

CalVTP – COVELL RANCH FOREST HEALTH FUELS REDUCTION



INTRODUCTION

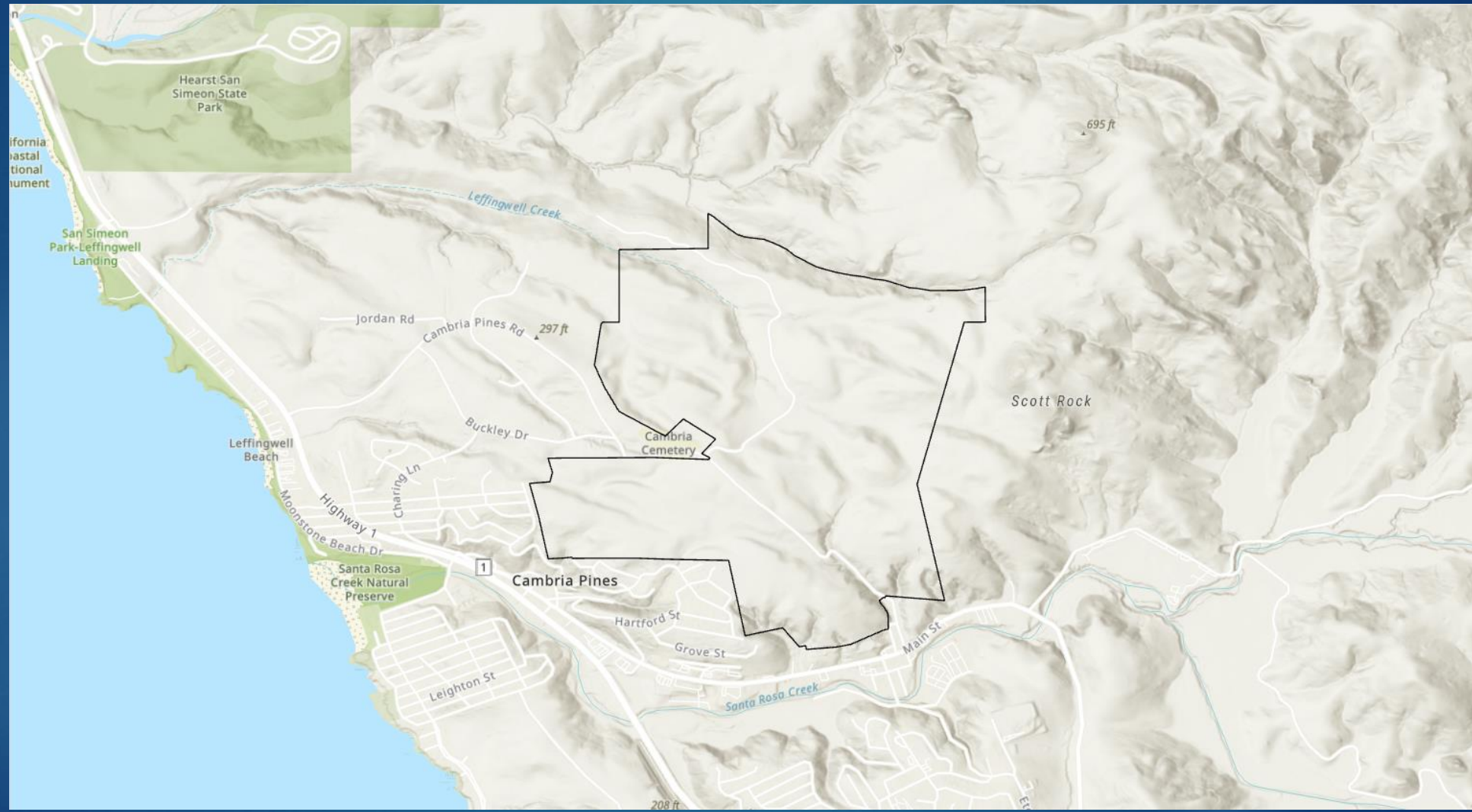
- Steve Auten – Registered Professional Forester and Principal with ARC
- Project Partners –FireSafe SLO, CAL FIRE, USLT RCD, Resolute and Associates, Covell Ranch, and ARC

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

- Covell project related background
- Why was the CalVTP selected as the permitting vehicle for forest health fuels reduction?
- Navigating the development of the CalVTP for Covell
 - Project development within CalVTP SPR's and MMRP
 - Field Investigations
 - Permit Development
 - Implementation of Treatments
- Final thoughts
- Questions



