



Greenspace - The Cambria Land Trust: It takes a village to save a forest

Published: March 29, 2012

By Wayne Attoe

Congratulations to all of you who helped save another piece of our rare Monterey pine forest. The latest gain is a 4.7-acre parcel that expands the Strawberry Canyon Reserve on Lodge Hill to nearly 21 acres. The extent to which Cambrians have once again stepped up— for the third time — to help secure this nature reserve is remarkable. This village cares about its forest.

Yes, there has been state money involved, but protection of the 21-acre forest stand could not have happened without the contributions of several hundred Cambrians and Cambria lovers. The first acquisition of 3.8 acres of Strawberry Canyon forest in 1997 was initiated in 1997 by Harry Farmer and Lucia Capacchione who marshaled their neighbors and others who were interested in preserving the woodland. Greenspace was asked to join the effort and a deal was struck with the property owners, Mary and Don A. Anderson.

While a grant from the California Coastal Conservancy was crucial to the enterprise, just as important were the nearly 100 people who made donations, and those who pledged to contribute various amounts monthly for six years to pay off the mortgage. (A group of 9 to 12-year-olds in the Cambria Save the Animals Club contributed a whopping \$700.) These gifts along with the state money allowed the first forest parcel— Strawberry 1—to be saved.

Demonstrating this kind of local commitment made our case so much more compelling when Greenspace subsequently applied to state agencies for another share of taxpayer-approved funds. The key to adding Strawberry 2 (12.2 acres) was cooperation from the landowners, Adian and Richard Lenz, and donations from neighbors and others. (An earlier owner of the parcel had planned to build five houses there.)

The latest purchase of 4.7 acres was completed in February and funded with a bequest from the late Lillian Gleischer, donations from two Greenspace directors and their spouses, and Greenspace membership contributions and other donations. This creates a 21-acre forest reserve where, incidentally, longtime residents of Cambria recall picking strawberries. (Hats off as well to everyone who saved the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve and its stand of Monterey pines.)

A trail loops around the reserve from the access point at Burton Drive and Kay Street. Monterey pines at all stages of growth thrive here along with shrubs, trees, grasses and wildflowers typical of these rare forests. (The Cambria Monterey pine forest is one of

only five in the world— Año Nuevo Point and Monterey, Calif., and two islands off the Pacific coast of Mexico.) Benches are located along the trail, donated in memory of or to honor family and friends.

Every property has challenges. Strawberry Canyon slopes to the west and collects runoff from streets and hillsides above it. This seasonal watercourse running east to west parallels a sewer easement. The combination of natural water scouring and man-made soil disturbance has led to erosion which Greenspace addresses when needed.

In February the California Conservation Corps contributed 200 hours of work removing dead and downed trees in Strawberry Canyon, improving drainage along the trail, and removing invasive plants. Short wooden dams are used to slow water and reduce particulates. Some of the erosion control and removal of invasive plants has been accomplished over the years by local high school students.

To provide for future maintenance of the forest reserve, we're building a \$20,000 endowment. We've reached 75 percent of that goal through gifts from 30 families and individuals who live near Strawberry Canyon, and from three Greenspace Directors and their spouses.

Greenspace has started a fund to purchase and protect yet another portion of the Cambria Monterey pine forest. We seek support for this important work with a contribution to "Greenspace— Forest Fund," mailed to Greenspace at P.O. Box 1505, Cambria CA 93428.

For more about Greenspace projects to save Monterey pines, go to www.greenspacecambria.org and click on "Projects," then on "Forest Conservation."

Wayne Attoe is president of Greenspace — The Cambria Land Trust. A column featuring updates from Greenspace appears every fifth Thursday. call 927-2866

Read more here:

<http://www.sanluisobispo.com/2012/03/29/2008673/greens-pace-the-cambria-land-trust.html#storylink=cpy>