



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, September 17, 2025

0900-1130 hours

Meeting held at Templeton Community Center

BOARD OF DIRECTORS IN ATTENDANCE:

Heather Moreno – President / BOS	Scott Hallett – Fourth Supervisorial District
Bob Neumann – Second Supervisorial District	Brendan Cosgrove – Building Industry
Ed Waage – Citizen at Large	Dan Ponti – Farm Bureau
Martin Scott – Ranchita Estates Focus Group	Paul Patti – Paso Robles Focus Group
Chad Pankey – Fifth Supervisorial District	Jeff Jones – Citizen at Large
Russ Johnson – Lake Naci Focus Group	Tom Swanson – CAL FIRE / SLO County Fire
Jim Sasules – First Supervisorial District	Emily Miggins – Los Osos Focus Group
Scott Johnson – Citizen at Large	David Pierson – Cambria Focus Group
Chris Slate – Third Supervisorial District	David Van Son – Atascadero FD Focus Group
Bill Cochrane – Cattlemen's Association	Matt Mohle – SLO County Parks
Skip Dyke – Range Improvement Assoc	Tom Peterson – County Fire Chiefs
Stacy Korsgaden – Insurance Industry	Spencer Gordon – USLT RCD
Reuben Brand – PG&E	

BOARD OF DIRECTORS ABSENT:

Todd Tuggle – City of SLO Focus Group	Dora Drexler – Air Pollution Control District
Debbie Arnold – Citizen at Large	Ashley Grupenhoff – Cal Poly State University

STAFF PRESENT:

Dan Turner – Executive Director	Loree McRoberts – CAL FIRE
Greg Alex – SLO FSC Webmaster	Jonathan Gee – CAL FIRE
Baxter Boyington – Focus Group Coordinator	Brandon Sanderson – CAL FIRE

GUESTS:

Monica Stant - APCD	Margot McDonald - Cal Poly WUI Institute
Peter Stephenson - USFS	Steve Crawford – PG&E
Susie Johnson – Lake Nacimiento	Lilian Thaoxaochay – UC Cooperative
Sarah Kramer – SLO Farm Bureau	Amy Ormiston – USLT RCD
Jim Neumann – LOFR Team 8	Eric Cleveland – VMP Inc.
Shari Cleveland – VMP Inc.	Dave Erickson – CAL FIRE

CALL TO ORDER

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

CONSENT AGENDA

Prior Meeting Minutes

- July 2025 Board of Directors meeting minutes were presented for approval
- August 2025 Executive Committee meeting minutes were presented for review

Fiscal Summary

- SLO FSC Operations Account Summary
- 2025 Contract Summary ending August 31, 2025
- Abbreviated Bank Statement ending August 31, 2025
- Active Grant Summary ending August 31, 2025

It was moved, seconded and approved to approve Consent Agenda Prior Meeting Minutes and Fiscal Summary as presented: Cosgrove Second: R. Johnson

PRESENTATIONS

Templeton Feed and Grain Fire

The fire which was ruled as arson started late July 4th. According to surveillance video obtained from a nearby business you can see an illegal firework being thrown at the building and land on the roof exploding. Cameras inside the business show a rain of sparks and fire break out instantly in the storage area of the bagged feed and grain. The fire burned for days, severely damaging the facility and leading to the demolition of its two silos. Although townspeople were asked to conserve water during suppression efforts, water was never an issue. An early estimate of water used to fight the fire is 2.1 million gallons. Cooperative agencies were instrumental in getting this fire under control and out. A thank you dinner was held recognizing all agencies involved and the community's gratitude for the efforts.

ROUNDTABLE

PG&E -	Lots of tree work being done in efforts to support reliability program
Cattlemen's -	Impressed with the response and actions taken in Gifford Fire, repairs underway
CAL FIRE -	Plans being made for burns in Porter Ranch, Tribal lands and RCD piles
Range Improvement -	Impressive response from CAL FIRE (Gifford Fire), Chief Veyna instituted updaties via text and that worked great
Farm Bureau -	The 103rd Annual Meeting of Members will be held October 28 at the La Lomita Ranch in SLO
USLT RCD -	Hazard fuel reduction complete in Strawberry Canyon, Amy Ormiston has joined the USLT RCD team
District 2 -	Botanical Gardens will be submitting a new grant application for work in the Fire Safe garden
District 4 -	Working with CEQA to get project moving forward
Fire Chiefs Assoc -	FHSZ maps have been adopted by all agencies, looking for a unified process for AB38 inspections

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City of SLO -	FireSide program for defensible space being investigated as unification
Insurance Industry -	Commissioner Lara is urging Governor Newsom to sign 7 bills that were sponsored for Wildfire Protections. The bills deal with discounts, reducing red tape, grants, home hardening, catastrophe bonds and non-renewal protections.
SLO County Parks -	Thank you for the firefighting efforts keeping Lopez Lake and Biddle Park safe
Building Industry -	New fire code goes into effect January 1, 2026, a lot of focus on home hardening
Cal Poly -	There is a new grant opportunity for wildfire curriculum
Cambria -	Pinedorado was a huge success, 750 Fisci books were distributed
Toro Creek -	Property with hoarding, fire safety concerns has not progressed with County Code Enforcement
Lake Nacimiento -	Fourteen miles of road work is almost complete
Ranchita Estates -	Pre attack maps were extremely helpful especially with crews from out of the area
Paso Robles -	Replanting efforts have been hit by vandalism
Atascadero -	Sixteen miles of roadside clearance have been completed, fuel break from San Diego Way to Eagle Ranch, Pine Mountain 60 acres of fuel reduction, fuel break from El Monte to San Luisito and two more FireWise Communities moving forward through the process
Los Padres -	Recap of the Gifford Fire