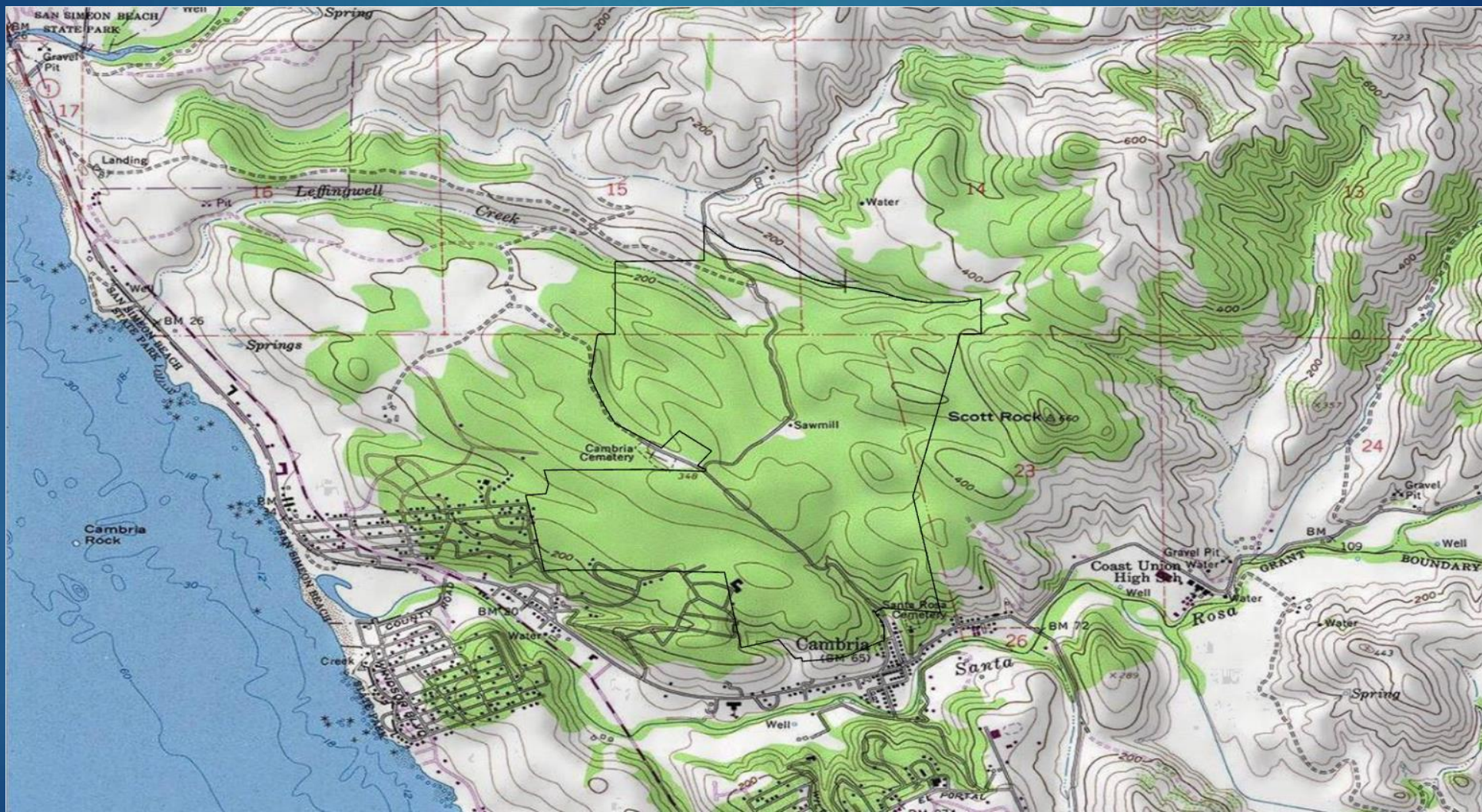
COVELL PROJECT RELATED BACKGROUND



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COVELL PROJECT RELATED BACKGROUND

