

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

**Minutes
March 18, 2009**

Attending:

RMAC:

Representing

Ken Zimmerman	California Cattlemen's Association (CCA)
Bart Cremers	California Farm Bureau Federation (CFBF)
J.R. McCollister	Public Member
Ed Anchordoguy	California Wool Growers Association (CWG)
Chuck Pritchard	California Association of Resource Conservation Districts
Scott Carnegie	California Forestry Association (CFA)
Leonard Hale	Watershed Fire Council of Southern California (WFCSC)
Mel Thompson	California Wool Growers Association (CWG)
Jeff Stephens	CAL FIRE / RMAC Executive Secretary

Members of the Public:

Representing

Ron Eng	CDFA
Joe Rawitzer	
Susan Edinger Marshall	Humboldt State University
George Gentry	Board of Forestry and Fire Protection

Items 1 & 2 Call to Order and Introductions:

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

Items 3, Review of the January 2009 minutes:

Minutes for the Policy Focus Group and Full Committee were reviewed. Chuck Pritchard made a motion to approve the Policy Focus Group minutes with corrections. J.R. McCollister seconded. Motion carried. J.R. McCollister made a motion to approve the Full Committee minutes with corrections. Scott Carnegie seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Item 5, Focus Group Reports:

Policy Focus Group, Ken Zimmerman Reporting:

Ken Zimmerman stated that Jeff Stephens handed out State Government Code 16720, Federal Tax Code Section 103 and bond language for Prop 40, 50, and 84 at the Policy meeting the day prior. This information is in reference to RMAC's attempt to validate source documents that support the RMAC white paper on land acquisition without management. The strategy agreed upon yesterday is to write a letter to the RPC referencing the codes and RMAC's findings, indicating that maintenance may be allowed under the "enhancement of capital assets" government code language. Jeff Stephens and

Ken Zimmerman shall prepare the letter. Leonard Hale motioned for the letter to be prepared as recommended. Chuck Pritchard seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Ken Zimmerman reviewed edits to the paper made yesterday regarding citations from the Holloran paper pertinent to the tax code, and stated that RPC has sent the white paper to the Resources Agency for comment before the RPC proceeds with review.

There was a review of recommendations from Scott Carnegie to add an addendum to the RMAC Strategic Plan which states how RMAC officers are selected. Ken Zimmerman reviewed the changes with the full committee. Chuck Pritchard moved that the RMAC Strategic Plan, Appendix, Officers, page 23, be amended to include the proposal as presented by Scott Carnegie with corrections. Leonard Hale seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Rangeland Focus Group, Chuck Pritchard Reporting:

Chuck Pritchard reported that Cathy Bleier and Doug Wickizer with the Department made a presentation on the Department's work in dealing with Carbon Sequestration, and that Barbara Allen-Diaz with UC has been developing carbon sequestration protocols. There is additional information available from the UC Berkeley Range Round Table at bie.berkeley.edu/rangelands, and from a site maintained by Derrick Markov at climateregistry.org.

Susan Marshall stated that Cal EPA has made available grant funding to study carbon sequestration on rangelands. Chuck Pritchard mentioned the Marin Carbon Project by Whendee Silver with UC. Preliminary results indicate that grazed lands in the Marin situation leads to higher stored carbon. Also spreading manure will increase sequestration on pastureland.

Williamson Act: A letter has been written by Mr. Pritchard's local RCD, UC Cooperative Extension, and a Range Conservationist at NRCS asking the Governor to not cut the Subvention funds in the current budget. Chuck Pritchard encouraged the RMAC to write a letter in support of the letter. Jeff Stephens stated that support for the RCD letter in support of the Williamson Act should not be a problem as long as the Board Chairman is kept informed of RMAC's intent.

