

CAMBRIA FOREST COMMITTEE

TO CONSERVE AND MANAGE THE NATIVE FOREST OF CAMBRIA

Meeting Minutes

August 12, 2022, 10:00 AM
Zoom.com Video Teleconference

Meeting Recording:

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/XD0P_x7uzXiBH5fLX3G76NMVnsza5NbckptMnZCOcSM6fkcM0w4gD09a93ibYd4x.xS4oQgY-z6COKPQQ

Access Passcode: Sa?u2faE

1.0 Crosby Swartz **called the meeting to order** at 10:00. A quorum was established by attendance of Crosby and Laura Swartz, Julie Jorgeson, Bob Fountain of Greenspace and Cambria CSD liaison Harry Farmer. Kitty Connolly, executive director of Friends of Fiscalini Ranch Preserve, and Keith Seydel, Rancho Marino Reserve director, also attended.

2.0 Public and Director Comments and Reports

Kitty Connolly reported that FFRP has launched a restoration nursery. About 200 trees are carried over from last year, when it was too dry to plant, and 120-150 new seedlings have been started for next year. The trees carried over from last year have developed stronger root systems. The new seeds are germinating quickly. She wants to start coyote brush to be planted with the trees as nurse plants for the seedlings. Waterings are scheduled.

3.0 **Approval of the Minutes** of July Meeting was deferred until Forest Committee Secretary Christine Heinrichs can attend.

4.0 Laura Swartz gave the **Treasurer's Report**: Account balance \$536.15, no change from last month. No grant money is left or outstanding obligations unpaid.

5.0 Sub-Committee Reports

5.1 Education/Planting/Mitigation/Operations

Tribune Article about Forest Health:

Tribune Environment Reporter Mackenzie Shuman wrote a story on Cambria's Monterey Pine forest, <https://www.sanluisobispo.com/news/local/environment/article263816618.html>. It presented various perspectives of the forest's condition, but it relied heavily on Dan Turner, Fire Safe Council, and Cal Fire Forestry Assistant Jon Gee. She ignored alternative viewpoints about which types of forest management projects effectively reduce fire risk to communities recommended by **Chad Hanson**, co-founder of the John Muir Project of the Earth Island Institute, author of *Smokescreen: Debunking Wildfire Myths to Save Our Forests and Our Climate*, <http://cambriaforestcommittee.org/forest-videos-and-media/baker-hanson-on-wildfire/>. Quotes as presented misleadingly imply that forest defenders oppose fire prevention measures.

Laura suggested writing a list of forest treatments the Forest Committee would approve. Harry has talked with Blair McCormick and Jeff Kwasny, local arborists. The Forest Committee could get written opinions from them on the condition of the forest and how to maintain it.

Keith is educated as an ecologist and is working with advisers from UC Davis and a drone expert for mapping to track forest changes. Because there are so few natural stands of Monterey Pine, there's little research on best practices.

The Land Conservancy has an ecologist on staff. The Forest Committee could invite her out for a walk-through and ask her opinion on the forest and recommendation for a professional to provide a report.

Grant funding is possible to support a consultant report.

5.2 Forest Management

Discussion of Addition to Fern Canyon Preserve

A representative of the trust that owns a vacant lot in Fern Canyon contacted the Forest Committee regarding donating the lot for conservation. Crosby referred him to The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo for consideration in the Transfer Development Credit Program.

Approval by the CCSD Board is required before this lot can be added to the District-owned Fern Canyon Preserve.

The CSD Finance Committee has recommended that the district save the money it spends on lot maintenance by selling lots in the Fern Canyon Preserve. This presents legal problems and discourages the Coastal Conservancy and Land Conservancy from supporting Cambria's grant funding applications.

All TDC documents are posted on the Forest Committee's web site, <http://cambriaforestcommittee.org/buildout-reduction-committee/>.

6.0 Report from Fire Safe Focus Group

Covell Ranch Project Update

The Covell Ranch project has completed its work on the west side of Bridge Street and continues on the east side, northeast of the cemetery. Requests for site visits to view completed areas of the project from organizations such as the California Native Plant Society and the Forest Committee have not been answered.

Grants for Home-Hardening: This is an effective way to reduce property damage from wildfire.

Undergrounding Electrical Lines: Dan Turner reported some grants may be available for undergrounding electrical transmission wires. Crosby will ask the PG&E contact on Covered Conductors for information. PG&E has agreed to undergrounding some amount of lines, and is under pressure to improve safety now. The Forest Committee can survey the community and make recommendations for areas where lines should be underground.

7.0 New Business

Discussion about Los Padres National Forest Fuel Reduction Project

Los Padres ForestWatch asked for support to extend the comment period on the 235,000-acre (368 square miles) project. <https://lpfw.org/widespread-opposition-to-clearing-logging->

[project-prompts-extension-of-comment-period/](#) Widespread opposition led to a 30-day extension, but the U.S. Forest Service still refuses to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement, despite requests from Congressional Rep. Carbajal and others to do so. An interactive map showing the proposed area is at <https://forestwatch.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/sidebar/index.html?appid=bc79b99c114d4bd98669e06a474b1f7a>

8.0 Unfinished Business

8.1 **Covered Conductor Follow Up with PG&E:** Crosby will follow up.

9.0 Public and Director Comments and Reports

Bob Fountain reported on the Survey Greenspace did of the tree seedlings planted in 2020. After two years of growth for the earliest plantings, some are more than six feet tall. Survival rate is 59 percent. Full results will be posted after Greenspace finalizes the survey findings.

He reported that Greenspace observed similar improvements in seed germination to Kitty's experience at the FFRP greenhouse. The Forest Committee's open forum meetings provide an arena for exchange of such nuggets of information, which may prove important to forest health.

10.0 Future Agenda Items and Speakers

Presentation about PG&E Line Hardening, Covered Conductors

Michigan State Forest Carbon and Climate Program <https://www.canr.msu.edu/fccp/>

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

11.0 The meeting was **adjourned** at 11:20 am.

Next Meeting 10 am September 9, 2022