

**MINUTES
RMAC MEETING
RANGELAND FOCUS GROUP**

JUNE 11, 2003

In Attendance:

Ken Zimmerman	Chairman of RMAC
Henry Giacomini	RMAC
Charles Pritchard	RMAC
Steve Hackett	RMAC
Neil McDougald	RMAC
Lennart Lindstrand	RMAC
Jeff Stephens	Executive Secretary RMAC
Laura Estrada	Office Technician
Pam Giacomini	Ca. Farm Bureau Federation

A. The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m.

B. Introductions:

C. Future Workshops and Conferences (C. Pritchard)

Chuck Pritchard attended a San Francisco conference as an invited speaker composed of urban business and government professionals. The audience included the San Francisco Police Chief, business leaders, and one former retired Assembly person.

Mr. Pritchard presented several issues that impact California agricultural producers and rangeland managers. His assessment of the discussion is that more should be done to educate urban business and government professionals on issues that impact California agricultural interests. He concluded that opportunities exist for agriculture and other industries to form alliances that may lead to positive impacts on state agricultural and rangeland interests. He further proposed that RMAC consider a workshop/conference that better informs urban society of agricultural and rangeland interests.

A discussion followed that dealt with the mission of the Board and RMAC, and whether pursuit of the issue was warranted. Several options were explored to address the interest generated by Mr. Pritchard's participation with the San Francisco group. RMAC consensus is that it would be more useful to connect any such effort with past and current work of RMAC. This includes the recent evaluation of the FRAP Rangeland Assessment documents per the request made by FRAP, and past information exchange that has occurred between RMAC and the Secretary Of Resources Office dealing with the California Legacy Project. It was proposed that an evaluation using FRAP data and information gained from the Legacy Project Workshops could be formulated into a paper that would serve two purposes: One is to serve as an advisory document to the Board and other government entities to which RMAC functions in an advisory capacity; and secondly, serve as a foundation for transferring information to interested groups regarding key issues facing agricultural producers, including the maintenance of rangeland resources in California.

Ken Zimmerman announced that the Regional Legacy Workshop will be held July 16th and 17th. He stated that we may wish to use this as a sounding board to determine what needs further review. The purpose of the Regional Legacy Workshop is to summarize the results of previous Legacy Workshops held throughout the state, and to compile the regional issues for various natural resources.

Henry Giacomini stated that RMAC should evaluate the Legacy output for accuracy and issues needing further expansion.

Copies of the most recent FRAP Assessment for Rangelands (April 2003) will be obtained for the entire RMAC by Jeff Stephens. Evaluation of the content is due back to Jeff Stephens by July 31, 2003. A noticed conference call will be scheduled for August 26, 2003 to discuss the results of peer review of the FRAP assessment and the Regional Legacy Workshop.

Jeff Stephens will provide Pam Giacomini (California Farm Bureau) with FRAP contacts for interpreting the FRAP Oak inventory data.

D. California Farm Bureau Comment:

Report from the California Farm Bureau Representative - Pam Giacomini: Mrs. Giacomini reported on the Bureau's position regarding several items of legislation and wildlife issues.

SB 711 (Kuehl), OPPOSE: This bill would require the provisions of CEQA to apply to timberland conversion and oak woodland conversion. The bill would require the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, on or before January 1, 2005, to develop regulations, as specified, that, among other things, establish mitigation criteria for those conversions and require an applicant for an oak woodlands conversion permit to pay a fee in an amount determined by the Department.

SB 754 (Perata), OPPOSE: This bill would enact the Heritage Tree Preservation Act to prohibit (1) cutting or causing a substantial probability of significant harm to any heritage tree, as defined, in this state, (2) using a heritage tree or heritage tree buffer zone, as defined, in a manner that significantly harms a heritage tree, and (3) cutting a heritage tree pursuant to certain statutory and regulatory exemptions.

Proposed Listing of western burrowing owl: OPPOSE. Exists in the Western half of the U.S.

Proposed Listing of California tiger salamander: OPPOSE. May impact 23 countries with rangelands.

The Farm Bureau is proposing new legislation that expands hunting programs on private land. Funding would be available to landowners to allow private access to property. The program will require a waiver of liability for access to private property. DFG is working on the waiver. The question was raised, "If the landowner is sued in spite of the waiver, is the landowner indemnified by the state?"

E. NEW BUSINESS:

Ken Zimmerman presented a concept paper patterned after the Weed Management Program that would form a coalition of local and regionally focused cooperators. The coalition would work in support of a mission statement that articulates planning, implementation, and managing regional goals. Contact Ken Zimmerman to supply input and comment regarding the concept paper.

