

**Board of Forestry and Fire Protection
Range Management Advisory Committee (RMAC)**

**Minutes
April 20, 2005**

Attending:

RMAC:

Representing

Ken Zimmerman	RMAC Chairman
Mike Connor	Public Member
J.R. McCollister	Public Member
Leonard Hale	Watershed Fire Council of Southern California
Mel Thompson	California Wool Growers Association
Neil McDougald	Cattlemen's Association
Chuck Pritchard	Ca. Association of Resource Conservation Dist.
Jeff Stephens	CDF / RMAC Executive Secretary

Members of the Public:

Joe Rawitzer	
Allan West	Watershed Fire Council of Southern California
Tracy Schohr	Cattlemen's Association

Call to Order and Introductions:

Agenda items 1, 2, and 3 of the agenda: Ken Zimmerman called the meeting to order April 20, 2005 at 8:15 A.M. Introductions of all present were made. He then asked for a review and approval of the minutes for the Vegetation Management/Fire Focus Group meetings conducted January 2005. These minutes were approved by unanimous vote with minor edits. The minutes for the January meeting of the full committee were not available for review and will be submitted for RMAC review at a later meeting.

Agenda Item 4, Proposed Water Quality Regulations by Lahontan Regional Water Quality Board:

This item was deferred to the June meeting of RMAC.

Agenda Item 5, Setting RMAC Priorities for the 2005/06 Fiscal Year:

This item was deferred to the June meeting of RMAC.

Agenda Item 6, Agency and Association Reports:

California Cattlemen's Association: Tracy Schohr introduced herself representing CCA; however, she declined to make a report to RMAC.

Southern California Fire and Watershed Council: Allan West representing the Council was invited by Ken Zimmerman to provide an overview. Mr. West responded stating the Council has been in existence since 1956 and in fact included representation on the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection at one time. The Council is an advisory group for fire and watershed issues in Southern California. There are five members from each represented county appointed by the Board of Supervisors. The Council has experienced a decline in activity in recent years. Meetings are the third Thursday of March, June, and September, and the second Thursday in December.

1. Much of the Council's focus is directed at Contract Counties as well as CDF and Federal agencies on fire and watershed issues. These issues include:
2. Major cut backs in the 2006 budget for Federal dollars in Cooperative fuels Management Programs.
3. Proposal to place large areas of National Forests within the National Parks System. The Council is currently organizing a delegation to Washington DC to address this issue.
4. Various lobbying efforts with congressional and state legislators.
5. Work with RMAC as the opportunities present themselves.

Ken Zimmerman expressed his appreciation to Mr. West and invited continued cooperation between RMAC and the Council.

Range Focus Group Minutes January 2005:

Chuck Pritchard was asked to review the minutes from the Range Focus Group meeting of January 2004. Motion was made by Leonard Hale to approve; seconded by J.R. McCollister; motion carried by unanimous vote.

Ken Zimmerman asked Mr. Pritchard if the white paper regarding the role RMAC plays in relation to the Board was forthcoming. Mr. Pritchard affirmed that that it will be completed. He also took the opportunity to provide additional information on the subject of complexity required to accomplish projects with agencies. In several meetings with NRCS and other agency attendees noted that red tape has reached the point that many people do not wish to participate in government programs. Even CDF field representatives have made it known to Mr. Pritchard that the steps needed to prepare projects have become so burdensome that it is not worth their time to become involved. He further stated that this problem should be elevated to

the Resources Secretary Chrisman, Chairman of the Board Stan Dixon, and the Governor's office. Ken Zimmerman responded asking that Chuck prepare his comments in writing so that RMAC may pursue a meeting with the Secretary and the Board Chairman on this issue. The statement of the problem should include language as to what RMAC hopes to achieve by such a meeting.

Chuck Pritchard continued with a statement of a second problem he has noted. Communication to the public has not been well coordinated on projects. He cited an example of a prescribed burn that resulted in complaints about smoke from the city of Cayucos. Mr. Pritchard stated that better information outreach would help the situation.

Discussion returned to the proposed meeting with Secretary Chrisman and Chairman Dixon. RMAC collectively agreed that the meeting date should be sometime during the week of May 23-27 or June 6-10. Expected duration is 30 minutes.

Chuck Pritchard stated that the white paper regarding RMAC's role with the Board would be available within the next 3 weeks. This is response to Ken Zimmerman' stated opinion that the paper should be available prior to the proposed meeting with the Secretary of Resources and Chairman of the Board of Forestry.

General Discussion:

Chuck Pritchard stated that in the proposed new budget for the U.S Department of Agriculture includes budget cuts for any RC&D (Resource Conservation Development) that has been in existence for 30 years or more. He further stated that RC&Ds normally have 501 3 (c) status, act as financial clearing houses for projects, and in general are very successful. He urged all RMAC members to contact their legislators in opposition to budget cuts.

