



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 18, 2026 0900-1130 hours Pavillion on the Lake, Atascadero

BOARD OF DIRECTORS IN ATTENDANCE:

Ed Waage – Citizen at Large	Debbie Arnold – Citizen at Large
Dan Ponti – Farm Bureau	Freddy Otte – City of SLO Focus Group
Jeff Jones – Citizen at Large	Keith Aggson – County Fire Chief’s Assoc
Bill Cochrane – Cattlemen’s Association	Skip Dyke – Range Improvement Assoc
Matt Mohle – SLO County Parks	Spencer Gordon – US LT RCD
Bob Neumann – Second Supervisorial District	Chris Slate – Third Supervisorial District
Martin Scott – Ranchita Estates Focus Group	Paul Patti – Paso Robles Focus Group
Russ Johnson – Lake Naci Focus Group	David Pierson – Cambria Focus Group
Jim Sasules – First Supervisorial District	Cody Gibbons – Air Pollution Control District
Scott Jalbert – SLO County OES	Reuben Brand – PG&E
Lilian Thaoxaochay – UC Cooperative	

BOARD OF DIRECTORS ABSENT:

Stacy Korsgaden – Insurance Industry	Ashley Grupenhoff – Cal Poly State University
Heather Moreno – President / BOS	Scott Hallett – Fourth Supervisorial District
Chad Pankey – Fifth Supervisorial District	Brendan Cosgrove – Building Industry
Scott Johnson – Citizen at Large	Garrett Veyna – CAL FIRE / SLO County Fire
David Van Son – Atascadero FD Focus Group	

STAFF PRESENT:

Dan Turner – Executive Director	Loree McRoberts – CAL FIRE/Recording Secretary
Greg Alex – SLO FSC Webmaster	Baxter Boyington – Focus Group Coordinator

GUESTS:

Steve Crawford – PG&E	Alan Peters – SLO FSC
Carly King – Cal Poly	Sohana Kotha – Cal Poly
Deborah Boynton – Cambria Focus Group	Carlos Robinson – Cal Poly
Beate Von Bischopiack – Cal Poly	Ray Ramos Jr. – Knollwood HOA
Samantha Alvarez – Coastal RCD	Margot McDonald – Cal Poly
Brian Brintle – Oak Shores/Lake Naci FG	Susie Johnson – Laki Naci Focus Group
Eric Cleveland – Vegetation Mgmt Partners	Dane Mumford – SLO FSC Coordinator
Michael Burkey – Cambria Fire	Zach Cipriano – CAL FIRE
Drew Loganbill – US LT RCD	Robert Lewin – Resolute Associates

Meeting Minutes

March 18, 2026

Page 2

CALL TO ORDER

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

CONSENT AGENDA

Prior Meeting Minutes

- January 2026 Board of Directors meeting minutes were presented for approval
- February 2026 Executive Committee meeting minutes were presented for review

It was moved, seconded and approved to approve Consent Agenda Prior Meeting Minutes as presented: Slate Second: Dyke

PRESENTATIONS

Cal Poly WUI Fire Institute – Earn by Doing program sent some students to the Eaton Fire site in Alta Dena. The students met with residents to ascertain what they wanted to see with the community rebuild, what features and characteristics of the town they want to revive and what practical changes would enhance their beloved community. Overwhelmingly residents wanted to keep the sense of home in the town they had grown to love; rebuilding parks and outdoor venues without seeing the town turn too commercial with high rises and increased traffic. With the program support from SLO FSC, these students received firsthand, real-world knowledge out of the classroom.

The SLO County Fireshed report has been completed and distributed to all interested. Many people and infrastructure are vulnerable to wildfire risk throughout SLO County. Some communities are at greater risk due to the natural environmental conditions and built environmental conditions that are present in their area. Human life and safety is the primary priority of most wildfire hazard reduction projects occurring in SLO County. The goal of the report was to identify the assets at risk and design plans for protecting them. In San Luis Obispo County there are 5 regions with 37 firesheds. Each area has important infrastructure, institutional assets, population hubs, economic and natural assets. Roads, ridges and rivers were used to define areas because those attributes never change and are always there. The preparation and work that went into this report was quite complex and involved many different people with different expertise. The published report won the 2025 CCBJ Business Achievement Award for Climate Resilience, honored for its leadership in wildfire risk reduction. Partnering with Rincon Consultants, Inc., SLO FSC was recognized for its innovative, collaborative approach to improving forest health and safety.

We are working with Resolute Associates to update the SLO County Countywide Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). The last update was done in 2019. CWPPs in California must meet specific requirements to be considered valid plans. Requirements include:

- Documentation that the plan was collaboratively developed and included public engagement
- Assessment of wildfire hazard and risk
- Prioritized actions to address hazardous fuels and reduce structural ignitability
- Signed approval by authorized representatives from the local government, fire department, and CAL FIRE (Local CAL FIRE Unit Chief, Contract County Fire Chief, or their designee)

If you are interested in volunteering to review and comment on the working copy of the SLO County CWPP, please contact Dan Turner, Executive Director or Rob Lewin, Resolute Associates.

