



A Chapter of
Small Wilderness Area Preservation

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FFRP News

FRIENDS OF THE FISCALINI RANCH PRESERVE NEWSLETTER

Fall 2013 - Website Version

Our Ranch / Our Thistle *By Bob McDonnell*



Steve, Walt, Loree

Even standard milk thistles are astonishing.

often grow densely, crowding out other vegetation with dense colonies, thereby preventing establishment of native plants. Its spiny leaves and stems reduce the ability of native animals to graze on it and other nearby forage. Two common types found on our ranch are bull thistle and milk thistle. Both can grow up to six feet tall. The milk thistle is so noxious all property owners in King County, Washington State are required to remove it.

Our one desirable thistle is the beautiful compact cobweb thistle, a native of coastal California. This particular plant is known as a species of concern, a term that commonly refers to species that are declining or appear to be in need of concentrated conservation actions.

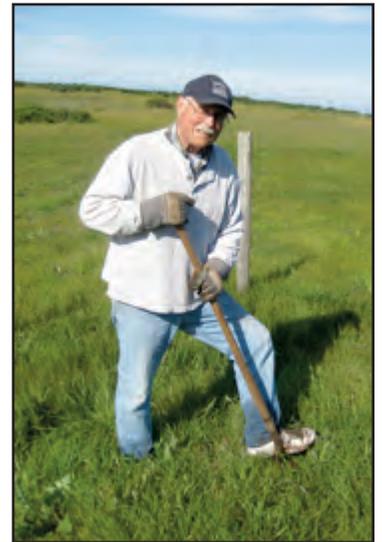


Wear gloves when entering a thistle jungle!

We love our ranch. We don't love our thistle (exception: We love compact cobweb thistle!)

What is our ranch? In brief, it is over 400 acres of beautiful coastal land in small town Cambria. The most outstanding natural feature of the preserve is the dramatic ocean bluff that runs about a mile along the shoreline. The Ranch offers a rare expanse of nature and solitude, almost a back county experience, but within walking distance of visitor accommodations and neighborhoods.

What about our thistle? We have five types of this stickery plant, found on a good part of our ranch. Thistles can



Curt enjoys the ranch, the ocean, the friends, and does not tolerate the thistle.

Our own Friends of the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve's mission is to protect and maintain the Ranch in a natural state compatible mainly with passive recreation. One part of this mission deals with, you guessed it, thistle removal. If you readers have a desire to remove thistles to help keep the Ranch in a natural state, to make friends and to have some fun, contact Alese Bell or Jo Ellen Butler at 927-2856. Then grab your hat, gloves, sunscreen, and a shovel. You will love our ranch even more.

Parade Day!



We're excited! Our Pinedorado Parade float took a second place ribbon in the Non-Commercial Decorated Floats, over 18 divisions!

FFRP hasn't participated in the Pinedorado Parade for a few years but with this year's theme, "Roar Into Tomorrow...Volunteer... Make It Happen," we couldn't pass up the opportunity to celebrate our volunteers and the Ranch.

As with most efforts, many hands were needed to create our entry. Board member Randy Schwalbe took the lead in designing our float and creating the centerpiece photo collage and the front and rear banners. Harvey Conn generously gave us the use of his trailer and Walt Andrus, with the help of Richard Lee, lent his carpentry skills to build the frames to display the collage and rear banner. Jan Meshkoff, Jo Ellen Butler, Marge Sewell, Loree Parral, Maryjean Carroll, Virginia Loe and Alese Bell gathered pine boughs and pine cones, painted tarps, made signs and artfully put everything together to present our message. Jim and Jan Bahringer kindly let us use their barn as a work site, which was especially nice because it is so close to parade staging.

We are also grateful to those who partnered with us: the Historical Society and Cambria Nursery which both loaned us trees. Special thanks to the CCSD, which not only provided the tractor but also Jay to drive it. We must also mention the kids Jay got to paint the fabulous flowers on the tractor to add a bit of whimsy!

