



*A Chapter of
Small Wilderness Area Preservation*

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FFRP News

FRIENDS OF THE FISCALINI RANCH PRESERVE NEWSLETTER

Winter 2012

Planting More Trees

Each year FFRP holds their Thanksgiving weekend tree planting on the Ranch to help expand our native Monterey pine forest. This year about 25 volunteers planted 300 trees along the western edge of the forest. It was a beautiful day, with spectacular views of the ocean and coastline, both to the north and south.

Trees were planted and watered and are now being monitored to make sure they survive this drier than normal winter. In the past we have been able to count on regular rains to see the trees through the winter at least. Last year the rains got our seedlings established so that we did not have to provide supplementary water.

This year we have already watered our new planting, thanks to Jim Bahringer who provided his truck and water tank. With Jim and volunteers Brad Seek, Jo Ellen Butler and a passing jogger named John, we were able to make sure the baby pines make it until the next rain comes. Volunteers will also be adding pine chip mulch at the next scheduled workday.

According to archaeological reports done on the Ranch, it was once covered in Monterey pine trees but logging for lumber and fuel took its toll in the late 1800's. So over the last 11 years we have planted well over 2000 trees. Not all of them have survived, but most are doing well because of our planting methods and follow up care. Instead of bringing in outside saplings, hundreds of seeds were collected from the Ranch and nearby forest. Brad Seek propagates the seeds and tends the seedlings until they are ready to plant the following fall. By using seed collected on-site, the hope is to reproduce the local genetics hidden in our forest that makes it different from other stands of Monterey pines.

FFRP's approach isn't one of intense management. For the most part we just let the forest reclaim the fields at its edge. But each year we help things along by expanding the tree line just a little. Our plantings have taken place mostly in areas along the ridge. We are not trying to completely reforest the Ranch. Our coastal prairie, that wide expanse of grassland that leads to the coast, is as rare and endangered as Monterey pines and is important to us too.



Coastal Cleanup 2011



Over 60,000 Volunteers removed close to 600,000 pounds of trash from California's shorelines on California Coastal Cleanup Day, September 17, 2011. Meanwhile, back at the Ranch, eight volunteers cleaned the length of the coastal bluffs and the Santa Rosa Creek corridor.

We are lucky on the Ranch because most Ranch walkers pick up after themselves and there is really very little trash to remove. But as we know from past cleanup data, most of the debris we find on our shorelines comes from inland sources, traveling through storm drains or creeks out to the beaches and the ocean. That was certainly true on the Ranch

Songs For the Season

When Ron Perry and Mary Schwalbe offered to provide music for a holiday fundraiser we were delighted. And what better place to hold it than the Hamlet at Moonstone Gardens?

On the evening of December 3 we hosted "Songs for the Season". Guests enjoyed an array of tasty delights from the repertoire of Becky Kincaid and Alese Bell paired with an assortment of local wines in the dining room at the Hamlet.

The musical talents of Mary and Ron greatly enhanced the evening and many, we are sure, attended especially to hear our musical guests. They played and sang seasonal favorites, including many "sing alongs" to the delight of everyone.

We also had a nice variety of raffle items. Thanks go out to donors Ed Everdale, GROW, Seekers Glass Gallery, Richard Lee, Coogan Appel Jewelry, Kathy Charbonneau, Mary Ann Grau, Cambria Nursery, Bob and Alese Bell and Jo Ellen Butler and Nolan Coogan. Everyone seemed delighted when their names were announced as winners.

It was a beautiful evening and a fabulous way to kick off the holiday season!

this year. We removed from the Santa Rosa Creek bed more than ten times the trash that was collected from the ocean bluffs. This was our first year cleaning both the coastal area and the creek. Based on this year's trash we will be including Santa Rosa Creek, from the Crosstown Trail Bridge to the Windsor Bridge, in future cleanups.

This event is sponsored every year by the California Coastal Commission, which asks that all Californians take responsibility for making sure trash goes where it belongs; securely in a trash can, recycling bin, or a hazardous waste dump when appropriate.