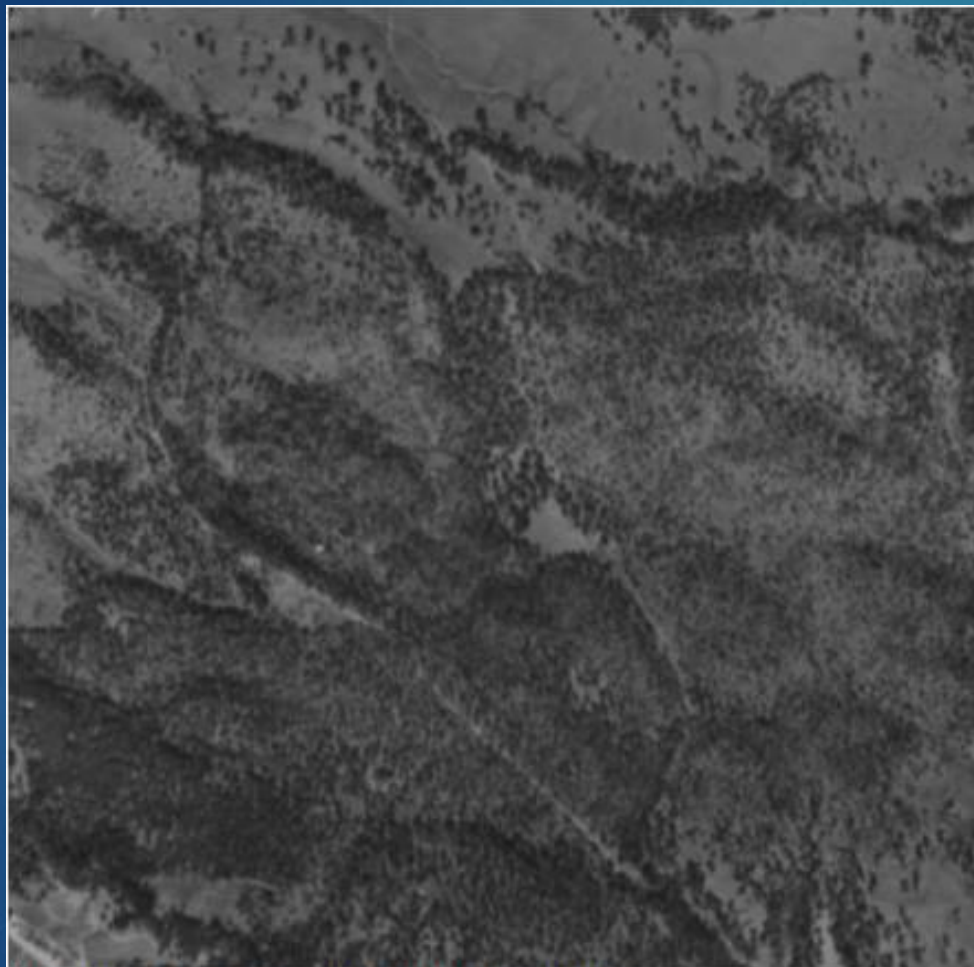


Figure 1. 1937 Covell Ranch/Cambria

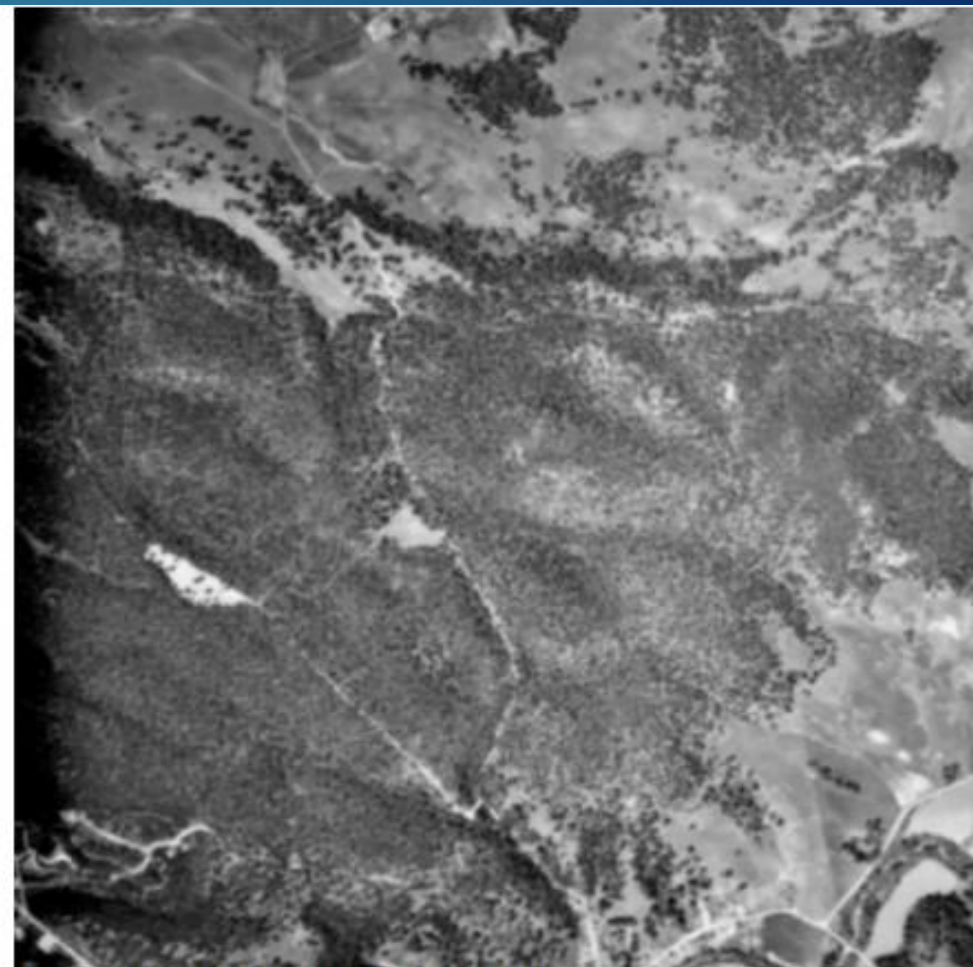


Figure 2. 1949 Covell Ranch/Cambria



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COVELL PROJECT RELATED BACKGROUND

