



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, March 19, 2025

0900-1130 hours

Meeting held at Atascadero Lake Park Pavillion

BOARD OF DIRECTORS IN ATTENDANCE:

Heather Moreno – County Supervisor	Brendan Cosgrove – Building Industry
Debbie Arnold – Citizen at Large	Ed Waage – Citizen at Large
Matt Mohle – SLO County Parks	Paul Patti – Paso Robles Focus Group
Chad Pankey – Fifth Supervisorial District	Tom Peterson – County Fire Chiefs
Russ Johnson – Lake Naci Focus Group	Bill Tietje – UC Coop Extension
Bill Cochrane – Cattlemen’s Association	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
Stacy Korsgaden – Insurance Industry	Spencer Gordon – ULT RCD
Garrett Veyna – CAL FIRE / SLO County Fire	Chris Slate – Third Supervisorial District
Dora Drexler – Air Pollution Control District	David Van Son – Atascadero FD Focus Group
Ashley Grupenhoff – Cal Poly State University	Martin Scott – Ranchita Estates Focus Group
Greg Saenz – PG&E	

BOARD OF DIRECTORS ABSENT:

Dan Ponti – Farm Bureau	Bob Neumann – Second Supervisorial Dist.
Scott Johnson – Citizen at Large	Jeff Jones – Citizen at Large

FOCUS GROUP and EX-OFFICIO REPRESENTATIVES IN ATTENDANCE:

Baxter Boyington – Toro Creek

STAFF PRESENT:

Dan Turner – Executive Director	Loree McRoberts – CAL FIRE
Dane Mumford – Project Supervisor	Greg Alex – SLO FSC Webmaster
Alan Peters – Project Manager	

GUESTS:

Toni Davis – CAL FIRE	Kevin McLean – CAL FIRE / SLO County Fire
Riley McFarland	Dave Erickson – CAL FIRE / SLO County Fire
Susie Johnson – Lake Nacimiento	Eric Cleveland – VMP Inc.
Scott Milner – SLO County OES	Steve Auten – Auten Resource Consulting

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CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by President Heather Moreno at 9:10 a.m. followed by introduction of directors, staff, focus groups and guests.

CONSENT AGENDA

- January 2025 Board of Directors meeting minutes were presented for approval.
- February 2025 Executive Committee meeting minutes were presented for review.

It was moved, seconded, and approved to approve the January 2025 Board of Directors meeting minutes and accept for review the February 2025 Executive Committee minutes as presented: Waage Second: Korsgaden

PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSIONS

SLO County Weed Abatement Ordinance Proposal

SLO County Fire is working with County representatives on a weed abatement ordinance that would affect every property lying within the Local Responsibility Area (LRA). It would be similar to the ordinance already in place for Cayucos. The ordinance would also have requirements for properties in the State Responsibility Area (SRA) if there were structures within 100 feet of the adjacent property lines. County Fire is hoping to have Board of Supervisor review and comments in April 2025.

Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHZ) Maps

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), through the Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM), has recently released the 2025 recommended Local Responsibility Area (LRA) FHSZ maps. These updated maps reflect more accurate information about the area's fire hazard levels based on the likelihood of a fire reaching the area and its potential intensity, not the risks of individual properties. State law requires local agencies adopt these maps by ordinance within 120 days of their release. This update is vital for ensuring that local communities are adequately informed about their fire risk, take necessary precautions and prepare for emergencies. It is slated to be presented to the County Board of Supervisors on April 8, 2025.

Governor's State of Emergency 2025-3-1

Following the devastation of the Southern California fires and the risk of more statewide, Governor Newsom proclaimed a state of emergency to fast-track critical projects protecting communities from wildfire. The emergency proclamation is aimed to cut bureaucratic red tape, including suspending CEQA and the Coastal Act which are proven to slow down forest management projects. Projects must be initiated this calendar year (as of now, no additional funding available) and if funding is already available an exemption request must be submitted.

Pismo Beach Focus Group Formation

The first meeting of the newly formed Pismo Fire Safe Council Focus Group was held at Pismo City Hall, led by Battalion Chief Paul Lee. The meeting was well-attended, with representatives being committed

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to wildfire prevention. Steve Viera from Pismo Heights has stepped up to lead the group, with active participation from five property owners and two representatives from the Land Conservancy at Pismo Preserve.

Fire Preparedness Townhalls

- March 1 – SLO Vets Hall organized by CAL FIRE/SLO County Fire
 - Considered successful by those in attendance
 - Plans to become an annual event
 - No North County meeting planned
- April 17 – Hayward Lumber
 - Building materials demonstration
- April 19 – Lake Nacimiento organized by Lake Nacimiento Focus Group
 - Goals are fire safety, home hardening and evacuation
 - Activities for everyone and BBQ after presentations

ROUNDTABLE

Focus Group and Organization Reports:

