

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

**Minutes  
January 14, 2009**

**Attending:**

**RMAC:**

Ken Zimmerman  
Mike Connor  
Bart Cremers  
Neil McDougald  
Scott Carnegie  
Mel Thompson  
Jeff Stephens

**Representing**

California Cattlemen's Association (CCA)  
Public Member  
California Farm Bureau Federation (CFBF)  
California Cattlemen's Association (CCA)  
California Forestry Association (CFA)  
California Wool Growers Association (CWG)  
CAL FIRE / RMAC Executive Secretary

**Members of the Public:**

Ann Yost  
Tacy Currey  
Lee Hazeltine

**Representing**

USFS  
California Association of Resource Conservation Districts  
Commercial Grazer

**Items 1 & 2 Call to Order and Introductions:**

Ken Zimmerman called the meeting to order at 8:00 AM.

**Items 3, Review of the November 2008 minutes:**

Minutes for three sessions were approved with corrections as follows:  
Vegetation Management/Fire Focus Group. Scott Carnegie moved for approval, Mel Thompson seconded. Motion carried unanimously  
Rangeland Focus Group. Mike Connor moved for approval, Scott Carnegie seconded. Motion carried unanimously.  
Full RMAC. Scott Carnegie moved for approval, Mike Connor seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

**Item 5, Draft White Paper, State Owned Lands: A Discussion of their Acquisition and Recommendations for Sustaining Natural Resource Values. Response to Resource Protection Committee Comments.**

Jeff Stephens distributed a revised version that contained edits from the Policy Focus Group made the preceding day. The RMAC determined that a cover letter will include mention of the items in need of further investigation by the Resource Protection Committee (RPC) for submission to RPC with the White Paper. These items include the relationship between the Federal Tax Code and the use of bond funds for management and maintenance of government acquired lands, and the data that identifies the number of acres that have been acquired by government entities for conservation purposes.

Ken Zimmerman stated that he will contact a Federal economist to search out an answer to the Federal Tax Code question. Jeff Stephens suggested that the Board's Chief Council with the Attorney General's Office may have contacts that could investigate the issue.

Mike Connor made a motion to return the document to RPC with a clean copy showing just the changes made by RMAC, and a copy that shows all changes made by RPC and RMAC. Include a letter stating that RMAC accepts the RPC changes and a discussion of the areas where RMAC believes the wording needs further review by RPC. Mel Thompson seconded. Discussion: Mel Thompson recommended that the letter conclude with a statement at the end indicating RMAC's wishes to continue providing assistance to RPC for completion of the paper. The recommendation was accepted for inclusion in the motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

**Item 6, Climate Change and Carbon Sequestration Issues Pertinent to Rangelands:  
Continued discussion from the November 2008 RMAC meeting.**

Jeff Stephens stated that this item was placed on the agenda as a place holder for continued discussion of climate change if RMAC so desires. Ken Zimmerman made reference to the draft document, *An Adaptive Plan for California's Forest Sector and Rangelands. Revised December 11, 2008*, circulated to RMAC prior to the meeting. This is a CAL FIRE draft document produced as part of the response to the California Air Resources Board requirement for State strategies in response to climate change. Ken Zimmerman stated that the document should be addressing the effects of climate change on the upper watersheds and declining meadows. These systems have lost their ability to retain ground water and hence the ability to buffer large storm events causing downstream damage.

Ken Zimmerman stated that if policy is being developed and forwarded to RMAC we need to respond in a timely manner and keep the organizations represented informed of the issues. Scott Carnegie asked if there is something more proactive that needs to be looked at now. Jeff Stephens responded stating that communications with the Executive Officer of the Board indicates that developing adaptive strategies to climate change is an item the Board could use assistance with currently. He referred to email sent to RMAC that documents what RMAC may provide.

Neil McDougald suggested that a better focus is the impact of drought on the agriculture regarding our management strategies. The discussion revealed that the word drought means different things to different people. The time frame for drought may be thought of short lived in the minds of some, and quite extended for others.