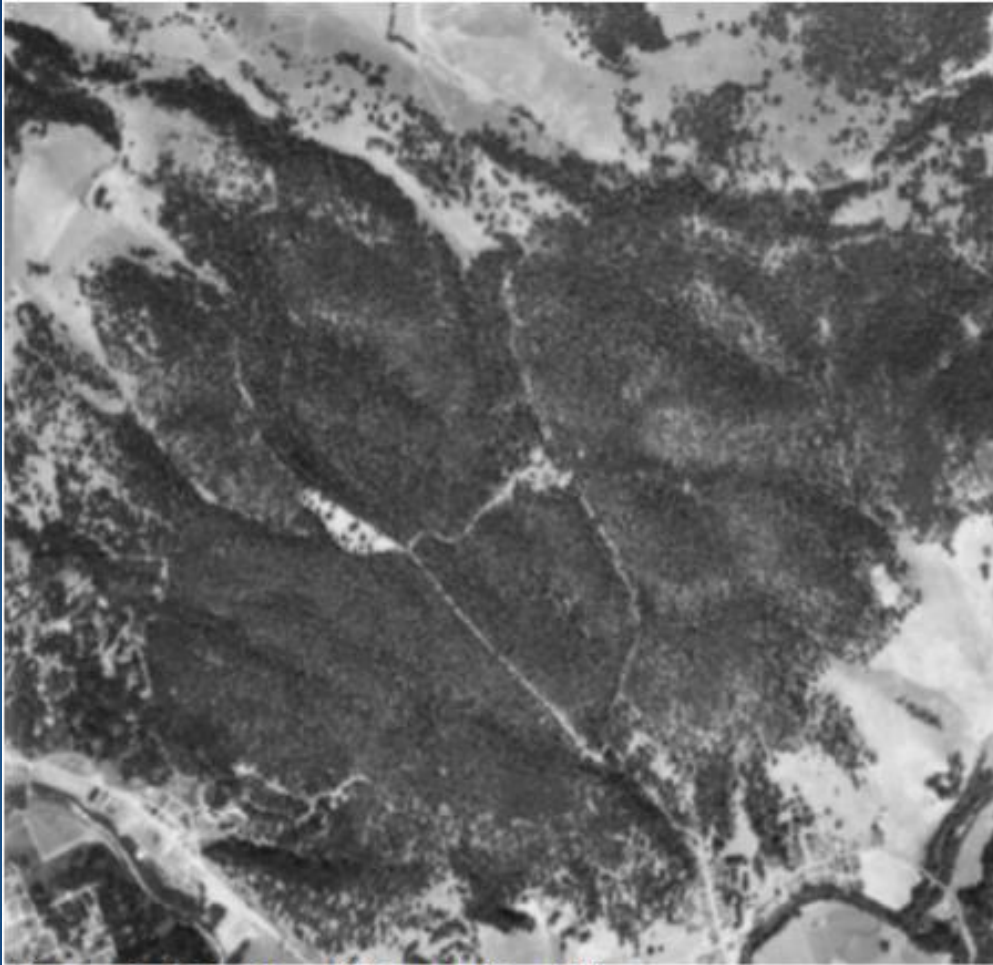


Figure 3. 1956 Covell Ranch/Cambria



Figure 4. 1996 Covell Ranch/Cambria



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COVELL PROJECT RELATED BACKGROUND

