

## **Cambria Forest Committee September 13th meeting summary**

The meeting was called to order at 10:03 AM by Chair Crosby Swartz. Attending the meeting were Treasurer Laura Swartz, Greenspace Executive Director Karin Argano, Friends of the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve Executive Director Kitty Connolly, CCSD Director and Parks, Recreation and Open Space Committee Chair Michael Thomas, and CCSD Director and Forest Committee liaison Harry Farmer.

As for approval of the meeting minutes, Chair Swartz recommends reading Director Farmer's August 16th meeting summary in the September 12, 2024 CCSD Agenda Packet.

Treasurer Swartz had a very encouraging Treasurer's Report. Thanks to a Grant from the Cambria Community Council, as well as two anonymous donations, the new CFC bank balance is \$2943.72.

As for Organization Reports. Chair Swartz began by giving an update on the August meeting of the Cambria Fire Safe Focus Group. Registered Professional Forester Steve Auten reported is in the process of preparing a Project Description Analysis (PSA) for future fire prevention and forest health projects in the north coast area.

FFRP ED Kitty Connolly then provided the latest on the Friends of the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve. First, FFRP's very creative, colorful and humorous Pinedorado Parade entry won the Sweepstakes Award, the top prize of the Parade that was certainly well deserved. Kudos to Brian Morgan and all the involved and committed volunteers. Also, coming up next month will be the long awaited dedication of the Linking Boardwalk Trail on Saturday, October 26th at 10AM. It will be a community event and the public is welcome to attend. A couple of elected officials have been invited, and there will be a few talks. As of now, the celebration will take place at the Bluff Trail entrance to the Boardwalk.

At this point, Laura Swartz brought up a conversation she'd had at the CFSFG meeting with Mr Auten and Upper Salinas-Las Tablas Resource Conservation District Project Manager Spencer Gordon. They are both receptive to having a more environmentally sensitive approach regarding upcoming forest projects, from CCSD owned properties, to the Fiscalini Ranch, and Fern Canyon. Kitty then expressed her gratitude that uniform standards would be used in upcoming projects.

Michael Thomas then commented, beginning with informing us he'd signed up for the Forest Stewardship Workshop Series. Some of the focus is on forest landowners developing their own Forest Management Plan. He then referenced the Forest Treatment Plans he'd read about, and how would these be implemented. Both Kitty and Karin spoke to this, stating that the forest management practices hadn't changed much in 20 years, and in fact a more more environmentally friendly ecological approach was now being taken. Karin expressed her appreciation that while initially Greenspace was going to be one of the individual projects, it was presently being bundled into the now being implemented Coastal Zone Project Specific Analysis. In addition, Karin complimented Steve Auten and Spencer Gordon for their evolving attitude that includes a more forward looking, ever changing approach toward forest health.

Laura then spoke up, expressing her concern regarding burn piles, recalling the disappointment of herself and others as to how burn piles created in the Leimert area in Cambria a number of years ago did harm to standing Monterey Pines, ultimately causing some of them to be destroyed. She hoped this would not be a problem in upcoming projects.

Karin now updated us on Greenspace the Cambria Land Trust. Recently Greenspace led a really nice walk in Strawberry Canyon for various folks from the California Native Plant Society, Also, Kitty and her are excited to soon be taking high school kids on hikes at the Bluff Trail on the Ranch, as well as in Strawberry Canyon. No doubt much fun will be had by everyone! The Greenspace Speaker Series will be featuring Obi Kaufman, a

writer, naturalist, self described “eco philosopher”, on Sunday, October 20th at 5PM at St Paul’s Episcopal Church on Eton Road in Cambria. Also, the November speaker will be Joe Burnett, senior lead biologist at Ventana who will be speaking on the Condor Project. Karin also stated she recently did a site visit with Hailey Leurk and Eric Grinberg from the USLT-RCD for three new planting sites for their Habitat Restoration grant they received from the USLT-RCD. She also announced that FFRP and Greenspace are collaborating on a Bio-Blitz for Pollinators sponsored by National Parks in September. In addition, Karin will be leading Leffingwell High School students to the Creekside Reserve and the Ranch Bluff Trail to collect data to submit to the project. Karin also was pleased to announce that Greenspace received the Blue Ribbon Award for the best non commercial entry in the Pinedorado Parade.

Crosby then provided a brief statement from Rancho Marino Reserve Director Keith Seydel that workers would be returning from firefighting duty next week to finish the treatment work on Randall Dr.

Under New Business, Kitty Connolly provided an update on the Habitat Restoration Project on the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve. A grant has been obtained by the US-LT Resource Conservation District from the Wildlife Conservation Board that will fund the enhancing of pollinator habitat. Presently 1500 plants are being grown at the Santa Barbara Botanical Garden including toyon, coyote bush, and sticky monkey. Plantings will take place south of the Dolphin Bench on the Huntington Trail in Fall of 2025. Kitty added that FFRP has had good luck in the past with plants grown at the Santa Barbara Botanical Garden, and that their assistance in this endeavor has been very much appreciated.

Under Unfinished Business, discussion took place as to updating and reprinting the Invasive Weed Guide. Crosby and Laura informed everyone that a bit more work was being done by the Swartz’s and author Christine Heinrichs, and the goal is that the Weed Guide be as easy as possible to work with once it is sent to ASAP Reprographics for printing.

The meeting was then adjourned at 10:39 AM.

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

This summary has been written and submitted by CCSD Director and CFC liaison Harry Farmer.