

Cambria Forest Committee October 11th, 2024 meeting summary

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 AM by Chair Crosby Swartz. In attendance were Treasurer Laura Swartz, FFRP Executive Director Kitty Connolly, Greenspace Vice President Donelle Morgan, Rancho Marino Reserve Director Keith Seydel, California Native Plant Society local representative Neil Havlik, CCSD Board Director and PROS Committee Chair Michael Thomas, and CCSD Board Director and Cambria Forest Committee liaison Harry Farmer.

There were no Public or Director comments.

As for approval of the meeting minutes, Chair Swartz recommends reading Director Farmer's September 11th meeting summary in the CCSD October 10th Agenda packet.

Treasurer Swartz reported CFC presently has \$2943.72 in the bank and no outstanding bills. She added that her and Crosby are still updating the Invasive Weed Guide, including working on substantial revisions, typing up different wording, and adding new photos provided by FFRP Ranch head volunteer coordinator Michael Thomas. Thank you Michael! Original author Christine Heinrichs is still participating in the update but has other projects of her own occupying her time. 150 copies will be printed, which Crosby feels should last for quite a while.

Under Organizational Reports, Neil Havlik stated that while he had nothing to report from the Native Plant Society, he spoke about a recent tour of the Covell Ranch taken by the group formerly known as Cambria University Women, now the California Community Scholarship Foundation. As his wife is a member, he was able to tag along. During the tour the thought occurred to him that the Covell Family might be interested in selling part of the property west of Bridge Street to a land conservation organization. The Nature Conservancy currently holds a conservation easement on that part of the ranch. A somewhat involved discussion took place. Greenspace representative Morgan will report on this discussion to their Executive Director.

There was no official report from the recent September Fire Safe Focus Group, though Mr Thomas attended the meeting and briefly provided some information that was discussed.

Laura again expressed her concern regarding burn piles on Rancho Marino, and the possible harm that could be done to young trees such as occurred in the Leimert area. Reserve Director Seydel confirmed that the burning of piles will be done by professionals during the rainy season.

FFRP Executive Director Kitty Connolly began her report by stating that the long anticipated linking Boardwalk would be finished today, and be available to walk on this weekend. Kitty expressed real enthusiasm she would be the first person to walk the Boardwalk this afternoon. The official dedication will be on Saturday, October 26 at 10AM. Reservations are requested. The Forest Health Grant being sought by FFRP and involving various agencies is moving forward, including an MOU that relates to the hopefully cooperative nature of the project.

Donnie Morgan provided an update on Greenspace matters. She stated Executive Director Argano would be meeting with San Simeon State Parks representatives in about 10 days to determine the date for the November tree planting, as well as discussing planting native plant seeds for understory. Donnie speculated that if the site for the trees is a new one that understory plating would be allowed, but if the tree plantings were located where other trees already exist planting understory would likely not be allowed. Needless to say the goal of Greenspace is to create a forest, not a tree farm. Donnie is also happy to report they are working with the California Native Plant Society, and that some of their plants would be put on the Greenspace property at Wilton Drive across from Pocahontas Park where the memorial benches and tables are. Ms Argano will be meeting with someone from the NPS to determine how the project will proceed. Also, someone has donated

native oaks that are being considered for planting, as they're were many more in the past. The Cambria Nursery is selling Monterey Pine seedlings supplied by Greenspace, and sales are going well. Greenspace is also beginning to work on a Strawberry Canyon Master Plan that will be the main focus for 2025, just as the Creekside Reserve was the signature project for 2023-24. Greenspace is also working with the County to get permits to expand the native plant garden at the Reserve, as well as creating a Donor Wall to acknowledge folks who have contributed to Greenspace. Recent communication with Supervisor Bruce Gibson and his staff regarding work required at the entrance to Strawberry Canyon has been quite hopeful in addressing this problem with the County as to who is responsible for repairing and maintaining the culvert. Donnie also reminded us that author, artist, designer and naturalist Obi Kaufman will be giving a presentation on Sunday, October 20th at 5PM at St Paul's Episcopal Church on Eton Road. Reservations are requested, as is a donation of \$10, with snacks and a reception afterward. Finally, the moving figure Greenspace Sam which won the Blue Ribbon in the Pinedorado Parade is presently in the Scarecrow Festival digging and planting 24/7 via solar power at the corner of Main St and Cambria Drive. How cool is this!

Rancho Marino Reserve Director Keith Seydel was happy to report that the forest management/fuel reduction project that began months ago in the interior of Rancho Marino will be finished this week, something for which everyone was grateful.

There were no reports from The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo or the Upper Salinas-Las Tablas Resource Conservation District.

Crosby then referenced the American Forests Article on Reforestation that, while mainly focused on the southern Sierra's, was still applicable to our area regarding replanting, as we of course wish for the number of trees in our area to be increasing rather than not. Funding for projects such as these was briefly mentioned. Crosby also alluded to the severity of fires, such as how low severity fires could actually be beneficial to the forest, while high severity fires could not only do serious harm to the wooded areas, but also be destructive to seeds and topsoil. He mentioned most fires are a combination of low and high severity. There are areas where reforestation is taking place, and the focus is on not cutting down healthy trees. The article also highlights the fact that forests need help from we humans to survive, especially the collecting of seeds for replanting.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:53AM.

The next Cambria Forest Committee meeting is scheduled for Friday, November 15th at 10AM via Zoom.

This summary was written and submitted by CCSO Director and CFC liaison Harry Farmer.