Parade day was warm and wonderful as we joined the parade with Brad Seek and Curt Snow carrying the banner, Alese and Bob Bell riding the float, Jan Meshkoff, Loree Parral and Jo Ellen Butler working the crowd handing out trail maps. The crowd favorites were Lorna and Bruce Mumper with their three Belgian Shepards, Aria, Tyger, and Cruiser.

Thank you to all the volunteers who did, indeed, make it happen.

A Brief Introduction: FFRP Board Members

We are proud to have a full Board of Directors for FFRP. Board members serve three year terms and are rotated in groups of four. Board members do the lion's share of work for the Ranch at our monthly meetings. Volunteering to run the organization that protects the Ranch for future generations is no light task. We thank the following board members for their dedication to the ranch.

Here is a little background on each board member so you might get to know them a little better:

Walt Andrus married his lovely wife, Loree Parral, on the Ranch and so has a very special connection to the preserve. He has a great willingness to contribute whatever work needs to be done and great skills to go along with his enthusiasm.

Adolph Atencio not only serves on our board, he is a member of Parks Recreation and Openspace Commission (PROS) and is on the Trails Committees for both. A retired aerospace engineer, he now works at Hearst Castle.

Jan Bahringer serves as our recording secretary. She is co-owner of Fog's End Bed & Breakfast with her husband Jim, who graciously share their barn with us for events. She raises chickens in her spare time.

Alese Bell is a founding board member and has been on the board since before the Ranch purchase. She was elected Chair of FFRP in 2004 and is not only our fearless leader, she is our food and flower maven.

Bob Detweiler is Dean of the School of Education at Cal Poly and has been on the Board since 2000. He serves on our Finance Committee and provides sly humor and great financial advice at our meetings.

Melanie Gruber was appointed to the board this year. She is a talented vocalist and one of the famed "Three Sopranos" here in Cambria. She is a retired teacher and brings many talents along with a great love of the Ranch to the Board.

Richard Lee came to us with board experience from Greenspace and Friends of the Elephant Seals. He is famous for his fantastic birdhouses and works hard to keep the benches on the Ranch beautiful and in good repair.

Joyce Renshaw is our Docent Walk coordinator and does a great job of providing us with interesting, informative presenters. She has an amazing volunteer record not only

with us, but also the Historical Society, NCAC and PROS among many others.

Randy Schwalbe was elected to the Board in January of 2013. He provides great creative skills and music connections and he has a wonderful can-do attitude. He is one of the busiest men in Cambria with his theatrical and "high school musical" involvement.

Brad Seek is retired from the County Health Department. He grows native plants for the Ranch and other properties around Cambria and is a "natural" at wildlife (and wildflower) photography!

Curt Snow serves FFRP as our Treasurer and is a regular member of the wonderful Wednesday Weeders on the Ranch. He also works part time doing bookkeeping for Linn's and (surprisingly) serves on our Finance Committee.

Mark Stetz is our newest Board Member and Pastor at Santa Rosa Catholic Church. Mark was appointed to the board in May of 2013 and helps provide a wise and balanced look at board activities. He also is a member of our Finance Committee.

Walking the Land

Bill E. Goldberg

Kindred spirits
walking the land.

Lovers of beauty's way
friends of the earth.

Soft soil
caresses their feet.

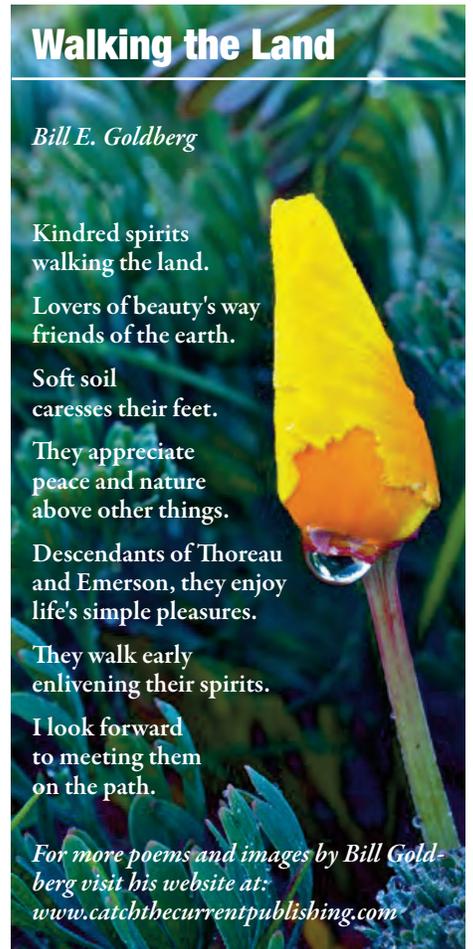
They appreciate
peace and nature
above other things.

