

# **CAMBRIA FOREST COMMITTEE**

TO CONSERVE AND MANAGE THE NATIVE FOREST OF CAMBRIA

## Meeting Minutes

May 13, 2022, 10:00 AM

Zoom.com Video Teleconference

Crosby Swartz **called the meeting to order** at 10:05 am. A **Quorum** was established by attendance of Crosby and Laura Swartz, Bob Fountain of Greenspace, Harry Farmer, Cambria CSD liaison and director, and Christine Heinrichs. Neil Havlik of California Native Plant Society and Keith Seydel, Kenneth S. Norris Rancho Marino Reserve Director also attended.

### **Public and Director Comments:**

Crosby presented information about PG&E's Covered Wire program, replacing high voltage lines with insulated wire. This could reduce fire danger from overhead wires by 90 percent. He will research the subject and report at the June meeting. This could be a subject for a future speaker. Funding is available for fire prevention projects. CFC could reach out to Fire Safe Council for collaboration on encouraging PG&E to replace uninsulated wire with Covered Wire.

The **Minutes** of the April Meeting were unanimously approved as amended.

**Treasurer's Report:** Laura Swartz reported the bank balance of \$366.15, and petty cash of \$40. She expects the bill for tax form preparation. CFC does not owe any taxes, but has to file.

### **Sub-Committee Reports**

#### **Education/Planting/Mitigation/Operations**

##### **Earth Day Event at Fiscalini Ranch Preserve**

CFC joined FFRP and Greenspace for collegial conversation and offered promotional materials at the south end of Fiscalini Ranch's Bluff Trail. In informal discussion, Greenspace directors reported that the owner of a large lot in Fern Canyon is interested in donating the property. Crosby and Laura described it as a forested lot in the middle of the canyon with year-round water frequented by wildlife and high conservation value. Bob Fountain will follow up with the Greenspace board. If Greenspace is not interested in accepting the lot, CFC can approach The SLO Land Conservancy about it.

## **Forest Management**

**Covell Ranch Project Update:** Work has stopped on this project. Pile burning has been suspended. CNPS has not received a response to the organization's request for a site visit. A site visit is important to gauge amount of vegetation regrowth through chips. A site visit can document the amount and species re-growing, at this time, five months after tree and understory removal. Based on result, the 10-year project can be revised now to encourage diversity and native plants. Neil and Melissa Mooney will follow up.

Results need to be documented and communicated to the Coastal Commission, which has jurisdiction over Cal VTP projects. The commission needs to be informed of the results of projects that they are approving.

The CSD's Ad Hoc Committee on Forest Management submitted its report to the District Board. It is on page 63 of the March 10 meeting agenda, <https://www.cambriacsd.org/files/1912d8d48/2022+03+10+Amended+Final+Regular+Meeting+Agenda.pdf>.

No **Fire Safe Focus Group** meeting this month, after the Wildfire Preparedness Day May 7.

## **New Business**

**Website Redesign:** The website needs better organization and easier navigation for visitors. It should be able to accept donations. Christine invites directors to visit the website and make suggestions. She will pursue getting an estimate for professional redesign.

## **Unfinished Business**

### **Discussion of CCSD Fire Hazard Fuel Reduction Program:**

Crosby and Laura have marked the list of lots to indicate which lots are under conservation easement or adjacent to conservation easements. Those lots should be treated differently from other vacant lots. Special guidelines should apply to 87 parcels in Fern Canyon, many of which comprise multiple lots. Fire Chief Hollingsworth is retiring in June. His successor has not yet been named.

**Discussion of USLT Resource Conservation District Role as Forest Manager:** Keith reported that Ascent Environmental, <https://www.ascentenvironmental.com/>, did a biological survey for Rancho Marino and adjacent California Fish & Wildlife property. He is working on a grant application with Upper Salinas Las Tablas Resource Conservation District for the

work. The proposed work will be subject to public comment before work begins. Keith lives on the land.

### **Public and Director Comments:**

Harry Farmer reported that Andrew Johnson, who had been acting as forest manager for USLTRCD, has left the organization. Spencer Gordon, formerly with State Parks, has taken the position. Harry will reach out to meet him.

The CSD suggestion that an evacuation road could be constructed through Rancho Marino and other properties south of Cambria would be a multi-million-dollar project. It would cross 13 arroyos and protected coastal prairie, making Coastal Commission approval unlikely. Keith would agree to safety measures, but this project is not likely to be achieved. Allowing evacuees to park on the ranch is possible, but the area is uneven. It could accommodate a couple hundred cars but not the 9,600 posited in the most recent evacuation documents.

Laura said that the Water Wait List applicants include about 500 more residences on Lodge Hill that would be attempting to evacuate in an emergency.

Bob Fountain reported that water samples had been collected on the first Saturday in May for **Marine Sanctuary Snapshot Day**. The water quality monitoring project collects samples from San Mateo County to SLO County, on the coast and from inland sites. Samples are tested for livestock bacterial and fertilizer chemical contamination Crosby suggested asking whether SODBlitz could be included, as Sudden Oak Death pathogens travel by water. See <https://montereybay.noaa.gov/getinvolved/volunteer/snapshotday.html> for more details and reports.

Directors noted that the Coastal Commission has unanimously denied **Poseidon Water's Huntington Beach Desalination Project** permit. That milestone will probably not be the end of that project.

**Cambria CSD** received a Notice of Violation from the Coastal Commission April 19, 2022. The NOV opens a discussion of Cambria's water use issues. Cambria's water extractions have been documented as damaging the creeks and riparian habitat for some years. The district has not reduced extractions and maintains that the district has adequate water to accommodate buildout of the Water Wait List. The process engages expensive legal conflicts that divert district finances away from critical infrastructure.

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

Covered wire  
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 11:30 am

**Next Meeting June 10, 2022**