

*San Luis Obispo County Community Fire Safe Council, Inc.*

# **Focus Group Formation and Operation Handbook**



**Established 1999  
Incorporated as a 501 (c) 3 Organization 2001**

**Focus Group Coordinator  
Baxter Boyington**

## **Mission Statement**

The San Luis Obispo County Community Fire Safe Council, Inc. is a diverse, collaborative group dedicated to a Fire Safe Environment through education, partnerships, and action.

## **Purpose**

The objective and purpose of the San Luis Obispo County Community Fire Safe Council is to provide education, exchange information and foster fire prevention, and fire safety within the County of San Luis Obispo.

The San Luis Obispo County Community Fire Safe Council, Inc. is a tax-exempt organization chartered under section 501 (c) (3) of the Department of Treasury, Internal Revenue Service.

## **History of the San Luis Obispo County Community Fire Safe Council**

In the early 1990's devastating California wildfires damaged and destroyed scores of homes and other structures in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) areas. California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (hereafter referred to as CAL FIRE) Director Richard Wilson realized, and publicly stated, that the Department could not maintain its level of service unless the State looked at new ways to address the wildland fire problem. In a 1993 report, Director Wilson declared that CAL FIRE must seek out cooperative relationships with the private sector and other governmental agencies. That same year, the multi-disciplined Fire Safe Advisory Council was established under the guidance of CAL FIRE, fire prevention bureau staff member, Bruce Turbeville. Local CAL FIRE units were encouraged to take a leadership role in establishing and supporting local fire safe councils, and today there are over 100 in the State. The Fire Safe Advisory Council was renamed the California Fire Safe Council (CFSC) in 1997 and in 2001, in order to qualify for increased grant assistance, became a private non-profit corporation. The CFSC continues to provide support and grant opportunities to the local councils.

In February 1998, under the direction of San Luis Obispo CAL FIRE Unit Chief Dan Turner, a steering committee consisting of fire prevention bureau staff members Ben Parker, Ben Stewart, and Rob Lewin was formed to develop a concept paper for the formation of a local fire safe council. The concept was to pattern the council after the California Fire Safe Council and to establish a county-wide council which would coordinate smaller focus groups made up of communities within the County. Membership within the council was designed to include a diverse group of the private and public sectors and not be dominated by the fire service. The first public meeting was held on May 1, 1998, where a board of directors was established, with 5<sup>th</sup> District Supervisor, Mike Ryan, elected as president. The first formal board of directors meeting took place on June 16, 1998. Early projects were done with volunteer labor and local

community equipment. Some of the first projects included Cambria pitch canker chipping and Pismo Heights fuel modification. Cambria became the first established focus group in August of 1998, closely followed by Pismo Beach and Atascadero. As of August 2023, there are ten active focus groups and two more in the formation stage. These focus groups range from small, isolated communities to incorporated cities.

Articles of incorporation and by-laws were drafted in late 1999, and the San Luis Obispo County Community Fire Safe Council (SLO FSC) was incorporated as a California Nonprofit Public Benefit Corporation on April 17, 2000. In 2002, private consultant Dave Mathe was retained as the Council's business manager. Prior to that, CAL FIRE staff provided administrative services and managed the grant program. By 1999, there were 20 agencies represented on the Board of Directors. The first grants awarded to the SLO FSC were in the low five-figure range. One example was a 2003 Bureau of Land Management grant for \$17,000. Early project priorities were dooryard chipping and Cambria Monterey pine forest hazard reduction projects.

In 2011, then retired Dan Turner replaced Mathe as Business Manager. Due to increased workload and responsibilities, Turner's position was changed to Executive Director in December 2021. As of August 2023, the SLO FSC manages over 16 million dollars' worth of multi-year grants, all ear-marked to provide the citizens of San Luis Obispo County with increased safety from wildland fires. *Submitted by Dan Dulitz*

## **Organization of the San Luis Obispo County Community Fire Safe Council (SLO FSC)**

The San Luis Obispo Community Fire Safe Council performs its mission by working with other organizations, to apply for, and receive, grants for targeted projects for fire prevention and forest health, which support the Mission Statement.

### **Grants**

SLO FSC is funded exclusively by grants and donations. There is no dedicated funding source. Since formation in 1998, SLO FSC has received and managed more than \$20 million in grant funding to complete projects reducing fire hazard and risk throughout the county. Projects include education projects such as the Fire Safety Education Center at the Mid-State Fairgrounds and neighborhood events. Planning projects include evacuation route plans, Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP), pre-fire operational plans, and countywide hazard and risk plans. Hazardous fire condition reduction projects include projects such as chipping programs, shaded fuel breaks, roadside access/egress clearance, open space hazardous fuel reduction, and ecological restoration projects to return fire to normal interval in areas with fire dependent plants and animals.

The SLO FSC also serves as the fiscal sponsor for neighborhoods and organizations that do not have a not for profit status (501.c.3 tax exemption) required to qualify for certain grants. SLO FSC applies on behalf of the group, manages the grant, and reports to the grantor. Fire Safe Focus Groups often use SLO FSC as their grant coordinator.

## **Profile**

SLO FSC is guided by an Executive Director, Executive Committee, and a Board of Directors that represents a countywide cross section of stakeholders.

### **Executive Director – Dan Turner**

The Executive Director is selected by, and reports to, the Board of Directors. The Executive Director is the general manager of the SLO FSC and is responsible for financial management, grant application and management, project operational oversight, and outreach to Focus Groups, SLO FSC organizational members, and outside groups.

