

BOARD OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION

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To: The Board of Forestry and Fire Protection **Date:** July 23, 2015

From: Kevin Conway, Staff Forester

Subject: Range Management Advisory Committee (RMAC) Update

Chair and Members of the Board,

The last RMAC meeting was held in Sacramento on July 14, 2015. The following is a brief outline of RMAC's recent activities.

- The Prescribed Herbivory for Hazardous Fuel Reduction white paper is in the process of being distributed to the CAL FIRE VMP Foresters.
 - The next step is to arrange a series of regional field tours to further introduce the capabilities of herbivores in various fuel types across the state.
 - The distribution included information on a series of hazardous fuel demonstration projects in central and southern California being put on by the USFS and CAL FIRE, among others, later this year that will include herbivory (see attached). Star Creek Land Stewards, where RMAC member Cole Bush is a project manager, will be the contract grazer for the Southern California Edison demonstration.
 - The Department has indicated a willingness to provide financial support for a pilot project using prescribed herbivory, most likely on a state forest. We are still in the early stages of working out the details but anticipate a project to occur in the spring of 2016.
- The RMAC comment letter on the proposed draft of the State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) 2015 Update has been submitted to the Department of Fish and Wildlife. A revised draft SWAP is expected to be available on October 1, 2015.
- The RMAC is looking into the Board's policy on grazing in state forests. Chief Helge Eng updated the committee on current status of grazing at each of the state forests. He indicated that there is not much traditional rangeland in the state forest system, but that forest management and grazing have a long history of being compatible activities, and he is not inherently adverse to a policy change recognizing that. RMAC is looking at the current policy and will likely provide some suggested revisions to the RPC by the end of the year.
- SB 805, containing the proposed changes to the RMAC statute (PRC 741), has been held in committee as a 2-year bill. It will be heard again in the Senate Natural Resource and Water Committee in January, 2016.

The next RMAC meeting date will be Tuesday, September 15, 2015 in Sacramento.

Hazardous Fuels Reduction Demonstration: Central & Southern CA October & November 2015

The USDA Forest Service, in conjunction with Southern California Edison and other partners, is sponsoring a series of hazardous fuels treatment demonstrations at strategic locations in central and southern California. Target audiences include fire agencies, natural resource managers, electric utilities, water conservation districts, homeowner associations, fire safe councils, county and city planning departments, fuels treatment contractors, and other stakeholders. Treatment demos will be one week in duration at each location and will provide equipment vendors the opportunity to demonstrate innovative equipment and techniques that might not be currently utilized in a local area. Equipment and techniques (including grazing animals) used for the demos will be monitored for effectiveness, efficiency, cost and resource impacts (e.g., soil compaction and disturbance). Results of the demos will be synthesized and disseminated identified target audiences and others. The primary objective of the demos is to raise awareness about hazardous fuels treatment alternatives and provide key stakeholders with up-to-date information regarding resource impacts, efficiencies, and cost of fuels treatment equipment and techniques.



Example of equipment considered for these demonstrations.

Schedule

Southern California Edison, Shaver Lake, CA—October 9
USFS Mountain Top Ranger District, Big Bear Lake, CA—October 16
Santa Rosa Indian Reservation, Mountain Center, CA—Nov. 20

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Project Partners—USDA Forest Service • Southern California Edison • Cal Fire • Natural Resources Conservation Service • Watershed Training and Research Center • The Nature Conservancy • California Forestry Association