

CAMBRIA FOREST COMMITTEE

TO CONSERVE AND MANAGE THE NATIVE FOREST OF CAMBRIA

Meeting Minutes

June 10, 2022, 11:00 AM

Zoom.com Video Teleconference

Crosby Swartz **called the meeting to order** at 11 am. A **Quorum** was established by attendance of Crosby and Laura Swartz, Bob Fountain of Greenspace, Harry Farmer of Cambria CSD and Christine Heinrichs. Neil Havlik of California Native Plant Society, Spencer Gordon, Conservation Technician and Devin Best, executive director, from USLTRCD, John Nixon, president of FFFRP board of directors, and Keith Seydel, Kenneth S. Norris Rancho Marino Reserve Director also attended.

Public and Director Comments:

Laura reported that Camp Ocean Pines Outdoor Education Director Channing Kaiser has asked for advice on native plants and how to grow them. COP has received a grant for a greenhouse. The project is a result of the Forest Committee's encouragement with last year's grant to plant Monterey Pines at the camp.

Grant Information from Upper Salinas-Las Tables Resource Conservation District

Spencer Gordon is a new employee at USLTRCD. He was previously employed by State Parks in Santa Cruz. The Forest Committee, Greenspace, FFRP and the CSD representatives all welcomed him.

USLTRCD has received a Cal Fire grant for work on 500 acres, including Rancho Marino, FRP and other areas. The goals are to improve forest health and reduce fire danger.

Ascent Environmental will write the Project Specific Analysis detailing the project. Different areas will be subject to different treatments. The public will have an opportunity to comment on the PSA. After the PSA is approved, USLTRCD

will be responsible for planning, permitting, doing the work, and monitoring. Work will probably start in October.

Neil expressed concern that this project will ignore CNPS requests for a pilot project or test plots, as happened in the Covell Ranch project. The Fire Safe Council excluded CNPS and the Forest committee from site visits. That work was so harsh on understory that wildlife habitat was lost, leaving little connection between ground and trees. Large amounts of wood chips were left on the ground, changing the forest floor.

Devin said that the USLTRCD's role is "to come up with a happy medium. We don't want compromise, we want consensus."

Devin said he would like to use fire ecology, which raises issues of greenhouse gas emissions and pollution. Possible use of a curtain burner could help. Devin has no place to store cut vegetation. The risk of setting fires in populated areas raises questions of fire safety. Burned piles along Cambria Pines Road were inadequately extinguished earlier this year, resulting in fire breaking out hours later. Burn piles were close together, and close to live trees, which were scorched and may die in future.

Spencer advised thinning vegetation to replicate the effects of fire. He said he does not anticipate using prescribed burns in future. He advised selective thinning from an ecological standpoint to create the habitat type created by fire.

After the discussion, Devin and Spencer left the meeting.

Directors continued with the business meeting.

The **Minutes of the May Meeting** were unanimously approved with an amendment to note that the Water Wait List includes nearly 500 homes that would add to the traffic on Lodge Hill during an evacuation.

Report from Fire Safe Focus Group Wednesday meeting.

Fire Safe Council Business Manager Dan Turner reported that the county has been awarded \$9 million in Fire Prevention / Forest Health grants. A bill in the state Senate could require projects to pay the prevailing wage, which would increase the costs. Projects now often rely on low-cost convict labor. He led a site visit to the Covell Ranch project last week for 30-40 people.

The council is trying to get approval from Cal Trans to use Phos-Chek Fortify along roads to reduce fire.

Treasurers report:

Laura reported that the account balance is \$536.15. She paid the bill from the CPA for preparing and filing the tax forms.

New Business

Discussion of Covered Conductors for High Voltage Power Lines

Crosby continues to research the possibilities and seek a contact at PG&E. Three kinds of conductors apply: Covered Conductors, Spacer Cable, and Load Bearing Cable. Areas in Cambria that would be appropriate for Covered Conductors include Cambria Pines Lodge where lines cross the ravine, near the nursery, and Fern Canyon Preserve, Newport to Sandown. Fire risk could be reduced in these areas without cutting down trees.

Unfinished Business

Website Redesign – looking for ways to make the site more accessible and interactive.

Public and Director Comments

Neil and Crosby noted trees at the Cambria Cemetery were marked with red tape, but no work is planned for that area.

Laura asked Bob Fountain whether Greenspace would consider accepting one specific high priority conservation lot in Fern Canyon for conservation easement. He will present it to the board. Crosby will contact the SLO Land Conservancy.

John Nixon reported that FFRP has completed construction of a 24' x 10' greenhouse. They intend to use it to propagate understory plants which will be used on CCSD land. Will be propagated it soon. 24 X 10 greenhouse. These plants will support natural propagation, which is reduced under current drought conditions.

Keith said he is working with Andrew Boyd-Goodrich, executive director of Camp Ocean Pines, on the PSA for Rancho Marino, which is adjacent to COP.

Future Agenda Items and Speakers

Presentation about Covered Conductors
Michigan State Forest Carbon and Climate Program

<https://www.canr.msu.edu/fccp/>

Society of American Foresters Videos <https://learn.eforester.org>

The meeting was **adjourned** at 12:30.

Next Meeting July 15, 2022