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RANCH WATCH: FALL 2025



Grants Help Friends of the Fiscalini
Ranch Preserve Make the Ranch
Healthier

Friends of the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve is excited to share some big news—two new grants will help us make the Ranch an even better home for plants, animals, and people!

Helping Pollinators:

Thanks to a grant from the Wildlife Conservation Board, our partner Upper Salinas-Las Tablas Resource Conservation District is providing the Ranch with up to 500 native plants. These are being grown at the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden from seeds collected on the Ranch itself. This fall and winter, the new plants—like coffeeberry, sticky monkey flower, toyon, coyote brush, and giant wild rye—will be planted to support monarch butterflies, bees, and other pollinators. They'll bring more color and life to the Ranch while helping wildlife thrive.

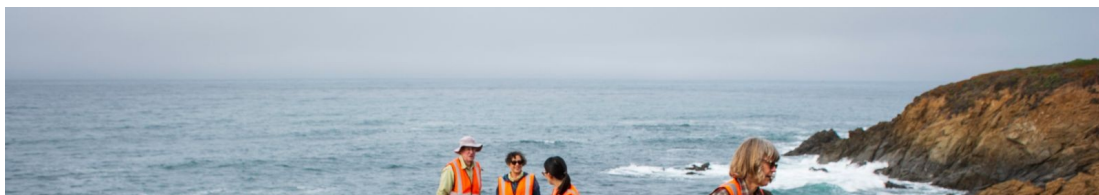
Caring for the Forest:

Beginning in 2026, a CAL FIRE California Climate Investment Grant through the San Luis Obispo Fire Safe Council will support major work in the Ranch's forest. Although much of the forest has been improved since 2019, some areas are still overgrown or filled with dead and diseased trees. This grant will allow careful thinning, removal of invasive plants, and creation of fuel breaks—steps that keep the forest healthier and make nearby homes safer from wildfire.

Why It Matters:

The Fiscalini Ranch Preserve is home to one of only five natural Monterey pine forests in the entire world. Keeping this rare forest strong is a responsibility we all share. These grants give FFRP and our partners the resources to protect this one-of-a-kind treasure while making it more resilient to fire and climate change.

With your support and these exciting new resources, the Ranch will continue to be a safe, healthy, and beautiful place for generations to come.





In the Fight Against Ice Plant, Volunteers Make a Big Difference

Ice plant might look pretty, but it doesn't belong here. It came from South Africa a long time ago, when people thought it would help stop erosion. Instead, it took over huge areas of California's coast, pushing out native plants and creating a "food desert" for animals and insects. The heavy, water-filled leaves can even make our cliffs weaker, not stronger.

That's why getting rid of ice plant is so important on the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve. If left alone, it would cover the land from the bluffs to the ridge, leaving no room for the plants and animals that make the Ranch special.

Thanks to many hardworking volunteers and support from donors, more than half of the ice plant has already been cleared away! This is a huge step forward in restoring healthy habitats where native plants, pollinators, and wildlife can thrive again.

Want to help keep the Ranch healthy? Join a volunteer crew on Wednesday mornings or the third Saturday of the month. Every pair of hands makes a difference!

Become a Force for Nature: Volunteer!



New Ways to Make Your Gift Go Further

There are brand-new opportunities to support the Ranch—and they could make your generosity go even further. With **Smart Giving**, you can protect open space, restore habitats, and keep trails open while also making the most of your financial resources.

Smart Giving offers fresh, flexible options that many supporters are just beginning to discover. From donating appreciated stock to giving directly from your IRA, these methods can unlock extra tax benefits while strengthening the work we do together.

Here are a few of the exciting new ways you can give:

- **Donor-Advised Funds (DAFs):** Use your charitable account -- like those at Fidelity Charitable, Schwab Charitable, or Vanguard Charitable -- to recommend a grant to support the Ranch.
- **Stock Gifts:** Donate appreciated stocks to avoid capital gains tax and claim a deduction.
- **Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs):** Direct funds from your IRA to the Ranch, satisfying required distributions without added taxable income.
- **Cryptocurrency:** Share your crypto and potentially deduct its full market value.

Each of these methods opens the door to greater impact—for you and for the Ranch.

Ready to explore the possibilities?

Learn More About Smart Giving

Non-Profit Status

Friends of the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization: EIN 91-2161009. Donations are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.



Friends of the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve Wins Sweepstakes at Pinedorado Days Parade!

The 75th Pinedorado Days kicked off in classic Cambria fashion with a lively parade—and Friends of the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve stole the show! With an entry full of butterflies, local wildlife, and dedicated volunteers, FFRP's creativity and enthusiasm shone brightly.

The judges agreed: FFRP was awarded the Sweepstakes Award, the parade's highest honor. A huge thank-you to all who marched, waved, and spread the Ranch spirit—you made this celebration unforgettable!





How the Ranch Is Cared For—and Why Your Voice Matters

The Fiscalini Ranch Preserve is owned and managed by the Cambria Community Services District (CCSD) under a conservation easement that requires CCSD to handle its upkeep and costs. Friends of the Fiscalini Ranch Preserves holds that conservation easement. For 25 years, CCSD's Facilities and Resources Department has overseen maintenance.

Recently, however, budget cuts and staffing shortages have left important work undone—from hazardous tree removal to trail access and fire safety. These challenges have raised concerns about the Ranch's care and even sparked suggestions by CCSD management about transferring ownership to another agency.