The Coastal Commission continued an effort to reduce the environmental footprint of the Cleanup by asking volunteers to bring reusable bags or buckets and their own gloves to the event, rather than using single-use disposable items and our volunteers came prepared.

Thank you Coastal Cleanup volunteers! By cleaning up where you live and play, and by helping to stop trash where it starts, you're caring for our coast and ocean as well as the Ranch.



New FFRP Website

At last! After a few trials, our new website is finished and ready for a visit from you. It has a brand new look, updated content, great photos and a new online store connected to PayPal for your online shopping convenience. You can now safely and conveniently join FFRP, renew your membership or donate online. If you'd rather download a membership form to mail in - that's easy too!

By logging on to www.ffrpcambria.org you will be able to keep up with the latest events, access the conservation documents that govern the Ranch and link to business support-

Thanks Everyone!

For many years FFRP has provided the Mutt Mitts that pet owners use on the Ranch. This was done at first with the help of an anonymous donor who financed the Huntington mutt mitts for several years. Later the Cambria Community Council granted funds to provide the Bluff Trail users with bags for their pet waste. FFRP provided the remaining funding for the bags, bought the dispensers, installed them and recruited volunteers to keep the Mutt Mitt dispensers filled.

This year the CCSD is sponsoring this much needed amenity on the Ranch in order to help keep the trails clean and our pets and wildlife healthy. Thank you CCSD!

We would also like to thank those who helped us in providing the bags; an anonymous Park Hill neighbor and the Cambria Community Council. A big thanks also to those volunteers who, over the years have monitored and filled the containers at the entrances to the Ranch; Mike and Kathryn Kenny, Jack Morrow, Ken Eberle, Patti Girata, Bob Bell, John and Judy Martinez, Stephen Gryte and Jacque van Weerden Poelman.

ers and some other organizations including the Forest Committee and the Cambria Historical Society.

Jennifer Star designed our website aided by the Website Committee; Becky Kincaid, Marian King and Jo Ellen Butler and we think that the result is stunning.

We hope you'll agree Jennifer has done a beautiful job, but we are always looking to improve, so please check out our new site and let us know what you think by clicking FFRPCAMBRIA@SBCGLOBAL.NET at the bottom of a page!



Young Volunteers

Ranch Meanderings by Randy Schwalbe

Ever notice how much better a shower feels after working out, doing heavy or dirty work around the yard, or playing football on a muddy field? The transformation is liberating. As I have for the past fifteen years, I am spending work days at a major aerospace company in the Los Angeles area. My job is rewarding, however, I notice the emotional and spiritual "grime" that has built up during the week when I have that cleansing experience on weekends here in Cambria. When my wife and I walk our dogs on all the various trails of the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve, aka the Ranch, I tend to treat the experience as a life's timeout in order to reflect on this process. Actually, it is more than reflecting—I consciously notice how the faucet has been turned on by making the trek to the Ranch and how the city soot is washed away by the sights and sounds of the panoramic vistas comprising the forest, grasslands, and bluffs of the preserve.

I began to notice this phenomenon by the difference in how I felt on Mondays after a weekend in Cambria (which almost always includes Ranch time). On those days, I feel invigorated with more purpose. Indeed, that difference is noticeable just by being in my home surrounded by the Lodge Hill forest, but there I am often consumed by projects, honeydos, or family activities. Setting foot on a Ranch trail is like following the bell into meditation during a church service. When I refrain from incessant chatter (which my

wife wishes I would do more often while on the Ranch), I start to focus on all the endless details surrounding the trails and how they all make up the bigger composition:

- *The mysteriousness of the forest harbors many secrets that nature will gladly share if I could stay long enough in one place.*
- *The grasslands offer a feeling of unbounded freedom, not just to roam, but from the shackles of civilization—akin to the return to Eden.*
- *The coastline is just stunningly beautiful, some of nature's most amazing handiwork.*
- *The fauna is a reminder that man can exhibit some restraint by nurturing and encouraging the natural order of an unadulterated ecosystem.*

Just a short hike from our house, all this feels like a part of our backyard. Wow, pinch me.