F. Meeting adjourned.

**MINUTES
RMAC MEETING
VEGETATION MANAGEMENT / Fire FOCUS GROUP**

JUNE 11, 2003

In Attendance:

Ken Zimmerman	RMAC
J. R. McCollister	RMAC
Henry Giacomini	RMAC
Clancy Dutra	RMAC
Neil McDougald	RMAC
Steve Hackett	RMAC
Charles Pritchard	RMAC
Lennart Linstrand	RMAC
Jeff Stephens	Executive Secretary, RMAC
Laura Estrada	Office Technician
Ross Johnson	Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

A. The meeting was called to order at 1:15 PM.

B. Introductions:

C. J.R. McCollister gave a report on the Resource Protection Committee meeting of May 6, 2003. Topics covered:

A review was made of the drought and bug killed timber in southern California counties, including a discussion of the emphasis on protecting life and property and escape routes in the event of wildfire. Ross Johnson reported that due to the Governor's proclamation

no timber harvest plan exemptions are required. Tree services and arborists are functioning as Licensed Timber Operators.

Lennart Lindstrand provided an update on the fee for fire protection proposed by the LAO. Last report the proposal was in the Budget Committee and has been changed from \$6.00 per acre to \$50.00 for structures and \$20 per 640 acre parcel. Other reports have been received by Mr. Lindstrand that there are other fee rates under consideration.

Chuck Pritchard reviewed data on the types of incidents CDF responds to and that non-fire incidents are the bulk of all calls; however, total cost is dominated by large campaign fires.

Mr. Lindstrand indicated that the Board should identify the purposes for which the RMAC report evaluating the LAO proposal for fees will be used. Jeff Stephens will convey this request to the RPC at the July Board meeting.

D. CDF Vegetation Management Program:

J.R. McCollister opened a discussion for recommendations for improving CDF's VMP Program. The following were ideas for improvement:

1. Consult with constituents served by the VMP program.
2. Consult with CDF VMP Coordinators for suggestions.
3. Evaluate budgets for individual CDF Units that are budgeted for VMP. Compare to accomplishments.

Ken Zimmerman: Inquired as to what are the existing problems and solutions for VMP. The discussion involved a review of the complexity of the program and some of the documentation and environmental review associated with a VMP project.

Several topics were identified by RMAC members for detailed study. Refer to the Full RMAC Meeting Minutes for additional discussion.

E. New and Unfinished Business:

None to report

F. Meeting Adjourned.

MINUTES
RMAC MEETING
FULL COMMITTEE

JUNE 12, 2003

In Attendance:

Ken Zimmerman	Chairman of RMAC
Charles Pritchard	RMAC
J. R. McCollister	RMAC
Clancy Dutra	RMAC
Henry Giacomini	RMAC
Lennart Linstrand	RMAC
Jeff Stephens	Executive Secretary RMAC
Jim Shackelford	USDA Forest Service
Helen Flach	NRCS
Ray Carruthers	USDA, Agricultural Research Service
Jim Sieber	USDA, Agricultural Research Service
Ben Higgins	California Cattleman's Association
Meg Bishop	NRCS

- A. The meeting was called to order at 8:15 a.m.
- B. Introductions
- C. Approval of Minutes from April 23, 2003 Meeting
- D. Agency and Association Reports

US Forest Service – Jim Shackelford

1. RMAC participation in the USFS Range Conservationist Workshop; Strengths and weaknesses of the workshop were identified. Presentations identified a most useful were by Bartolome and Huntsinger. Presentations described as less useful to USFS Range Conservation efforts were those by Tipton and Koffman.
2. A review of the Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment; Specific changes to the document were discussed for willow flycatcher, Yosemite toad, great grey owl, and maintaining meadows. The most significant change is added flexibility for permittees to enter into specific management strategies with local line officers. The Supplemental EIS is still a draft. Therefore existing allotments are subject to old standards and guides. USFS and the Cattlemen's Association are working for legislative relief; however the current outlook is not favorable.
3. Southern California Forest Plan Amendment: An in-house draft will be looked at in August by the US Forest Service. A draft for public review may be available by

October, 2003. RMAC comment is invited. The draft environment impact statement is due by the end of the year. Jim will keep Jeff Stephens informed of the progress by email.

4. Northwest Forest Plan: Primarily deals with vegetation and fuels management, and it is not likely that grazing issues will be included with this document due to the political climate. Impacted National Forests include the Klamath, Shasta-Trinity, Six Rivers, and the Mendocino.
5. Rescissions Act: Sierra National Forest was sued by the Center for Biological Diversity; approximate year 1990. The complaint originated from issuing grazing permits without environmental analysis. Court action would have ended every grazing allotment. Resolution involved Congress passing the Rescissions Act of 1995 that allowed a waiver of the permit and required the US Forest Service to provide NEPA documents within the next 10 years.