- CAL FIRE/SLO County Fire – looking forward to working with Cal Poly WUI Institute
- Cattlemen's Association – rain is at 50% of a typical year, lots of green grazing going on
- Range Improvement Association – Spring BBQ to be announced soon
- Upper Las Tablas RCD – New Executive Director named, Michael Archer,
 - SLO Resil is working on improving landscapes, working towards getting CEQA for 88,000 acres approved for projects utilizing public funds
 - Rancho Moreno has burned 160 piles
 - Three Bridges – 12 acres identified for fuel reduction with the City of Atascadero
 - Carrisa Plains – pile burning scheduled for March 29
- County Fire Chiefs – hot topic is the changes to the FSHZ maps, fire code changes coming out this year also
- Insurance Industry – Department of Insurance denied 22% increase in February putting the burden of proof on State Farm who was approved for an interim rate increase on March 14
- County Parks – Chipping at Santa Margarita, Lopez Lake will be next
- Building Industry – Chapter 7A of Building Code will be changing this year, WUI code also
 - People are willing to invest in home hardening
 - Working with WUI Institute
- UC Cooperative Extension – March 24 in Sacramento there will be a workshop at the California Forest Science Symposium to highlight and discuss landscape-scale prescribed burning
- APCD – Prescribed burn support is proving to be successful
- Cal Poly – lots of research going on, MOU with CAL FIRE, ribbon cutting for offices in Tech Park scheduled for June 2
- Cambria Focus Group – Neighborhood townhalls scheduled at the Cambria Vets Hall on March 31 and April 1
- Los Osos Focus Group – Chipping going on now, lot 41 has been approved by the Fish and Wildlife department to move forward, hazard eucalyptus trees on Pecho Valley and Cabrillo Estates are being addressed

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- Toro Creek Focus Group – recent structure fire has brought residents together to talk about FireWise Community
- Lake Nacimiento Focus Group – weed abatement will be starting as soon as weather permits, April 19 Townhall meeting planning is going well
- Ranchita Focus Group – Chipping in February, converting 20+ miles of hiking and equestrian trails to fire apparatus accessibility, assessment should be done in 3-4 weeks
- Paso Robles Focus Group – Weed abatement deadline fast approaching, meeting March 31 at 1800 hours in the City Council Chambers to review the new FHSZ map
- Avila Valley Focus Group – Chipping projects in Squire and See Canyons

FIRE SAFE COUNCIL BUSINESS

- Website
 - 10-12 new hits a day
 - Working on FIRESHED updates with Ladris, Genasys Protects and SCOUT dashboards
- Fiscal Summary
 - SLO FSC Operations Account Summary
 - Contract Services Summary ending February 28, 2025
 - Abbreviated Bank Statement ending February 28, 2025
 - Grant Summary ending February 28, 2025
- Scholarships/Local Grants
 - Executive Committee recommended actions requiring Board concurrence on the following awards:
 - Allan Hancock Fire Academy Scholarships – Nine awards, total \$22,000
 - Cambria Firefighter Fundraiser – converting \$5,000 loan to local grant
 - Lake Nacimiento Townhall funding support - \$2,500
 - Fire Preparedness Townhall March 1 in SLO – not to exceed \$1,500 for refreshments
 - Chipper Day Scheduling Software from FireAside for online registration for chipping needs – available countywide to all jurisdictions if they opt in = \$3,000 one-time fee and \$8,000 annual fee
 - Scam attempt – 5 scholarship applications were received that were found to be suspicious, after some investigation they were found to be fraudulent. We have processes in place to vet all incoming requests.

It was moved, seconded and approved to affirm the recommendations made by the Executive Committee on February 19, 2025, as presented: Slate Second: R. Johnson

It was moved, seconded and approved to approve the fiscal summaries and the one scholarship submittal for \$2,000 as presented: Pierson Second: Korsqaden

- 2025 Grant Fiscal and Projects Status Summaries
 - \$23 million dollars in current grant funding
 - State Coastal Conservancy extended grant expiration date and partnering with SLO City
 - 48 stations countywide are slated for structural hardening evaluation

It was moved, seconded and approved to approve the grant fiscal and projects summaries as presented: Arnold Second: Slate

NEW GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

- 2025 PG&E Fuel Reduction Grants
 - 3 proposals submitted
 - Mountaintop communication sites
 - Via La Barranza in Arroyo Grande
 - Downed log removal for chipping in Cambria
 - Any log 4" in diameter or larger must be left for property owner because it's been deemed as a valuable asset
- 2024 Proposition 4 – Safe drinking water, wildfire prevention, drought preparedness and clean air bond act of 2024
 - \$1.5 Billion approved for wildfire programs, some of which will be for new grant funding
 - Most funds are earmarked for agency programs
- 2025 State Coastal Conservancy has opened applications
- 2025 USDA Community Wildfire Defense Grants
 - SLO City was able to apply due to its disadvantaged community status. SLO FSC issued a letter of support.
- County Coordinator Funding – CA FSC has secured a new grant to reinstate this funding

GOOD OF THE ORDER

Russ Johnson would like to see a resource guide sheet put together to handout to different communities for things like home hardening.

NEXT MEETINGS

Executive Committee Meeting

- Wednesday, April 16, 9:00 to 11:30 a.m.
- Location: Atascadero City Hall

Board of Directors Meeting

- Wednesday, May 21, 2025, 9:00 to 12:00 a.m.
- Location: To be determined

ADJOURNMENT

President Heather Moreno adjourned the meeting at 11:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Loree McRoberts

Recording Secretary