Meeting Minutes

March 18, 2026

Page 3

ROUNDTABLE

- Lake Nacimiento Focus Group – FireWise/Boat Safety Event April 25
- Ranchita Focus Group – great work by the SLO County Fire GIS crew on the preattack plan updates, we were able to install 3 helipads in our community for emergency use, hazard fuel reduction work ongoing due to our residents being so proactive and we're ready to chip
- Paso Robles Fire – goats are coming back to the riverbed in May, 1st FireWise community in City has been established
- Pismo Beach – Residents are focused on FireWise Community status and looking for leadership
- SLO County Fire – Wildland fire engines will be staffed by permanent employees year-round, air tankers are due back to air attack in April, prescribed burns are scheduled out for the year
- District 3 – brush removal project near the old General Hospital in SLO is planned
- PG&E – backpack Lidar unit being tested in the See Canyon area
- Cattlemen's Association – Western states herds are down due to the selling off during drought years, will take a few years to build back, higher prices are due to supply/demand issues
- APCD – Title 17 Prescribed Burn meeting held giving overview of other agencies plans
- Cambria Focus Group – Burn piles in Rancho Marino and Strawberry Canyon are ready, French Broom eradication going on in Fiscalini Ranch, successful chipping event, booth in April 18 Preparedness event, Cal Trans doing roadside treatment on Santa Rosa Road
- Atascadero Fire – Backyard burning still open, Chipping next week with 159 signups, second FireWise Community established with 240 structures in Long Valley
- City of SLO – VMP plan for 1,000 acres made possible by SCC grant, two Community Risk Reduction interns hired with Fema grant, first FireWise Community established in the Buena Vista Estates (Terrace Hill area), second chipping event coming up
- Cal Poly WUI – Conference in Reno, interview with the BBC
- Coop Education – Board of Forestry meeting 4/23 for Zone 0
- County Parks – hazard fuel removal ongoing
- Range Improvement – annual meeting with BBQ on April 30, prescribed burn scheduled for April
- US LT RCD – Drew Loganbill is the new Director, plan being drafted for 10 acres of herbivory in Strawberry Canyon, Forest Health Grant preproposal for 836 acres in 4 years, lots of efforts in Cambria with two new projects 33 acres, Direct Award in Willow Creek for 5 acres, hand crews in Santa Rita and Hartzell Ranch 20 acres.

FIRE SAFE COUNCIL BUSINESS

Fiscal Summary for Month Ending February 28, 2026

- SLO FSC Operations Account Summary
- 2026 Contract Summary
- Abbreviated Monthly Bank Statement
- Active Grants Financial Summary

2026 Active Grants

2022 SLO County Fuels Reduction 5GA21137	Expires: 3/15/2026	Award: \$ 4,483,721
2022 SLO County Planning Projects 5GG21161	3/15/2026	\$ 441,687
2023 VMP Support Contract 5GA21212	3/15/2026	\$ 628,040
2024 State Coastal Conservancy	7/30/2026	\$ 270,250
2023 CCI Wildfire Prevention 5GA22227	3/20/2029	\$ 2,857,954
2024 Wildfire Prevention 5TR23211	3/15/2030	\$ 3,112,344

Meeting Minutes

March 18, 2026

Page 4

2024 Monterey Pine Forest Health 8GG23617	3/15/2030	\$ 6,678,635
Upper Salinas-Las Tablas RCD	3/15/2026	\$ 1,028,542
2025 Critical Infrastructure 5GG25236	2/15/2029	\$ 936,286
2026 PG&E Las Pilitas Road Project	11/1/2026	\$ 96,300
	TOTAL	\$20,533,759

It was moved, seconded and approved to approve the Fiscal Summary items as slated and presented:

R. Johnson Second: Jones

Website Report

- 26,000 hits since January 1, 2026
- Chipper Day is working very well

Executive Committee Interim Actions

- Affirmation for actions taken by Executive Committee at February 2026 Meeting awarding \$63,000 in scholarships
 - Twenty-four (24) Allan Hancock Fire Academy student scholarships were awarded for a total of \$58,000
 - Two (2) Cuesta College student scholarships were awarded for a total of \$5,000

It was moved, seconded and approved to affirm the Executive Committee actions as slated and presented: Scott Second: Mohle

Scholarships and Grants

- Scholarship committee recommends awarding Austin Catlin and Carlos Hernandez \$2,500 scholarships each

It was moved, seconded and approved to approve the recommendations of the scholarship committee in awarding \$2,500 scholarships to Catlin and Hernandez as presented: Slate Second: Scott

Lake Nacimiento Focus Group Event

- The Lake Nacimiento Focus Group will be hosting a Firewise – Boating Safety Fair Open House on April 25, 2026 starting at 11:00 a.m.
 - Oak Shores HOA is hosting and budgeting \$15,000 for the event
 - Recommendation made for SLO FSC to award a local grant of \$5,000 in support of the event

It was moved, seconded and approved to approve the local grant amount of \$5,000 for the Firewise – Boating Safety Fair Open House on April 25, 2026 as presented: R. Johnson Second: Jones

CA Senate Bill 973

California Fire Safe Council is requesting support for SB973 which would codify County Coordinator Program into law (Public Resources Code). San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors submitted a letter of support.

