

CAMBRIA FOREST COMMITTEE

TO CONSERVE AND MANAGE THE NATIVE FOREST OF CAMBRIA

Meeting Minutes

October 14, 2020, 6:30 PM
Zoom.com Video Teleconference

Crosby Swartz called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm. A **quorum** was established by attendance of Crosby and Laura Swartz, Paul Nugent, Christine Heinrichs and Greenspace representative Bob Fountain. Harry Farmer, CSD president and liaison, and John Weigold, CSD general manager, also attended.

Public and Director Comments:

Harry Farmer said that the Forest Committee could sponsor speakers for the public, using Zoom. The technology allows presentations to be recorded and posted online. Possible speakers include Rick Hawley and Paul Williams.

Paul Nugent offered to take over as secretary from Christine Heinrichs. Christine will become co-chair with Crosby.

Crosby gave information on the herbicide Florel to Carlos to treat Dwarf Mistletoe. Carlos has purchased it and will use it on any patches he sees or are brought to his notice. Anyone who notices infestations can alert Carlos. Early treatment reduces damage.

Laura reported that the Cambria Community Council contacted her to encourage the Forest Committee to apply for a grant. Directors are asked to bring ideas. CCC favors projects that involve young people and serve the community. Previous grants have supported the Forest Committee's signs and invasive weed guide.

Minutes of the September Meeting were approved unanimously.

Laura Swartz gave the **Treasurer's Report**: The account balance is \$738.60, with one check for \$541 for Directors and Officers insurance outstanding. The balance will be \$197.60 after that clears. Directors are asked to donate. Paul Nugent reported that the bill for Zoom is \$149 for the year. He will donate that payment.

Sub-Committee Reports

Education/Planting/Mitigation/Operations

Transfer of Development Credits / Lodge Hill Restoration Program:
Crosby had no progress to report.

The **CambriaCa Newsletter** Article: published meeting announcement again.

Forest Management

DefensibleSpace.org Website Recommendations: This web site, referred by Kitty Connolly, executive director of FFRP, has a lot of useful information on hardening homes against fire. Ember-proofing the house is more effective than cutting down trees, as embers can travel long distances. Only trees within 100 feet of structures should be limbed up. Paul has discussed ladder fuels with Steve Bitto.

Report from Fire Safe Focus Group:

Crosby and Laura attended the meeting. Fire Department Chief William Hollingsworth has an account to track volunteer hours in support of grant applications. He will post official information to Nextdoor. He reported on evacuation.

Dan Turner, business manager of County Fire Safe Council, reported on the Village Lane Project, to remove dead and dying trees from the canyon near Tin City and Santa Lucia Middle School. The project is being funded by PG&E to protect its power lines. County Planning has granted an exemption from the normal permitting process. A biologist's report is expected with the week. California Native Plant Society representatives will walk through to assess native plants. Work needs to be started in October and completed by mid-November.

No project description has yet been made available to the public. This area is private property, unlike Fiscalini Ranch, which belongs to the District. Having a project description the public can review improves public confidence. The Forest Committee will continue to follow the project and review it on the agenda.

Dan Turner is also considering hiring Auten to write the Environmental Impact Report for work on the Covell Ranch and possible work on Hearst Ranch. The report is expected to be available in a few months.

Cal Poly has 110 test plots they are monitoring in Cambria. They are keeping a detailed count of what is growing, what has died, how high, a detailed record of what is happening in the forest.

New Business

Officer Elections: As required by the Bylaws, election of officers is held annually. Crosby will work up a slate of officers in consultation with directors and the slate will be presented at the November meeting. Bob Fountain offered to become a director.

Unfinished Business

Director and Officer Liability Insurance Policy: Contact Crosby for a copy of the policy. The \$541 fee covers any number of directors.

Discussion of Forest Manager Tasks and Qualifications: Ability to work with all agencies as a respected voice for the forest is important. The Forest Committee will review Steve Auten's work with the Covell and Hearst Ranch projects for suitability.

Harry Farmer suggested working with Cal Poly forestry graduates, faculty and other contacts for candidates. Bob Fountain said that the forest manager should understand the whole picture of forest ecology. "The ideal person can act as a referee between environmental interests and firefighting agencies. It needs to be somebody who can find a path forward," Crosby said.

Public and Director Comments:

CSD General Manager John Weigold reported that the homeless issue is getting worse. He advises working with county resources to remove encampments. Recently, homeless people have been moving substantial assets into the forest on Fiscalini Ranch, including outdoor grills. The county has Community Action Teams to help.

Fire generally is banned, but those who don't have a place to live use fires for cooking and warming. Chief Hollingsworth has observed that they do not follow warnings not to have fires.

Christine will give a presentation on Carbon Neutral Cambria at the October 23 NCAC meeting. Trees are important in sequestering CO₂.

The meeting was **adjourned** at 7:45 pm

Next Meeting November 11, 2020