

# **CAMBRIA FOREST COMMITTEE**

TO CONSERVE AND MANAGE THE NATIVE FOREST OF CAMBRIA

## Meeting Minutes

June 9, 2021, 6:30 PM

Zoom.com Video Teleconference

The meeting was **Called to Order and a Quorum** established by the attendance of Crosby and Laura Swartz, Julie Jorgenson, Bob Fountain and Christine Heinrichs. Harry Farmer, Cambria Community Services District liaison, Neil Havlik and Melissa Mooney of California Native Plant Society and John Seed of Greenspace also attended.

**Minutes of May Meeting** were approved as amended.

**Treasurer's Report:** Laura Swatz reported that the bank balance is \$389.60, with \$10 in petty cash. She paid CPA Lynn Singer's bill for preparing the tax return. Crosby continues to check the IRS Business Master File for the correction to the CFC's status, which had not yet been made.

### **Sub-Committee Reports**

**Smokescreen, Debunking Wildfire Myths to Save Our Forests and Climate webinar** is posted at <https://lpfw.org/smokescreen-with-dr-chad-hanson-webinar-recording/>. The link is also posted to the CFC web site.

**Screenshare PBS DVD on Zoom:** Crosby is working on setting up the technology to show this video.

**Website Domain Name Administrator:** Crosby will make this transfer from Paul Nugent to himself.

### **Forest Management**

**Upper Salinas Las Tablas Resource Conservation District Public Works Plan:** The plan establishes Best Practices for working in the Coastal Zone. It will be presented at the June 15 NCAC meeting.

### **Report from Fire Safe Focus Group:**

Comments on the Steve Auten report are due by July 1.

The Fire Safe council is seeking approval from Cal Trans to use herbicide on the broom that is growing along Highway 1.

Phos-Chek Wildfire Home Defense is a consumer product that can reduce flammability of vegetation around homes. <https://phos-chekhomedefense.com/>

### **New Business**

#### **Draft Comment Letter on Covell Ranch Fuel Reduction Project:**

This report, now posted on the CFC web site, raised many questions. Comments are due by

July 1. The Coastal Commission may hold a public hearing on this plan. The Nature Conservancy holds the conservation easement on the Covell Ranch. Enforcing it involves this fuel reduction plan. CNPS wrote and submitted comments, led by Neil and Melissa. Crosby will send draft of comments to directors for advice. Julie will take pictures to illustrate the unintended effects of previous fuel reduction projects

This is the environmental document that Cal Fire and others will rely on for this and future projects. It's important to get it right. Several attendees questioned the assumptions underlying its recommendations of removing 70-80 percent of the trees, mainly those eight inches or less in diameter, reducing tree density to 200 trees per acre.

The forest is not the same and a fuel break and different standards and treatments should apply.

Removing all young trees reduces diversity of tree ages. Younger trees may be better adapted to changing conditions. Removing the young trees opens the older trees to wind damage.

Use of a masticator is destructive to understory and is rarely justified for use in the forest. Projects should rely on handwork, using masticators and bulldozers only as needed.

Removal of native understory plants in the cause of fuel reduction results in loss of habitat for native wildlife. Replacement vegetation is grass, which is more flammable than native plants. Loss of understory vegetation can create open space that makes it easier for burning embers to blow through during a fire.

Thinning and removal of young trees to open up the canopy and allow sunlight in allows the soil to overheat, dry out and encourages weed growth..

Treating Cambria's Monterey Pine forest the same as Sierra forests is misleading. The Monterey Pine forest requires different management.

Fire prevention should also focus on home hardening as well as forest fuel reduction.

## **Unfinished Business**

Report and Discussion, CCSD Forest Management Ad Hoc Committee: The Ad Hoc committee of Tom Gray and Harry Farmer met with Dan Turner, Steve Auten and Keith Seydel of Rancho Marino. They discussed updating the Cambria Forest Management Plan of 2001. Harry will invite Devin Best, executive director of the Upper Salinas-Las Tablas Resource Conservation District to a future meeting.

## **Public and Director Comments:**

Julie said PG&E telephoned to say that they will be marking trees for removal. Davey Tree will tag the trees but other contractors may do the work. Monitors are needed to limit destruction and collateral damage, and follow up that the contractors have disposed of cut trees and brush appropriately.

Bob Fountain said that Greenspace has hundreds of Monterey Pine seedlings available. Greenspace will accommodate to place them. He will contact Andrew Boyd-Goodrich, executive director at Camp Ocean Pines, for possible placement there.

Bob also reported that some Cal Poly students have approached Greenspace about the possibility of using drones to survey the forest in Cambria.

## **Future Agenda Items and Speakers:**

Crosby suggested the CFC meeting have informational sessions on specific subjects such as Thinning and Masticators.

Meeting **Adjourned** at 8:30 pm.

**Next Meeting July 14, 2021**