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Friends of the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve

News from the Ranch: Winter 2026

Forest Health Work Finished Early — What's Next

I walked the Forest Loop Trail last week and stopped: I could see the sky between the trees for the first time in years.



Along the Tipton Trail **BEFORE** the forest project -- dense trees block the horizon and litter is built up on the forest floor.



AFTER the work sunlight is visible all the way through the trees, giving them space to grow. More of the forest floor is available for the next generation of trees to sprout.

The crew wrapped up two weeks ahead of schedule, treating all 62 acres they set out to. They removed the dead and diseased trees, the ones leaning over the trails, the ones crowding so close their limbs tangled, but they left every tree under 5 feet tall, clumps of toyon and coffeeberry, and any tree over 6 inches thick standing more than 8 feet from its neighbor. Standing dead snags stayed too, since woodpeckers and owls need them as much as live trees.

You'll notice the light first. What you might not notice right away is more growth on the forest floor, and that's expected, it's not a problem. Pine seeds need sun on bare soil to germinate, and most of these stands were so shaded that seeds simply sat there without sprouting. This summer hit 90 degrees on the Ranch, hot enough that a lot of cones opened and released seed. If we get even a normal wet winter, we may see a new generation of Monterey pine germinating on its own.

We're not leaving that to chance, though. The project includes planting 15 acres of new pine seedlings, and you can be part of that work yourself: at our annual Thanksgiving weekend planting event, we'll be putting seedlings and understory plants — monkey flower, coffeeberry, and others — into the ground together. Details on the date and how to sign up are below.

Stay tuned for updates as winter rain moves in and we see what comes up.

Thank you,

— *Kitty*

Kitty Connolly, Executive Director, FFRP

Thanksgiving Weekend Community Planting

Saturday, Nov 28, 2026, from 10 AM to Noon

Meet at the Dolphin Bench on the Ridge Trail

Learn More



Monterey pine forest thrive for generations to come.

ADMISSION
Free

No reservations needed. If it rains, the planting will be rescheduled.
Questions? Call (805) 927-2856 or email **ranch@fiscaliniranch.org**
More at **fiscaliniranchpreserve.org**

Friends of the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve

Together we protect and restore Fiscalini Ranch Preserve, in the heart of Cambria.

Monterey Pine on the Ranch, Over the Years



See the Aerial Photos

Monterey pine is a fussy tree. It needs the fog and the cool summer temperatures we get here, and not much else will do — too hot and dry, and the trees stop growing; too little moisture, and they don't survive the dry season. That sensitivity is exactly why these photos

matter: you can watch the forest expand and contract with the weather it's had.

Two things jump out. On the ocean side of the forest, about a third of the way up, you can see the tree line has pushed forward — advancing toward the water as conditions favored it. And in the lower middle of the same images, there's a gap where a large stand of pines simply isn't there anymore: that's the damage from the January 2021 windstorm, which took down around 100 trees in a single night.

You can also see our own hand in these photos. Between the Ridge Trail and the forest's edge, there's a strip of new growth that wasn't there in 2009 — thousands of seedlings we've planted, year after year, now visibly part of the canopy.

Which is exactly the work you just read about: the forest health project we finished this fall, the seedlings going into the ground this Thanksgiving. This is what that work looks like fifteen years on.

If you'd like to help continue the planting, you can give here. Tree dedications are $50. Be sure to let us know where to send the dedication card.

Dedicate a Tree

Songs for the Season

Saturday, Dec 5, 2026, from 2-4 pm

The Barn at Fog's End, 2735 Main St, Cambria

Get Tickets to Songs



FRIENDS OF THE FISCALINI RANCH PRESERVE PRESENTS

Songs for the Season

Our annual holiday celebration

SATURDAY	AFTERNOON	THE BARN AT FOG'S END
December 5	**2 – 4 p.m.**	**2735 Main Street, Cambria**

Food & wine
Savory bites from local chefs, desserts crafted by community bakers, and delicious wines.

Music
Live California Americana music from Rough House, followed by a holiday sing-along.

New this year
A wine pull where every entrant is a winner. Wines valued up to $200 a bottle!

Raffle & Silent Auction
Central Coast experiences: wine tastings, tours of Hearst Castle, and more. Plus gift certificates to your favorite restaurants and handy services like window and car washing.
Sponsors and the full prize list: fiscaliniranchpreserve.org

TICKETS **$50**

In person: Friends of the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve office, 604D Main Street

Online: scan the code or buy tickets online

All proceeds protect and restore Fiscalini Ranch Preserve, in the heart of Cambria.

Images are AI-assisted.

The 2026 Appreciation Party










On October 15, volunteers, donors, and friends of the Ranch filled Parr Wines to celebrate the year. Joey Sykes played, Boni's Tacos fed the crowd, and Parr poured its wines. Volunteers put the whole party together.

The best part of the night was the show of hands. As each volunteer crew was called, from the Weekly Weeders to the Wildflower Show, hands went up. Together, Ranch volunteers gave **4,400** hours this year. The Weekly Weeders alone gave 1,750, and office docents welcomed more than 3,100 visitors.

