

CAMBRIA FOREST COMMITTEE

TO CONSERVE AND MANAGE THE NATIVE FOREST OF CAMBRIA

Meeting Minutes

April 14, 2021, 6:30 PM

Zoom.com Video Teleconference

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

Public and Director Comments

Harry Farmer recounted his experience with French broom in Strawberry Canyon. He saw some and went to pull it, then noticed more growing in the gully. He pulled about 75 plants. The experience impressed him with how fast broom can infest the forest. Crosby Swartz said the broom seeds persist in the ground for years.

Harry reported on the IWMA meeting, at which, by a close vote, the polystyrene ban was kept in place but will not be implemented.

Crosby asked for directors to reach out to appropriate people to serve as CFC directors. Neil Havlik said he will consider serving, and reach out to other CNPS members who may be interested.

Laura Swartz has a frame to fill racks to raise MP trees. She will loan it to Bob Fountain for setting up racks later this week.

Minutes of the March Meeting were unanimously approved with one name spelling correction.

Treasurer's Report: Laura Swartz reported that the account balance is \$634.60. She continues to pursue correcting the IRS error. The IRS nonprofit forms will be prepared by a professional accountant to meet the May 15 deadline.

Sub-Committee Reports

Education/Planting/Mitigation/Operations

Update Website Domain Name Administrator: Crosby will handle.

Forest Management

Tree Pruning (Limbing Up) at Grammar School: Crosby will pursue what the reason was for limbing up trees that did not pose any danger of crown fire, and removal of associated brush.

Cal Fire VTP Project Specific Analysis Document (PSA)

This process makes it simpler to proceed with a forest project by allowing approval if the project meets PSA criteria, as established by a programmatic statewide EIR. The process limits opportunities for public oversight. Board members discussed the possibilities for public comment on local projects, such as the upcoming Covell Ranch project. Fire Safe Focus Group meetings may hear comment, and projects in the Coastal Zone may come before the Coastal Commission for comment.

Report from Fire Safe Focus Group:

The meeting focused on house hardening to reduce fire damage. The Fire Safe Council is looking for grants to assist homeowners in making their houses more fire resistant.

The group will invite forest advisor Steve Auten to its May meeting. His recorded presentation from a previous meeting has not been made generally available because of technical problems. Directors continue to pursue resolution of electronic access to his presentation. Forest Committee directors are urged to attend the May Fire Safe Focus Group meeting.

The legislature has approved \$500 million for fuel reduction projects in the current Fiscal Year, with plans for another \$500 million in the 2022 FY. Fire Safe Council will apply for grants, deadline May 19. FSC business manager Dan Turner said that grants will be available for invasive species removal and removal of hazardous trees. The Covell Ranch project and a project on San Simeon Point, to clear out debris and thin eucalyptus, may be included.

Turner is aware that French broom has replaced the understory vegetation removed along Highway 1 by the fuel reduction project in 2020. He said that permission from Cal Trans, which holds the Right of Way, prevents entry of teams to treat the broom. He is working on getting a Memorandum of Understanding with Cal Trans so that Fire Safe teams can have access. Neil Havlik said that areas along Highway 1 have rich, diverse native vegetation including native orchids that need to be protected. He and other CNPS members are providing CNPS Best Practices to Fire Safe and Cal Fire to bring attention to the plants before projects damage them.

Fire Safe will hold a community chipping event. CERT is giving Covid shots. State Sen. John Laird will hold a Zoom Town Hall meeting April 29, 5:30 pm, about problems with homeowners and fire insurance.

State Farm Insurance is partnering with a private fire prevention company, Wildfire Defense Systems. More information to follow. Christine is looking into it.

Unfinished Business

Discuss CCSD Forest Management Ad Hoc Committee

The Ad Hoc Committee led by Harry Farmer and Tom Gray held its first meeting April 1. Greenspace has written a list of job responsibilities which Crosby will circulate to directors. Harry reported that Tom Gray has proposed another meeting, to invite other stakeholders such as Cal Fire, County Supervisor Bruce Gibson and others. A third meeting could bring differing perspectives together.

How to pay for a Forest Manager/Ecologist remains undecided. Harry reported that FFRP is willing to assist with its own funding and additional fund raising.

Public and Director Comments:

Neil has discussed the possibility of holding a meeting of all forest stakeholders, both local and entities such as The SLO Land Conservancy, State Parks, and the Upper Salinas - Las Tablas Resource Conservation District, sponsored by EcoSLO. EcoSLO is willing to consider hosting such a meeting, with financial support from the attendees.

The scope of a Forest Manager/Forest Ecologist is not limited to land owned by the CSD. Addressing the responsibilities of a Forest Manager/Ecologist, the Cambria Forest Management Plan states:

[p. R-1] ...although the Cambria Forest Management Plan emphasizes management for Monterey pine success, it also addresses other species, such as coast live oak, that co-occur and interact with Monterey pines, in order to ensure an ecosystem-based management approach.

[p. 1-1] The Cambria Forest Management Plan is intended to serve the community of Cambria and its environs and will provide an integrated framework of techniques for the management of the forest. It was created for use by an experienced Professional Forester to ensure comprehensive and effective management of a sustainable forest for the present and future benefit of the North Coast Planning Area's people, plants, and animals. The Professional Forester would be responsible to the implementation agency (i.e. a Services District). The Cambria Forest Committee may act in an advisory capacity to the forest management implementing agency.

“The goal is the well-being of the forest,” Harry said.

Directors offered to reach out to contacts for recommendations as to the job description of a Forest Manager/Ecologist. Bob will contact Mike Walgren at State Parks, Christine will contact Ben Higgins at Hearst Ranch, Harry will contact FFRP board members, executive director Kitty Connolly and Rancho Marino director Keith Seydel. Crosby will contact The Land Conservancy. They will report at the May meeting.

Bob Fountain reported that Greenspace continues its 3,000 Tree Initiative, handing out racks on 25 April at the Creekside Reserve. They have 15 volunteer growers and 8 or 9 Greenspace board members signed up to grow seedlings. The seedlings will be planted next winter, November through February, on State Parks land, between San Simeon Acres and Lone Palm Road, to create a corridor of Monterey Pine along the highway.

Future Agenda Items and Speakers

PBS Age of Nature: The web site states that videos usually include permission for showing to public audiences for free, such as teachers in classrooms. <https://help.pbs.org/support/solutions/articles/5000673755-how-do-i-obtain-public-performance-rights-for-a-show->

NOAA and State Parks Webinars are ongoing. Previous programs are archived. <https://www.noaa.gov/education/resource-collections/education-at-home/upcoming-and-archived-webinars>

The meeting was **adjourned** at 8:30 pm.

Next Meeting May 12, 2021