Mel Thompson argued for developing a strategy for educating RMAC on topics, including determining which people to invite and the information that is being sought. Scott Carnegie stated that the issues should be initiated within the Focus Groups, prioritized, and then speakers selected according to the information needed. Mel Thompson agreed. Bart Cremers also identified the need for RMAC representation with other groups such as the Climate Change forum being organized by Bartolome at University of California (UC).

Ken Zimmerman confirmed with the other RMAC members that Climate Change will be a topic for the Rangeland Focus Group. Mike Connor argued for keeping informed with other agencies and their activities regarding climate change so that opportunities are not missed where RMAC constituents may benefit. He characterized the knowledge as falling into two

categories; one, developing knowledge on how RMAC can promote environmental and fiscal benefits for rangelands, and second knowledge useful for the prevention of adverse actions that control agencies may take in the name of climate change that are detrimental to rangelands. Neil McDougald stated there is likely to be significant amounts of money being made available as a result of climate change that may result in changes that impact agriculture substantially. RMAC should be staying abreast of the information as a means to provide some protection to potential negative consequences.

Ken Zimmerman put forth the idea of developing a vision statement in order to keep RMAC focused on specific tasks associated with climate change. He favors establishing specific objectives when reviewing information so that a more orderly response may be made.

Mike Connor noted the Rangeland Focus Group priorities call for involvement with climate change and the committee should be knowledgeable of meetings and activities within CAL FIRE and the Resources Agency. He suggested invited Bartolome to a meeting for an update.

Ken Zimmerman stated that a Rangeland Focus Group will be held in March, and that the primary purpose of that meeting will be to develop a strategy on how RMAC may respond to and monitor climate change in regards to rangelands.

Ann Yost cited examples of court rulings where the plaintiffs have been advocating addressing climate change in broader more global context, whereas the USFS prefers to focus on the project (permit) at hand. She further stated that ecological restoration is becoming the new focus of her agency and she can see climate change as being an issue raised in this context. Ms. Yost mentioned the economic stimulus package and projects that potentially may be done for range improvement work under this new funding source.

#### **Items 4, Agency and Association Reports, Invited:**

##### US Forest Service: Ann Yost Reporting

Ann Yost reported that progress has been made with developing the Public Rangelands Forum that USFS and Farm Bureau are co-chairing. A representative from the environmental community is being sought to assist with planning. The forum will be either March 2<sup>nd</sup> or March 9<sup>th</sup> at the Farm Bureau Office in Sacramento. The flyer refers to "public lands" with focus on the USFS. The first meeting will focus on the history of how we have reached the current situation. The organizers intend to focus on positive accomplishments such as the rangeland monitoring data that is showing improving conditions. Ken Tate will provide information on water quality. Lynn Huntsinger or Sheila Barry may speak on the economics. Ann Yost's goal for the Forum is to seek non litigated solutions to grazing issues.

##### California Association of Resource Conservation Districts (CARCD), Tacy Currey Reporting:

Districts have been furloughing people due to the shutdown of State bond funded grants. All invoices for work by the various Resource Conservation Districts that did not make it to the Controllers Office by December 17, 2008 are frozen. She is looking for lines of credit to bridge the funding.

CARCD is creating a Memorandum of Understanding with Bureau of Land Management for cooperative projects on private and public lands.

The National Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative Conference is being hosted by the CARCD December 13-16 in Sparks, NV. Over half of the presenters will be producers. Flyers were distributed to RMAC asking for papers and advertising the conference.

CARCD has also been conducting workshops bringing in speakers to localized groups to hear presentations on the benefits of grazing. Dan Dagget is among the featured speakers. Local environmental groups and producers are the target audience. The workshops have been highly successful.