### **Executive Committee**

The Executive Committee consists of the President, First Vice-President, Second Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and one (1) “At Large” member from the Board of Directors elected for the year by the full Board at the annual January meeting. This committee puts into practice the decisions and policies of SLO FSC and acts in an advisory capacity to the Board on issues and long-term planning. The Executive Committee can act on behalf of the entire Board when time is of the essence, and a full Board of Directors meeting is not scheduled in time to consider the matter.

### **Board of Directors**

The Board of Directors is a group of individuals elected to represent various agencies, organizations, associations, and districts throughout San Luis Obispo County. The group establishes and supports the execution of policies, ensuring that SLO FSC is acting in line with its mission. The make-up of the Board is to assure a countywide cross section of the fire safety stakeholders. Certain seats on the Board are designated to an organization, and that organization selects their representative, which is affirmed by the SLO FSC Board of Directors at the annual January meeting. There are some Board seats dedicated to “citizens at large” that do not represent a designated organization but have an important role in fire safety. Some Focus Groups have dedicated seats on the SLO FSC Board, and some do not.

## **Ex-Officio Members**

Some regular attendees of the SLO FSC are designated as ex-officio, or non-voting members. This ex-officio status may be temporary, or long term based on the organization's preference; some may have a conflict of interest related to voting but wish to contribute to the goals and objectives.

## **SLO FSC Staff**

There are individuals that serve as paid and unpaid staff to the SLO FSC. Their role is often advisory through their expertise; or serve in a coordinating role in implementing projects. CAL FIRE provides several staff to support the SLO FSC, recording secretary, staff for project planning, environmental review, and outreach.

## **Focus Groups**

Focus Groups are local community members, which represent geographic areas, working with the SLO FSC, to focus on identifying community needs, community outreach, contacts, and project management.

Focus Groups serve as a vital component of the SLO FSC model. The SLO FSC Board serves a strategic countywide role, and the focus groups connect the countywide programs to grassroots action. The focus groups also assist the SLO FSC in achieving goals and objectives.

The groups may be a short term, ad hoc group, focused on a specific project, or stand as permanent organizations, which coordinate community wide efforts. Focus groups serve as agents of the SLO FSC for approved activities and projects. Some focus groups that are long standing may have a seat on the SLO FSC Board of Directors.

## **SLO FSC Project Supervisors**

These individuals are contractors, hired by SLO FSC, and interface working in the field, with the other contractors doing the work. They interact and communicate with Focus Groups, and landowners, as work is being performed. Project Supervisors also identify and propose projects to SLO FSC based on focus group and field interactions.

## **Contractors**

All work performed by the SLO FSC is executed by contractors. The SLO FSC does not have any employees, does not have offices, and does not own any equipment. This model keeps our overhead very low and allows for maximizing grant funds to deliverables.

## **Meetings**

The full SLO FSC Board of Directors meetings are held on the third Wednesday of the odd numbered months (1-Jan; 3-Mar; 5-May; 7-July; 9-Sept; and 11-Nov). The Executive Committee meets on the third Wednesday of the even numbered months (2-Feb; 4-April; 6-June; 8-Aug; 10-Oct; and 12-Dec). The public is welcome to attend Board meetings. Board members can also attend Executive Committee meetings.

## **Firewise Communities**

Firewise Communities is a formal designation and recognition from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) in coordination with CAL FIRE and US Forest Service. The designation recognizes the communities' awareness of the fire problem and their actions to reduce the hazard and risk through education, outreach, and action. Communities must meet certain criteria to achieve Firewise Community designation.

## **Fire Safe Focus Group (FSFG) Formation and Operations**

### **Common Goals among Fire Safe Focus Groups:**

1. Serve as the grassroots organization to identify fire hazards/risks, and solutions to make their community safer.
2. Public education and outreach.
3. Identifying, and starting fire-safe practices, landscaping, and defensible space around homes and/or businesses.
4. Identifying, and sharing fire-safe construction to reduce fire ember's ability to enter the inside of a building or ignite the building interior or exterior.
5. Holding neighborhood meetings to promote wildland fire safety preparedness.
6. Coordinating, and delivering Fire Safe events such as chipping and roadside clearance, to reduce accumulated dead wildland fuels, and enhance defensible space around structures.
7. Increase awareness and public education regarding evacuation safety routes for families and businesses.
8. Coordinate community-wide fire safety townhalls and other events.

### **The Importance of Regularly Scheduled Meetings:**

Fire Safe Focus Groups (FSFG) become, and stay active by regularly, and continually, engaging with their constituents via emails, meetings, projects, and events.

As one person said, ***“In the effort to connect our area and protect our neighbors against wildfire, we must be smarter, and more persistent than wildfire.”***

Holding regularly scheduled meetings, with agendas, is important for sustaining active groups. Some FSFGs meet monthly, every other month, or quarterly. One FSFG is planning an annual educational event near the date of a recent large fire. These events help keep Fire Prevention “Top of Mind” for residents and create opportunities to engage personally with your neighbors. Meetings are an opportunity for committee heads to share and report progress in their area of responsibility. They can receive feedback, and comments from the group, which builds community rapport, trust, and communication which are critical in any emergency. Building those connections is a major function of FSFGs. FSFGs often include (or know) the key individuals in a community to “get things done” which makes the projects successful.

## **Focus Group Formation**

Members of the public are encouraged to join together in helping their community acquire the education, resources and tools needed to be better prepared for wildfire. A cross section of the community, including local fire agency representatives, has proven to be a highly successful model for FSFGs.

If you are interested in forming a Fire Safe Focus Group, please send an introductory letter explaining your objectives to the SLO FSC at [firesafeslo@gmail.com](mailto:firesafeslo@gmail.com). Your letter will be shared with our Executive Committee, and you will be invited to a Board of Directors meeting to share your community vision. The Board members will vote on recognizing you as an official San Luis Obispo County Fire Safe Council Fire Safe Focus Group and provide support to your new organization.