FIRE SAFE COUNCIL BUSINESS

- UC Cooperative Extension representative, Bill Tietje, has retired. Lillian Thaoxaochay has been recommended to replace Mr. Tietje. Royce Larsen has been designated as the alternate.
It was moved, seconded and approved to approve Lillian Thaoxaochay as the SLO FSC Board of Director representative for UC Cooperative Extension and Royce Larsen as the alternate: Dyke Second: Cosgrove
- Scholarships/Local Grants
 - Cal Poly Tech Park building is ready for occupancy. The WUI Fire Institute has received their furniture, courtesy of a SLO FSC local grant. The SLO FSC office is ready to occupy. Ribbon cutting ceremony has been postponed.
 - Allan Hancock College Fire Academy students will be presented with information about our scholarship program on September 19.
- Focus Groups / Fire Wise Communities
Pismo Beach and West Nipomo are continuing efforts to organize. Squire Canyon, Bragg Canyon, and Thousand Hills areas want to work together developing an evacuation plan.
- Mid-State Fair
The event was deemed a success. PG&E joined the education center space for a few days promoting "Right Tree Right Place" and found it productive. They would like to join our efforts again next year.
- Policy 017 – SLO FSC Executive Director Responsibilities
Policy written to document the Executive Director has the authority to make purchases on behalf of the SLO FSC. This action was done at the request of CAL FIRE Southern Region Grants.

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- Chipper Day Scheduling Software

The program is working well. One hundred seventy-five (175) residences have signed up for the program since implementation with 252 cubic yards removed.

- Website and IT Projects

Things with Scout, Ladrus and Fireshed are moving forward with 546 evacuation zones in SLO County. The projects are all about sharing information with the public and first responders.

- CEQA Suspensions, Exemptions and NOE Reversals

Implementation period has been extended from 2 years to 5 years.

SLO FSC has had five (5) CNRA CEQA suspensions approved:

1. Hearst Pico Creek
2. Covell Ranch
3. Stagecoach Project (Stagecoach and Parkhill Roads)
4. Heritage Ranch (Water treatment plant and Lake Naci resort entrance)
5. Chispa Project (Blue Sky Ranch, Highway 229 and Rocky Canyon area)

Upper Salinas Las Tablas RCD has had three (3) CNRA CEQA suspensions approved:

1. Strawberry Canyon
2. Leffingwell Ranch
3. Krazinski Ranch

SLO FSC has submitted three (3) more projects for suspension consideration:

1. Coyote Project – O'Donovan Road and Highway 58
2. Pressley Project – Parkhill and Huer Huero Road
3. Atascadero Creek – City of Atascadero

GRANT / PROJECT ACTIVITY UPDATES

- Pico Creek Project – Hearst Ranch

This project is a 232-acre mastication project. An electronic meeting and vote were held by the Executive Committee on August 25, 2025, due to the time constraints with executing the contract and starting the project before the next regularly scheduled Board of Directors meeting.

Eight (8) bid proposals were received and reviewed. The contractors associated with those bids were interviewed to establish their knowledge of the scope of work. It was deemed that North Coast Tree Service was the most qualified for award. The Executive Committee directed the Executive Director, Dan Turner, to complete and execute contract documents with North Coast Tree Service for the amount of \$819,700 to complete the 232-acre Hearst Pico Creek mastication project.

It was moved, seconded and approved to affirm the Executive Committee's interim action to complete and execute the project contract with North Coast Tree Service for the amount of \$819,700 as presented: Pierson Second: Slate

- PG&E Grant Offer

PG&E has offered a grant, asking us to serve as fiscal sponsor for SLO County Fire, for the purchase of a portable fire suppression tank system (\$40,000). Due to time constraints, SLO FSC being the fiscal sponsor is faster than having SLO County Fire go through the steps to accept the grant themselves. As sponsor, SLO FSC agrees to accept the grant, purchase the system and have it delivered to SLO County Fire.

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It was moved, seconded and approved to accept the grant from PG&E and purchase the portable water tank system for donation to SLO County Fire as presented: Jones Second: Cosgrove

FUTURE GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

- 2024 Proposition 4
 - Governor signed early funding release of \$130 million to Department of Conservation
 - Coastal Conservancy \$30 million
- 2025-26 CAL FIRE CCI
 - Application closed August 6
 - \$950,000 cap per application, multiple applications from organization allowed
 - Proposition 4 can only be used for Hazardous Fuel Reduction projects
 - CA CCI can be used for Hazardous Fuel Reduction, Public Education and Planning projects
 - SLO FSC submitted four applications:
 1. Countywide Planning \$936,000
 2. South County Projects \$932,000
 3. North County Projects \$941,400
 4. USFS-Los Padres Projects \$835,970

GOOD OF THE ORDER

State Coastal Conservancy / Department of Conservation had a meeting September 16, 2025. The \$4.5 million in grant funding will be broken into block grants. More information to follow as it becomes available.

NEXT MEETINGS

Executive Committee Meeting

- Wednesday, October 15, 2025
- Location: Atascadero City Hall

Board of Directors Meeting

- Wednesday, November 19, 2025
- Location: To be determined

ADJOURNMENT

President Heather Moreno adjourned the meeting at 11:30 a.m. and invited all attendees to join in a barbecue luncheon provided by SLO FSC.

Respectfully submitted,

Loree McRoberts

Recording Secretary