

**BOARD OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION**

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**Date:** August 15, 2014

**To:** The Board of Forestry and Fire Protection

**From:** Kevin Conway, Staff Forester

**Subject:** Range Management Advisory Committee (RMAC) Update

Chair and Members of the Board,

The last RMAC meeting was held in Sacramento on July 9, 2014. We had seven members in attendance, including the newest member, John Van Duyn, whom the Board just confirmed in June as the California Forestry Association representative. This was the RMAC's third meeting since being assigned new support staff earlier this year. The RMAC is currently working on the following items:

Statewide Grazing Regulatory Action Plan: This is a project of the State Water Resources Control Board to develop regulatory strategies to address potential nonpoint sources of pollution from grazing activities. RMAC co-chairs, Marc Horney and Lesa Osterholm, have a meeting with Regional Water Quality Control Board staff involved with this process on September 9 in Sacramento. The purpose of the meeting is to establish a relationship between the RMAC and Water Board staff so that they may act in an advisory nature through this process and help the Water Board accomplish its mandated objectives.

Public Lands: The topic of rangelands in public ownership with limited consideration of grazing as a management strategy continues to top the RMAC's list of priorities. Staff has researched State Parks and Department of Fish and Wildlife managed lands currently in the process for updating their management plans. The RMAC has expressed interest in commenting on these plans when appropriate to make sure that grazing is considered when it complements the larger management objectives. Identifying barriers and opportunities to utilizing livestock in public land management will be an ongoing project for the RMAC.

Prescribed Grazing for Vegetation Management: The RMAC has assigned a team to develop educational material for the Vegetation Management Program (VMP) Foresters on how prescribed grazing may be used as part of the Department's comprehensive Vegetation Treatment Program. Prescribed grazing is contemplated in the VTP EIR currently under development, primarily for fuel break maintenance. The RMAC wants to raise awareness of the benefits and limitations of this management tool amongst the VMP Foresters.

Predator Populations: The RMAC had a concerned stakeholder present a problem statement about the biological and ecological consequences of expanding predator populations, with the primary concern being mountain lions. No action items came out of this discussion.

Budget: The RMAC's 2014/15 fiscal year budget has been approved. As requested by the Committee, it is sufficient to allow the RMAC to hold 6 meetings in Sacramento this year.

Vacancies: There are still two vacancies on the committee. One is for the California Wool Growers Association. Staff has reached out to this group to put forth a representative. The second is for the Watershed Fire Council of Southern California, which has statutory representation on the RMAC but is no longer a going concern. We continue to seek out closely related organizations, but have also initiated talks with Department legislative staff about the process for seeking a legislative change.

The next RMAC meeting date is Wednesday, September 10, 2014 in Sacramento.