



# 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 16, 2025

0900-1130 hours

Meeting held at Atascadero City Council Chambers

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS IN ATTENDANCE:

Heather Moreno – President / BOS	Garrett Veyna – CAL FIRE / SLO County Fire
Bob Neumann – Second Supervisorial Dist.	Brendan Cosgrove – Building Industry
Debbie Arnold – 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	John Owens – CAL FIRE / SLO County Fire
Jim Sasules – First Supervisorial District	Jose Torres – Los Osos Focus Group
Todd Tuggle – City of SLO Focus Group	David Pierson – Cambria Focus Group
Chris Slate – Third Supervisorial District	David Van Son – Atascadero FD Focus Group
Stacy Korsgaden – Insurance Industry	Spencer Gordon – USLT RCD
Reuben Brand – PG&E	

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS ABSENT:

Ed Waage – Citizen at Large	Scott Hallett – Fourth Supervisorial District
Freddy Otte – City of SLO Focus Group	Bill Cochrane – Cattlemen's Association
Scott Johnson – Citizen at Large	Skip Dyke – Range Improvement Assoc
Bill Tietje – UC Coop Extension	Matt Mohle – SLO County Parks
Dora Drexler – Air Pollution Control District	Tom Peterson – County Fire Chiefs
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 Sanders – CAL FIRE

### GUESTS:

Monica Stant - APCD	Frank Frievalt – Cal Poly WUI Institute
Fred Pena - USFS	Steve Crawford – PG&E
Susie Johnson – Lake Nacimiento	Samantha Alvarez - CSLRCD
Janine Ariey – Black Lake HOA	Steve Calvert – Knollwood at Black Lake HOA
Ray Ramos Jr.– Knollwood at Black Lake HOA	Brian Brintle – Nacimiento/Oak Shores
LynnDee Althouse – Althouse & Meade	

## Meeting Minutes

July 16, 2025

Page 2

### **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.

### **PRESENTATIONS**

#### Madre Fire Update

The Madre Fire continues to burn. Highway 166 was closed for six days. One structure was lost and 208 people were affected. At peak, the fire had 1,400 people assigned. It has burned 30,000 acres of the Chimineas Ranch which is in the Carrizo Plains Ecological Reserve.

#### Llano Fire

On June 28 a vegetation fire broke out near 6705 Llano Road in Atascadero. Mutual aid assisted City of Atascadero in keeping structures safe and extinguishing the fire. Six structures were threatened, none lost. There were 15 engines, 2 helicopters, 2 dozers and 97 personnel assigned in fighting this fire. Great teamwork among agencies.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

#### Prior Meeting Minutes

- May 2025 Board of Directors meeting minutes were presented for approval
- June 2025 Executive Committee meeting minutes were presented for review

#### Resolution 2025-7-16 Grant Application Approval

- Recommend approval of resolution authorizing application for 2025-26 CA Climate Investment and Proposition 4 Wildfire Prevention grants

*It was moved, seconded and approved to approve Consent Agenda Prior Meeting Minutes and Resolution 2025-7-16 as presented: Slate Second: Arnold*

#### Good of the Order – Events

- SLO-RESIL – Upper Salinas Las Tablas RCD Cal VTP PSA
  - Approved by US LT RCD Board on June 25
  - CA Coastal Commission August 11-13 for vote
- SLO Blues baseball game on July 10 was a fun time by all in attendance.
- SLO County Hazard Abatement ordinance has received a lot of positive support. BOS hearing scheduled for August 19.

#### Monthly Financial Summary

- SLO FSC Operations Account Summary
- Contract Services Summary ending June 30, 2025
- Abbreviated Bank Statement ending June 30, 2025
- Active Grant Summary

*It was moved, seconded, and approved to approve the Monthly Financial Summary items as presented: Neumann Second: Slate*

## Meeting Minutes

July 16, 2025

Page 3

### **FIRE SAFE COUNCIL BUSINESS**

- **USLT RCD Board Member Change**

Michael Larcher was recently voted in as the new representative on the SLO FSC Board of Directors. Mr. Larcher has since stepped down from his position with the RCD. It is recommended that Spencer Gordon, the current RCD alternate, be appointed the representative with term expiring January 2027.

