

Cambria Forest Committee March 15, 2024 meeting summary

The meeting was called to order at 10:03 AM. In attendance were CFC Chair Crosby Swartz, Secretary Christine Heinrichs, Treasurer Laura Swartz, CFC Director Julie Jorgensen, CCSD Director and PROS (Parks, Recreation and Open Space) Committee Chair Michael Thomas, PROS Committee member Jeff Wilson, US-LT RCD (Upper Salinas-Las Tablas Resource Conservation District) Project Manager Spencer Gordon, CNPS (California Native Plant Society) member Neil Havlik, Cambria resident Dennis Dudzik, and CCSD Board member and CFC liaison Harry Farmer.

Crosby began the comment segment of the meeting by stating he'd recently sent out a link to the Trees of Los Padres Webinar presented by Bryant Baker, Director of Conservation and Resources for Los Padres Forest Watch. Laura Swartz then provided the Treasurer's Report, stating there were no outstanding bills or grant funding obligations, but grant opportunities would be pursued in the coming year.

Under Organizational Reports, Neil Havlik stated the Native Plant Society is very concerned about the proposed large construction and development project in Nipomo in southern San Luis Obispo County. While no one was available representing the Cambria Fire Safe Focus Group, Jeff Wilson remarked he'd attended the most recent meeting, and the topic of home owners fire insurance had come up. Crosby stated much information on fire insurance and its availability can be found at the FSFG website. There was no report available from FFRP (Friends of the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve). Crosby then read a written report submitted by Greenspace Executive Director Karin Argano, reminding us once again that Earth Day will be celebrated at the Greenspace Creekside Reserve on Center St on April 21st, which will include an art project from the students at the Grammar School. Upgrades are also taking place at the Reserve, as the Temple will be getting a new coat of paint, the driveway a new layer of gravel, and new docent training for the Temple will be taking place.

Spencer Gordon provided an update on the fuel reduction project at Rancho Marino, saying the start date is tentatively set for April 29th, and he's presently working out the scheduling with the contractors and Camp Ocean Pines. As for the length of the project, Spencer remarked while the project could possibly take up to two years, it's hoped the thinning will take place this Spring and Summer, the wood would then be cured, and burned in November. Spencer added he's also put in a Cal Fire grant proposal for the North County that would provide for some forest thinning projects in that area. Jeff Wilson then spoke, stating that at the recent FSFG meeting, Dan Turner, Executive Director of the San Luis Obispo Fire Safe Council, had commented on the upcoming work on the Hearst Ranch property, beginning with eucalyptus thinning at San Simeon Point, followed by Monterey Pine thinning, all of which had been approved last year by the California Coastal Commission. Laura then asked about "progress" regarding the fuel reduction project on the Covell Ranch, to which Spencer said he'd been out on the property recently and heard the chipper running, but otherwise could provide no further details.

Speaking of land management and care for the natural environment, at this point Michael Thomas, Chair of the PROS Committee, stated it might be possible that Fern Canyon may be the first of the Forest Management Plans initiated by the District (CCSD). Concern was expressed regarding the exposed collection line in Fern Canyon, and the environmental challenges that would be faced in repairing/replacing the line. Spencer Gordon then commented that work on a forest management project description for the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve will begin this Fall. The UC Berkeley Fire Surrogate 20 Year Study addressing Forest Management was briefly acknowledged.

Crosby Swartz reported on an article published by the California Forest Pest Council about the *Onnia Subtriquetra* fungus (Wooley Velvet Polypore) attacking coastal pines.

Michael Thomas then provided some brief comments on the past history of the PROS Committee, which for its almost entire existence has been known as the PROS Commission, and background on long time efforts to

develop an East Ranch Community Park. Jeff Wilson added that PROS was now actively involved with the County Parks and Recreation Commission, and both he and former PROS Chair and current committee member Steve Kniffen attend the monthly meetings of the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Laura then commented on the need for the County being involved in the cleanup of homeless encampments, including providing assistance financially.

At this point the meeting was adjourned at 10:52 AM.

The next scheduled Cambria Forest Committee is on Friday, April 12th at 10AM via Zoom.

This summary was written and submitted by CCSD Board member and CFC liaison Harry Farmer.