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RANCH WATCH: WINTER 2025

From tree plantings to parties, from mountain lions to thank yous, there's so much going on we needed another newsletter!





Thanksgiving Weekend Tree Planting

Saturday, November 29 | 10 AM

Follow signs from the Ridge Trail

Grab your gloves, lace up your boots, and join Friends of the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve for one of Cambria's most beloved traditions—the Annual Community Tree Planting. It is a day of community, connection, and conservation—and yes, there will be plenty of smiles, laughter, and photo-worthy moments. Come grow with us.

No experience? No problem! FFRP will provide the tools, training, and even a few pre-dug holes to get everyone started. All volunteers need are closed-toe shoes, gloves, sunscreen, and a hat.

This event is made possible by the support of **tree dedications**. All seeds were locally collected to ensure strong, resilient plantings that are well adapted to our coastal home.

Dedicate a Tree



Songs for the Season

Saturday, December 6 | 2-4 PM

The Barn at Fog's End | 2735 Main Street

Ring in the holidays with one of Cambria's most magical afternoons, FFRP's annual holiday party, "Songs for the Season". This joyful gathering will be filled with festive music, delicious food, fine wine, and community cheer—all to benefit the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve.

Savor savory bites from Robin's and Madeline's, sample sweet treats from local bakers, and raise a glass of local wine as Bone Appétit fills the barn with lively tunes. Then, warm your heart (and your vocal cords!) during our annual sing-along.

Feeling lucky? Do not miss the raffle and auction, packed with unforgettable Central Coast experiences—from wine tastings and hotel getaways to horseback rides and even tours of Hearst Castle. There will be gift certificates to local favorites and, of course, some tasty vino.

Tickets are just \$50 per person available now at the FFRP office (604D Main Street) or online.

Songs for the Season Tickets



Pollinator Habitat Planting Day

Saturday, December 13 | 10 AM

Follow signs from the Tipton Trail Entrance

This year's restoration work goes beyond pines—volunteers will be adding colorful, wildlife-friendly companions like toyon, flowering currant (above), coffeeberry, and sticky monkey flower to the Ranch. Each plant was selected to support local pollinators.

No experience? No problem! FFRP will provide the tools and training. All volunteers need are closed-toe shoes, gloves, sunscreen, and a hat.

This event is made possible by the support of a grant from the **Upper Salinas-Las Tablas Resource Conservation District**. All seeds were locally collected to ensure strong, resilient plantings that are well adapted to our coastal home.

Become a Force for Nature: Volunteer!



Living with Mountain Lions on the Central Coast

Life on California's Central Coast means sharing our beautiful surroundings with a rich variety of wildlife. From elephant seals along the shore to mule deer in our meadows—and occasionally a mountain lion—these animals are part of what makes our region special.

Mountain lions are typically shy and avoid people. They move quietly along forest paths and through neighborhoods, following the deer that thrive in our area. Seeing one is uncommon and, in most cases, not a cause for concern.

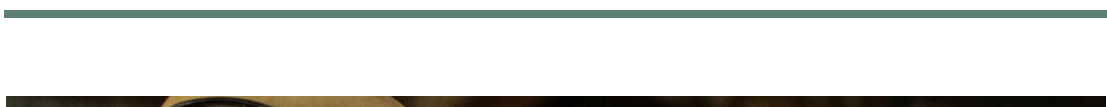
Still, it's wise to take a few simple precautions:

- Avoid walking alone, especially at dawn, dusk, or after dark.
- Keep pets indoors or on a leash.
- Don't attract deer or other prey animals to your property.

If you do see a mountain lion, give it plenty of space. Most sightings are peaceful and brief. If the animal seems unusually interested in you, stand tall, speak firmly, and slowly back away—never **scamper, squat, or squeal**. If a lion appears aggressive, pick up any small children and pets you have with you and make yourself look as large and confident as possible.

Occasionally, the Cambria Community Services District (CCSD) and Friends of the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve (FFRP) may alert the public if a mountain lion's behavior requires attention. For example, earlier this year a lion left a deer carcass near a popular trail. Because the animal was likely to return, CCSD and FFRP temporarily closed that trail for 24 hours to protect visitors and their dogs. The lion fed, moved on, and the trail was safely reopened the next day.

Encountering a mountain lion is a rare and remarkable experience. With awareness and respect, we can continue to coexist safely with these magnificent animals.





