

1 **RANGE MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

2
3 **DRAFT MEETING MINUTES**

4
5 Meeting held at noticed location and by teleconference on Thursday, May 18, 2011; Focus
6 Groups convened at the same location and by teleconference on Wednesday May 17,
7 2011. Resources Building, 1416 9th Street, 15th floor, Room 1506-12
8 Sacramento, California
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10 **Attending:**

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12 **RMAC:**

13 **Representing:**

14 Mel Thompson, Chair
15 Bart Cremers
16 Lesa Osterholm
17 Marc Horney
18 Aaron Lazanoff
19 Bill Burrows

California Wool Growers Association
California Farm Bureau Federation
California Farm Bureau Federation (by phone)
General Public (by phone)
California Cattlemen's Association (by phone)
General Public

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21 George Gentry, Exec. Officer
22 Eric Huff (staff)

California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection
California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection

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24 **Members of the Public:**

25 **Representing:**

26 Kevin Piper
27 Karen Buhr

California Polytechnic State University, SLO (by phone)
California Association of Resource Conservation Districts
(by phone)

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29
30 *~ Items appear in the order in which they were discussed by the Committee ~*

31
32 **Item 1: Call to Order, Introductions, and Discussion of Policy Focus Group Priorities.**

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34 Chair Thompson called the meeting to order and began with introductions.

35
36 Mr. George Gentry, Executive Officer of the Board then opened discussion of the Policy
37 Focus Group's draft priorities for 2011. The Policy Focus Group did not convene the
38 previous day due to the absence of Members. Staff accordingly suggested that a brief
39 discussion of the Group's agenda items, in particular review of focus group priorities, would
40 be appropriate during the full RMAC meeting.

41
42 One of the identified Policy Focus Group priorities is to work with the Board and other
43 agencies to "increase permit coordination and minimize redundancy." Member Osterholm
44 highlighted the findings of the "California Roundtable on Agriculture and the Environment
45 (CRAE)" on the issue of permitting for restoration activities. Mr. Kevin Piper, Director of
46 Agriculture Operations at Cal Poly SLO shared his experiences with restoration activity
47 permitting in Nevada as well as his current work on water quality related permitting for Cal
48 Poly. Karen Buhr, Executive Director of the California Association of Resource
49 Conservation Districts reported on a proposed statewide permit for small restoration
50 projects undertaken by a number of Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs).

1 She noted that the RCDs have since chosen to pursue coordinated permitting at a regional
2 scale, rather than statewide.

3
4 Chair Thompson and Member Cremers brought the discussion back to general review of
5 the focus group priorities. With the concurrence of the Committee, the “permit coordination”
6 priority was acknowledged as viable for the Policy Focus Group. The Committee then
7 identified an additional priority for the Rangelands Focus Group and revised the language
8 in one of the Water Focus Group priorities. The final draft list of priorities will be included in
9 RMAC’s report to the Board, but the Committee may thereafter choose to focus on a limited
10 number of priorities for action in 2011.

11
12 **Item 6: Review and Discussion of Draft Revised RMAC Strategic Plan.**

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14 Chair Thompson introduced the topic and reported that Vice-Chair Carnegie had taken on
15 the task of drafting a revised Plan for the Committee’s review and consideration. Member
16 Burrows noted that the draft Plan had a number of broadly stated elements that require
17 further clarification. As a result of his comments, Member Burrows was appointed to serve
18 on the Strategic Plan revision editorial committee.

19
20 Executive Officer Gentry observed that it could be informative for the Committee to review
21 the 2010 Assessment of Forests and Rangelands prepared by Cal Fire’s Fire and
22 Resource Assessment Program (“2010 FRAP Assessment”). The FRAP Assessment could
23 help focus RMAC’s Strategic Plan revision effort. Chair Thompson stated that the Strategic
24 Plan revision would be the Policy Focus Group’s number one priority for 2011.

25
26 **Item 2: Review and Approval of March 2011 Draft RMAC and Focus Group Meeting**
27 **Minutes.**

28
29 **05-11-01** Member Burrows moved to approve the March 2011 Vegetation
30 Management Focus Group meeting minutes and Member Osterholm
31 seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

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33 **05-11-02** Member Osterholm moved to approve the March 2011 Water Focus Group
34 meeting minutes and Member Cremers seconded the motion. The motion
35 carried unanimously.

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37 **05-11-03** Member Osterholm moved to approve the March 2011 Rangelands Focus
38 Group meeting minutes and Member Burrows seconded the motion. The
39 motion carried unanimously.

40
41 **05-11-04** Member Osterholm moved to approve the March 2011 Policy Focus Group
42 meeting minutes and Member Cremers seconded the motion. The motion
43 carried unanimously.

44
45 **05-11-05** Member Cremers moved to approve the March 2011 full RMAC meeting
46 minutes and Member Osterholm seconded the motion. The motion carried
47 unanimously.

