San Luis Obispo County Fire Safe Council

www.fscslo.org

Board of Directors
and
State Coastal Conservancy Regional Forest and Wildfire Capacity

Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, September 16, 2026
0900-1120 hours
Atascadero City Hall

BOARD OF DIRECTORS IN ATTENDANCE:

Heather Moreno – President / BOS	Scott Hallett – Fourth Supervisorial District
Dan Ponti – Farm Bureau	Jim Sasules – First Supervisorial District
Ed Waage – Citizen at Large	Ruben Brand – PG&E
Stacy Korsgaden – Insurance Industry	Chris Slate – Third Supervisorial District
Chad Pankey – Fifth Supervisorial District	Scott Milner – SLO County OES
Scott Johnson – Citizen at Large	Bill Cochrane – Cattlemen's Association
Martin Scott – Ranchita Estates Focus Group	Paul Patti – Paso Robles Focus Group
Tony Freeman – Cambria Focus Group	Garrett Veyna – CAL FIRE/SLO County Fire
Skip Dyke – Range Improvement Assoc	

BOARD OF DIRECTORS ABSENT:

Bob Neumann – 2nd Supervisorial District	Ashley Grupenhoff – Cal Poly
Brendan Cosgrove – Building Industry	David Van Son – Atascadero FD Focus Group
Jeff Jones – Citizen at Large	Lilian Thaoxaochay – UC Cooperative
Cody Gibbons – Air Pollution Control District	Matt Mohle – SLO County Parks
Russ Johnson – Lake Naci Focus Group	Spencer Gordon – US LT RCD
Debbie Arnold – Citizen at Large	Josh Daniel – City of SLO Focus Group

STAFF PRESENT:

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

GUESTS:

Margot McDonald – Cal Poly	Mike Burkey – Cambria Fire
Andrew Johnson – Cal Poly	Lorrie Curb – Varian Ranch
Ross Porter – City of Paso Robles	Deborah Boynton – Cambria Focus Group
Wendy Lockwood – Varian Ranch	Dustin Heck – CAL FIRE
Brayan Bonilla – CAL FIRE	Andrew Johnson – Rincon Consultants
Mark Mankins – Range Improvement Assoc	Ray Ramos Jr. – Knollwood HOA
Jeremy James – Cal Poly	Steve Crawford – PG&E
Samantha Alvarez – CSL RCD	

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

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

PRESENTATIONS

Cal Poly Forest and Fire Sciences Department

- Department Head, Jeremy James introduced their newest faculty member, Assistant Professor of Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Fire Science, Andrew Johnson. Dr. Johnson is being sponsored by SLO FSC his first year at Cal Poly. This sponsorship supports a portion of his teaching load and enables his involvement in local projects and fosters networking with us and local agencies. His academic background includes a Bachelor of Science degree in Forestry from Virginia Tech and a PhD in Wildland Fire Science from Berkeley. Dr. Johnson's work bridges the gap between field-level forestry practices and advanced fire modeling. Interest in the program offered has grown considerably, the school received 600 applications with only 60 available slots for the year. Graduation rates have been 60% of students in Fire and 40% in Forestry. Dr. Johnson is very appreciative of the opportunity SLO FSC has afforded him and is looking forward to forming relationships within the community.

Range Improvement Association

- Mark Mankins was presented with a $20,000 check for support of the Range Improvement's prescribed fire operations, safety equipment and logistics.

ROUNDTABLE

- Ranchita Estates – residents are keeping up with vegetation and fire safe compliant
- CAL FIRE/SLO County Fire – Zone 0 is on hold pending further review, 3 new defensible space inspectors are starting next week, adding LRA abatement into County ordinance has caused 1,800 inspections of those properties since May
- First Supervisorial District – Heritage Ranch Safety Fair slated for April 17, 2027
- Third Supervisorial District – investigating a project involving a big grove of eucalyptus trees to be removed and duff cleaned up in SLO off Johnson Avenue behind old probation department
- Pismo Beach – looking at splitting Pismo into three different areas for representation, need people to form these groups
- Cambria Focus Group – Fiscalini Ranch Preserve, Covell Ranch and the Fish and Wildlife projects are moving forward quickly, Cambria Fire is raising funds for a watercraft by holding a pickleball tournament, educational materials being translated into Spanish to educate landscapers
- PG&E – different departments within PG&E are consolidating their work tasks and schedules to minimize disruptions and impact on customer's property, Lidar units being used in See Canyon project
- Paso Robles – second Firewise community established, chipping events are being advertised with social media and sign boards
- Cattlemen's Association – lots of calves on the ground and with that ranchers are seeing a lot more pigs, bears and mountain lions
- Toro Creek – hoarder house with Code Enforcement case and extreme fire hazard is finally being cleaned up

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- Insurance Industry – With the State implementing the replacement tire program, auto policies will see changes – less tread means more money. California lawmakers have rejected Governor Gavin Newsom's push to stop insurance companies from seeking reimbursement from utility companies responsible for wildfires.
- Cal Poly – A joint research funding opportunity focused on wildfires in the wildland urban interface with Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States is accepting applications. This collaborative opportunity seeks to improve understanding of and resilience to wildfire in zones where natural and human environments meet.
- Avila Beach – First meeting held with 20 people in attendance
- OES – The predicted El Nino this winter has prompted updated information to be released soon.

