

Range Management Advisory Committee Board of Forestry and Fire Protection

Minutes Full Committee Meeting August 26, 2003

In Attendance:

Ken Zimmerman	Chairman of RMAC
Charles Pritchard	RMAC
J. R. McCollister	RMAC
Henry Giacomini	RMAC
Lennart Linstrand	RMAC
Leonard Hale	RMAC
Mike Connor	RMAC
Neil McDougald	RMAC
Mark Bosetti	Board of Forestry and Fire Protection
Dennis Hall	Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
Joe Rawitzer	Monterey County Fire Safe Council
Jeff Stephens	Executive Secretary RMAC

Agenda item 1. The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. via conference call; Roll call taken.

Agenda item 2. Approval of Minutes from June 11, 2003 Meeting

Agenda item 3. And 4:

Agenda item 3 (The proposed white paper that Identifies key agricultural and rangeland issues of concerns) and item 4 (Rangeland Policy) were discussed jointly by the RMAC. Chairman Zimmerman and Board Member Mark Bosetti (when consulted on the issue) spoke in favor of producing a document that lays the foundation for recommended policy.

RMAC Member Len Lindstrand made a motion to continue with the white paper and that it is written to include the following subject areas:

1. Present existing Board Policy for California's rangelands.
2. Recommendations indicating those portions of policy that should be retained.
3. Recommendations indicating existing policy that should be altered or expanded.
4. Recommendations indicating new policy that addresses new issues of concern for rangeland resources and industries.

Motion Carried.

During the discussion of agenda item 4, eight elements were identified that should be considered during the process of developing recommended Board policy for rangeland. They are as follows:

1. Neil McDougald: Rangeland policy should draw a distinction between “small” versus “large” parcels. Current policy does not address the needs of smaller ownerships.
2. Ken Zimmerman: What are the impacts of the California Legacy Project on rangeland policy? The point was made that the information generated from the project has the potential to be used by land managers and practitioners for maintaining rangelands as working landscapes. However, the project has evolved into a process that has generated information internal to agencies without ready access by local interests.
3. Oak Woodland Management: Dennis Hall (public member and acting CDF Forest Practice Manager) described recent Board history and legislation (SB 711) that has promoted Board regulation of oak woodlands. Discussion following Mr. Hall’s comment is as follows:

The idea of the Board taking a position on legislation was discussed. Board member Mark Bosetti stated that the Board would be reluctant to take a position on legislation. What would be appropriate is for RMAC to participate in proceedings of the newly formed Policy and Management Committee where much of the Board discussion on oak woodlands is focused. Mr. Bosetti also recommended that RMAC members obtain copies of the Board minutes from the 2003 Sonora Board meeting where considerable time was devoted to oak woodlands. RMAC members Mike Connor, Neil McDougald, and Ken Zimmerman emphasized that when subjects that impact rangeland resources are before the Board, there should be a mechanism to trigger Board consultation with RMAC. Mr. Connor emphasized the need for consultation with RMAC to be included in Board policy. Mr. Bosetti stated that he will carry this message back to the full Board. Len Lindstrand indicated that the Board has become highly focused on very complex and detailed problems such as the CDF Forest Practice Program, and as a result other resource areas such as rangeland policy are not receiving attention.

4. There needs to be a mechanism expressed in policy that provides for communication between the Board and RMAC on rangeland issues. The need for this is made greater given that the Board is minus one member

who normally would represent rangeland interests.

5. The Board's policy for rangeland should take on a holistic approach to managing resources. The tendency to address very specific problems, such as addressing the needs of individual species rather than looking at biological systems as a whole, should be avoided. RMAC member Chuck Pritchard referred to this as compartmentalization of issues.
6. The Board in its policy should emphasize the need for local input as a primary determining factor for decision making, since local interests are most impacted by Board decisions.
7. Policy should contain language that emphasizes the need to address problems early and aggressively following detection.
8. Policy should emphasize as a goal the conservation of rangeland units and discourage fragmentation of the resource.