## **Focus Group Operations**

We asked our Focus Groups to share about their operations in hopes their answers would provide a toolbox for others. Listed below are the responses we received:

### **City of Atascadero**

The Atascadero Focus Group is a part of Atascadero Fire and Emergency Services, headed by Dave Van Son, Battalion Chief.

“We write grants on behalf of the City of Atascadero and conduct hazard reduction programs such as chipping, evacuation planning, defensible space clearance, and community outreach.”

### **Avila Valley**

(Avila Beach, Avila Valley, See Canyon, Barron Canyon, Bassi Ranch, San Luis Bay Estates and Squire Canyon)

**How are you organized? Committees and functions?**

We were organized at the suggestion of Dan Turner and Battalion Chief Paul Lee. We are basically a consolidation of residential groups in our area that had been working separately over the years on grant writing. One committee to have a big picture view of the Avila Valley area rather than individual neighborhoods.

**What activities do you undertake on behalf of your constituents?**

We write grant requests and assist in identifying projects, coordinating with landowners and homeowner associations.

**How do you communicate with your constituents?**

Each member of the focus group handles communication within their residential area.

**What projects are your group considering for grant proposals now?**

We submitted a grant proposal in October 2022 for vegetation management, evacuation route communication, etc. Waiting to hear on that one before we attempt any additional ones. With assistance from SLO FSC and CAL FIRE, identified, obtained county permits, and installed Temporary Refuge Areas (TRA) along See Canyon Road to protect people when evacuation routes are cut off.

**Do you do fund raising?** No.

**Cambria**

(Cambria Community Services District and North Coast area)

**How are you organized? Committees and functions?**

The group meets, as a whole, once a month. We have a moderator that leads the discussion and keeps the agenda. The moderator also sends out emails to the entire list of members (the email list has 105 addressees, and about 90 are Cambrians or North Coast, the remainder ex-officio i.e., CAL FIRE and SLO FSC members). There is a secretary who keeps the minutes and attendance records. We have a designated Firewise Coordinator who handles our yearly application.

**What activities do you undertake on behalf of your constituents?**

Activities and events will depend on community needs and FSFG organizational strength. Examples of activities are:

FSFG Meetings: Meetings can be held monthly, quarterly or on an as needed basis.

Planning of activities and providing information to the local leaders.

Educational Events: These are community-wide events held in a suitable venue. Held in the evening or on the weekend to maximize participation. Guest speakers are encouraged to draw more people (examples are Cal Poly professors, Insurance Commissioner's office, etc.). Goal is to educate the community on safety and preparedness – what they can do.



Neighborhood Coffees: The same objectives as the larger events but with a group of neighbors (10-15 people). Getting a sponsor to hold the meeting in their home/outdoor space is key. More informal distribution of information including Q & A.

Community Chipping: These are held in spring or summer to remind people to clean up their defensible space. These can entail the entire community or a particular area. Los Osos FSFG has had success with encouraging competition in areas to see who can get the most chipping done. Local tree trimming contractors are hired to chip the material left curbside by the residents. The SLO FSC will generally fund these efforts to reduce the fire fuel in the community.

Firewise Communities: The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) awards certificates to communities who show support for fire prevention activities in the community. Many insurance companies offer discounts to residents of Firewise certified communities. Application information is found here [NFPA – Firewise USA®](https://www.nfpa.com/firewise-usa)

**Communication:** Communication with the community is key to the success of the group. These are some of the opportunities besides the activities discussed above.

- **Facebook:** Cambria FSFG has a page, but it was not visited much so it is dormant
- **Social Media:** This is done by members to advertise our events
- **Email lists:** Yes, primary source of getting information out to members  
FSC Website: Will be used more in the future to post minutes, agendas, and other material
- **Slick Text App:** Not presently used
- **Brochures and handouts:** Yes, to advertise our events
- **Government Meetings:** Speak during Public Comment at Cambria CSD meetings on occasion. Attend the monthly meeting of the North Coast Advisory Committee and give a report of activities.

### **Do you do fund raising? How is it managed?**

We currently have no fund-raising activities.

### **Huasna**

(Huasna Road and Huasna Townsite, east of Arroyo Grande)

### **How are you organized? Committees and functions?**

We are a young focus group (recognized January 2023) and are organized with a board, including the heads of the subcommittees and a few others. Approximately 15 people in total are on the board. Subcommittees include:

- a. Communications
- b. Mapping
- c. Ranch directory
- d. Chipping
- e. Animal protection

- f. Town Hall Meeting coordination

**What activities do you undertake on behalf of your constituents?**

- a. Coordinate risk reduction activities, such as chipping and brush clearing
- b. Communications, including developing a Ranch Directory, regular updates to the community via email and in person meetings, offering HAM radio training
- c. Animal protection awareness and planning (HEET)
- d. Coordinate with the community, Cal Poly, Fire Safe and CAL FIRE on mapping activities

**How do you communicate with your constituents?**

Primarily via email, and roughly quarterly in person meetings.

**What projects are your group considering for grant proposals now?**

We are hoping for assistance with fuel mitigation along the following roads:

- Huasna River Road and Deer Creek (out by Townsite)
- Bobcat Lane (Townsite)
- All along Huasna Road
- We also need road work along Huasna Road, to fix soil erosion problems, areas where there is no shoulder, areas with cliffs or sink holes on the edge of Huasna Road and adding turnouts along the road every couple miles.

**Do you do fundraising? How is it managed?**

We don't currently fundraise, but this could change in the future.