FINANCIAL AUDIT COMMITTEE

- The first committee meeting was held on September 11, 2026.
    - Financial practices were reviewed to familiarize members with the processes of billing grants for reimbursement and advances, processing accounts payable and the purpose of each bank account.
    - Columbia accounts on track for closure by end of September 2026.
- Allan Hancock College scholarship support change
    - Proposal submitted to switch to a block grant model for Allan Hancock College Fire Academy through their Foundation.

It was moved, seconded and approved to transition to a block grant model for Allan Hancock Fire Academy students beginning Fall 2026 as presented: Dyke Second: Pankey

- The committee reviewed two proposals received for our financial audit, Caliber Audit & Attest LLP and Glenn Burdette. Recommendation made to award audit contract to Caliber Audit & Attest LLP.
    - An additional $12,000 will need to be allocated to Consulting and Professional Services line item in the Operations budget to accommodate the audit contract.

It was moved, seconded and approved to award the financial audit contract to Caliber Audit & Attest LLP and direct the SLO FSC President, Treasurer or Executive Director to execute contract and increase the SLO FSC Operations Budget Consulting and Professional Services line-item allocation from $18,000 to $30,000 to accommodate the audit contract as presented: Waage Second: Slate

FIRE SAFE COUNCIL BUSINESS

Fiscal Summary for Month Ending August 31, 2026

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

2026 Active Grants

2026 PG&E Las Pilitas Road Project	Expires: 11/1/2026	$ 96,300
2024 State Coastal Conservancy	12/30/2026	$ 270,250
Upper Salinas Las Tablas RCD – Schwartz	12/30/2026	$ 120,000
Upper Salinas Las Tablas RCD – Linkage 2	12/30/2026	$ 134,400
2025 Critical Infrastructure 5GG25236	2/15/2029	$ 936,286
2023 CCI Wildfire Prevention 5GA22227	3/20/2029	$ 2,857,954
2024 Wildfire Prevention 5TR23211	3/15/2030	$ 3,112,344
2024 Monterey Pine Forest Health 8GG23617	3/15/2030	$ 6,678,635
	TOTAL	**$14,206,169**

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

Scholarship Committee

- Brayan Bonilla, Cuesta College student and current CAL FIRE Defensible Space Inspector, furthering his firefighter career path with EMT training.

It was moved, seconded and approved to award a $2,500 scholarship to Brayan Bonilla as presented: Hallett Second: Slate

Website Report

- SLO FSC has six (6) interns working with us on evacuation and preplans
- Chipper Day is getting a lot of attention, since January 1, 2026, we have serviced 536 residents for 1,000 cubic yards
- SIM Table events scheduled in Atascadero

Focus Group / FireWise Communities

- Pismo Heights has 4 people interested in forming a Focus Group
- Varian Ranch, Cambria, Trilogy (Nipomo) and Avila have all held recent focus group meetings
- Los Osos Emergency Services Committee is interested in seeing the focus group reform

NEW GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

- 2025-26 Wildfire Prevention Grant
    - Local level review deadline September 17, 2026
    - Three (3) project proposals submitted with a $950,000 cap per proposal
        - Heritage Ranch Community Risk Reduction $812,958
            - Fuel break
            - Lake Nacimiento Fireshed analysis
            - Firewise community support
        - Pismo – Avila Beach – South County Community Risk Reduction $944,990
            - 18 projects in 10 neighborhoods
        - Creston-Parkhill Community Risk Reduction $945,470
            - Rocky Terrace Strategic Fuel Break
            - Coyote-Sunstorm II Strategic Fuel Break
            - Parkhill Fireshed analysis
- 2026 CAL FIRE Regional Wildfire and Landscape Resilience Block Grant Program
    - Concept proposal submitted, we have been invited to second round submission – full application due October 6
        - 42 applications submitted Statewide – 7 were invited to second round
    - SLO FSC applied for $6 million for the Central Coast Regional Wildfire Coalition
        - Our administration would have a workload increase in managing subawards
        - Potential landscape scale projects:
            - Heritage Ranch – Las Tablas Ranch fuel break
            - Pismo Beach eastside fuel treatment - Oak Park Road north to Squire Canyon
            - San Luis Obispo – Cal Poly, Miossi, Reservoir Canyon, Cuesta Grade
            - Atascadero – westside, Santa Rita Road to Tassajera Road
            - Workforce Development – Cal Poly WUI Fire Institute

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- Department of Conservation Regional Forest Fire Grant
    - Draft guidelines withdrawn for rewrite – unknown deadline
    - Grantor wants 3-5 counties to combine into a Regional Block Grant
        - No direction as to which counties they want to combine
        - Governor's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force subregional maps being considered as groupings
    - Currently there are no plans for SLO FSC to apply to be Regional Block Grant leader

GOOD OF THE ORDER

- Senate Bill 973 – SB codifies the Wildfire County Coordinator Program in state law and authorizes $9.5 million for its administration, ensuring long-term funding and oversight for county-level wildfire mitigation efforts
- Senate Bill 1370 - SB codifies in state law Governor Newsom's temporary emergency proclamation that removed the requirements of most state environmental regulations for wildfire mitigation.

NEXT MEETINGS

Executive Committee Meeting

- Wednesday, October21, 2026
- Location: Atascadero City Hall

Board of Directors Meeting

- Wednesday, November 18, 2026
- Location: To be determined

November Board of Directors Meeting will be changed to a 2:00 p.m. start time.

ADJOURNMENT

President Heather Moreno adjourned the meeting at 11:20 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Loree McRoberts
Recording Secretary

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