Permitting: Tacy Currey stated that CARCD is making it known to funding agencies like NRCS field offices that CARCD is not likely to use funding to do work on projects that have extensive permitting. This is due to the difficulty of delivering money to the ground because of the complexity, delay, and restrictions imposed by permits. The 1600 process was cited as an example, primarily having to do with the length of time for approval.

**Item 7, Rangeland Issues Pertaining to The 2007 Policy Statement and Strategic Program of the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection:**

Ken Zimmerman asked Mel Thompson to begin discussion. Mel Thompson stated that RMAC was given copies of the document and asked for comment in March of 2006 with a due date of April 10th. He mentioned page 12 "Internal Assessment," and page 13 that identifies difficulties expected by the Board for implementation of the goals expressed in the document. Mel Thompson pointed out that the document took about two years to develop and that RMAC does not seem to be engaged with the document and would like to see RMAC to become more of a partner with its implementation. Prior to the RMAC meeting Mel Thompson contacted George Gentry and asked what RMAC's role may be. Mr. Gentry responded stating that 1) AB 32 (Climate Change) is an important consideration when assessing the role that RMAC may play; 2) RMAC should develop their own priorities in order of importance within the context of the Strategic Program document. He suggested writing a letter to the Board expressing an interest and stating RMAC's position, and asking that RMAC be engaged by the Board in some capacity.

Ken Zimmerman made reference to the Rangelands Focus Group that will meet in March and climate change will be on the agenda. He agreed that in regards to other issues they must be prioritized to avoid wasted efforts. Mike Connor argued that RMAC should be selecting topics/issues where there is the greatest potential for RMAC to have an impact. Mel Thompson asked what the conduit would be for RMAC to make regular reports/updates to the Board. Jeff Stephens responded that historically the Resource Protection Committee (RPC) has been the vehicle for reporting. He also recommended inviting George Gentry to RMAC. Jeff Stephens recommended that if greater involvement with RPC is desired RMAC should extract specific items from the Strategic Program document, and have a well defined agenda of items they wish to discuss in order to make the best use of the RPC's time.

Mel Thompson noted that the "document" infers that policy and regulations governing natural resources on forests & rangelands are administered by the Board primarily. He posed the question of how to bring RMAC and the industry into the discussion of policy and

regulations that involve rangelands. Mike Connor recommended identification of primary issues that RMAC wishes to work on, have dialogue with the Board, and then proceed with their concurrence. Mel Thompson made reference to an evaluations process for tasks before the Board mentioned on page 3 of the “document’s” Executive Summary.” Ken Zimmerman asked Jeff Stephens to obtain copies for evaluation as a possible conduit for RMAC to make comment on issues. He further stated that AB 32, the Board’s 2007 Strategic Program, and recommendations on how to proceed would form the basis for the March 2009 Rangeland Focus Group meeting.

#### **Item 8, Focus Group Structure and Methods for Selecting RMAC Officers:**

Mel Thompson distributed a list of ideas for selecting officers. He noted that item two calling for the election of Focus Group Chairs was deleted from the list. Scott Carnegie stated that the real objective is to simply identify the procedure for Focus Group Chair, RMAC Chairman and Vice Chair selection, and have it become part of the RMAC Strategic Plan along with specified terms. Mel Thompson added that a review of RMAC goals and objectives would also be included with a specification for time frames. He further stated that Ed Anchordoguy’s primary concern is that the method for all these tasks be formalized.

Scott Carnegie recommended that a formal proposal be presented at the March meeting. Ken Zimmerman agreed and also stated that members interested in the Rangeland Focus Group Chairman position should contact him before the March meeting. Scott Carnegie will produce the proposal prior to the end of January. Neil McDougald stated that he would like to know the history of procedures for selecting officers. Jeff Stephens agreed to ask Cathy Bleier, former RMAC Executive Secretary, for her recollection of how officers transitioned in and out of office. Mr. McDougald stated that term limits in a small group such as this is not advisable.

