

BOARD OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION

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**RANGE MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Tuesday, January 20, 2015
 Sacramento, CA

RMAC Members Present	RMAC Members Absent
Co-chair, Lesa Osterholm Bill Burrows John Van Duyn Cole Bush Bart Cremers Sheryl Landrum Via Conference: Co-chair, Marc Horney Ed Anchordoguy Chuck Pritchard Mary Rickert Aaron Lazanoff	Chris Marengo
RMAC Staff	Department Staff
Kevin Conway Edith Hannigan	

Items appear in the order they were presented on the agenda.

Approve November Minutes

Chair Osterholm requested two changes, one to *Focus Group Updates – c. Rangeland Water Quality (GRAP update)* and one to *2015 Priorities* to capture more specific information about the GRAP invitation-only formal listening sessions and additional groups to consider for RMAC outreach.

Member Burrows put forward a motion to approve the minutes with those changes, Member Landrum second the motion, and they were approved with a unanimous voice vote.

Administrative**a. Membership – Extension and expiration of terms**

Members Burrows and Anchordoguy will be submitted to the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (Board) at their January 28, 2015 meeting for an approval of an extension of their terms for one more year. Member Cremers will be submitted to the Board at that same meeting for a renewal of his membership on RMAC for another term.

With the addition of Member Landrum, RMAC will consider its committee make up and staff, the co-chairs, and Member Landrum will discuss how best to utilize her skills and interests to move RMAC's work forward.

b. Officers – Election of 2015 officers

Member Burrows moved to retain the current co-chairs and vice-chair (Members Horney, Osterholm, and Cremers, respectively) as RMAC leadership. Member Pritchard second the motion and the motion was approved with a unanimous voice vote.

Focus Group Updates

a. Rangeland Water Quality

i. GRAP Update

Members recapped the San Luis Obispo and Redding meetings hosted by the Water Boards. A final meeting is scheduled for January 28th in Bishop. Noelle Cremers presented the California Farm Bureau Federation perspective and updated RMAC on a joint advisory committee between the Farm Bureau, CA Cattleman's Association, and the CA Wool Growers Association to address GRAP. They developed a document with talking points for members to use when addressing the Water Board and other groups and are working on ways to continue addressing the Water Board's water quality concerns. RMAC is prioritizing coordinated and articulate communication across the board in responding to this issue.

Kirk Wilbur from CCA attended the meeting and presented the Cattlemen's assessment of the GRAP situation. Cattlemen's are also concerned about the 1) process to develop GRAP and 2) the underlying assumptions informing the need for regulation in this area. CCA was asked by Water Board members to facilitate some ranching tours. They are participating in the advisory group mentioned by Ms. Cremers and those interested in participating in or being informed of the group's activities can email Mr. Wilbur for more information.

The Water Board, according to Mr. Wilbur, is digesting the listening sessions and other information they've received and "developing and evaluating all [their] options" to see the best way to improve water quality. It is anticipated that the Water Boards will put their notes from the Redding listening session online; RMAC members who would prefer to have the recordings and/or transcripts put online are encouraged to contact the Water Board with that request.

ii. Regional Water Quality Management Plan

The RWQMP is currently being updated, with the project being led by David Lewis of the UC Davis Sonoma Cooperative Extension and Morgan Doran of the Yolo Cooperative Extension. RMAC members requested staff invite Mr. Lewis or Mr. Doran to the next meeting to discuss progress. The training

information available online *has* been updated recently and is available for use by the public.

b. Land Management Tools (Prescribed Herbivory for VMP)

Members Bush and Burrows presented the latest updates to their white paper and presentation on the topic of prescribed herbivory as a land management tool for VMP foresters to utilize. RMAC members were generally pleased with the document with the following suggestions:

- Incorporate animals beyond sheep and goats, specifically cattle and/or horses. Discuss the appropriate use of each type of animal.
- Incorporate the pros and cons of specific species into the “Advantage and Benefits” and “Limitations” sections.
- Add in the benefits of using prescribed herbivory as a maintenance tool – emphasis the role of herbivores as biological masticators.
- Some additional resources to consider incorporating into the “Resources” appendix include CCA, Farm Bureau, RMAC, UC Cooperative Extensions, RCDs, NRCS, and CRMs. Some members noted that different Coop Extensions, RCDs, and NRCS offices will have varying levels of familiarity with prescribed herbivory and cautioned against including them *carte blanche* as resources available to foresters.