1 **Item 4: Status Report on Attempt to Identify Agency Permitting Processes that Could**
2 **Be Coordinated or Integrated Pursuant to Ad Hoc Survey Report Recommendations.**
3

4 Member Osterholm reported briefly on the status of a CARCD survey in which two-thirds
5 of respondents indicated that they chose not to work further on restoration projects due
6 to permit coordination issues.

7 This survey is referenced in the CRAE document mentioned in agenda item number
8 one. This item will continue to be discussed in the Water Focus Group as a priority for
9 2011.

10
11 **Item 7: Focus Group Reports**
12

13 Focus Group meetings were conducted on May 16, 2011 with additional discussion on
14 agenda topics at the full RMAC meeting the following day. Meeting attendance included
15 teleconference participants Ben Zabinsky (NCRWQCB) and Kevin Piper (Cal Poly SLO).
16 Participants in person included Justin Oldfield and Tracy Schohr (CCA), Noelle Cremers
17 and Jack Rice (CFBF), Lesa Carlton (CWA), Anne Yost (USFS), David Lewis (UCCE),
18 and Karen Buhr (CARCD).
19

20 **Water Focus Group**

21 Following introductions, Focus Group Chair Horney invited Ms. Anne Yost from the
22 United States Forest Service to present to the Group. Ms. Yost then gave a PowerPoint
23 presentation on the status of the waiver of waste discharge reporting requirements for
24 National Forests (contact staff for copy of presentation). Ms. Yost noted that the Forest
25 Service believes the waiver is the best approach for meeting water quality requirements
26 for activities on National Forest lands. The waiver would cover the activities of
27 permittees thereby eliminating the need for individual project level water quality
28 permitting. The Forest Service intends to have livestock grazing authorized under the
29 waiver. The waiver will rely upon the Forest Service's recently revised Water Quality
30 Management Handbook and a series of Best Management Practices for protection of
31 water quality. She also noted that there is already a public lands waiver under the
32 auspices of the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board that is distinct from
33 the larger Region-wide effort. The draft waiver is not out for public review at this point
34 and Ms. Yost will continue to update the Focus Group on new developments.
35

36 Ms. Yost then provided a brief status update on the collaborative water quality research
37 project being conducted by the Forest Service (Region 5) and the UC Davis Water
38 Quality Lab. She and Dr. Ken Tate are moving forward with water quality sampling this
39 summer on multiple National Forests. Ms. Yost will continue to provide updates to the
40 Focus Group as this work continues.
41

42 Mr. David Lewis from the University of California Cooperative Extension Service (UCCE)
43 was then invited to speak on the Tomales Bay conditional waiver for grazing activities.
44 This waiver was adopted by the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control
45 Board in 2008 to implement the Tomales Bay Pathogens TMDL and Walker Creek
46 Sediment TMDL. Landowners of 50 acres or more that conduct grazing are required to
47 complete a Ranch Water Quality Management Plan and conduct a specified number of
48 annual forensic monitoring inspections of their ownerships. The Plan is proprietary to the
49 ownership, but must be made available for review by regional board staff during site visits.
50 In addition, landowners are required to file with the regional board a compliance certification
51 annually.

1 Focus Group participants then engaged in a general discussion of the State Water Board's
2 apparent proposal to create a statewide waiver of waste discharge reporting for grazing
3 and irrigated lands. Ms. Cindy Wise of the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board
4 is reportedly the primary contact for this statewide effort and has been invited to speak to
5 the Water Focus Group in July on this and the existing Lahontan grazing waiver.
6

7 **Rangelands Focus Group**

8 Focus Group Chair, Bart Cremers began the meeting with introductions before inviting
9 Mr. David Lewis from UCCE to present to the Group. Mr. Lewis then gave a second
10 PowerPoint presentation on work undertaken by members of the "Marin Carbon Project"
11 (contact staff for copy of presentation). The Project is centered in Marin County and
12 includes participation by USDA, UC Berkeley, Marin Agricultural Land Trust, Marin
13 Organic, Nicasio Native Grass Ranch, Marin RCD, and UCCE, among others. The
14 presentation was specific to a research study by UC Berkeley Professor, Whendee
15 Silver, et al. The study is attempting to answer the questions of whether or not soil
16 carbon stocks vary across California's rangelands and if the effects of management on
17 soil carbon stocks can be detected. Mr. Lewis reported that the research findings thus
18 far indicate soil carbon stocks vary across Marin's rangelands. It would also appear that
19 the effects of organic soil amendments on soil carbon can be detected in that fields
20 treated with organic soil amendments showed an increase in soil carbon levels. The
21 work is ongoing and a research paper is currently in press.
22

23 Member Burrows then gave a report on his efforts to certify a portion of his ranch for
24 carbon credit sales. He is working with Mr. Forrest Mertens at SunOne Solutions to
25 market carbon from the oak woodlands on his ownership. If at some future point a
26 rangeland carbon protocol is developed, Member Burrows' rangelands will also be
27 incorporated into the carbon sale program.
28