#### **Item 9, Status Report: Draft Board Policy 12 for Certified Rangeland Manager:**

Mike Connor provided the update stating that the Policy was accepted by the Board on January 7, 2009. There were only minor changes to what RMAC proposed in the final draft. He expressed his hope that the Policy would clarify where a Certified Rangeland Manager is required and/or recommended. It was suggested that the Policy should be distributed through *Licensing News* and through Cal-Pac’s newsletter as well.

#### **Item 10, Focus Group Reports:**

Rangeland Focus Group, Mike Connor Reporting: Mr. Connor noted a comment from Jon Gustafson that the NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service) has no plans to require certification of their range management staff. Therefore a way to strengthen and improve the management of California rangelands is to negotiate certification of Federal employees that advise on rangeland issues. Mike Connor noted that continuing education units (CEU) are being pursued at that national level by Bartolome, Stroud and others. Bart Cremers raised the question whether a CRM is required to perform continuing education. Mike Connor confirmed that continuing education is required but presently not formally documented or recorded. Ken Zimmerman asked that a task for follow-up on the CEU issue be added to the Rangeland Focus Group work priorities. This will be placed under “Promoting a Good CRM Program.”

#### **Item 11, Pending Issues Before RMAC:**

Alternative Meeting Location: Ken Zimmerman stated that with the budget situation this item should be tabled for another meeting. Conference calls may be required in the future.

RMAC Interfacing with Represented Organizations: Ken Zimmerman and Neil McDougald noted that RMAC has not received an invitation to speak before CCA in at least 3 years. Mel Thompson noted that he reports to CWG quarterly. Neil McDougald noted that Tracy Schohr and Justin Oldfield have been regular attendees at RMAC and it may have been felt by CCA that their attendance and reporting is sufficient.

Scott Carnegie stated that Policy 12 may be an issue of interest to CFA and he will approach them regarding future representation at RMAC meetings.

### **Item 12, New and Unfinished Business:**

Ken Zimmerman encouraged all RMAC members to go to the SRM (Society of Range Management) website and look at the conference proceeding on fire in the American deserts in Reno. Good materials on restoration are presented.

Neil McDougald recommended looking at the website by Mel George on the historical record of grazing including grazing in foreign countries like Mongolia.

Bart Cremers asked for a status of positions that are open with RMAC. Jeff Stephens stated that the Public Member position will be vacated by Mike Connor effective January 14, 2009. An advertisement for this position will be posted by the Board. Tacy Currey has indicated her intent to nominate Chuck Pritchard for the position held by California Association of Resource Conservation Districts. The CWG position is open and a nomination for Mel Thompson has been submitted to the Board.

### **Item 13, Public Comment:**

Lee Hazeltine (sp), a commercial grazer presented an account of his business using goats to manage vegetation. He started the business two years ago, concentrating mostly on levies. He has also done some work on industrial forest lands. Air quality issues have had a positive influence on the business since burning is becoming less feasible. Mr. Hazeltine has also grazed Department of Fish & Game refuges and home owner associations in the Lincoln area. Jeff Stephens asked if demand is sufficient to keep the animals busy. Mr. Hazeltine responded stating that available work exceeds his ability to meet demand.

Mr. Hazeltine expressed his opinion that budgets should not be focused on expanding fire suppression resources; focus instead on new methods for managing fuels, animals being one.

### **Adjourn**

Tasks:

1. The RMAC White Paper for acquisition of private land without management shall be returned to RPC with edits and a cover letter for their February meeting.
2. Place climate change on the Rangelands Focus Group Agenda.

3. Scott Carnegie shall prepare a proposal for amending the RMAC Strategic Plan regarding the transition of officers for the next RMAC meeting.
4. Jeff Stephens will add a follow-up statement to the Rangelands Focus Group's work priorities that addresses continuing education credits.
5. Jeff Stephens will ask the Board for any copies that may exist of a formal template for making annual reviews of committee accomplishments.