

GREENSPACE IN 2017

February 1. Imbolc is upon us, the “cross-quarter day” that marks the beginning of spring on the old Celtic calendar. The fields have softened from weeks of abundant rain. The sun has begun to arc higher across the sky each day. Birds sing to their mates. Plum trees bloom by the Burton Street bridge over a full-running Santa Rosa Creek.

In the U.S., of course, we mark Groundhog Day, Feb. 2, when Punxsutawney Phil predicts whether or not winter will last for six more weeks. But in ancient Ireland and the Gaelic parts of Britain, it was Imbolc, feast day of St. Brigid and celebration of returning light, that brought hope, the new agricultural round.

What better time to speak of new plans and share Greenspace’s goals for 2017? Our Board of Directors met on January 28th for an intensive retreat that focused on our accomplishments and our plans as we look ahead. During the day-long session, we explored ways in which we have addressed our mission and vision in this past year and brainstormed how we will build on successes to achieve still more benefits to SLO County’s North Coast, its vital natural resources and its people.

You can find Greenspace’s Mission at the end of each *Insider* newsletter. Here is our Vision:

“Greenspace envisions a thriving North Coast where unique environmental, agricultural, cultural and spiritual resources are valued by residents and visitors alike. We envision restored open spaces, effective environmental education and advocacy programs, implementation of forest and watershed plans, sustainable local agriculture, and a healthy coastal ecosystem. Our vision is to be a vital, influential and financially sound link in our community, inspiring and shaping a healthy future for this beautiful region.”

Focusing on this vision, we have established a number of plans that will further its realization for Cambria and nearby communities. First, Green-

space is moving forward with year two of our Environmental Education Field Days for 6th graders at Santa Lucia Middle School. Funded by a second grant from the Harold J. Miossi Charitable Trust, the program focuses this year on the Monterey pine forest, with one field day each quarter in our Strawberry Canyon Reserve.



Students testing Strawberry Canyon soil

Photo: Sara Blair Field

The students explore the pine life cycle, the forest’s complex ecosystem, and the threat of invasive plants and pathogens. They learn about the uses of dendrochronology or tree-ring dating, and conduct tests on the reserve’s soil to determine its chemistry. They do field drawings and spend time in silence, absorbing birds’ calls, squirrel chatter, the sound of a lizard crossing dry leaves. Then each student plants a Monterey pine seedling to restore the forest.

At Coast Union High School, we’re working with agriculture instructor Darcy Dobrec to provide her horticulture students with hands-on experiences in regenerating native Monterey pines. The Seed to Forest project was funded by a generous grant from the Cambria Community Council. The students will propagate seedlings this spring from our existing seed bank, learning how to mix soils, and

establishing the correct soil chemistry for pine germination and growth. They then will raise seedlings in the high school greenhouse.

The students will plant native Monterey pine seedlings in Strawberry Canyon. They also will locate disease-free trees in several sections of the local forest, using GPS to establish tree locations so that we can harvest cones next fall, process them and replenish the cache of healthy seeds.

Greenspace will provide several community events in the months ahead. On April 1st, we will host A Learning Adventure in Strawberry Canyon, for both adults and young people. Led by Monterey pine forest expert Rick Hawley, the walk will include many of the same elements described above, including exploring the pine life cycle, plant identification, soil testing and planting Monterey pine seedlings. A delicious gourmet lunch will be included.

On April 22, Greenspace will observe Earth Day at our Creekside Reserve, 2264 Center Street, with a public concert by Zen Mountain Poets and presentations on Monterey pines. In early May, we will offer a workshop, "Native Plants and Defensible Space," for interested residents, gardeners and vegetation workers. The workshop will be bilingual. We also will present a legacy workshop on charitable trust gifts with estate lawyer Chris Toews in June.

We will celebrate the Chinese Duan Wu Festival and Cambria Heritage Days on May 27 with an open house at the Creekside Reserve's Chinese Temple. Sandy Lydon, historian of the Chinese immigrant experience in California, will speak on Cambria's Chinese community and "hungry ghosts." Cal Poly's Dragon Dancers will offer a special performance.

Be sure to mark your calendars for our 6th annual Art & Adventure Dinner and Auction, July 22 at Robin's Restaurant in Cambria. As always, there will be wonderful adventures ranging from a guided fishing trip on Estero Bay to a two-night stay in beautiful Mendocino to a wine cruise on the Columbia River. Art work by talented local and regional artists also will be auctioned. Tickets will be available in May.

August 26th will be our summer celebration at the Creekside, with local musicians, dancing, food and festivities. In the fall, we are planning notable guest presentations on forest and watershed issues as part of our Speakers Series.

During this year, Greenspace will collaborate with other organizations on advocating for environmental

issues that must be addressed in the age of rapid climate change, and against likely environmental deregulation that may make it more difficult to protect coastal ecosystems.

We continue to seek appropriate land parcels to acquire, retire from development and restore to native habitat status. If you are interested in donating or discussing purchase by Greenspace of a trust property, or are interested in assisting with this work, please feel free to email or call the office.

In all these activities, we remain focused on our long-range vision: the thriving community, the engaged citizenry, the healed and healing environment. --CG



Santa Rosa Creek Breaks Through to the Pacific Photo: C. Gannon

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteer with Greenspace and help make this vision a reality! On February 23rd and March 1st, we will be planting native tree seedlings in Strawberry Canyon with Coast Union students. Please join us for the fun and satisfying work of restoring the forest. We're also seeking volunteers to help with upcoming events in April and May – to publicize, set up and clean up, sell tickets at the gate, or serve food. A Chinese Temple docent training will take place prior to the May 27th cultural celebration.

Please call the office at [805/927-2866](tel:8059272866) or email for more information on any of these events.

info@greenspacecambria.org



The North Coast area of San Luis Obispo County is a national treasure. Greenspace will protect and enhance its ecological systems, cultural resources and marine habitats through land acquisition, education and advocacy.