J.R. McCollister was asked by Ken Zimmerman to lead a review of the January 4, 2005 minutes from the Vegetation Management/Fire Focus Group. Mr. McCollister did so; a motion was made to adopt by Mike Connor and seconded by Leonard Hale. Motion Carried unanimously. Ken Zimmerman referred to text on page 2 dealing with the Federal Ten Year Comprehensive Strategy and the Healthy Forest Initiative. He noted that Jack Blackwell stated recently at a public gathering that 50% of Healthy Forest Imitative funding is used for fuels projects within WUI (Wildland Urban Interface Areas) versus the wildlands.

Leonard Hale stated that AI West informed him of new funding through the National Fire Plan for fuels treatment. Amounts and time frames were not identified.

Agenda Item 7, Committee Reports:

The Vegetation Management/Fire Focus Group was the only Group that reported.

RMAC resumed discussion of the CDF VMP that was the topic of work from the April 19, 2005 meeting. Mike Connor assumed the lead on behalf of Focus Group Chairman McCollister. The following subject matter was taken in turn from the draft report on recommendations to the Board:

Support CDF Units Treating Acres:

On page 10 lines 6-10 Neil McDougald noted that performance among CDF Units will vary and other members noted that this includes the Contract Counties. Mr. McDougald commented that if the VMP Coordinator for Contract Counties is removed for poor performance then this will become the excuse for not doing VMP work. Mel Thompson commented that the incentive for doing work may be the restoration of the position.

Commitment to VMP:

Chuck Pritchard mentioned work by Cal Poly that models vegetation change and accumulation over time. He raised the issue of whether an inventory of problem areas and setting priorities for treatments is needed. Joe Rawitzer responded by stating that Monterey County has a contract with FRAP to do fire threat analysis to investigate areas not currently being considered for fuels treatment. Chuck Pritchard noted that a tool like this may cause a change in Unit dynamics regarding how local authorities view the problem. Ken Zimmerman noted that a tool as described by Mr. Rawitzer might be used to reallocate resources to achieve set goals not currently being met. Chuck Pritchard asked if CDF as a rule changes with new technologies. Jeff Stephens responded that CDF does employ new technology when available for assessing environmental problems. Mike Connor noted this topic is beyond the scope of the assignment by Ross Johnson.

Mel Thompson raised the question of whether the Department would be monitoring itself for performance. As a group RMAC indicated self monitoring to be ill-advised indicating that the Board of Forestry should monitor through the annual report on VMP.

Mike Connor confirmed that the downward trend in treated acres will be shown in the report to the Board in an appendix.

Al West asked RMAC if there is an internal performance evaluation within CDF for program accomplishment. J.R. McCollister responded stating that there is no performance review. Al West identified this as a significant problem.

RMAC edited the section on Support of CDF Units. All changes were capture by Mike Connor.

RMAC diverted the discussion form the draft recommendations and invited Dick Hayes of the Department to explain the Fire Safe Council Clearing House process

used to distribute funds for fuel reduction work. Mr. Hayes explained that the Clearing House functions as a central repository for federal and state dollars. There is currently greater demand for funding than available funds. He further stated that the Clearing House works quite well for coordinating project funds. This year Prop 40 funding allowed federal funding to be stretched farther and do additional projects. Participants include BLM, USF&WS, USFS, CDF, and NPS. Discussion returned to the Draft Report to the Board on VMP following Mr. Hayes' comment.

Funding Needs:

RMAC members inquired if the dollars spent for wildland fire on SRA is available. Jeff Stephens stated he would investigate and provide whatever information can be obtained.

Ken Zimmerman stated that administrative costs for fuels projects need to be limited. This sentiment was later reinforced in the list of funding sources with statements indicating that administrative costs should be no more than 15%.

Joe Rawitzer made comment that the State uses unlimited funding to suppress wildland fire, yet VMP is not funded for project work. He further recommended that the term rangeland burns should be changed to landscape scale burns to deemphasize rangelands and emphasize the fact that this program is intended to treat a variety of objectives in addition to rangeland. This suggestion was accepted by RMAC and changes to text were made and recorded by Mike Connor. Further discussion on the matter resulted in RMAC accepting the modification that treating more acres with a landscape approach is in line with the State Fire Plan objective of treating fuels in a cost effective manner. Mr. Rawitzer stated that research from the US Forest Service indicate that for every \$1.00 spent in fuels management/reduction equal \$10.00 saved in suppression cost. Jeff Stephens stated that the source for this information should be verified if the information is used in the report. Mr. Rawitzer referred RMAC to US Forest Services representative Gary Beale to source the information.

Dedicated Workforce:

Chuck Pritchard will complete this section and submit for RMAC review.

Local Partnerships:

Joe Rawitzer was recruited by RMAC to submit suggested text for RMAC review under the heading Local Partnerships (page 13 line 12).

