

CAMBRIA FOREST COMMITTEE

TO CONSERVE AND MANAGE THE NATIVE FOREST OF CAMBRIA

Meeting Minutes

March 10, 2021, 6:30 PM

Zoom.com Video Teleconference

The meeting was **called to order** at 6:30 pm by Crosby Swartz, and a **Quorum** established by attendance of Crosby and Laura Swartz, Julie Jorgenson, Bob Fountain, Greenspace representative, and myself, Christine Heinrichs. Cambria CSD Board liaison Harry Farmer and California Native Plant Society member Neil Havlik also attended.

Public and Director Comments and Introductions:

Neil Havlik has been a CNPS member since 1966. He is interested in issues around balancing fire and fuel management with habitat quality and biodiversity.

Christine and Bob both attended the Bay Nature webinar on Chaparral Fire Ecology and Fire Following Plants. One of the points made was that while fire is a natural feature of the ecology, fires too hot or too frequent turn chaparral into weed patches.

Minutes of January and February Meetings were approved with minor changes.

Treasurer's Report: Laura Swartz reported the balance at \$634.60. There are no outstanding bills or checks.

Sub-Committee Reports

Education/Planting/Mitigation/Operations

Transfer of Development Credits / Lodge Hill Restoration Program:

Crosby sent Christine the TDC references he identified. He will send the Vacant Parcel Assessment Report. Christine will post to the website.

Update Website Domain Name Administrator:

Crosby will transfer the GoDaddy account from Paul Nugent to Crosby Swartz.

Replacement trees: Bob Fountain reported that planting replacement trees for Monterey Pine and Coast Live Oaks is still required, but no one is getting trees from Greenspace. He received some documents from the county relating to tree replacement requirements. He will send to Christine, who will post to the website.

The Hadian and Bookout projects, which have been given permits by the District and have been appealed to the County Board of Supervisors, would, if constructed, remove respectively, 50 and 70 Monterey Pine trees, requiring planting of hundreds of trees.

Greenspace's 3,000-Tree Initiative continues to raise seedlings. Most are being planted on State Parks property.

Forest Management

Tree Pruning (Limbing Up) at Grammar School:

Crosby noticed the trees had been extensively pruned as he drove past. He will take photos and pursue information as to who authorized the work and who performed it. Because there is no overstory that could be affected by fire climbing the trees, they did not need to be limbed up.

Cal Vegetation Treatment Program (VTP) and Coastal Commission Conditions:

Cal Fire intends to use VTP, <https://bof.fire.ca.gov/projects-and-programs/calvtp/>, instead of other permits for fuel reduction projects. The Village Lane Project was done under the governor's Executive Order, according to Dan Turner, business manager of the county Fire Safe Council. He has not yet shown the county's Letter of Exemption for the project, and county officials have not provided it.

Turner has said that trees will be replaced as needed after observing how many regenerate naturally. Because that requires years of observation, tree replacement requirements can be overlooked.

Neil Havlik said that he and Dave Krause, Melissa Mooney, and Dave Chipping of the CNPS local chapter talked with Turner to advocate for leaving some sensitive areas of the Village Lane Project alone, that vegetation management needs to be carefully considered. They met with Kevin Cooper at the site and asked that areas behind the horse paddock be left alone to protect sensitive plants, and that area was not treated. He felt "they had listened to us."

Harry Farmer said that the Fiscalini Ranch project that removed understory in 2020 resulted in regeneration of poison oak rather than ferns and native plant diversity. Once the understory is disturbed, it opens the path for invasives. French broom is coming back in the areas along Highway 1 that were cleared last year. Turner has said that he is aware of the need to follow up on broom removal.

Farmer reported piles of French broom removed in 2020 on Covell Ranch have not been removed and are a fire hazard.

The Coastal Commission and the Regional Water Quality Control Board have also expressed concern. Crosby will contact Steve Auten to get a report.

Report from Fire Safe Focus Group – None of the CFC directors attended the meeting.