**Lake Nacimiento**

**How are you organized? Committees and functions?**

The Lake Nacimiento Focus Group covers a geographical area over 12 miles long, and over 8 miles wide all-around Lake Nacimiento. It encompasses:

- Oak Shores (some 500 residents),
- Heritage Ranch (some 2500 residents),
- Running Deer Ranch (about 100 property owners),
- Tri Counties (60 member/owners),
- Cal Shasta Club (120 members/owners),
- Rancho Del Lago (21 owners),
- South Shore Village Club (40 member/owners),
- About 65 private property owners.

Every community, save private property owners, have their own rules and management. It was decided by others that instead of each community managing their own Fire Safe Focus Group, there would be a single source. Our group includes one representative from each community. We have no committees.

**How do you communicate with your constituents?**

Prior to Covid, we met monthly or bi-monthly at Fire Station 33 in Heritage Ranch. The group has not met in person in over 2 years. Communication is by email or text. All communities are contacted once a month and asked if they need assistance and/or have any projects. They are reminded of upcoming FSC meetings and invited to attend.

**What activities do you undertake on behalf of your constituents?**

We apply for project grants, and all our requests have been approved so far.

**What projects are your group considering for grant proposals now?**

There are other projects in our area that are planned and managed by CAL FIRE, usually controlled burns. We do have one large project that was approved a couple of years ago, that is yet to be undertaken. Our group is very active with the chipping program and does an excellent job as a Firewise Community. All communities perform required fuel reduction requirements and go far beyond. On the South side, we have over 30 miles of roads that we treat with herbicide up to 20' on each side for fuel reduction. The North side has far more roads that they treat equally.

**Do you do fund raising? How is it managed?**

We do not do any fund raising.

**Los Osos**

The Los Osos Focus Group is currently reforming under new leadership.

**City of Paso Robles Fire and Emergency Services****How are you organized? Committees and functions?**

The City of Paso Robles Focus Group is organized and represented by the Fire Department. Currently, Battalion Chief Scott Hallett represents the group as a Board Member on SLO FSC. We currently have no community members active on the focus group.

**What activities do you undertake on behalf of your constituents?**

The Fire Department has a Community Risk Reduction division that has assumed the role of activities such as Wildland Fire Preparedness workshops (public education) and is currently exploring a Firewise Community designation for the west side of the city. Additionally, the city has an annual weed abatement / community reduction inspection and enforcement program. The focus of the projects and grant funding have been within the Salinas Riverbed. Currently, Battalion Chief Jay Enns is the project lead within the riverbed. He has been working with the Water Resource Board, Fish and Wildlife, and a local biology firm in approving a long-term mitigation plan within the riverbed and annual work plans. We have been successful in this endeavor. The project is funded in large part through a SLO FSC grant. Additionally, we identified a priority project in Fern

Canyon. This project was within the SRA but has a direct fire threat to the community of Paso Robles. SLO FSC grant funding and collaboration with CAL FIRE was utilized to complete the project.

**How do you communicate with your constituents?**

We primarily communicate with constituents through public press releases, City web pages, public workshops, and social media. We continue to seek grant funding for the Salinas Riverbed as this will be an ongoing program and fire problem. We also are exploring grant funding to purchase a tracked chipper to assist with the riverbed project. Currently our primary fuel treatment method in the riverbed is with livestock grazing and hand tools.

**Do you do fund raising? How is it managed?**

Paso Robles Focus Group does not do any fundraising.

**Ranchita Estates**

**How are you organized? Committees and functions?**

Ranchita Estates is an incorporated homeowner's association which is managed by a five-member Board of Directors. Our management company is The Management Trust in San Luis Obispo. We have a Fire Safety Committee which consists of five residents and Martin Scott is the chairperson.

**What activities do you undertake on behalf of your constituents?**

The California Conservation Corps (CCC) completes our annual chipping event in April each year. Starting in November the year before, Ranchita Estates is put on the CCC's calendar. Emails are sent out to the community for residents that are interested. Normally our April chipping event lasts 3-4 days. Ranchita Estates has a contractual agreement with CAL FIRE Cuesta Camp to work on hazardous fuel reduction (HFR) projects within the community. Martin Scott coordinates the HFR projects. This is added to the chipping email that is sent out to the community from The Management Company and Martin Scott. Information provided is Firewise/NFPA/Fire Safe Council information, hazardous fuel reduction projects and annual chipping updates. Pre-Attack plans and maps are addressed at the annual homeowners' association meeting. Presently CAL FIRE is working on a Vegetation Management Program (VMP) for Lake Lopez and Ranchita Estates control burn project. Over the last 16 years, we have received numerous grants from the Fire Safe Council and PG&E. Presently, Ranchita Estates is not applying for any grants.

**How do you communicate with your constituents?**

- Email from the Management Company
- Email from the HOA Board of Directors
- HOA Board of Directors meeting summary sent to all residents

- Email from the Fire Committee

**Do you do fund raising? How is it managed?**

Ranchita Estates HOA has a fire prevention fund. All the residents voted for a monthly donation to the fund many years ago. The Board of Directors manages the funds that are spent on numerous hazardous fuel reduction projects, fuel break dozer projects and reimbursement for hand crew work on hazardous fuel reduction projects.

**Santa Rita**

(Santa Rita Ranchos, Santa Rita Canyon, Sunrise Ridge)

**How are you organized? Committees and functions?**

We are a very informal group of several property owner associations and individual households bordering Santa Rita Road in Templeton. We communicate mostly through emails and a few of us get together on an informal basis at local restaurants to discuss a range of topics, including our Fire Focus Group.