Public Outreach:

Mel Thompson opened discussion on this portion of the draft recommendations. He noted that there seems to be a landowner shift away from range improvement burns (LE-7 program) to VMP as discussed the previous day at the Vegetation Management /Fire Focus Group on April 19, 2005.

Ken Zimmerman commented that the “in reach” process developed by Mel Thompson is in agreement with RMAC’s assigned task to examine the VMP.

Neil McDougald commented that public outreach should be in response to changing CDF policy that reflects a changed program. RMAC should institute a public outreach separate from the Department CDF were to make a change in policy.

Ken Zimmerman stated that RMAC should approach the Board to investigate the reasons for declining VMP use by landowners.

Mike Connor closed the discussion on Public Outreach by asking Mel Thompson and Ken Zimmerman to collaborate on changes to this section, and submit for review by the full RMAC. Both agreed to this task.

General Discussion:

Mike Connor asked RMAC to plan an agenda for future actions while sufficient time remained for the meeting. The following agenda was put forward by committee members:

All revised text as a result of the April 20th meeting is due to Jeff Stephens by April 27, 2005. Mr. Stephens will distribute to RMAC immediately upon receipt of these materials.

Any additional comment as a result of the distribution of new text is due back to Jeff Stephens by May 11, 2005. This response shall include draft recommendations to the Board of Forestry from each RMAC member for there respective portion of the report.

A conference call will be scheduled for May 20, 2005 at 10:00 AM to address all draft recommendations.

The following meeting locations were selected:

Ken Zimmerman – LA County Fire Department
Mike Connor – UC Research Station Brownsville
Chuck Pritchard – Local RCD office Paso Robles area.
J.R. McCollister – CDF Red Bluff or Redding
Mel Thompson – CDF Oroville
Neil McDougald – UC Field Station

Other RMAC members not present at the April 2005 meeting will be contacted for a meeting location.

A motion to adopt this schedule was made, seconded and passed by unanimous vote.

Foresters as VMP Coordinators:

J.R. McCollister made the case that VMP projects deal with natural resource issues that are best addressed if a RPF (Registered Professional Forester) is involved with the project. Jeff Stephens stated that it is an a matter of CDF policy that CDF Foresters prepare or as a minimum approve VMP projects, and that manipulation of vegetation on timber sites definitely require an RPF under the Professional Foresters Licensing Law. Mike Connor concluded that VMP Coordinators should be a RPF or a CRM (Certified Range Manager).

VMP Related to the California Fire Plan:

This section contains numerical data on past program performance. Jeff Stephens was asked and agreed to verify the data with VMP records.

RMAC asked Jeff Stephens to obtain official copy of Board policy as it relates to page 15, line 17 of the draft recommendations. Mr. Stephens will also obtain the correct reference and text for PRC 4475 and CCR 1564 b (3). Mr. Stephens will also obtain the correct reference for the State Fire Plan page 16, line 13 of the draft report.

Discussion on Format and draft report item "Paradigm Shift," page 17 line, 7:

Mel Thompson asked what form should be used to present the recommendations. Mike Conner responded by referencing the Oak Woodlands Report as a guide and that each recommendation needs supporting text in the body of the report.

Mel Thompson made the point that the Paradigm Shift portion section is in fact a recommendation rather than a section unto itself, and that it is a major point that should be emphasized. Chuck Pritchard agreed. Mike Connor recommended that a recommendation to the Board should be taken from each section of the draft report and displayed in a separate section. RMAC agreed and also considered moving the recommendation for a paradigm shift to the head of the recommendations.

RMAC collectively decided that each person who authored a portion of the draft report will write a recommendation form the portion. The following assignments were recognized:

Expanded Tool Box of Vegetation Treatments – Mike Conner
Streamlined Process – Henry Giacomini
Maintenance of Completed Projects – Ken Zimmerman
Integration of Programs – Chuck Pritchard
Set Quantitative Goals – J.R. McCollister
Support CDF Units Treating Acres (Reallocation of Resources) – J.R. McCollister
Commitment to VMP - J.R. McCollister
Funding Needs – Leonard Hale
Dedicated Workforce – Chuck Pritchard
Local Partnerships – Joe Rawitzer
Public Outreach – Mel Thompson
Foresters as VMP Coordinators - J.R. McCollister
VMP in Relation to the California Fire Plan - J.R. McCollister
Paradigm Shift – Neil McDougald

Discussion on the draft report on VMP was closed by Mike Conner and returned control of the discussion to Ken Zimmerman.

Agenda Item 8, New and Unfinished Business:

RMAC members are requested for the May 5, 2005 meeting of the Board. This will be a joint meeting of the Board of Forestry and the Fish & Game Commission. On the agenda will be the Joint Policy on Hardwood Woodlands. The Boards agenda is available on line, and should be received by each RMAC member as part of the Board's master mailing list.

The next meeting for RMAC is June 21-22.

Meeting adjourned