The RMAC was provided with excerpts from selected sections of existing Board policy and the Public Resources Code for review prior to the August 26, 2003 meeting. Board policy sections reviewed included 0333, 0336, 0342.4, 0342.5, 0342.5.3, 0352, and 0335. Code section from the Public Resources Code included PRC 4789.3(a), and 4781 through 4788. A discussion of these items is as follows:

0336: This section contains language that encourages a tax system promoting the maintenance of the timberland base. The consensus of RMAC is that a similar policy should be adopted by the Board that encourages tax systems favorable to the maintenance of rangeland. Board Member Mark Bosetti indicated that he would expect the Board to be in favor of adopting such a policy. Mr. Bosetti also raised the question as to whether the current tax system encourages conversion of rangeland to some other use. Chuck Pritchard responded by stating that it is highest and best use unless placed under the Williamson Act. RMAC Member Henry Giacimini raised the question as to what Board attention or action resulted when the Williamson Act came under attack in recent months. Mr. Bosetti responded by stating that he did not recall any discussion by the Board regarding the matter.

0352: This section contains Board, policy that mentions the need for an integrated pest management approach when addressing forest health problems. After discussion RMAC members agreed that Board policy should contain language that encourages integrated vegetation management when addressing rangeland health problems such as noxious weeds.

Neil McDougald and other RMAC members stated that current Board Policy contains language that is not being used in the correct context. A review of

terminology is needed.

Several RMAC members expressed the need to review the complete sections taken from Board policy rather than the summaries provided. Jeff Stephens was asked to send a complete copy to all RMAC members including electronic format.

An ad hoc committee was formed composed of Chuck Pritchard, Mike Connor, Neil McDougald, and Len Lindstrand to analyze current Board rangeland policy. Comment from each of these individuals is due back to Chuck Pritchard by September 30, 2003.

RMAC members noted that the Public Resources Code calls for work and research in rangeland vegetation types that are not occurring today. Staffing and programs within these areas of concentration no longer exist. Len Lindstrand made the observation that if the Department no longer has the funding and staffing for such programs, then as an alternative the Department should lend support to outside entities (UC) to conduct the work.

Agenda Item 5:

Evaluation and recommendation to the Board regarding the Department's Vegetation Management Program (VMP): J.R. McCollister reviewed the seven subject areas that were identified at the June RMAC meeting. Not all RMAC members have responded with their respective subject areas. A motion was made and carried to post pone further discussion on VMP until all responses are submitted. The new date for submission of subject areas to J.R. McCollister is September 30, 2003. Mr. McCollister will compile all input and report to the full RMAC by October 31, 2003. Jeff Stephens will inform all RMAC members of the new dates for submitting materials.

Agenda Item 6:

Water Quality Waste Discharge Permits and possible impacts to irrigated pasture: This item was initiated by Len Lindstrand. Waste Discharge Permits have the potential to impact livestock producers with permit fees and enforcement actions that have not been experienced before by the industry. Other agricultural producers have dealt with these issues, such as rice producers in the valley. RMAC may wish to initiate a new round of water quality workshops to address the issue.

Ken Zimmerman pointed out that UC has lost staff and dollars are scarce; however, Mr. Lindstrand stated there is a need for this information. Perhaps the Rangeland Quality Management Program needs expansion to include irrigated pasture.

Mr. Lindstrand recommended an informal or formal contact with UC and a follow-up letter of support for a workshop from the Board addressed to the State Water Quality Control Board.

Mike Connor noted that potential funding sources for a workshop may be Prop 319 Research and Demonstration funding, Prop 13, or Cal Fed.

A motion was made for Mike Connor and Neil McDougald to speak with UC staff and determine what services they may be able to provide in regard to a water quality workshop on irrigated pasture. They will also recommend language for a letter from the Board of Forestry to the State Water Quality Control Board in support of a workshop.

Agenda Item 7:

New and Unfinished Business: Leonard Hale reported that the San Bernardino National Forest is involved in a project that identifies the attributes of a healthy forest. Mr. Hale agreed to keep the RMAC informed on the San Bernardino project.

Agenda Item 8:

Public Comment: Joe Rawitzer representing the Monterey County Fire Safe Council: Mr. Rawitzer commented on RMAC's discussion of Board rangeland policy. He called for a strong statement from RMAC for the Board to look at issues in a comprehensive way. A comprehensive coordinated perspective on resource management in general is needed. Full integration of the State Fire Plan with local and national activities is but one example. He urged the RMAC members to contact him for clarification on his position and comment.

Meeting Adjourned