

## BOARD OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION RANGE MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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### **Board of Forestry and Fire Protection – Range Management Advisory Committee**

#### **RANGELANDS FOCUS GROUP**

#### **MEETING MINUTES**

Meeting held Tuesday, March 16, 2010, 3:00pm  
Resources Building, 1416 9<sup>th</sup> Street, 15<sup>th</sup> floor, Room 1506-12  
Sacramento, California

#### **Attending:**

##### **RMAC:**

Chuck Pritchard (by phone)  
Scott Carnegie  
Ed Anchordoguy  
Mel Thompson  
Ken Zimmerman  
Marc Horney  
Bart Cremers

##### **Representing:**

California Association of Resource Conservation Districts  
California Forestry Association (CFA)  
California Wool Growers Association (CWG)  
California Wool Growers Association (CWG)  
California Cattlemen's Association (CCA)  
General Public  
California Farm Bureau Federation (CFBF)

Eric Huff (staff)

California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection

##### **Members of the Public:**

Joe Rawitzer  
Tracy Schohr  
Noelle Cremers

##### **Representing:**

Monterey-San Benito Range Improvement Assn.  
California Cattlemen's Association (CCA)  
California Farm Bureau Federation (CFBF)

#### **Item 1: Call to Order**

Acting Chair, Bart Cremers called the meeting to order.

#### **Item 2: Continued Discussion of Williamson Act Program Status.**

Focus Group Chairman, Chuck Pritchard summarized his family's personal experience with a parcel held by a deceased relative who had no heirs. Chuck paid the property taxes on the parcel and these taxes continued to increase over the years, despite Proposition 13 limitations. Upon proving there were no heirs to the deceased relative, Chuck was able to purchase the property and put it under Williamson Act contract with San Luis Obispo County. As a result, the property taxes for the parcel were cut in half.

Mr. Cremers inquired as to what Mr. Pritchard thought RMAC's next steps with regard to the loss of Williamson Act subvention funding ought to be.

Mr. Pritchard responded that RMAC should help facilitate a coordinated response amongst all interested parties to support restoration of the subvention funding.

RMAC Chairman, Ken Zimmerman noted that CFBF representative, John Gamper had reported at a previous Focus Group meeting that some counties had been inappropriately taking advantage of the subvention funds. Mr. Zimmerman suggested that perhaps RMAC should support fixing that problem as a means of brokering restoration of the funds. The Group noted that each county utilized the funding allocations differently and that it would be difficult to address problems with Williamson Act implementation broadly.

Mr. Cremers expressed the perspective that there is a solid base of support for the Williamson Act across all constituencies from agricultural to environmental. Restoration of the subvention funds is probably not a question of generating broad constituent support so much as finding a source of leverage with the Governor's Office. The Governor is apparently using the subvention funds as a mechanism for brokering votes for his proposed Budget Act.

Ms. Noelle Cremers of CFBF noted that a broad coalition of Williamson Act supporters from local governments, environmental groups, legislators from both parties, and landowners have been pressing their collective perspective in a number of forums to no avail.

Mr. Pritchard suggested that RMAC write a letter in support of the Williamson Act for broad circulation and use by supporters of the Act. Member Thompson offered that perhaps the letter should be written to the Board to inform them of this situation and inquire as to what if anything the Board can do about it. The participants supported sending a letter to the Board Chairman with a list of talking points he could use in discussion with legislative staff and policymakers. Mr. Cremers volunteered to assist Mr. Pritchard with the drafting of the letter and talking points.

### **Item 3: New and Unfinished Business.**

Mr. Cremers directed the participants to review the draft final Rangelands Focus Group Goals. Mr. Cremers noted that he had removed the goal of creating a pilot study to investigate the efficacy of public lands management. Member Thompson opposed the elimination of this goal and discussion amongst the participants ensued. Mr. Thompson did not recall the notion of creating a pilot study and expressed the belief that the goal should be focused on supporting the RMAC *Natural Resource White Paper*.

Ms. Tracy Schohr of CCA and Ms. Cremers of CFBF noted that agency personnel seldom have the expertise to manage the public lands for which they are responsible. Ms. Schohr suggested that she could help coordinate between RMAC and some of her agency contacts to facilitate the creation of a public land management plan template.

Mr. Cremers advised that he would reincorporate a goal that supported investigation of opportunities for promotion of resource management on state-owned lands. The Group concurred with the inclusion of this goal.

Mr. Cremers then reported that he had asked Member Horney to communicate a number of points with the California-Pacific Society of Range Management (Cal-Pac SRM) Panel on Certification. RMAC had sent a letter of inquiry to the Panel and has yet to receive a response. Mr. Horney will follow up with the assistance of the foresters licensing office and report back to the Group.

Mr. Cremers reported that RMAC is now back in the loop for review of Weed Management Area grant proposals for funding by the California Department of Food and Agriculture. Mr. Cremers and Mr. Zimmerman have been reviewing two types of proposals: those for the Weed Management Areas and “mini-grants” for smaller projects. Mr. Zimmerman provided some observations about the proposals he and Mr. Cremers have evaluated thus far.

**Item 4: Public Comment.**

There was no public comment to report.

The meeting was then adjourned by unanimous consent of the Focus Group participants.

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