



San Luis Obispo County Fire Safe Council

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Board of Directors and State Coastal Conservancy Regional Forest and Wildfire Capacity Meeting Minutes Wednesday, July 17, 2024 0900-1200 hours

Meeting held at Paso Robles Public Safety Building EOC

BOARD OF DIRECTORS IN ATTENDANCE:

Ed Waage – Citizen at Large	Chris Slate – Third Supervisorial District
Debbie Arnold – County BOS	Paul Patti – Paso Robles Focus Group
Chris Dicus – Cal Poly State University	Brendan Cosgrove – Building Industry
Scott Johnson – Citizen at Large	Dan Ponti – Farm Bureau
Tom Peterson – County Fire Chiefs	Jose Torres – Los Osos Focus Group
Todd Tuggle – City of SLO Focus Group	David Pierson – Cambria Focus Group
Skip Dyke – Range Improvement Assoc	James Sasules – First Supervisorial District
Martin Scott – Ranchita Estates Focus Group	Spencer Gordon – RCD
Ruben Brand – PG&E	Bill Cochrane – Cattlemen’s Association
Russ Johnson – Lake Naci Focus Group	Garrett Veyna - San Luis Obispo County Fire
Stacy Korsgaden – Insurance Industry	Monica Stant - Air Pollution Control District
Matt Mohle – SLO County Parks	Dena Paschke – Fire Prev Officers Assoc
Royce Larsen – UC Cooperative Extension	

BOARD OF DIRECTORS ABSENT:

David Van Son – Atascadero FD Focus Group	Jeff Jones – Citizen at Large
Bob Neumann – Second Supervisorial District	Chad Pankey – Fifth Supervisorial District

FOCUS GROUP and EX-OFFICIO REPRESENTATIVES IN ATTENDANCE:

Baxter Boyington – Toro Creek

STAFF PRESENT:

Dan Turner – Executive Director	Loree McRoberts – CAL FIRE
Nate Herring – FSC Project Coordinator	Greg Alex – SLO FSC Webmaster
Ted Mathiesen – FSC Project Coordinator	

GUESTS:

Michael Burkey – Cambria Fire Chief	Dan Dulitz – Retired FSC Board Member
Kelley Abbas – Legislative Assistant	Morgan Partridge – CAL FIRE
Eric Cleveland – VMP Inc.	Kate Wels
Susie Johnson	Ivan O’Neill
Frank Frievault – Cal Poly	Cody Blankenship – USLTRCD
Sophia Marquez – Althouse & Meade	

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CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by President Debbie Arnold at 9:00 a.m. followed by introduction of directors, staff, focus groups and guests.

CONSENT AGENDA

- May 2024 Board of Directors meeting minutes were presented for approval.
- June 2024 Executive Committee meeting minutes were presented for review.
- SLO FSC Operations Account Summary
- 2024 Contract Services Summary
- Abbreviated Bank Statement ending June 30, 2024
- Active Grant Fiscal Summary 2024

Amendment to May Board of Directors meeting minutes. Originally recorded in Roundtable as: There are now 2 tree trimming contractors being utilized in the area for wire clearance: Davey Tree and American Tree Medics. Ruben Brand, PG&E Board Member, has requested to have that corrected to read: PG&E Vegetation Management has two Inspection Contractors here locally covering PG&E distribution and transmission lines. The two contractors are Davey Resource Group and American Tree Medics. Our primary tree trimming contractor is Davey Tree.

It was moved, seconded, and approved to approve the May 2024 Board of Directors meeting minutes with the noted amendment and accept for review the June 2024 Executive Committee minutes, financial summaries, and grant summaries reports as presented: Pierson Second: Slate

ROUNDTABLE

- Paso Robles Fire and Emergency Services: They attained 100% compliance with their weed abatement program. The 2023 riverbed herbivory actions reduced fire starts by 50%. This year they increased the herd size and have abated 87 acres with 1,400 goats.
- Cambria Focus Group: Phase 1 Weed abatement is complete. Chipping event to be held July 22 and 23. There will be a focus group entry in the Pinedorado Parade this year.
- APCD: Ag burning is currently allowed with proper permitting, backyard burning is not.
- Insurance: Crisis with coverage continues. State Farm needs to raise rates by 30% to stay in business, they have 21% of all policies in California and have already committed to not renewing 70,000 policies this year.
- CAL FIRE: State has fires throughout; SLU is currently on draw down levels.
- PG&E: The San Luis Obispo Division has inspected 8,000 miles of lines. There are 2,000 miles of line in high fire areas that are inspected two times per year. Twenty-five thousand (25,000) trees have been trimmed this year to date.
- Cal Poly: attempting to get students more real-world experience.
- County Parks: Fires banned at all County Parks

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- Resource Conservation District: Rancho Moreno work will be done by Fire Storm (contractor). A prescribed burn association meeting was held for burns on private lands, looking forward to getting more burning done.
- Los Osos Focus Group: Expressed thank you to SLO FSC and Ted Mathiesen for the chipping event and trailhead signs. There will be a townhall meeting August 3 from 1000-1200 hours at the South Bay Training Center.
- Building Industry: Building to WUI and home hardening regulations/recommendations to allow customers to obtain insurance.
- Ranchita Focus Group: Four days of chipping completed. Kudos to Cuesta Crew, inmates were very well trained in falling trees.
- Lake Nacimiento Focus Group: The grant work in the area is complete. Signage is posted throughout the area. Special assessment was approved for road repair, road work should be complete by end of October.
- Toro Creek Focus Group: Fuel reduction project completed; work areas look great.
- San Luis Obispo Focus Group: New Fire Marshal Kim Rapp is on board. Currently working on VMP and hazard tree removal from Lizzie Fire area.