29 Focus Group Chair Cremers had to leave the meeting prior to reporting on the status of
30 efforts to develop a public lands grazing protocol so this item was deferred to the
31 following day. During the full RMAC meeting the following day, he reported on an email
32 status update that some of the Members received on the coordinated attempt to initiate a
33 grazing program on state lands. He noted that a publicly owned preserve had been
34 identified as a possible pilot project location, but efforts have since stalled. In the
35 meantime, it was learned that Sheila Barry and Stephanie Larson from UCCE were
36 working on a similar effort. Ms. Barry and Ms. Larson have since become focused on an
37 attempt to include grazing under the auspices of a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP)
38 somewhere in the San Francisco Bay region. However, it would appear that Barry and
39 Larson would like to work with RMAC on initiation of grazing on public lands and
40 possible development of grazing protocols. The Committee expressed strong support for
41 this possible opportunity and noted that a number of education and commodity
42 organizations share an interest in this effort. Chair Cremers indicated that the next step
43 would be to contact Ms. Barry and Ms. Larson. Member Osterholm suggested that
44 perhaps a letter of support for their work could be helpful.
45

46 **05-11-06** Member Cremers moved to authorize the drafting of a support letter
47 between this and the July RMAC meeting. Member Burrows seconded the
48 motion. The motion carried unanimously.
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50 **Vegetation Management Focus Group**

51 Focus Group did not convene - no action items to report.

1 **Policy Focus Group**

2 Focus Group did not convene - no action items to report.

3
4 **Item 3: Status Report on Outreach Efforts to Local and State Agricultural**
5 **Organizations.**

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7 Member Horney reported that he has narrowed down the list of other organizations to be
8 contacted including the Wildlife Society among others. He would like to provide written
9 updates to these prospective contacts in the form of his personal abbreviated meeting
10 syntheses. Staff suggested that Marc's synthesis documents be sent first to RMAC
11 Members for review prior to their transmission to others.

12
13 **Item 5: Status Report on Draft Annual Report to the Board of Forestry and Fire**
14 **Protection.**

15
16 Staff reported that he has been unable to commence drafting of the annual report due
17 other duties. He outlined a suggested format for the document that includes biographical
18 information for each of the RMAC Members, discussion of RMAC's vision for the future
19 of rangeland management, the Ad Hoc survey report findings, Focus Group and
20 Committee priority identification as well as explanation of the purpose of each Focus
21 Group, recommendations for Board actions in support of rangeland constituents, and a
22 feedback mechanism of some kind, among other elements. The goal is to have the
23 report completed in time for presentation to the Board at their July meeting. Staff
24 suggested that the entire RMAC membership be encouraged to attend the Board
25 meeting. Committee Chair Thompson volunteered to lead the drafting of the document.
26 Chair Thompson requested that staff produce minutes in a more timely fashion to
27 support this effort.

28
29 **Item 8: New and Unfinished Business.**

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31 Member Cremers inquired as to the status of the correspondence authorized at the March
32 meeting. Staff reported that the Sunflower CRMP support letter was posted. The proposed
33 letter to the California Air Resources Board (CARB) in support of development of a
34 rangeland carbon credit protocol was not sent. Executive Officer Gentry has advised that
35 the letter instead be sent to the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection. The Board would
36 then send a letter to CARB endorsing RMAC's recommendation along with a copy of
37 RMAC's letter. Staff will revise the letter accordingly and circulate it to the Committee for
38 review and approval.

39
40 Member Cremers then asked for an update on the CRM Program's activities. Staff reported
41 that one CRM examinee took the exam in April. A copy of the applicant's exam will be
42 forwarded for grading immediately following the RMAC meeting. Member Horney reported
43 that he intends to post CRM exam study materials for posting to applicants and staff
44 volunteered to assist in this effort. Staff further reported that the CRM Program Guidelines
45 revision effort is on hold until such time as staff and the Attorney General's representative
46 are able to convene and work on language changes that address the Administrative
47 Procedures Act and Foresters Law.

48
49 Member Horney announced that he has 30 students set to attend Range Camp this year.
50 He is looking for financial support for three of them.

51

1 The next meeting is scheduled for July 13-14 and will coincide with the July Board meeting.
2 RMAC will attempt to complete its annual report to the Board in advance of this meeting so
3 that it could be presented to the Board on July 13.

4 Chair Thompson reported on his participation in the Vegetation Treatment Program EIR
5 conference call. The draft VTP EIR is intended to be publicly posted in the fall.

6
7 Chair Thompson reported on a workshop conducted by Stanford University's Woods
8 Institute for the Environment.

9
10 Member Osterholm reported that the Sierra Nevada Conservancy has 10 million dollars in
11 grant funds earmarked for range and forest health projects. She advocated for RMAC
12 Members to comment in support of this earmark through the "public comments" section on
13 the Conservancy's website.

14
15 Ms. Karen Buhr reported that the CARCD Annual Meeting will be held in November and
16 that proposals for presentations are due by June 2.

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18 **Item 9: Public Comment.**

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20 No comment was offered and meeting was adjourned by motion of Member Cremers with a
21 second provided by Member Burrows.

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