Tax-smart Ways to Give

“Thank you for splendid morning walks, spectacular vistas, and bracing sea-salt air! I give so that others may continue to enjoy such even though I no longer can.” – K.P.

The Ranch offers many rewards. With changes to the laws coming in 2026, a tax break may be among those rewards. This is the right time to think about tax-smart charitable giving options based on appreciated assets. Each of these methods opens the door to greater impact—for you and for the Ranch.

Donor-Advised Funds (DAFs)

Donor-Advised Funds (DAF) -- like those at Fidelity Charitable, DAFgiving360, or Vanguard Charitable -- are like your own charitable savings account. You contribute to the fund as frequently as you like and then recommend grants to nonprofits like ours, all while potentially earning immediate tax benefits.

Stock Gifts

Donating appreciated stocks can provide substantial support to

our cause and potentially help you avoid capital gains taxes and claim a tax deduction based on the full market value of your stocks.

Qualified Charitable Distributions

A Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) is a direct transfer of funds from your IRA to a nonprofit, counted towards your required minimum distributions (RMD) for the year, without treating the distribution as taxable income.

Cryptocurrency

Cryptocurrency donations are a new, tax-efficient way to give. By donating crypto, you potentially avoid capital gains tax on the appreciation and can deduct the fair market value of the asset on your tax return.

[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.





Holiday Open House at the Ranch Shop!

Thursday, December 4 | 4–7 PM
604D Main Street | Cambria

Follow the twinkle lights to the cozy end of the street and join Friends of the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve for Cambria’s Annual Holiday Open House!

Step in from the chill and enjoy the aroma of our famous café de olla (decaf, of course!) and freshly baked holiday cookies. Browse our nature-inspired gifts—perfect for the outdoor lovers on your list—at special seasonal prices available only during the event.

Come sip, shop, and share the spirit of the season with your friends from the Ranch!

Or Shop Online



Thank You to Our Corporate

Sponsors

Corporate sponsors help to protect a local treasure—and show commitment to community and conservation. We are grateful for our 2025/2026 Corporate Sponsors:

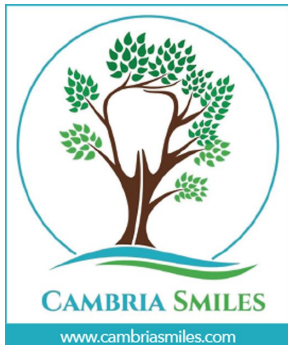
RE/MAX Pines by the Sea



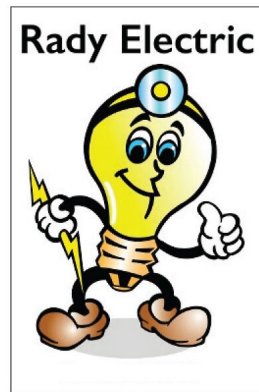
Placer Title Company



Cambria Smiles



Rady Electric



**Jennifer White,
Farmer's
Insurance**





Speaking of Amazing Volunteers...

FFRP recently celebrated its annual Volunteer Appreciation Party at Parr Wines in Cambria. Nearly 100 guests gathered for a lovely afternoon featuring live music from Ron Perry, Mary Schwalbe, and Carolyn Kelly, delicious bites from Boni's Tacos, and of course, local Parr wines.

A huge thank-you to our events dream team – Dianne Anderson, Cathleen Campe, Ellie Etter, John Nixon, Shari Robasciotti, and Jose Luis Sanchez – for organizing a truly special event and to Debbie Markham Photography for taking pictures. This year's celebration also marked the 25th anniversary of saving the Ranch, and the team pulled out all the stops to honor our volunteers, supporters, and members.

We're grateful every day for the people who keep the Ranch wild, beautiful, and thriving.





Docent Walks Reveal Winter Wonders

We're planning some exciting docent walks for the coming months!

In January we'll be joined by three leaders from the California Native Plant Society for an extensive mushroom walk. In February, an expert birder will take participants on a long bird walk covering both the forest and coastal prairie areas of the Ranch. And in March, a professor emeritus from Cal Poly will lead a walk on the geologic past of the Ranch and surrounding areas, discussing subjects including plate tectonics, Franciscan mélangé, and terrace. We'll also have additional walks led by our very own Fiscalini Ranch Preserve naturalists!

Stay tuned for more information. We'll have descriptions and registration links for these walks on the website in December.

Docent Walk Info





Images by Walt Andrus, Patricia Griffin, Debbie Markham, and FFRP.

Donate Online Today

Friends of the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve

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