Descendants of Thoreau
and Emerson, they enjoy
life's simple pleasures.

They walk early
enlivening their spirits.

I look forward
to meeting them
on the path.

*For more poems and images by Bill Goldberg visit his website at:
www.catchthecurrentpublishing.com*



It's The Little Things



Brad Seek's featured photo subject is a young Allen's Hummingbird who was testing out its shape and flexibility. He shot photos of this youngster along Santa Rosa Creek. The riparian corridor on the Ranch is perfect habitat, apparently, for visiting Allen's Hummingbirds to breed and raise young before heading south in the late summer.

The Allen's Hummingbird is a small bird, with mature adults reaching only 3 to 3½ inches in length. The male Allen's has an iridescent scarlet throat, a green back and forehead, with rust-colored rufous flanks, rump, and tail. Females are slightly less colorful with a dull white chin, throat and chest. Immature birds are similar in coloring to the female, with less spotting on the throat and less rufous on the flanks.

Allens' dine on floral nectar and small insects taken from the air or from vegetation.

This species of hummingbird breeds only along a narrow strip of coastal California and southern Oregon. The courtship flight of the male Allen's Hummingbird is a back and forth arc of about 25 feet, similar to the motion of a swinging pendulum, followed by a high-speed dive from about 100 feet.

Females make their nests in shrubs and trees with dense vegetation. Nests are made of grasses and leaves woven together with spider webs. The outside is covered with mosses and lichens and the inside is lined with down. An average of two off white eggs are laid and incubated for 12-22 days. Usually there are two clutches of eggs per season.

The Sur del Valle de Mexico supports Allen's Hummingbirds on their wintering range and they are also known to winter in southern California and Arizona. They are resident in



extreme southern California and the Channel Islands, off the coast from Santa Barbara.

Interesting fact: A group of hummingbirds has many collective nouns, including a "bouquet", "glittering", "hover", "shimmer", and "tune" of hummingbirds.

THANKS To Our Business Members

FFRP appreciates the support of:

A Matter of Taste

Bridge Street Inn

Cambria Window Cleaning

Cookie Crock Market

Exotic Nature

Fog's End Bed & Breakfast

Olallieberry Inn

Patricia Griffin Studio

StarFlower Professional Services

Please support the businesses that support the Ranch. All memberships help keep the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve healthy, happy and open to the public, from dawn to dusk every day of the year. Now you can connect to our business member websites from our website! www.ffrpcambria.org

Great Kitchens! Great Fun!

Each year FFRP's biggest fundraiser is the Great Kitchens of Cambria Tour presented on the last Saturday in July. This year was our thirteenth year and most of our committee members have been part of the effort for at least 10 years. We begin our search each year in March for kitchens of various styles and sizes, both new and remodeled. As we line them up we begin looking for sponsors and raffle prizes from local businesses.

Many years ago we learned that the most popular kitchens were at the locations where we were serving food, so it didn't take long before we began to serve food at every kitchen. Our volunteers prepare all of the food. We strive to make each venue attractive and interesting as well as palate pleasing. Requests for our recipes became so overwhelming that 4 years ago we created a recipe book in a format that can be added to each year.

