

**CAMBRIA FIRE SAFE FOCUS GROUP  
CAMBRIA VETS' HALL & ZOOM  
GENERAL MEETING  
AUGUST 28, 2024**

**ATTENDANCE:** David Lennep, Lara Rachowicz, Erick McCurdy, Bob Putney, Dave Pierson, Chief Burkey, Cheryl McDowell, Debra Hori, Greg Alex, Tony Safford, Dan Turner, Laura Swartz, Crosby Swartz, Steve Auten, Taylor Hilden, Riley McFarland, Blake Fixler, Craig Ufferheide, Spencer Gordon, Kitty Connolly, Lou Escobar, Marshall Hamilton, Baxter Boyington, Harry Farmer, Karen Argano, Michael Thomas, Jessica Hodge, Danae Panahan

**WELCOME:** Moderator Dave Pierson opened the meeting at 3:00 PM. He asked for introductions all around.

**RED CROSS EDUCATION EFFORT:** Tony Safford introduced the team from SLO County Red Cross. He reported that they have begun to develop a new project: home preparedness. He was joined by Jessica Hodge and Erick McCurdy of the Red Cross in this discussion. They are proposing to train volunteers to visit homeowners and do a walk-through of their property after which they would focus on specifics within the Immediate Zone (0-5 ft.) around the home. They would follow up with suggestions for things the homeowner can do to protect their home in the event of a wildfire. The volunteers would receive specific training, and it was suggested that Cambria CERT members might make good volunteers for this project.

Bob Putney, who is the current CERT coordinator, noted that there are a lot of moving parts that complicate the assessment process. He questioned their timeline of completing these assessments on 20 properties by December, 2024. Chief Burkey suggested that a more feasible project would be to visit homes and discuss evacuation planning and preparation. Dan Turner added that preparedness in general is very important. He suggested that these volunteers not conduct an inspection per se. Rather the focus should be on the basics, do a cursory inspection, and leave flyers plus information about resources. Jessica Hodge thanked everyone for their input and noted that this will be very helpful in their planning going forward.

**CERT UPDATE:** Bob Putney reported that he conducted 1 and 1/2 days of chipping on behalf of CERT and FSC. There were three piles alone that took four truckloads to haul off. He also had a chance to chat with neighbors about evacuation and other topics. There was one complaint about the noise the machine was making.

Bob reported that there is now a plan for CERT. Current members have received communications about becoming re-certified by means of a 6-step process. He hopes to have a membership of 80 Cambrians and get in at least one training by the end of 2024.

**GRANTS UPDATE:** Dave Pierson was awarded \$3200 to help with the 2025 town hall, to be held in October. He has decided to focus on the Fireman's Fundraiser to be held in May 2025.

Dan Turner reported that hand crews with chippers are working on Old San Simeon Point, cleaning up the cypress and Monterey pine forest area. They are cleaning dead material, chipping it back. They plan to be there for three weeks. In addition, work proceeds on the Monterey Pine Forest Health Grant through CALFIRE. They were awarded \$6.7 million for ecological restoration at the Pico Creek Stand, Covell Ranch, Fish & Wildlife Reserve, and the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve. He announced the 2024 (through 2029) Wildfire Prevention and Fuel Reduction Grant has been awarded to the FSC totaling \$3.11 million for 19 projects in 9 different communities in SLO County. The Strawberry Canyon project will feature the use of goats and sheep for clearing. In addition, Steve Bitto continues his work on French Broom eradication.

**NORTH COAST FOEST HEALTH PLAN:** Spencer Gordon is working on 43 acres in Rancho Marino using a CALFIRE grant. They have reached the halfway point, working on Randall Road conducting a shaded fuel break. Work will resume September 13<sup>th</sup> with clearing and creating burn piles inside the forested area, aiming for a December 2024 finish date. CalPoly is holding a workshop for the public to follow the work and tour these areas.

Steve Auten reported that he has some funding to develop a project specific analysis (PSA) for forest management. It will focus on treatment prescriptions in the coastal area from the county border south to Morro Bay. He will utilize this project in validating future such projects: The future projects in the area will have a higher likelihood that of gaining approval and it will improve the approval process of grants by the Coastal Commission, and not restrict landowners from seeking other projects.

**FIREFIGHTERS' EVENT:** Debra Hori reported that her 12-member committee have finalized details of this fundraiser for the Cambria Fire Department: the date is May 3, 2025, starting at 4:30 PM, tickets sell for \$175.00. The event will be located at the Dairy Barn on the Hearst Ranch, catered by Linns. There are 75 spots for parking and they are considering making a shuttle available.

**FIRE CHIEF UPDATE:** Chief Burkey reported that the SLO County Fire Chiefs are working on evacuation planning: updating maps, fire dept plans, countywide plans, etc. They are making changes to Genaysis and will rely on Readyslo.org as the platform that will house any changes.

**PINEDORADO:** Roberta Vitols reported that Keith Decker's fire engine is cleaned up and ready for the parade thanks to three members of the Interact Club at Coast Union. Dave Pierson has secured a driver, Lu Estrada. Lou Escobar, Debra Hori, Dave Pierson, and Roberta Vitols will accompany the fire engine and hand out Fisci activity books. We are #48.

**INSURANCE UPDATE:** Commissioner Lara has released an updated plan to allow insurance companies to return to California and offer homeowner policies. This plan allows for catastrophic modeling. They will start taking people off the Fair Plan and encourage them to seek policies with insurance companies.

**ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting was adjourned at 4:40 PM. The next meeting is September 27<sup>th</sup> at 3:00.

Respectfully submitted,

Roberta Vitols