***It was moved, seconded and approved to approve Spencer Gordon as the SLO FSC Board of Director representative: Korsgaden Second: Slate***

- **Scholarships/Local Grants**

- Two candidates have applied for scholarship to continue their education at Cal Poly. The scholarship committee has recommended the following awards:
  - Jessica Lee \$2,000
  - Garrett Lee \$2,500
- Executive Committee approved a request of \$2,500 to fund materials for the Mid State Fair that are not likely to be reimbursed by an existing CAL FIRE grant.

***It was moved, seconded and approved to approve the scholarship committee's recommendations and approve the local grant request for Mid State Fair Supplies: Johnson Second: Slate***

- **CAL FIRE CEQA Exemptions and Reversals**

In the 2025-2026 State budget, many wildfire prevention projects were exempted from CEQA to increase pace and scale of treatments which is the Governor's and Legislature's policy. CAL FIRE has issued a new ruling with negative effect on our fuel treatment projects that will slow the pace and scale. Here are key points in the recent ruling:

1. They have disallowed any further use of their own historical notice of exemptions that have been used since 2011. Those exemptions were utilized for many projects including CAL FIRE crews, roadside clearance, chipping, cutting and piling. This disallowance will require agreements by new lead agency and issuance of new notice of exemptions.
2. No other agencies will be able to utilize the Chaparral Management Programmatic EIR (VMP program).
3. CAL FIRE will no longer collaborate with SLO FSC on projects if grant funding is involved.
4. CAL FIRE cannot work on the same project that is using grant funds – this has been done for years. Previously we did CEQA preparation, site surveys and some site work (crews, crush, dozer, etc.) on behalf of CAL FIRE and then CAL FIRE did the burning. That will not be allowed anymore.
5. VMP Projects in Parkhill-Creston (Stagecoach, Sunstorm, Coyote, Chispa); Cal Poly/SLO City/Miossi; Heritage Ranch/Lake Nacimiento are all paused pending resolution.
6. VTP-PSA project at San Simeon-Cambria is paused pending either CEQA exemption application approval or CAL FIRE agency resolution on previously approved CEQA documents.

- **Chipper Day Scheduling Software**

The program is up and running. People can log in their requests for curbside chipping, and it will be scheduled by SLO FSC.

## Meeting Minutes

July 16, 2025

Page 4

- Website and IT Projects

Things with Scout, Ladris and Fireshed are moving forward. SLO FSC will be working with City of SLO in Fireshed, Xyloplan, Ladris and wildfire protection planning process.

- CA FSC County Coordinator Grant

Funding of \$151,050 has been awarded to July 31, 2026. This grant funds Dan Turner, Loree McRoberts, Greg Alex and Baxter Boyington's positions. These positions are usually paid from our Operating budget. With this grant, more money is available for scholarships and local grants.

- Countywide Activities

- County Board of Supervisors sent a letter to the State Fire Marshal with their concerns over the new Fire Hazard Severity Zone maps.
- The final draft of the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan update is being reviewed.
- Evacuation guides and preplan map updates – City of SLO being used as an example.

## GRANT / PROJECT ACTIVITY UPDATES

### Governor's State of Emergency

- SLO Resil has had two approved:
  - Strawberry Canyon – Cambria Greenspace-Contractor Firestorm
  - Sohagi project Cambria – Contractor is SLO FSC
- SLO FSC is submitting two:
  - Hearst Pico Creek
  - Covell Ranch

### Upper Salinas-Las Tablas RCD Projects

- Atascadero – Three Bridges Open Space – ALPS, project has been completed
- McGinley Ranch – Santa Rita Road – Templeton, project has been completed
- Sohagi project – Cambria, started on July 14

### Pico Creek Project – Hearst Ranch

- Bid walk June 5 – 12 contractors participated
- 232 acres to be treated by mastication and hand crews
- 8 bids received, in view of CAL FIRE rule changes review is on hold until resolution
- Goal is to award bid and start work August 1 – September 1 time frame

## 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 closes August 6
  - Multiple applications by organizations 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

**Meeting Minutes**

**July 16, 2025**

**Page 5**

**NEXT MEETINGS**

**Executive Committee Meeting**

- Wednesday, August 20, 2025
- Location: Atascadero City Hall

**Board of Directors Meeting**

- Wednesday, September 17, 2025
- Location: To be determined

**ADJOURNMENT**

President Heather Moreno adjourned the meeting at 11:35 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Loree McRoberts*

Recording Secretary