Mr. Conway confirmed that there is no spring date set yet for VMP forester training/meeting and will follow up on that and communicate any meeting dates to RMAC. Mr. Burrows was also interested in the amount of acres treated using VMP burns versus contract grazing, by county.

c. Rangeland Conversion

There were no major updates from Mr. Van Duyn and Mr. Anchordoguy. They did note that if GRAP goes the way of the irrigated lands program, many more ranching operations will continue to become unsustainable. There will be widespread effects if private landowners decide private leases aren’t worth it and ranchers lose that opportunity for grazing land.

d. Public Land Grazing

Members Cremers and Pritchard have no updates. Member Pritchard mentioned local efforts in the San Luis Obispo area by ranchers to work on this issue on a small scale but there has mostly been backwards progress. There is less “management” taking place on federal lands, he noted, which is taking away opportunities for grazing now and in the long term (taking out access roads, etc).

Chair Osterholm wondered if federal land ownership bodies still set aside land for catastrophic fires or other events? Many were put aside 20-25 years ago waiting for the NEPA process and she was unaware of any movement towards changing that so that nearby landowners could have grazing area in times of extreme drought or other issues.

Mr. Conway noted that he had heard about a State Parks management plan (potentially Hollister Hills) that was up for renewal and public review; he will confirm which plan and send it to Members Cremers and Pritchard for their review and potential comment.

e. VTP PEIR

Mr. Conway and Ms. Hannigan updated RMAC on the progress of the VTP PEIR. Mr. Conway explained the range improvement information in the document will stay the same, although the focus of the document has shifted towards WUI protection rather than ecological restoration, as it was previously. Range improvement is still discussed in the PEIR, it's just a lower priority for the VTP program.

f. Drought

No member updates beyond a general notation regarding the lack of rain since last month.

FRAP Update

Richard Harris, CAL FIRE, presented to RMAC an outline of the Range chapter in the next Forest and Resource Assessment. Mr. Harris went through the research he consulted and how he came to his findings in the chapter, but wanted to hear from RMAC about their perspectives on the ranching industry in California. He wanted to know what are the barriers to small ranchers and what can be done to better support small ranching operations?

He specifically mentioned:

- What kinds of concerns do they have about how wildfire will affect them?
- How do ranchers interact with oak woodland environments and what kinds of pressures are on oak woodland environments?
- What are the problems blocking the marketing of ranch land for carbon credits?
- Does RMAC have examples of cost share programs they have utilized or found helpful?
- How can we provide direct and tangible support to landowners? What can we provide it for?

RMAC members agreed to contact Mr. Harris with ideas, information, and their experiences with the above issues. Member Burrows will send Mr. Harris more information regarding the language in conservation easement agreements that put up barriers to marketing ranch land for carbon credits.

Member Pritchard provided some further insight into the conversion pressures on land, particularly highlighted the older-skewing age of ranch owners, the involvement of outside organizations in developing rangeland management policies without any relevant experience doing such, and top-down government programs that don't meet the needs of ranchers on the ground.

In the Range chapter, Mr. Harris plans to examine herd size, property size, the use of supplemental feed, and price, among others, and examine what makes an operation

viable or not viable. RMAC members who wish to communicate their experiences to Mr. Harris can get his contact information from Mr. Conway.

New and Unfinished Business

Member Cremers asked staff for an update on the CRM program changes. The approved 45 day notice and proposed rule text has not be noticed publicly and staff will keep RMAC informed of its progress.

Member Van Duyn followed up with staff regarding ID cards to enter the building; those are in progress.

Member Pritchard asked that RMAC reconsider its meeting schedule for 2015, since the Cattlemen's Association also meets every 3rd Tuesday. Ms. Hannigan will send out a survey to find out what days of the month work best for members and will work with Mr. Conway to find appropriate meeting spaces.

Mr. Nick Kuntz, California State Water Board, will forward the new bacteria standards to staff to send to members. He encourages attendance at the UC Davis rangeland event on March 3-4.

Member Updates

Member Landrum and the FireSafe Council of Greater San Diego are in the middle of a large grant cycle. They applied for 3 CAL FIRE SRA and GHG reduction grants and are taking advantage of some USFS opportunities as well.

Member Bush promoted the Western Range Grazing for Change conference on the 27th and 28th of February at Chico State. Member Burrows will be presenting and Member Bush is cohosting and presenting. Promotional materials are available from Member Bush.

Member Osterholm gave more information about the UC Davis Rangeland event on March 3rd and 4th. March 3rd will be focused on water quality and March 4th on the sustainability of public lands grazing.

Member Van Duyn plans to attend Grazing for Change.

Member Pritchard is putting together a workshop in San Luis Obispo County in April or May focused on management practices on rangeland. They are anticipating a full day workshop in the field but are tentatively about scheduling until more rain comes. They hope the Water Boards are able to attend to learn more about rangeland management.

Chair Horney was joined by Member Lazanoff and suggested new representatives from CCA. Staff will continue working on membership. Chair Horney has been working on GRAP, organizing the UC Davis event, his classes, and a drone project. He appreciates the engagement by RMAC, especially on GRAP.

Member Rickert also expressed appreciation for the response to GRAP, particularly by the cattle industry.

Meeting Adjourned.