**What activities do you undertake on behalf of your constituents?**

We have had great success working with Dan Turner to have local brush cleared from our roads and most summers we do a brush chipping day. We have had success in the past piggy-backing requests for funds with other larger Fire Safe Focus Groups in the area. When resources are available from other projects, we make certain we can act quickly and put work crews and equipment to work for our group. Our main concern going forward is improvement of our evacuation routes. Santa Rita Road is single lane in one area (and in several areas after recent rains). We would like to see our main evacuation route of Santa Rita Road be able to handle incoming fire equipment and evacuating residents without the single lane bottleneck.

**How do you communicate with your constituents?**

Mostly email.

**Do you do fund raising? How is it managed?**

We do not do any fund raising.

**Toro Creek**

(Toro Creek Road north of Highway 41)

**How are you organized? Committees and functions?**

We are a small group of about 90 residences, and our organization is informal. One person functions as a coordinator, and four other members are an ad hoc leadership roundtable. A meeting for all members is held on alternating months, and the leadership roundtable meets on the other months. Individuals take on the role of "Point Person" to address specific tasks or projects.

**What activities do you undertake on behalf of your constituents?**

- We conduct an annual chipping event for neighbors to bring their brush to the roadside to be chipped.
- We have participated in a Fuel Reduction project that created a shaded fuel break along the length of Toro Creek Road, on both public and private property.
- Working with the SLO FSC we are negotiating a second emergency evacuation, and ingress route across private property. SLO FSC hand crews will clear brush and fallen trees.
- We created and installed three, 18 x 25 inch, signs reading “CAUTION High Fire Danger”.

**What projects are your group considering for grant proposals now?**

- Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) by Cal Poly Wildfire Urban Interface (WUI) students.
- Pre-Planning map update
- Office of Emergency Services (OES)- Genasys Protect Evacuation Zones
- Evacuation modeling
- PhosChek application on Toro Creek Road
- Public education event at Station 14, with SIM Table demonstration.

**How do you communicate with your constituents?**

- Email notifications are the primary communication.
- We maintain an *Emergency Contact List* with names, addresses, phone, and email, which is updated at least twice a year.
- We hold regular meetings every other month at Morro-Toro Station 14.

**Do you do fund raising? How is it managed?**

We do not do any fund raising.

**Focus Group Discussion Topics**

These subjects that have been discussed at Focus Group meetings may be useful topics for discussion in your group.

**How do Focus Groups suggest local projects, and request participation in grants?**

Focus Groups are encouraged to identify and suggest fire prevention, fuel reduction, and forest health, projects in their area. These project suggestions should be emailed to Dan Turner, Executive Director, at [firesafeslo1@gmail.com](mailto:firesafeslo1@gmail.com).

**Ways to Communicate with neighborhood constituents**

- Email list- Ongoing list maintenance

- Emergency Contact lists, Phone Tree (Update twice annually)
- Slick Text-App (See below)
- Neighbor hosted in-home coffees
- Townhalls, Community Fire Safety events
- [www.slofsc.org](http://www.slofsc.org)

### **Partnering with other organizations**

- CAL FIRE- Interactions at all levels. PIO contact.
- CSD Management
- Sheriff
- County Supervisor and their Legislative Assistant

Focus Groups can work with the Focus Group Coordinator to make the needed connections.

## **Useful Programs and Apps**

### **Ag Pass Program**

The County of San Luis Obispo offers a program for commercial farmers and ranchers to access their property during a catastrophic event if safe. The purpose of creating a county-based "Ag Pass" program is to provide a uniform way to identify vetted commercial farm and ranch owner-operators and their employees to firefighting personnel, California Highway Patrol officers, Sheriff's deputies and other law enforcement officers, and other emergency personnel. Possession of an Ag Pass during a flood, storm, fire, earthquake, or other disaster, potentially allows the agriculturalist limited emergency access to areas that may otherwise be restricted to the public, in order to:

1. Protect or care for agricultural assets (such as irrigating crops or feeding, watering, and transporting livestock) and/or
2. Provide support information to emergency personnel (such as identifying access roads and water points)

For more in depth information about the program, eligibility requirements and an application, please see: <https://www.slocounty.ca.gov/Departments/Agriculture-Weights-and-Measures/Services/Ag-Pass.aspx>

### **Genasys Protect App**

When an evacuation is warned or ordered, the Genasys Protect App will provide alerts, shelter-in-place, or evacuation details for your location. The App is a free download, there is a FAQ section, and it is easy to use. It follows your location, and a second location you want to monitor, like your home. The information is provided by the SLO County OES and is tied to the

Reverse 911 system. Everyone is encouraged to download the app and register for Reverse 911. <https://www.prepareslo.org>

### **PulsePoint App**

Receive real time notifications of fire and other emergencies. Important if you are CPR trained. You can select which agencies to follow and listen to radio traffic. You might consider informing your neighbors about the app and suggesting settings appropriate for your area.

### **FlightRadar24 App**

Allows you to identify what aircraft are flying in an area and track their flight path. You can see where the spotter aircraft is circling to know the location of a fire, and watch the air tanker, and helicopter activity. Helpful while listening to the spotter on your scanner, to hear how they are directing the attacks. You can monitor air speed and altitude to see helicopter water scoops and drops.

### **SIM Table Demonstrations**

The SIM Table is fairly new technology, and we are doing experimentation and training to improve the educational value for the public.

Requests for demonstrations can be made through the Fire Safe Council at: [FireSafeSLO@gmail.com](mailto:FireSafeSLO@gmail.com) Please cc myself on the e-mail, Focus Group Coordinator, Baxter Boyington, [baxter.toro@gmail.com](mailto:baxter.toro@gmail.com) and [njherr@sbcglobal.net](mailto:njherr@sbcglobal.net) .