This year's tour was a sellout and also our most successful to date. As always, we showcased eight kitchens in all areas of Cambria. Stolo Winery on Santa Rosa Creek Road opened their farmhouse kitchen and served

their Chardonnay with our gourmet cheeses in their outdoor kitchen. Guests could also stroll the beautiful gardens and even visit the tasting room. Virginia Severa's home on Marine Terrace brought Big Sur to mind with a CHEF's kitchen nestled in the center. On Happy Hill, Bruce Beery and Susan Belany's kitchen was a lesson in sustainability and the sliding glass wall opened the space to the deck for great flow. Kathleen and Greg Lawson's Park Hill kitchen was a white-bright remodel and a very clever use of space. Kathryn Taylor and Al Curtice's kitchen in Pacific Pines (old Air Force housing) was a beautiful self-remodel and the expansive gardens were the perfect place for guests to enjoy dessert and coffee. Pine Knolls was the location of Carl Brandt's kitchen, which is spacious and well appointed with tons of storage. Bruce and Lorna Mumper's home on Lodge Hill had a very striking sage green kitchen and featured all drawer storage as well as a pastry center. Finally Lynn and John Carter's Liemert kitchen was the largest on this year's tour and described as "A place to enjoy friends and family." That is just a

taste of what each of these kitchens had to offer.

As guests traveled from kitchen to kitchen the overall impression was of a moving party of happy, almost giddy, people enjoying party food, greeting friends and viewing beautiful homes. Each year we hear "that was the best one yet." So if you haven't come yet, please do, and if you have, we know you'll want to come again. See you next July!



Events: Ongoing and Upcoming – Please Mark Your Calendar!

Docent Walks - Due to limited space on most walks, reservations are required; by e-mail, reservations@cambriaranchwalks.com or by phone, (805) 927-2202. For more information on each walk, visit www.cambriaranchwalks.com.

Opportunities to Make a Difference

Invader Raiders meet on *Wednesdays, some Fridays and Sundays every week* (weather permitting) to remove invasive non-native plants, which encourages the native wildflowers and grasses to return to the preserve. You may volunteer whenever you can (no commitment required) and enjoy the company of others while doing good work. Please call 927-2856 if you are interested or for more information.

Ranch Hands meet the *third Saturday of each month*, to do different maintenance projects on the Ranch including broom removal, trail maintenance and refinishing benches, among other things. We also call on Ranch Hands when volunteer labor is needed to match grant funds for projects on the Ranch. Please call 927-2856 if you would like to be notified of these workdays.

Mutt Mitt Minders keep an eye on the mutt mitt dispensers at each trailhead to make sure they are filled. This very important job makes walking on the Ranch so much more pleasant. We currently need back up minders for a few of the entrances. Volunteers are provided with the mutt mitts and refill the dispensers when they walk on the Ranch, so it is good to have someone who lives near the entrance they are monitoring.



New Focus, New Forest

One of our most wonderful events on the Ranch is our Thanksgiving Weekend Tree Planting. In the past we have planted from 200 – 400 rare and endangered Monterey pines on the Ranch each year. It is a wonderful time to get together with others in the community and work off a little of the poundage we've gained celebrating with friends and family.

After eight years and thousands of Monterey pines planted on the Ranch, FFRP is giving it a rest this year. We have decided to take a step back and assess how our plantings are doing, what areas may need attention next and what other methods we might use to protect the health of the forest. Sometimes planting more trees isn't the best answer.

On Saturday, November 30 at 9:00 am, we will meet at the Highway 1 entrance to the west Ranch by the Santa Rosa Creek Bridge. After tending the native plantings in the Santa Rosa Creek Restoration project area, we will take a guided walk until noon to look at our past Thanksgiving plantings and talk about the native Monterey pine forest.

Membership Renewal... FFRP Wants YOU!

Your membership renewal is important to us! You recently received a renewal reminder letter from FFRP asking you to renew for the July 2013 to July 2014 membership year. If you've already renewed—thank you! If not, please consider doing so right away.

Renew Now! You may either fill out the bottom portion of your membership renewal letter, or renew online at:

ffrpcambria.org/join.html

Your membership shows community support and helps us fulfill our mission of preserving the Ranch...forever.