FIRE SAFE COUNCIL BUSINESS

- Recommendations were received from the scholarship committee to award \$2,500 to Kyra Otte (Paso Robles High School) and Carrie Potts (Cuesta College).
It was moved, seconded, and approved to grant the scholarships as presented: Torres Second: Korsqaden
- A draft policy was reviewed allowing the utilization of grant management fees to fund non-administrative expenses. The policy defines the process to authorize expenditures of grant indirect funds for grant support purposes beyond administration. It also provides an approval process for short notice and foreseeable expenditures.
It was moved, seconded, and approved to approve SLO FSC Policy 016, "Grant Indirect Expenditures" as presented: Scott Second: Larsen
- Cambria Fire Safe Focus group is requesting SLO FSC serve as their fiscal sponsor for a fundraising campaign to purchase fire department supplies for Cambria Fire department. This will require establishing a website donation process, separate bank account and managing/dispersing funds.
It was moved, seconded, and approved to approve serving as the fiscal sponsor for Cambria Fire Safe Focus Group fundraiser including establishing web-based donation portal, separate bank accounts and fund administration as presented: Korsqaden Second: Slate Abstained: Pierson
- Office of Planning and Research lost their funding for the Cambria CSD Evacuation Grant proposal. The grantor withdrew the opportunity. Research will continue on an avenue to accomplish the evacuation study and outreach project with the possibility of SLO FSC being a co-applicant.
- Regional Water Quality Control Board proposed general order for vegetation treatment and sedimentation adoption is accepting written comments until close of business today, July 17. This proposal may have significant negative impact on fuel reduction and defensible space activities unless amended. Public hearing produced a lot of questions and frustration.

PRESENTATIONS

Sharon Smith, California Department of Insurance, shared information regarding the insurance crisis in California. Over the last ten years, homeowner insurance companies have done far worse with business in California than nationally. Inflation is creating financial stress to the insurance market along with an increase in the cost of rebuilding supplies. Natural disasters and global inflation have increased insurers loss and reinsurance is now very hard to find. California is looking at the largest insurance reform since 1998 in an attempt to bring companies back to the market.

Frank Frievalt, Director of Cal Poly WUI Fire Institute, spoke about wildfires effect on WUI communities and destabilizing the homeowner insurance market in California. The need for accurate and comprehensive information to better understand and manage the risk is necessary to disseminate to insurers and reinsurers. Property owners and fire service personnel also need information allowing them to understand the threat to neighborhoods and communities and what steps can be taken to prepare, mitigate and recover. There will be a survey offered via QR code at the Fire Safe Education Center during the Mid-State Fair, hoping to gather some valuable information.

All Risk Shield, owned by Joe Torres, is a local company offering wildfire prevention and home hardening services throughout California. They offer increasing structural survivability options so not everybody is living in a concrete igloo. An all-inclusive approach includes risk assessment, education, installation of ember resistant vents, vegetation management, application of long-term fire retardants and emergency response. Their experience with the Woolsley Fire proved their efforts effective, not one of their clients' properties were lost.

With one in five homes being at risk of wildfire, Ivan O'Neill co-founded Madronus Wildfire Defense. Their mission is to create wildfire resilient communities and healthy forests. Their approach follows California state law (PRC 4291 and CFC 304.1.2), local ordinances, the latest scientific research, and ecological principles. Their services include assessment, home/structure hardening, defensible space planning, landscape design, vegetation management and forest restoration.

GRANT ACTIVITY UPDATES

Current Grant Activity

PG&E 2024

- Toro Creek Fuel Reduction – awarded \$75,000, work complete
- Pecho Valley Road – awarded \$75,000, project is ready waiting on State Parks
- Lizzie Fire project – awarded \$100,000, project to start in September

State FSC County Coordinator Grant

- Grant performance period extended to December 31, 2024
- Additional funding of \$69,050

Monterey Pine Forest Health Grant

- Awarded \$6.7 million, grant period ends 2030
- Partners with CAL FIRE (CEQA lead agency), Hearst Ranch, Covell Ranch, Cambria CSD, Fiscalini Ranch and Friends of Fiscalini Ranch
- Contract pending, grantor making last minute budget adjustments
- Negotiating with Auten Resource Consulting on contract for onsite RPF project management

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Pending Grant Activity

- 2023-24 CCI-CAL FIRE Wildlife Prevention Grants
 - \$2.9 million grant proposal submitted; decision expected soon
- State Coastal Conservancy – Wildfire Resilience Grant
 - Project concept proposal submitted by City of SLO
 - Project is to develop implementation operational plans for treatments
 - SLO FSC supports the project, local review and site visit by SCC staff

Extension Request – 5GA20115 2021 SLO County HFR

- Extension denied; current grant expiration date does not accommodate work on Miossi La Cuesta Ranch
- Working on re-scoping and swapping projects with other grants

GOOD OF THE ORDER

- There is a BBQ lunch after the meeting and a visit to the Mid-State Fair Fire Safe Education Center for all interested.

NEXT MEETINGS

Executive Committee Meeting

- Wednesday, August 21, 2024, 9:00 to 11:30 a.m.
- Location: County Government Center

Board of Directors Meeting

- Wednesday, September 18, 2024, 9:00 to 11:30 a.m.
- Location: TBD

ADJOURNMENT

President Debbie Arnold adjourned the meeting at 12:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Loree McRoberts

Recording Secretary