ELECTIONS 2026 – BOARD OF DIRECTORS, OFFICERS, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Board of Directors

David Pierson is resigning his membership with the Cambria Focus Group and his Vice President role with SLO FSC Executive Committee due to his move out of State. Cambria Focus Group has identified alternate Board member, Anthony Freeman, to fill Mr. Pierson's seat on the SLO FSC Board of Directors.

Meeting Minutes

March 18, 2026

Page 5

Scott Hallett, Fourth Supervisorial District representative, has expressed his interest in filling the vacated Executive Committee position.

Nominations for Second Vice President were received as follows:

Debbie Allen nominated Scott Hallett to fill the vacated Second Vice President position

Paul Patti seconded the nomination

It was moved, seconded and approved to award Scott Hallett the position of Second Vice President and Anthony Freeman as the designated representative for the Cambria Focus Group on the Board of Directors as presented: Dyke Second: Scott

SLO Blues Baseball Sponsorship

- Foul ball sponsor for one 2026 home game
- We will receive 100 tickets and continual organization promotion throughout the game
- Date has not been determined yet

NEW GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

- 2025-26 Wildfire Prevention Grant
 - Prop 4 resubmit may reopen in Spring 2026 once regulations have been placed
 - Prop 4 funds can only be used for fuel treatment projects
- 2025-26 Forest Health Grant – CCI and Prop 4 funding
 - Upper Salinas-Las Tablas RCD is submitting applications for continuing Monterey Pine restoration work in Cambria and San Simeon with SLO FSC staff support
 - No direct application from SLO FSC
- CA State Fire Safe Council Grants
 - Current County Coordinator grant is being extended through October 2027
 - Invitation to apply for 2026-27 FSC County Coordinator Grant

It was moved, seconded and approved to apply for the CA FSC County Coordinator grant as presented: Slate Second: Sasules

- CWPP and Evacuation Planning Grant
 - Funding would provide continuing update of SLO County CWPP and Evacuation Modeling

It was moved, seconded and approved to apply for CWPP and Evacuation Planning grant as presented: Scott Second: Otte

- Both CA FSC grants require external audit within last 2 years

It was moved, seconded and approved to direct SLO FSC Treasurer, Stacy Korsgaden, and Executive Director, Dan Turner, to obtain external audit to comply with CA FSC Audit requirement as presented: Jones Second: Dyke

- 2026 Regional Forest Fire Capacity Block Grant
 - New program - Natalie Chapman from the Department of Conservation and Kostoula Vallianos from the State Coastal Conservancy briefed the Executive Committee on the new program. Hopes for program guidelines to be released soon for public comment with finalization by end of Summer 2026.
 - This could be a multi-million-dollar block grant for San Luis Obispo County. It's designed to provide long-term, sustainable funding.
 - Our new FireShed project and dashboard will serve as the basis for reviewing proposed projects.

Meeting Minutes

March 18, 2026

Page 6

- SLO FSC could serve as reviewers, approvers, and/or administrators of the block grant. The role we would hold has yet to be determined. There are multiple options in the administration of this grant:

- Project application review/prioritization only, or
- Project prioritization and recommendation to regional administrator, or
- Project prioritization and administration of subaward grants.

Our grants committee would play a large role in the review and award decisions which would require that committee to expand both internally and with external representatives.

- CAL FIRE Regional Block Grant Program
 - New program from the Legislature
 - Appropriated \$30 million from the 2024 Climate Bond (Prop 4) to CAL FIRE to fund regional projects to improve local fire prevention capacity, improve forest health and resilience, and reduce the risk of wildfire spreading into populated areas from wildlands.
 - CAL FIRE has drafted the Regional Wildfire and Landscape Resilience Grant guidelines to award these funds. Public comment period of the guidelines is open until April 13, 2026.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

- Defensible Space Qualified Entity Inspector course will be held March 24 and 25 at the Paso Emergency Services Center. Registration is on our website.
- The new Pismo Beach Fire and Police Station will be holding a ribbon cutting ceremony on May 11. Occupation of the new station is slated for mid-April.

NEXT MEETINGS

Executive Committee Meeting

- Wednesday, April 15, 2026
- Location: Atascadero City Hall

Board of Directors Meeting

- Wednesday, May 27, 2026 – please note this meeting is not on the 3rd Wednesday of the month
- Location: To be determined

ADJOURNMENT

Vice President Ed Waage adjourned the meeting at 11:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Loree McRoberts

Recording Secretary