Four people gave the most. Marvin Josephson, Brian Morgan, and Shari Robasciotti each gave more than 200 hours. Michael Thomas gave more than 300 leading the invasive plant program. He and his crew cleared more than 40 acres, and that ground is coming back to native plants.

To every volunteer, whether you gave one hour or three hundred: thank you. Every hour helps the Ranch.

Preparing for El Niño



Cambria Community Services District's Facilities and Resources Department is preparing for what promises to be a very wet winter. Of particular concern is the Marine Terrace Trail, which doubles as an emergency route for people living on either side of the Ranch. CCSD will grade the trail while our volunteers will ensure that the outflows direct water off the trail surface.

Give Stock, Keep the Tax





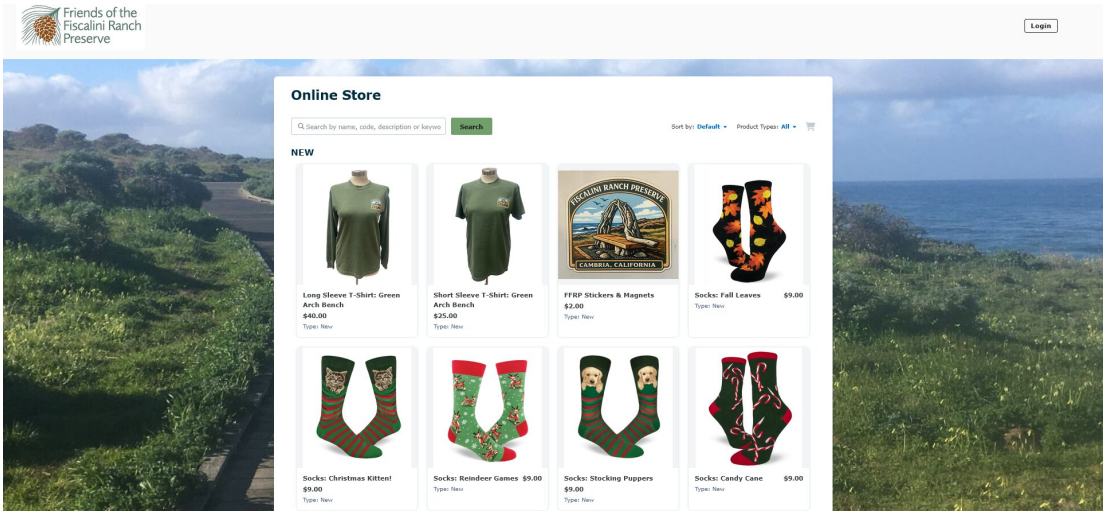
If you own stock you've held for more than a year and it has gone up, giving those shares may cost you less than giving cash. When you give appreciated stock directly to the Ranch, you owe no capital gains tax on the growth, and you can generally deduct the full market value. The savings for you can be large. Check with your tax advisor about your own situation.

If you have a donor-advised fund, please think about sending the shares straight to us. A direct gift goes to work on the Ranch right away.

To Give Stock

FFRP's tax ID: 91-2161009.

Holiday Shopping in Now Open!



Check out the new products in our refurbished online store: long and short sleeve tees featuring the Arch Bench, Arch Bench

stickers and magnets, and tons of holiday socks! New products are tucked in here and there, as well as a sale on select XXL tees.

Visit us at our store Thursdays through Saturday, 11 am to 2 pm (3 pm on Saturdays). We're located at 604 D Main St, Cambria, between Sandy's Deli and Maddie Mae's Pet Pantry. We'd love to see you!

Every purchase supports the Ranch: Thank you!

Shop Now

Friends of the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve's Events & Docent Walks

Under the Canopy: November Magic on the Forest Loop Walk

Docent Walk with Brian Morgan
Saturday, Nov 14, 10 am – 12:30 pm
Stroll the twists and turns of forest trails with your naturalist forest guide on a beautiful Fall morning and explore your senses as you experience the changes that Mother Nature gifts us!
Learn more and register here.

Thanksgiving Weekend Community Planting

Community Workday
Saturday, Nov 28, 10 am – noon (weather permitting)
Don't miss this family-friendly chance to give back to the Ranch. We'll be planting Monterey pine, monkey flower, even native grasses!
Meet near the Dolphin Bench on the Ridge Trail off Huntington -- look for the truck.
Learn more here.



Songs for the Season

Saturday, Dec 5, 2-4 pm

Be sure to put this date into your calendar: You won't want to miss this annual kick-off of the holiday season!

Location: The Barn at Fog's End

Learn more and register here.

A Holiday Escape Into Nature's Magic

Docent Walk with Joanne Freemire

Saturday, Dec 19, 10 am – 12 pm

A winter walk through the forest of the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve offers a naturally festive escape.

Learn more and register here.

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Photos courtesy of Walt Andrus, Jose Luis Sanchez, and FFRP.

Friends of the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve

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