The Regional Forester's position is to work actively with the permittees on solutions. Ken Zimmerman noted this as a recent favorable change. Henry Giacomini called for a streamlining of the process for NEPA documents. It was noted by Mr. Shackelford that permittees can assist with the problem by participating in short term and long term monitoring.

NRCS – Helen Flach

1. 2002 Farm Bill: This bill includes a Grassland Easements section which is focused at the Klamath Basin. Subsequent to becoming effective the Grassland Easements section was pulled back due to a law suit. It must now be released as a national program. The agency to assume leadership for this program is yet to be determined. The intent of the section is to restore native vegetation.
2. The Conservation Security Program scheduled to begin next year will provide incentives for improving management of private grazing lands; however, it does not include grazing allotments on federal lands. Helen Flach has appealed this decision. A description of the program is available on the NRCS website by county. Chuck Pritchard agreed to provide updates on the program to Jeff Stephens for distribution to RMAC.
3. The State Range Conservationist position is still vacant. No time line was offered for filling this position.

California Cattlemen's Association – Ben Higgins

1. Fees for Wildland Fire Protection; Legislative Analyst Recommendation: CCA continues to follow the issue and is in opposition to any fee or tax to fund CDF's fire protection mission. There information to date indicates that legislators do not regard this as an important issue.

2. Several federal issues were reported including: The Sierra Nevada Forest Amendment, the Grassland Reserve Program, and grazing land permit renewals and transfers. CCA has lobbied with the USDA Secretary and Under Secretaries regarding new rules that are pending with the Grassland Reserve Program, and the renewal or transfer of grazing permits not requiring NEPA review.

E. Focus Group Reports:

1. Vegetation Management / Fire Focus Group:

J. R. McCollister identified several topics of concentration for evaluating the Department's Vegetation Management Program, and identified individual RMAC members for addressing each topic. Subsequent discussion resulted in a motion to accept topics of concentration (see items a-g below). Motion carried unanimously. All responses by the assigned RMAC members are due back to J.R. McCollister by July 15, 2003. The responses will be the subject of discussion at the next noticed meeting of RMAC tentatively scheduled for August 26, 2003.

- a. Maintenance of existing projects – Addressed by K. Zimmerman & L. Lindstrand
- b. A Comprehensive Program - Addressed by L. Lindstrand
- c. A Dedicated Work Force – Addressed by S. Hackette
- d. Funding Levels and Sources – Addressed by J. McCollister
- e. Complexity of Project Approval and Implementation – H. Giacomini
- f. Evaluation of CDF Fire Plan – J. McCollister
- g. Evaluation of Existing Legislation – Addressed by M. Connor

Len Lindstrand provided a summary of the report he made before the Resource Protection Committee of the Board. This report was specific to the Legislative Analyst proposal to charge fees for wildland fire protection. He reported that the accuracy of the report was validated by a US Forest Service representative present at the RPC meeting, who had personal knowledge of the Oregon system

J.R. McCollister reported on the Working Group created by AB 2993. The working Group will evaluate methods for reducing wildland fuels on SRA and wildland urban interface areas (WUI). Mr. McCollister has been appointed to the Working Group. Their first meeting is scheduled for July 2, 2003. Results of the Working Group will be reported to the Department and the Legislature.

2. Rangeland Focus Group:

Chuck Pritchard reported on the results of the Rangeland Focus Group meeting that occurred June 11, 2003. A motion was made to accept the plan for using the FRAP Draft Range Assessment, and the information gained from the Legacy Project, as described by Ken Zimmerman, to formulate a white paper on key agricultural and rangeland issues. The paper will serve to educate interested government/business entities on agricultural and rangeland issues. It will also serve as an advisory document to the Board and other agencies to which RMAC is responsible as an advisory body. A motion was made to accept this proposal. The motion carried unanimously.

Jeff Stephens will provide a copy of the FRAP Draft Assessment to all RMAC members. Ken Zimmerman will attend the upcoming Legacy meeting in Sacramento on July 16, 2003.

Board Letter of Support for a joint USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and UC Davis facility for Integrated Vegetation Management: Chuck Pritchard introduced the topic by reading the letter of support from Board Chairman Stan Dixon. Jim Seiber and Ray Carruthers represented ARS, and presented an overview of the ARS research facility in Albany as well as the national organization of the ARS. The information included current research programs underway, methods for bringing forward new proposals for research projects, and the methods for obtaining funding. They also discussed the letter of support from the Board encouraging a joint ARS-UC Davis research facility that would include Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM). ARS is currently working in the area of IVM, and there is a recommendation for four new scientists working within this field of study that was proposed at the January Forum for Invasive Weeds. However, any expansion of this effort must have Department level and/or Congressional support.

ARS operates on five year planning horizons. Therefore initiation of new projects is not immediate; they must be worked into the budget cycle several fiscal years into the future.

F. New and Unfinished Business:

None to report

G. Meeting Adjourned