Someday soon, I will remove the shackles of corporate life, and become a full-time resident of Cambria. Until then, I wonder, will my relationship, my reverence of the Ranch change? Will it no longer serve as a cleansing agent of my soul? Well, it has been fifteen years, and I love it even more. Talking with acquaintances and strangers alike along the bluff trail, volunteering to remove invasive plants, or eating lunch on the bench on the western edge of the upper Ranch, it just never gets old.



Santa Rosa Creek Restoration Project

The Santa Rosa Creek Restoration project is complete. Eucalyptus was removed from a small area between the Highway One entrance and the pump station along the Santa Rosa Creek Trail. The area was also cleared of very invasive Cape or German ivy.

The California Conservation Corps did most of the work, but the very largest trees had to be removed by a licensed contractor. The largest stump weighed 22,000 pounds and will be recycled to make a very large tree house. Other wood has been recycled as firewood. The large straight logs will be used for a future erosion control project on the Ranch, slated to start in August of 2012.

All downed material has been removed and the site and staging areas have been seeded with hydro mulch and small native seedlings have been planted. The area will be monitored to make sure the eucalyptus doesn't resprout and the native plantings survive. It will also be monitored to see what the effect of removing the eucalyptus has on the creek and its inhabitants. What we find out will determine how to approach future creek restoration projects.



THANKS To Our Business Members

FFRP appreciates the support of:

- *A Matter of Taste*
- *Bridge Street Inn*
- *Cambria Window Cleaning*
- *Cookie Crock*
- *Exotic Nature*
- *Fog's End Bed and Breakfast*
- *Olallieberry Inn*
- *Patricia Griffin Studio*

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 new website! www.ffrpcambria.org



Mushroom Walk, January 2012

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, 927-2202.

For more information on each walk, visit www.CambriaRanchWalks.com.

Cambria Pine Trees and Nature on the Ranch

Saturday, February 25, 10:00 - 12:00

Brad Seek will lead us on a nature walk that will include Cambria's Pine Trees. He will enlighten us on the life cycle of the pines as well as other plants along the trail.

Archaeology Walk

Saturday, March 10, 10:00 - 12:00

Join Terry Jones in a walk back in time. You will see the Ranch with new eyes. We will find out who lived on the Ranch during the last 10,000 years and how they reacted to changes in climate, food resources and population.

Introduction to Lichens

Saturday, April TBA, 10:00 - 12:00

Lisa Andreano is an expert on lichens. She wrote, *Common Lichens of the Estero Bay Area*. Learn the symbiotic make up between algae and fungus. Lichens are widespread in

our Ranch forest and have many uses such as in the making of dyes, perfumes, as well as in traditional medicines.

Opportunities to Make a Difference

Invader Raiders meet on *Wednesday, Friday and Sunday 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 927-1035 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. At the end of summer we will be helping with an erosion control project on the gully behind Seacliff Estates by doing invasive weed removal and restoration planting. Please call 927-2856 if you would like to be notified of these workdays.

Upcoming Events

Look for invitations to our *Gathering in the Gardens* fundraiser and our annual *Volunteer Picnic* this spring. Dates and times have yet to be decided.

8th Annual Cambria Wildflower Show

*Saturday and Sunday, April 28 and 29
Cambria Veteran's Memorial Building*

Have you ever wondered about the wildflowers, shrubs and trees you see flowering on your spring walks and drives on the central coast? Do you have questions about what makes a wildflower a native or an alien? If so, you can have your wildflower questions answered at the *Eighth Annual Cambria Wildflower Show*. Over 500 individually labeled specimens are expected to be on display. Call 805-927-2856 for more information or to volunteer.

You might also enjoy a related event that takes place in Santa Margarita on March 24 and 25. The *2nd Annual Wildflower Festival* features wildflower related "hidden treasures" talks along with vendors. Please go to visitsantamargarita.com or call Jill Gallagher at 805-235-2129 for more information.

Friends of the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve
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