Management Plan for the Carriso Plains National Monument: Chuck Pritchard reviewed elements of the plan, and the content of a letter prepared by Mr. Whitecamp (retired Range Conservationist Cooperative Extension) expressing his concerns with the lack of grazing protocols within the plan. Mr. Pritchard pointed out a few items worthy of consideration for RMAC; one being the lack of an environmental protocol which measures the impact of removing grazing animals from the ecosystem. JS recommended that individuals concerned with the issue use the public comment process to require a response from the Plan authors, which explains how they intend to mitigate the negative impacts of removing grazing from a rangeland ecosystem. He further recommended that research conducted by groups such as the Dye Creek Preserve is used to support the positive impacts of grazing that are now absent.

Item 4, Rangeland Issues Pertaining to *The 2007 Policy Statement and Strategic Program of the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection.* (Mel Thompson)

Mel Thompson began discussion with a handout previously distributed titled, *Comments on the 2007 Policy and Strategic Program of the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection*. He referred to problem statements listed on page one and items 1- 6 on page two that identifies items RMAC should explore.

George Gentry provided some background regarding the Strategic Policy. FRAP does a resource assessment every 5 years. The Strategic Policy Statement is intended to build upon the assessment, and cites information taken from the assessment. Mr. Gentry focused on one of the comments submitted by Mel Thompson, the lack of specificity of the Policy Statement and Strategic Program. Mr. Gentry stated this is intended. It is meant to provide an overview and not an end in itself. It should be reviewed frequently and altered to meet changes that occur in resources and policy. The work plans within the document are an opportunity to provide specificity, and RMAC should regard them as an opportunity to provide greater specificity specific to rangeland initiatives. Mr. Gentry stated that he hopes to eventually use the Policy Statement and Strategic Program to replace the Board's report to the Governor. Key issues for the Board are the indices. The indices are patterned after work by the Oregon State Board of Forestry, and are patterned after the Montréal Protocols. The Oregon Board spent a year on developing these indices; a luxury California does not have given limited staff. Oregon settled upon about 20 indices that they felt were measurable. RMAC can provide valuable help to the Board by providing measurable indices to evaluate the changing conditions of rangelands; acres lost to development as an example.

Mel Thompson raised the question as to how the Board expects to impact development on rangelands, and how will RMAC impact the Board's Policy. George Gentry stated that the impact is not likely to be direct. However, the Board does have statutory authority for setting policy for forest land in the State, and to the extent forest land is used for grazing there can be a direct impact. Therefore, the Board may write policy for the Governor that impacts rangelands in a forest setting. The Board does not impact grazing lands found in oak woodlands, not because it lacks authority, but because it chooses not to exercise that authority.

George Gentry further stated that one item the Board would look to RMAC to provide is what rangeland policy in the State should look like. The Board and RMAC have a policy role in regards to rangeland, and both should exercise that role.

Chuck Pritchard noted that part of the frustration is that solving problems on the land are often stymied by policy and regulations that work counter to the objective of fixing the problem. George Gentry noted that this is the same problem found within the timber industry. He noted some progress with federal issues in recent months, and that there may be opportunity to assist federal managers with developing positive management objectives that federal agencies can utilize.

In reference back to the Policy Statement and Strategic Program, George Gentry suggested that RMAC develop a work plan for engaging federal partners on rangeland issues, specifically proactive management strategies. Jeff Stephens reminded the Committee of Ann Yost with the USFS, her support of RMAC, and the opportunity to promote sound range management practices on federal lands through her.

George Gentry's stated that it was always his objective for the document to grow in specificity and relies on RMAC to provide the expertise for policy development. He

further emphasized the importance of climate change and global warming. In his view maintaining open working landscapes is key to achieving climate change objectives.

Chuck Pritchard cited the example in San Luis Obispo County where a core group of private and public cooperators have come together to solve problems. George Gentry made the same analogy with the 1996 Fire Plan spawning the birth of Fire Safe Councils.

George Gentry, based on comment received from RMAC members regarding the purpose of the document, stated that the purpose of the document was never for the Board to assume authority over private rangelands. The purpose was to provide a voice for the rangeland community through the Board of Forestry. The rangelands information in the document was placed there for the benefit of RMAC to utilize.