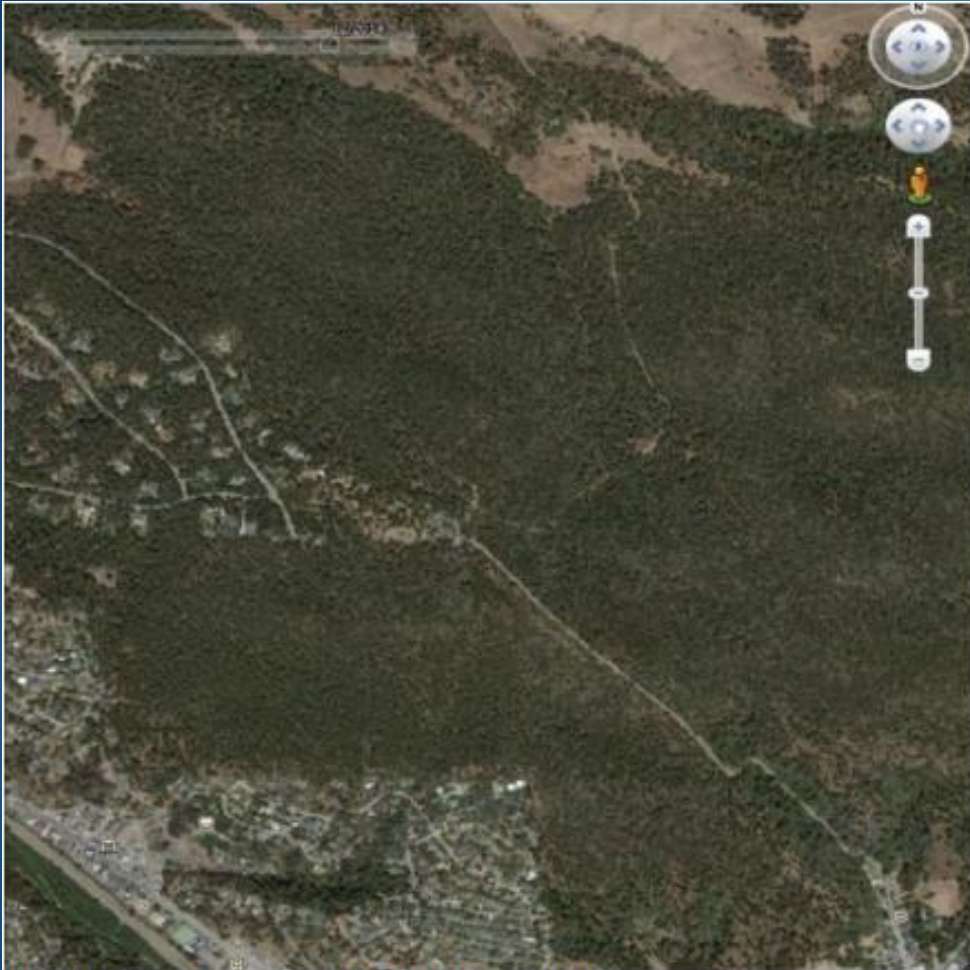


Figure 5. 2014 Covell Ranch/Cambria

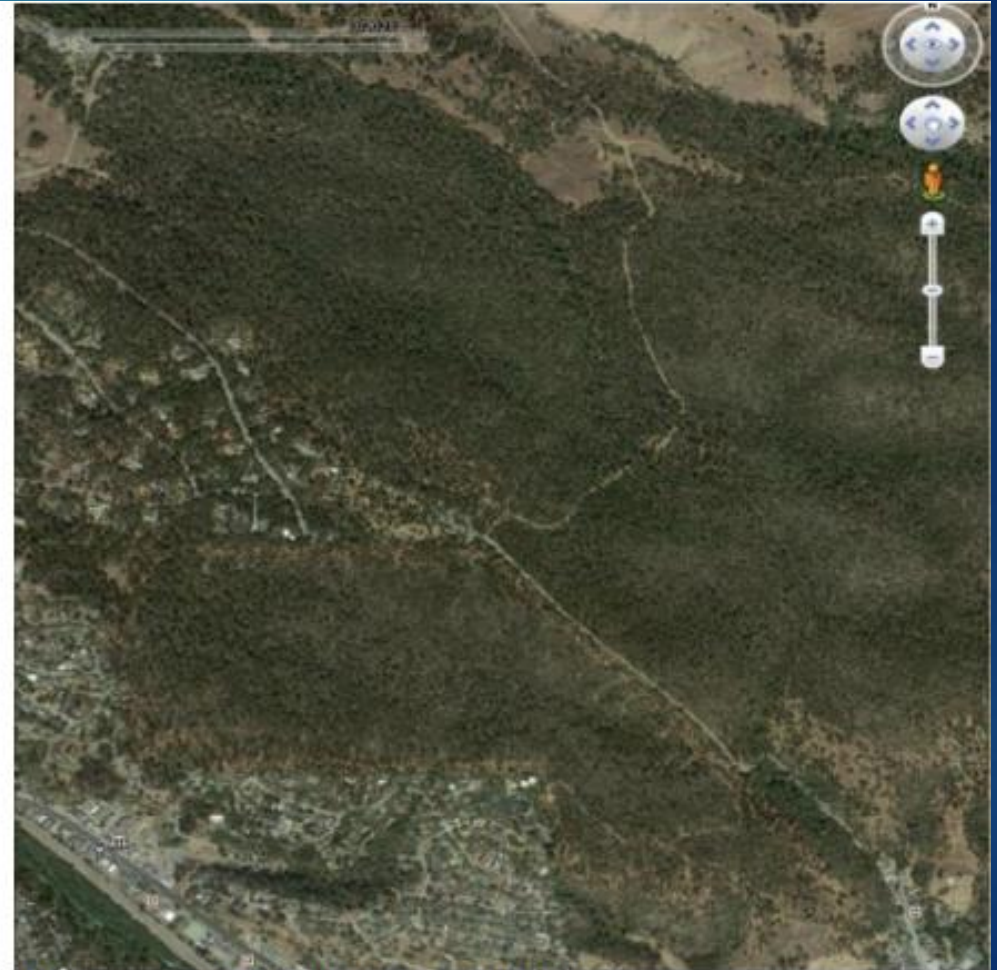


Figure 6. 2021 Covell Ranch/Cambria



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COVELL PROJECT RELATED BACKGROUND – 2013 - 2015



Photo Credit – 2015 Dan Turner



COVELL PROJECT RELATED BACKGROUND - 2021





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COVELL PROJECT RELATED BACKGROUND - 2021



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COVELL PROJECT RELATED BACKGROUND – 2020 Aerial



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WHY WAS THE CaIVTP SELECTED AS THE PERMITTING VEHICLE FOR FOREST HEALTH FUELS REDUCTION WORK?

- 2010 Timber Harvest Plan or Coastal Development Permit (CDP)? Applied for a Coastal Development Permit (CDP) – Approved after appeal (Minor Use Permit/LCP?CDP). Forest Management Plan also required per the Conservation Easement with the Nature Conservancy.
- 2011 - Work began and had to be completed in 2 years (2014), then they would have to reapply.
- 2015 - A Governors executive order allowed treatment of dead and dying trees and invasive species allowed for some treatment to continue but it wasn't enough to appropriately increase forest health and reduce fire severity.
- 2017 CAL FIRE 1038 exemption Sanitation/Salvage expecting to carry out a THP next until Board of Forestry moved Monterey Pine to the Group B species list in 2018.
- 2019 BOF tour of the Covell Ranch Treatments to date. Discussed CalVTP.
- In January 2020, following many severe fires seasons, the CEQA compliant CalVTP was approved for use by the Board of Forestry and a short time later the Coastal Commission determined that it was possible to utilize the Public Works Plan Process to certify specific CalVTP Projects through Resource Conservation Districts.