Community voices are making a difference. Dozens of residents have spoken at CCSD meetings and sent letters urging stronger support for the Ranch. Their advocacy led to the creation of a new ad hoc committee of CCSD board members that is working with Friends of the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve representatives to review maintenance needs and chart a path forward.

As this process continues, public engagement will be key to ensuring the Ranch remains healthy, safe, and accessible for everyone. As always, the

Ranch thrives only when people care. Thank you for caring.



Student Project Supports Ranch Restoration

We're excited to share that Cal Poly Landscape Architecture senior Tovia Keeley is undertaking a year-long project focused on the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve. Her work lays out a plan to restore the coastal prairie and meadow habitats, with special attention to wildlife like the burrowing owl.

The project also suggests ways future students and community members can help monitor plants and insects, gather long-term data, and deepen learning through citizen science and Indigenous perspectives.

This thoughtful work adds to our vision for a healthier, more resilient Ranch for generations to come.





25th Anniversary Challenge Met!

This year, Friends of the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve is celebrating a remarkable milestone — 25 years of protecting, preserving, and cherishing this extraordinary stretch of coastal wilderness.

To mark this anniversary, we launched a special Board Challenge: Our goal was to raise \$25,000 for 25 years of preservation.

Contributions from every member of our Board and Staff brought us halfway to our goal. Then, we turned to you — our community of nature lovers, trail walkers, and Ranch stewards — to help us reach the finish line.

Did you pitch in to help us reach \$25,000? More than! I'm thrilled -- and grateful -- to announce that we more than doubled our goal: raising nearly \$40,000 in donations and pledges!

There's still time to contribute. Your gift ensures the Ranch remains a sanctuary for wildlife and a source of wonder for generations to come. Whether you give \$25, \$250, or more, you become part of this milestone moment.

[Donate Online Today](#)

Because of you, we're not just celebrating 25 years of preservation — we're investing in the next 25!

Fall Docent Walks & Events

Step into nature's classroom with Friends of the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve as our passionate docents lead you on a series of engaging, family-friendly walks through one of Cambria's most beloved natural spaces. Whether you are drawn by curiosity, beauty, or the chance to slow down, these free Saturday (and occasional Sunday) morning experiences are a perfect way to reconnect with the land — and each other. Walks begin at 10 a.m. and are free with registration.

Ready to walk, wonder, and learn? Spots fill quickly — register today.

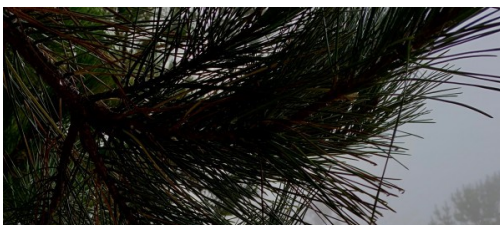


Finding Wabi Sabi

- Sunday, Sept 28, 10AM – 12PM

What is Wabi-sabi? Join us for a slow, mindful stroll along the bluff as we uncover the beauty of imperfection and the fleeting wonders of nature. Docent: Gil Eastman

[Register](#)



Things that Go Bump in the Night

- Saturday, Oct 11, 10AM – 12:30PM



What lurks beneath the log or rustles the leaves? A spine-tingling pre-Halloween walk through the forest—full of eerie sounds, surprising sightings, and wild imagination. Docent: Brian Morgan

Register



Volunteer Workday

- Saturday, Oct 18, 10AM – 12PM

There's lots to accomplish on the Ranch: pulling ice plant, spreading wood chips on trails, clearing weeds. Who knows what fun awaits! Wear sturdy shoes and long pants.

No registration required.



Autumn Sea Scenes

- Saturday, Oct 25, 10AM – 12PM

Autumn along the Bluff Trail offers more than stunning views. Dive deeper with a naturalist into the secret life of the coastal ecosystem.

Docent: Duffy Burns

Register



Mother Nature's Autumn Abundance

- Saturday, Nov 8, 10AM – 12:30PM

Discover how the first people of this land used the forest's resources to thrive — and how much of that abundance still surrounds us today. Docent: Brian Morgan

Register



A Thanksgiving Stroll

- Saturday, Nov 22, 10AM – 12PM

Give thanks, slow down, and savor the seasonal gifts the Ranch offers — for animals, for people, for all who wander its paths. Docent: Gil Eastman

Register



Thanksgiving Weekend Tree Planting

- Saturday, Nov 29, 10AM – 12PM

Location to be announced

Join in the traditional, family friendly fall tree (and shrub) planting. We will supply plants, water, and wood chips, along with tools and loaner gloves. You bring your good spirits and together we will make the Ranch a better place!

No registration required.



Songs for the Season

Songs for the Season

- Saturday, Dec 7, 2 – 4PM

Mark your calendars and join us at the charming **Barn at Fog's End** (2735 Main Street) for our annual celebration, **Songs for the Season**. Hosted by the **Friends of the Fiscalini Ranch**

Preserve, this cherished event promises an afternoon filled with festive entertainment, delicious food, and a chance to win exciting raffle prizes!

[Register](#)



Signs of the Season: A Holiday Walk in the Woods

- Saturday, Dec 13, 10AM – 12PM

Keep your eyes peeled—berries, critters, maybe even an elf on an oak! Celebrate the season with nature's own festive decorations.
Docent: Joanne Freemire

[Register](#)



Images by Joe Josephs, Ray Hennessy, Derek Keats, Helmut Kuhn, Walt Andrus, Patricia Griffin, and FFRP.

Friends of the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve

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