Ken Zimmerman noted that the Board is providing an opportunity to become involved in rangeland policy formation. Chuck Pritchard noted that it would be worthwhile to become involved in the rangeland workshops currently being conducted by the CCA and the CARCD that educate public on rangeland values, and the California Rangeland Coalition.

Mel Thompson asked the question if the board is open to a shift in rangeland policy that is more proactive in various aspects, including providing more support for vegetation management on rangelands. George Gentry responded in the affirmative. Chuck Pritchard confirmed with Mr. Gentry that RMAC does not need Board permission to actively recruit and meet with entities interested in promoting rangeland management.

Ken Zimmerman directed attention to Mel Thompson's item # 5,

Establish a working relationship to define and supply the missing components; implementation, accomplishment, public review and accountability;

He suggested this item has potential as an action item/starting point for RMAC to become involved in the formation of Board rangeland policy.

Chuck Pritchard made the point that in servicing Mel Thompson's item 4,

Refine and prioritize values expressed in the document, so that rangeland and socially-related objectives are more likely to be achieved;

that an appropriate place to start is to meet with the constituents RMAC represents and solicit their input on issues of importance related to rangeland management and policy. Mel Thompson agreed and stated that measurable indices referred to by George Gentry should be an objective of that exercise.

Ken Zimmerman stated that Mel Thompson will convene an ad hoc committee meeting in May to develop further a plan of action regarding the Board's Strategic Program and Policy Statement.

Item 6, Agency and Association Reports, Invited:

CDFA: Ron Eng Reporting

Invasive Species of Council of California: This is an advisory council chaired by the Secretary of Agriculture and Vice Chaired by the Secretary of Natural resources Agency. Other agencies belonging to the council include the California Environmental Protection Agency, California Business Transportation and Housing Agency, California Health and Human Services Agency, and California Emergency Management Agency. Purpose is to explore how to control invasive species and outline different methods for control. There is no funding source; strictly advisory.

There is also an Invasive Species Advisory Committee comprised of University of California, California State Universities, Local and Federal Government representatives, Water Conservation organizations, and public land owners. AB 2763 was discussed at the March 11, 2009 meeting of the Committee. This bill changed procedures for notifying the public and the governor when aerial applications of control agents are proposed for the light brown apple moth. Primary concerns have been with the carrying agents not the pheromone used for control.

Ken Zimmerman asked if Mr. Eng was familiar with any new chemical products under consideration for range. Mr. Eng stated that the only new product being considered he is aware of is one for cape weed in orchard applications. Ken Zimmerman stated he believes that there is a new product for range.

J.R. McCollister asked if he knew of a new product for star thistle. Ron Eng identified it as "milestone." Chuck Pritchard stated that EQIP funds may be used for star thistle control for ranchers and farmers; not the general public. Ken Zimmerman asked if Ron Eng knew the status of funding previously available for research via the Noxious Weed Strategic Plan and identified as part of AB 1740. At one time RMAC had grant review oversight of these dollars. Mr. Eng stated that he would look into the issue and report directly to Mr. Zimmerman. Ron Eng was also of the opinion that the process for allocation of grant money still exists, and that panelists come in from various parts of the State to review grant proposals. Mr. Zimmerman stated that he would prefer for RMAC to continue in with the review of proposals if research dollars are still being granted under this legislation.

Item 7, New and Unfinished Business:

Ken Zimmerman announced that Neil McDougald has stepped down from RMAC. Consequently Ken Zimmerman has asked Bart Cremers to assume chairmanship of the Rangeland Focus Group. The CCA has been approached for a replacement for Neil.

Richard Harris will be placed on the agenda for RMAC in May 2009.

A meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee chaired by Mel Thompson will meet in May 2009.

J.R. McCollister stated that he will not be at the May meeting. He asked Jeff Stephens to determine if the Fire Plan Steering Committee is still accepting public comment. If so he would like to submit written comment. Jeff Stephens advised that the Steering Committee meetings are publicly noticed, and therefore should accept comment written and oral at every meeting.

