

Cambria Forest Committee April 14th, 2023 meeting summary

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 AM by Committee Chair Crosby Swartz. Also present were CFC treasurer Laura Swartz, CFC secretary Christine Heinrichs, Greenspace Executive Director Karin Argano and GS Board member Jeff Wilson, Friends of the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve Executive Director Kitty Connolly, Upper Salinas-Las Tablas Resource Conservation District Project Manager Spencer Gordon, Rancho Marino Preserve Director Keith Seydel, and Harry Farmer, CCSD Board Director and CFC liaison.

The first report of the meeting was provided by FFRP ED Kitty Connolly. She informed us of the upcoming fundraiser this weekend, Friday April 14th through Sunday the 16th at the new Brydges Restaurant on Bridge St. All wine sales and corkage fees will be donated to support the Friends of the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve. Kitty also promoted the Greenspace Earth Day event on April 22nd as well as the 3 day weekend Earth Day happening at the Cambria Nursery. Of course the big event taking place is the return of the Cambria Wildflower Show on Saturday and Sunday, April 29th and 30th, at the Cambria Veteran's Hall. After a three-year absence due to the covid 19 pandemic, this wonderful happening is much anticipated. This is one of the finest events of this type in the State, with roughly 500 examples of dozens of varieties of plants to treat the viewer to the wonders of nature. In addition, we were informed that design and construction of the Boardwalk linking the Bluff Trail to the Marine Terrace Fire Road would be going out to bid in May.

Kitty also mentioned she is now the Environmental Editor for the on line weekly community newspaper CambriaCA continuing to be put together by John Rohrbaugh. Thank you John!

Greenspace the Cambria Land Trust Executive Director Karin Argano provided more details on the April 22nd Earth Day event at the Greenspace Preserve on Center St. Taking place from 11AM-3PM, many food and beverage vendors and information booths will be on site, as well as live music and a kid's zone. This will be a fun and super educational event celebrating the beauty of nature in Cambria and everywhere, with the world wide Earth Day theme, "Invest In Our Planet".

In addition, Karin remarked on the impact of the recent storm on Strawberry Canyon, from downed trees, especially at the lower entrance, to very muddy and difficult to walk trails, and advised using the upper trail. The Chinese Temple at the Reserve that was recently broken into is being repaired and looked fine for the Earth Day event. Greenspace is also in need of a part time administrative assistant to work 15-20 hours a week.

Treasurer Laura Swartz stated that just \$267.15 remains in the CFC bank account, and that the tax report will be filed with the IRS through accountant Lynn Singer by May 15th.

A report was provided by Dan Turner from the Fire Safe Focus Group, highlighting the Wildlife Preparedness/Fire Safety Town Hall on Saturday, May 6th from 10AM-1PM at the Cambria Veteran's Hall. Speakers will be available via Zoom, including environmental scientist and educator Dr Sarah Bisbing. The many posters created by the youth of our community addressing fire safety and the environment will be on display, and the winner announced. This event is not only informative but helps to maintain the Fire Wise insurance rating status for Cambria.

Jeff Wilson remarked on the need for greater clarity and reporting requirements for PSA's (Project Specific Analysis), and to do periodic reporting. Spencer Gordon responded by saying an effort was

being made by the US-LTRCD working with Cal Fire to have more consistent reporting. Being considered was a weekly system showing specific project requirements being implemented along with a short description. Jeff then emphasized that reports should be made public.

We were reminded that the next SLO County Fire Safe Council meeting would be on Wednesday, May 17th at 9AM combined with Cambria's Fire Safe Focus Group at the Cambria Veteran's Hall. Following later in the morning will be a tour of the Covell Ranch, with a limited number of attendees available. Reservations will be required, details to be provided.

Under New Business, a discussion took place regarding the Comment Letter to the CA Coastal Commission addressing the Hearst Ranch and Cambria Reserve Projects being proposed by Cal Fire and US-LTRCD. At present revisions are being considered by the US-LTRCD and the Coastal Commission staff as to how to incorporate changes into the project description. The hope is to get revisions back by April 20th prior to the US-LTRCD Board meeting on April 27th. The month of May will be available to provide more comments to Coastal Commission staff early enough for them to accommodate revisions to forward to the Commissioners for their June 7th-9th meetings being done virtually via Zoom.

Crosby will also be putting together an article reflecting public comment on this very important subject to be available in CambriaCA. Crosby also talked about the standards of the California Vegetative Treatment Program (CalVTP) in the Coastal Zone, and the very detailed report available describing the effectiveness of various forest management treatments.

It was announced that the Sudden Oak Death Annual Sampling Project organized by Cal Fire will take place on Saturday and Sunday, May 6th and 7th, and volunteers are needed to assist in this endeavor. The work is done through a Smartphone app and GPS location. Thankfully SOD is not prevalent in our area. Anyone interested can contact Crosby.

CCSD Board Director Harry Farmer announced that the Board had selected a new General Manager for the District, Matt McElhenie, that he'd been given an employment agreement, and would be introduced to the public at the next CCSD Board meeting on April 20th.

Christine Heinrichs announced that "Tales From the Cambria Woods Volume 2" is being put together, and that commentaries from the community would be needed and much appreciated. Volume One from many years ago consisted of articles submitted to "The Cambrian" newspaper which is sadly no longer in existence in lengthy print form. Christine also announced she would like to step down as Secretary and the CFC is looking for someone to fill that position.

Karin reported that the trees planted by Greenspace volunteers in recent years, including the 1,000 trees planted this past November followed by the abundance of rain, have produced a major increase in the return of a variety of wildlife, especially birds. This is very good news!!, including the fact that trees are so important in absorbing carbon dioxide (CO2). Karin also announced that she has a UCSC doctoral student calculating the carbon footprint taking place on the Central Coast.

As the meeting was winding down, Spencer Gordon then produced the Rancho Marino Preserve Project map, including the shaded fuel break adjacent to Randall Rd, and the cleaning up of downed trees and dead wood, most all of the work being done by hand. Tree retention will be of 150-250 trees per acre, and 15-20% or more shrub retention. Also, a 75 foot buffer zone will be maintained in riparian areas, and a 100 foot buffer zone around wood rat nests and nesting birds. He also announced that while

originally the Rancho Marino Project was to cover 187 acres, the priority work areas have been reduced to 40 acres.

Under Future Agenda Items and Speakers, Steve Auten of Auten Resource Consulting/US-LTRCD is being considered and will be contacted.

Crosby adjourned the meeting at 11:04 AM.

The next Cambria Forest Committee meeting will be on Friday, May 12th at 10AM via Zoom.

This summary written and submitted by CCSD Board Director Harry Farmer.