Requirement for the SIM Table: A room without direct sunlight. It does not have to be “movie theatre dark,” but direct sunlight through windows tends to wash out the picture on the screen. Depending on the size of the audience, if there are less than 8-10 people, then it is easiest to stand around the table. Any more than that is too crowded and is best viewed on a screen through a Power Point projector.

There are prepared demonstrations in the software that highlight some large incidents in the Western Region of the U.S., but the unique thing about the SIM Table is that scenarios can be built in to cover specific geographic areas of interest, so the audience will see areas they are familiar with, and the fire behavior that can be expected.

Currently, the best utilization for the SIM Table is to show the potential for fires in a given area. We can get close to demonstrating recent fires. Variables such as what types of equipment and aircraft are available, and response times all factor into the eventual outcome, and we may not have complete data about the fire, for a full recreation. *Nate Herring, SIM Table Demonstrator provided this information.*

Video demonstration of SIM Table <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W-Pn-aV5DtE>



## Signage

SLO FSC has donated the framing and signs with a variety of messages like this (see below) for placement in well-travelled areas throughout the County. Many of the focus groups have installed these in their communities.



To continually inform residents, and visitors, of the extreme high fire danger in rural areas, some Focus Groups have created, and installed 18" x 24" signs reading "Caution High Fire Danger".



## HEET (Horse Emergency Evacuation Team)

The group works with the Sheriff and CAL FIRE to evacuate horses, and other animals, during an emergency. Part of their training is having a Ham radio license. The North County

coordinator is Kathe Hustace [hustacek@gmail.com](mailto:hustacek@gmail.com), 805-459-6436. South county contact. John Henry [jbh1989@gmail.com](mailto:jbh1989@gmail.com), 805-478-3297. Website: <http://www.sloheet.net/>

### **Slick Text App**

This is a commercial marketing app that is being used by the Lake Nacimiento Focus Group to inform and alert their large neighbor groups. It is a paid for service. Three of the FG leaders can activate the system. It may serve a need to quickly reach a large number of neighbors, instead of a phone tree. <https://www.slicktext.com>

### **Wildfire Alert Cameras**

This is a system of mountain top cameras that can be used to view areas and fire activity. With a little experimentation you can locate cameras and understand how they operate. Some are more active than others; it may have to do with fire activity. <https://alertca.live/>

### **Scanners**

During a fire it is beneficial, and comforting, to be able to listen to the communications of firefighting agencies on a scanner. Your Communications Committee may consider providing information about how to use a scanner, and the useful frequencies to program on it. This can provide an additional level of communication. Links to “10-Code” lists are helpful. There are also scanner apps for phones.

The PulsePoint App allows you to listen to SLO County Fire Dispatch for incidents.

### **Two-way Radio use**

Some Focus Groups are investigating Ham, and two-way radio training use to enhance communications during a fire. HEET uses Ham radio communication when coordinating during an event.

### **Scholarships**

Our scholarship program was established in 2020 and provides financial assistance (\$500 - \$2,500) to undergraduate fire students and funding for student conferences and national meeting opportunities. Highest consideration will be given to students who demonstrate strong educational motivation and group leadership skills through their school, work, and volunteer activities. If you know someone who has educational and career interests in Fire Service, Fire Science or Natural Resource Management, please encourage them to check out our website for more information. <https://firesafeslo.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/2023-FSC-Scholarship-Application.pdf>

## APPENDIX

### **SLO FSC Contact Info**

**Website:** [www.fscslo.org](http://www.fscslo.org)

**Executive Director:** Dan Turner  
[firesafeslo@gmail.com](mailto:firesafeslo@gmail.com)  
805-458-3513  
Mailing Address:  
SLO FSC  
P.O. Box 5305  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93403

**SLO FSC Webmaster:** Greg Alex  
[greg@firesafeslo.org](mailto:greg@firesafeslo.org)

**SLO County Fire Public Information Officer (PIO):**  
Toni Davis  
[toni.davis@fire.ca.gov](mailto:toni.davis@fire.ca.gov)