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WHY WAS THE CaIVTP SELECTED AS THE PERMITTING VEHICLE FOR FOREST HEALTH FUELS REDUCTION WORK?

- The CaIVTP was selected since CEQA does not have an expiration date unless conditions change significantly in the project area.
- Although the CaIVTP can be challenging to develop and implement, it can permit landscape level restoration and maintenance treatments with shovel ready projects for many years (PWP does require periodic renewal with CCC, ~every 5-10 years).
- Although it is highly unlikely that the Cambria community will grow further into this Monterey pine forest, the community of trees and people will always live next to each other. Living next to your neighbors takes compromise and this comes in the form of home hardening, clearing defensible space, creating shaded fuel breaks, conducting ecologically restorative treatments to increase forest health while reducing fire severity, and general forest maintenance - all in perpetuity.



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NAVIGATING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CaIVTP FOR COVELL

- Play by play of how the Covell Ranch CaIVTP PSA was developed to implement treatments upon approval.



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FINAL THOUGHTS

24 people had to coordinate including years of outreach to the local community and stakeholders to make this project happen:

- Dan Tuner – Executive Director, FireSafe SLO
- CAL FIRE SLU (San Luis Obispo Unit)– Alan Peters (Unit Forester - ret.) John Gee, Brandon Sanderson, Rick Carr, Denny O'Neil, and Denise Ruzika,
- CAL FIRE Sacramento – Len Nielson and Shannon Johnson
- Kevin Cooper – Resolute and Associates
- Devin Best – Executive Director – Upper Salinas-Las Tablas Resource Conservation District
- Andrew Johnson – Rincon Consultants (Formerly Upper Salinas-Las Tablas Resource Conservation District)
 - Hayley Barnes – (Formerly Upper Salinas-Las Tablas Resource Conservation District)
- Coastal Commission – Jonna Engel, Mary Matella, Daniel Nathan, and Madeline Cavalieri
- USFWS – Deborah Kirkland, Chad Mitcham, and Leilani Takano
- Auten Resource Consulting – Riley McFarland, Steve Auten, Shelby Kranich, Joe Culver (Coastal Forestry)
- Keep this in mind when considering your communications budget...



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FINAL THOUGHTS

- Start outreach early and always be ready for a curve ball at the end. Nothing is locked until the Board votes in favor of a project, and it's finally recorded on CEQA net...
- The Covell project took one year to design, layout, obtain permits, and begin implementation.
- Three months later, critical Unit 1 was predominantly complete. To date approximately 300 of 665 acres are complete through priority Unit 2 and now planning for Unit 3.
 - 2021 – Operations were shut down due to weather and saturated soil conditions for ~3-4 months (December to March)
 - Nesting birds shut down operations for ~2 months (May and June)
 - Budget and plan for this.
- Following approval of the CaIVTP Project Specific Analysis, the project can move forward into implementation but not without completing several required items including executing the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan (MMRP).
 - Among required Mitigations and the MMRP, still to be completed are the Archaeological Survey Report and Burn Plan, conducting focused surveys for RTE species, flagging watercourses, identifying existing infrastructure for use such as roads and staging areas for units proposed for operations.
 - Not required but, developing a detailed set of project specifications and operations maps, creating an example retention mark, and committing a significant level of professional supervision, are all critical to appropriately executing treatments under any permit including the CaIVTP. Plan and budget for this too...



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FINAL THOUGHTS:

Don't forget about
digging waterbars in the
winter!



FINAL THOUGHTS – October 2021 Before – November 2021 After – Handwork/Track Chipper



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FINAL THOUGHTS – October 2021 Before – November 2021 After – Handwork in a Class III Equipment Exclusion Zone



UPPER SALINAS-LAS TABLAS
RESOURCE
CONSERVATION DISTRICT



FINAL THOUGHTS – October 2021 Before – November 2021 After – Mechanized Treatment



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FINAL THOUGHTS – 2015 – CDP - One Year Following Handwork/Track Chipper Treatment



Photo Credit – 2015 Dan Turner



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FINAL THOUGHTS – 2015 – CDP - One Year Following Handwork/Track Chipper Treatment



Photo Credit – 2015 Dan Turner



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Sawmill Site in 2021 Following Multiple Handwork Understory and French Broom Treatments.

QUESTIONS?

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