New Business

Discuss CCSD Forest Management Ad Hoc Committee

This item is included on the CCSD's March 11, 2021 regular meeting agenda:

Discussion and Consideration of Establishing a Board Ad Hoc Committee for Forest Management Alternatives

RECOMMENDATIONS: Staff recommends that the Board discuss and consider establishing a Board Ad Hoc Committee for Forest Management Alternatives to identify and define viable options to manage and promote the health, regeneration, and vitality of our native tree stands on Cambria Community Services District (CCSD) properties, so they may thrive and prosper for future generations.

FISCAL IMPACT: The fiscal impact of creating a Forest Management Alternatives Ad Hoc Committee would result in an undetermined amount of staff time.

DISCUSSION: CCSD owns and manages properties populated by Monterey Pine trees, which are at risk due to natural and non-natural impacts. Disease and drought have ravaged these magnificent rare trees over the last decade. To better understand the issues and potential options for the Board to consider in maintaining the Monterey Pine stands on District property, the Board should discuss and consider appointing an ad hoc committee to identify and evaluate options and alternatives. Some questions the Board may direct the ad hoc committee to address may include:

1. What is a clear definition of the problem?
2. How should the Board consider the alternatives, given that much of the forest does not belong to CCSD?
3. What expertise is required to help guide the District in forest management?
4. Where might resources come from for any ongoing District forest management efforts?

As an alternative that holds potential for Cambria, the Board may consider reviewing a model utilized in Santa Cruz, where landowners formed a network to agree on overall management objectives, remain current on forest science, and pursue joint projects. One benefit of such a group is increasing the likelihood of fundraising for forest health projects when an area-wide coalition applies. The Santa Cruz Mountains Stewardship Network website can be found at: <http://scmsn.net/>. Staff recommends the Board consider establishing a Board Ad Hoc Committee for Forest Management Alternatives.

CFC directors Crosby, Laura and Christine will speak in favor of the subcommittee and appointing Harry Farmer to lead it. Concerns include broadening the scope to include the entire forest, with all owners involved; hiring a Forest Ecologist to advise the district and the community; starting small with a part-time consultant and building on successes; finding funding from the district, FFRP, and other avenues.

[In the event, the ad hoc committee was created and Directors Harry Farmer and Tom Gray appointed.]

Letter to IRS Correcting Business Master File

Treasurer Laura Swartz has spent substantial time on the phone with the IRS to straighten this out. It's an internal IRS error. She and Crosby will write a letter detailing the problem and how to fix it. The incorrect listing could affect grant funding.

Unfinished Business

List of Tasks for Forest Management Consultant, Outreach to Other Groups:

Directors had many suggestions, including identifying diseases and treatments, organizing volunteers to remove invasives, exploring whether Galling Flies could be released to control Cape Ivy. Keith Seydel, director at Rancho Marino Reserve, suggested assessing the science to determine the overall health of the forest, and whether it is shrinking or growing.

Greenspace is working up its own list of tasks for a Forest Ecologist.

Neil offered to contact EcoSLO regarding their Coastal Summit, held at Camp Ocean Pines in the past. That might be a setting in which to write Best Practices for managing Monterey Pines. The Forest Committee and Greenspace have collaborated on Best Practices and Big Sur Land Trust has its own Best Practices. Christine will send those to all attending.

Public and Director Comments

Hadian,
<https://agenda.slocounty.ca.gov/iip/sanluisobispo/agendaitem/details/12837>, and
Bookout,
<https://agenda.slocounty.ca.gov/iip/sanluisobispo/agendaitem/details/12974>,
applications were approved by the Planning Department and now go on to Board
of Supervisors. Christine and others have filed appeals.

Future Agenda Items and Speakers

PBS Age of Nature, NOAA and State Parks Webinars are possible future
meeting subjects that could also attract the public to attend.

The meeting was **adjourned** at 8:09 pm.

Next Meeting April 14, 2021