**Focus Group Coordinator:**  
Baxter Boyington  
[baxter.toro@gmail.com](mailto:baxter.toro@gmail.com)  
805-550-2904

CAL FIRE / SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY FIRE



UNIT CHIEF C3400 / OWENS	DEPUTY CHIEF C3401 / TAYLOR (OPERATIONS, DC'S)	ADMIN OFFICER D3402 / VEYNA (DIVISION 2)	COASTAL DIVISION CHIEF D3403 / SALAS (DIVISION 3)	INLAND DIVISION CHIEF D3404 / VACANT (DIVISION 4)	NORTH DIVISION CHIEF D3405 / SWANSON (DIVISION 5)	VENTURA/S.B. DIVISION CHIEF D3407 / SHALHOOB (DIVISION 7)
DEPUTY CHIEF	COASTAL	ADMIN	NORTH COAST	(INLAND) PASO ROBLES	CNA-NACIMIENTO	VENTURA
C3401 / TAYLOR	D3403 / SALAS	FINANCE	BATTALION 1	BATTALION 3	B3407 / ERMIGARAT	B3418 / BRANT
AO	INLAND	HUMAN RESOURCES	PAUL PROVENCE - BC	TRAVIS CRAIG - BC	PASO AIR BASE	CAMARILLO
D3402 / VEYNA	D3404 / VACANT	FLEET	STATION 10 - CAMBRIA	STATION 30 - PASO ROBLES	B8 / B3408 / TULLY	B3417 / DAVIS
	NACIMIENTO	PLANNING/FIRE MARSHALL	STATION 15 - LOS OSOS	STATION 33 - HERITAGE RANCH	FUELS CREW	CAMARILLO
	D3405 / SWANSON	LAW ENFORCEMENT	STATION 16 - CAYUCOS	STATION 34 - OAK SHORES (VOLUNTEER)	B3406 / BOURGAULT	B3416 / ORNELAS
	VENTURA FIRE CAMP	PREVENTION	SOUTH COAST	STATION 35 - LAS TABLAS	SCHEDULING	
	D3407 / SHALHOOB	RSC MNGMT	BATTALION 2	INLAND (PLAINS)	HFEOS	
	EMERGENCY COMMAND CENTER		CHAD FLEMING - BC	BATTALION 4	DOZERS	
	B3409 / FOWLER		STATION 20 - NIPOMO	STEVE MARTIN - BC		
	TRAINING		STATION 21 - SLO AIRPORT	STATION 40 - PARKHILL		
	B3405 / RINEHART		STATION 22 - NIPOMO MESA	STATION 41 - LA PANZA		
	EMS		STATION 23 - NORTH SLO	STATION 42 - CARRIZO PLAIN		
	B3436 / JENKINS		MID COAST	INLAND (ESTRELLA)		
			BATTALION 6	BATTALION 5		
			PAUL LEE - BC	JOSH HEINBACH - BC		
			STATION 62 - AVILA VALLEY	STATION 50 - CRESTON		
			STATION 63 - SHELL BEACH	STATION 51 - SHANDON		
			STATION 64 - PISMO BEACH	STATION 52 - MERIDIAN		
			TORO FIRE CENTER			
			NATE HAMM - BC			
			TORO FIRE CENTER			
			VACANT			
			CUESTA			
			D3 / 3403 / SALAS			



## Board of Directors 2023

Name	Stakeholder Group	Term Expires
1. Debbie Arnold	County Board of Supervisors	1/2025
2. Jim Sasules	1 <sup>st</sup> Supervisorial District	1/2025
3. Bob Neumann	2 <sup>nd</sup> Supervisorial District	1/2024
4. Chris Slate	3 <sup>rd</sup> Supervisorial District	1/2024
5. VACANT	4 <sup>th</sup> Supervisorial District	1/2024
6. Dan Dulitz	5 <sup>th</sup> Supervisorial District	1/2024
7. Karl Tupper	Air Pollution Control District	1/2025
8. David Van Son	Atascadero FD Focus Group	1/2025
9. Turko Semmes	Building Industry	1/2024
10. John Owens	CAL FIRE / SLO County Fire	1/2025
11. Chris Dicus	Cal Poly State University	1/2025
12. David Pierson	Cambria Focus Group	1/2024
13. Bill Cochrane	Cattleman's Association	1/2025
14. Hayley Barnes	Citizen at Large	1/2025
15. Scott Johnson	Citizen at Large	1/2024
16. Jeff Jones	Citizen at Large	1/2024
17. Chad Pankey	Citizen at Large	1/2024
18. Ed Waage	Citizen at Large	1/2024
19. James Blattler	City of San Luis Obispo	1/2024
20. Tom Peterson	County Fire Chiefs Association	1/2025
21. Matt Mohle	County Parks	1/2025
22. VACANT	ECO SLO	1/2025
23. Dan Ponti	Farm Bureau	1/2025
24. Dena Paschke	Fire Prevention Officers Association	1/2025
25. Stacy Korsgaden	Insurance Industry	1/2024
26. Russ Johnson	Lake Nacimiento Focus Group	1/2024
27. Jose Torres	Los Osos Focus Group	1/2025
28. Scott Hallett	Paso Robles Focus Group	1/2024
29. David Perry	PG&E	1/2024
30. Martin Scott	Ranchita Estates Focus Group	1/2025
31. Skip Dyke	Range Improvement Association	1/2025
32. Royce Larsen	UC Cooperative Extension	1/2024
33. Devin Best	Upper Salinas-Las Tablas RCD	1/2025

# **Officers and Executive Committee Members 2023**

**Debbie Arnold, President**

**Dan Dulitz, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President**

**Ed Waage, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President**

**Stacy Korsgaden, Secretary**

**Bob Neumann, Treasurer**

**Royce Larsen, Director at Large**



## Ex-Officio Members and Focus Groups

EX-OFFICIO and ALTERNATE MEMBERS		REPRESENTING
1.	Loree McRoberts	CAL FIRE / County Fire - Recording Secretary
2.	David Erickson	CAL FIRE / Forester
3.	Luke Bourgault	CAL FIRE / County Fire Battalion Chief – Fuels Crew
4.	Brandon Sanderson	CAL FIRE / Environmental Scientist
5.	Jason Potts	CAL FIRE / County Fire – Pre Fire Eng
6.	Jon Gee	CAL FIRE / County Fire Forestry Asst II
7.	Toni Davis	CAL FIRE / SLU Public Information Officer
8.	Scotty Jalbert	County of SLO / OES
9.	Kevin Hurt	CA Parks & Rec
10.	Mike Anderson	CCC
11.	Peter Stephenson	Las Padres National Forest – Fuels Battalion Chief
12.	Rudy Uribe	Las Padres National Forest
13.	Spencer Gordon	Alternate - Upper Salinas-Las Tablas RCD
14.	Hallie Richard	Alternate – Citizen at Large (San Luis Coastal RCD)
15.	Ruben Brand	Alternate – PG&E
16.	Rodger Maggio	Alternate – City of San Luis Obispo
17.	Brent Burchett	Alternate – Farm Bureau
18.	Tricia Atkins	Alternate – Air Pollution Control District
19.	Brandon Roberts	Alternate - Atascadero FD Focus Group
20.	Tom Swanson	Alternate – CAL FIRE / SLO County Fire
<b>FOCUS GROUPS AND REPRESENTATIVES</b>		
Toro Creek – Baxter Boyington		
Lake Nacimiento – Russ Johnson		
Ranchita Estates – Martin Scott		
Paso Robles Fire and Emergency Services – Scott Hallett		
Atascadero Fire Department – David Van Son		
San Luis Obispo Fire Department – James Blattler		
Cambria – David Pierson		
Los Osos – Tom Wright		
Santa Rita Creek – Ed Lyszczyk		
Huasna Valley – John Eaton / Kathryn Loomis		
Avila Valley – Jim Hartig		