Chuck Pritchard stated that Tacy Currey intended to be here to distribute the final letter addressed to CARCD and also the national office for Resource Conservation Districts. He reported that the letter was melded into a position paper with the Colorado Cattlemen's Association Land Trust. Chuck Pritchard will obtain a copy of the letter and send to Jeff Stephens for distribution to RMAC.

Item 8, Public Comment:

Susan Marshall representing Humboldt State University: Susan Marshall spoke on behalf of the range management major at Humboldt State University (HSU). She stated that a specific objective of coming to RMAC today was to solicit support for the major with RMAC in the form of a letter addressed to the HSU Administration. She also invited RMAC to visit HSU and meet with faculty that supports the major.

Susan Marshall described her background and the courses that she teaches which include soil science classes and Range Resource Science 306. Presently the range program meets the OPM requirements for Rangeland Specialist with the Federal Government. HSU graduates are also competitive for federal Soil Science classifications. Range is now part of the Forest and Wildland Resources Department.

The University has gone through a prioritization process for majors/programs. Range was not listed as a high priority (Rated 4 out a scale of 1-5). Demand for their graduates is high; however, presently the program overall is very lean on faculty and in need of additional staff. Bart Cremers confirmed with Susan Marshall that HSU has the only range undergrad program in California, and that they have a masters program which is also threatened with elimination. Typically they have 8-12 students at any given time in the undergraduate major. Ken Fulgram will be meeting with CAL Pac in the near future to generate support for the major.

Susan Marshall pointed out that many of the students that take the Intro to Range Science course are from many different resource management majors including wildlife management. The advantage is that these students will have an appreciation for rangeland issues that will be carried forward into their professional lives.

Susan Marshall stated that her biggest challenge to maintaining the program is the fact that administration and other faculty at HSU are not aware of the important work natural resource managers do, and in particular range managers.

J.R. McCollister recommended that Ms. Marshall solicit support from the Conservancies that manage rangeland. Chuck Pritchard recommended that Tacy Currey with the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts and Tracy Schohr with California Cattlemen's Association be contacted for support as well. Ann Yost with US Forest Service was also recommended as a good contact.

Ken Zimmerman asked Bart Cremers and Chuck Pritchard to compose the letter of support. They agreed. J.R. McCollister made a motion that RMAC prepare the letter of support for the HSU Range Program. Leonard Hale seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote. The letter will be sent to all RMAC members and will be forwarded to the Board of Forestry.

Joe Rawitzer: Mr. Rawitzer stated that much of the discussion confirmed his personal belief that rangelands are becoming diminished in importance among some sectors including the Department. He was encouraged by comments made by George Gentry that RMAC may be in a position to encourage the Board to do the right thing regarding rangelands.

Mr. Rawitzer indicated that his local Fire Safe Council has attained renewed vigor and interest from local groups due to two recent large fires that burned in Monterey County. The ability to perform fuels management in Monterey County is enhanced by the fact that the population is somewhat concentrated, and that larger landowners are willing to do fuels management. New laws and changes to law are not needed. It is a matter of getting the right people together.

Adjourn

Tasks:

1. Ron Eng shall report to Ken Zimmerman on the status of grant funds for research on noxious weed control created by AB 1740 which included RMAC review of grant applications.
2. Bart Cremers and Chuck Pritchard will write a letter of support for the HSU Range Program.
3. Chuck Pritchard will obtain a copy of the letter from the Colorado Cattlemen's Association Land trust and send to Jeff Stephens for distribution to RMAC.
4. Jeff Stephens and Ken Zimmerman will write a letter to the RPC explaining the RMAC findings related to IRS and Government Code language for tax exempt bond funds.
5. Prepare an amendment to the RMAC Strategic Plan that incorporates the recommended changes for selecting officers presented by Scott Carnegie.