

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

**Vegetation Management / Fire
Focus Group**

**Minutes
September 18, 2007**

Attending:

RMAC:

Representing

Ken Zimmerman	California Cattlemen's Association
Mike Connor	Public Member
Clancy Dutra	California Farm Bureau Federation
J.R McCollister	Public Member
Ed Ancho doguy	California Wool Growers Association
Scott Carnegie	California Forestry Association
Mel Thompson	California Wool Growers Association
Jeff Stephens	CAL FIRE / RMAC Executive Secretary

Members of the Public:

Russ Henly	CAL FIRE
Chris Zimny	CAL FIRE
Pam Giacomini	Board of Forestry & Fire Protection

Items 1 & 2 Call to Order and Introductions:

JR McCollister called the meeting to order at 10:00 A.M. Introductions of all present were made.

Item 3 CAL FIRE Vegetation Treatment Program Policy Review and VTP EIR:

JR McCollister asked if Jeff Stephens had any updates or information to initiate the discussion. Jeff Stephens indicated that he was prepared to comment on the VTP EIR but not the Vegetation Treatment Program Policy Review. He indicated that a new amendment to the contract has just been completed that calls for a new work schedule, and the Department expects to take delivery on the Administrative Draft on October 31, 2007. It will be reviewed by an internal panel that includes two Board members and two RMAC members for a period of one month, followed by compilation of all input for delivery back to the contractor on November 15, 2007. Jeff Stephens confirmed that Neil McDougald and Scott Carnegie are the two RMAC reviewers.

Pam Giacomini asked for an explanation of cost overruns and whether issues with Department of Pesticide Regulations (DPR) had been addressed. Jeff Stephens stated that cost overruns were related to extensive investigations made on the herbicide issue and the fact that a subcontractor for biological concerns was brought in to assist the primary contractor. Pam Giacomini expressed concerns that time and money had not

been used wisely by the contractor specifically referencing the herbicide portion. Mr. Stephens explained that the work was done with his approval with the intent of investigating herbicides in a very thorough manner. RH commented that the Department has been meeting with DPR on herbicides related to the Forest Practice issues and timber harvesting. RH asked that Jeff Stephens contact DPR once again and solicit comment on the issue of pesticide regulation to insure that the Department is not overstepping its authority and is coordinated with current DPR procedures for pesticide regulation. Mr. Stephens agreed to contact DPR.

The schedule for completing the EIR was reviewed. The final EIR is scheduled for Board certification September 2008. In the interim a 45 day public comment period is anticipated in mid March followed by response to public comment and completion of the final EIR.

JR McCollister then turned discussion to the Program Policy Review and asked Pam Giacomini to provide comment. He stated that of concern to RMAC are statements made at the August meeting of the RPC indicating that the Board may consider not making a complete review of all Department VTP programs as recommended by RMAC. Pam Giacomini confirmed that the Board fully intends to make a complete review of VTP programs. JR McCollister stated that this satisfies RMAC's concerns and supports moving forward. Chris Zimny confirmed that Chief McLean supports providing information for the review of VTP programs. JR McCollister suggested that field staff come in for a special assignment to assist with completing the VTP Program review. Pam Giacomini stated that they have not made such a request; however, Chief McLean's willingness to pursue the project is promising, and that there is a meeting planned with the Chief and Kate Dargan with the Fire Marshal's Office to make sure that all are on the "same page" regarding completion of the project.

Jeff Stephens asked if he may return it the VTP EIR for a final point of clarification. He stated that the acreage allocation model developed by FRAP was not used as previously stated in some of the EIR planning meetings. This was due to claims by the contractor that the model would have required considerable staff time and expense to distribute acres for the purposes of cumulative effects analysis. Therefore, the decision was made to allocate acres according the historical record which, is assumed to represent preferred strategy for future allocation of acres. As a consequence areas with relatively active programs are more likely to receive a greater proportion of acres treated. JR McCollister expressed concern with this strategy and recommended that the look back period for the historical record be longer than that of the current fire plan to avoid the effect it has had on reduced acres treated by prescribed fire.

Russ Henly commented that if a particular area (bioregion) requires more fuel treatment work than originally analyzed that additional CEQA analysis can be done to account for the extra work. Hopefully the additional analysis would be minimal.

Ken Zimmerman asked if the RMAC reviewers have been notified that the administrative draft is about to be released. Jeff Stephens stated that they have been notified. Scott Carnegie stated that he would like to know if there is any specific comment from other RMAC members. Jeff Stephens stated that the two reviewers should be communicating with other RMAC members when questions come up that require assistance. He also stated that previous comment submitted by RMAC would be provided to assist with the review and avoid revisiting the same issues.

Ken Zimmerman invited Pam Giacomini to state any needs that she may have of RMAC regarding completion of the VTP Policy Review. She agreed to take it under consideration and attend future RMAC meetings as time and her schedule permits.

JR McCollister stated that there are no recommended actions from this meeting to RMAC other than to report on the discussion.

Item 4, New and Unfinished Business:

None

Item 5, Public Comment:

NONE

Adjourn