## FIREWISE COMMUNITIES

Cabrillo Estates
Cambria
Heritage Ranch
Lake Nacimiento Southside Communities
Las Ventanas in Arroyo Grande
Oak Shores
Ranchita Estates near Lopez Lake
San Luis Bay Estates
Varian Ranch HOA

## SLO FSC STAFF

STAFF MEMBER	DUTIES
Dan Turner	Executive Director
Loree McRoberts	Assistant Business Manager
Dane Mumford	SLO FSC Project Coordinator
Jim Neumann	SLO FSC Project Coordinator
Ted Mathiesen	SLO FSC Project Coordinator
Jeff Smith	SLO FSC Project Coordinator
Felix Camacho	SLO FSC Project Coordinator
Steve Bitto	SLO FSC Project Coordinator
Doug Forrest	SLO FSC Project Coordinator
Jeff Downing	SLO FSC Project Coordinator
Nate Herring	SLO FSC Project Coordinator
Maurica Anderson	SLO FSC Project Coordinator
Greg Alex	SLO FSC Webmaster
Alan Peters	SLO FSC Registered Professional Forester
Kevin Cooper	SLO FSC Biologist



# SLO FSC Focus Group Representatives

<u>Name</u>	<u>E-mail</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Jim Hartig	runhartig@gmail.com	Avila Valley Focus Group	
David Pierson	david.pierson.usna@gmail.com	Cambria Fire Safe Focus Group	Board Member
Brandon Roberts	broberts@atascadero.org	City of Atascadero Fire	Board Member - Alternate
David Van Son	dvanson@atascadero.org	City of Atascadero Fire	Board Member
Scott Hallett	shallett@prcity.com	City of Paso Robles Fire and Emergency Services	Board Member
James Blattler	jblattle@slocity.org	City of San Luis Obispo Fire	Board Member
Rodger Maggio	rmaggio@slocity.org	City of San Luis Obispo Fire	Board Member - Alternate
John Eaton	JEaton@eatonassoc.com	Huasna Focus Group	
Kathryn Loomis	kathrynloomis2@gmail.com	Huasna Focus Group	
Russ Johnson	ranchodellago@aol.com	Lake Nacimiento Focus Group	Board Member
Jose Torres	jose.torres@stokedfire.net	Los Osos Focus Group	Board Member
Martin Scott	mlscott2003@outlook.com	Ranchita Focus Group	Board Member
Ed Lysczek	edlysek@me.com	Santa Rita Focus Group	
Baxter Boyington	baxter.toro@gmail.com	Toro Creek Focus Group	

# San Luis Obispo County Community Fire Safe Council

## Member Listing

2023



Member	Phone (805)	Mailing Address	E-mail
Arnold, Debbie	781-4339	1055 Monterey Street Room D430, SLO 93408	<a href="mailto:darnold@co.slo.ca.us">darnold@co.slo.ca.us</a>
Barnes, Hayley	909-8315	1203 Main Street, Suite B Morro Bay 93442	<a href="mailto:hbarnes@coastalrfd.org">hbarnes@coastalrfd.org</a>
Best, Devin	460-7272 x5	9481 El Camino Real, Atascadero 93422	<a href="mailto:devin@us-ltrcd.org">devin@us-ltrcd.org</a>
Blattler, James	440-7448	2160 Santa Barbara Avenue, SLO 93401	<a href="mailto:jblattler@slocity.org">jblattler@slocity.org</a>
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Brand, Reuben	754-4191	8823 Arcade Rd, Atascadero 93422	<a href="mailto:Reuben.brand@pge.com">Reuben.brand@pge.com</a>
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Van Son, David	470-3300	6500 Palma, Atascadero 93422	<a href="mailto:dvanson@atascadero.org">dvanson@atascadero.org</a>
Waage, Ed	550-3345	760 Mattie Rd, Pismo Beach 93449	<a href="mailto:ewaage@pismo-beach.org">ewaage@pismo-beach.org</a>



# 2023

## San Luis Obispo County Community Fire Safe Council, Inc. Meeting Calendar

January						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

February						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28				

March						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

April						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

May						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

June						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

July						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

August						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

September						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

October						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

November						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

December						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

## **Glossary**

Can you translate this? “Please have the SLU PIO contact BEU GIS, about the CWPP, for the WUI after the VMP in the SRA.”

BEU	-	CAL FIRE San Benito- Monterey Unit
CCWP	-	Community Wildfire Protection Plan
FRA	-	Federal Responsibility Area-federal agencies (US Forest Service or Bureau of Land Management) are responsible for wildland fires
GIS	-	Graphic Information system
LRA	-	Local Responsibility Area- local government (all cities) are responsible for wildland fires
OES	-	Office of Emergency Services
PIO	-	Public Information Officer
SLU	-	CAL FIRE / San Luis Obispo Unit
SRA	-	State Responsibility Area-State (CAL FIRE) is responsible for wildland fires
VMP	-	Vegetation Management Program environmental permitting, and landowner agreement for vegetation management cost share with CAL FIRE (usually prescribed fire)
VTP	-	Vegetation Treatment Program-similar to VMP program above
WUI	-	Wildland Urban Interface