

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

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### RANGE MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

#### WATER FOCUS GROUP

#### MEETING MINUTES

Meeting held by teleconference on Wednesday, November 3, 2010  
Resources Building, 1416 9<sup>th</sup> Street, 15<sup>th</sup> floor, Room 1506-12  
Sacramento, California

#### Attending:

#### **RMAC:**

Mel Thompson  
Marc Horney  
Ken Zimmerman

Eric Huff (staff)

#### **Representing:**

California Wool Growers Association  
General Public  
California Cattlemen's Association

California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection

#### **Agencies and Public:**

Elisa Noble  
Karen Buhr  
Ben Zabinsky  
Justin Oldfield  
Tracy Schohr  
Kevin Piper  
Aaron Lazanoff

#### **Representing:**

California Farm Bureau Federation  
California Association of Resource Conservation Districts  
North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board  
California Cattlemen's Association  
California Cattlemen's Association/Rangeland Coalition  
Cal Poly San Luis Obispo  
Cal Poly San Luis Obispo

*~ Items appear in the order in which they were discussed by the Committee ~*

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

Focus Group Chairman Horney called the meeting to order following introductions of meeting participants.

#### **Items 2: Review of California Cattlemen's Association's Comments on Recent Water Board Actions.**

Chairman Horney invited Mr. Ben Zabinsky of the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board to report on the status of the North Coast Board's recent actions relative to rangeland water quality. Mr. Zabinsky began with a summary of both the Regional and State Water Board's adoption of a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for the Klamath Basin. One of the items specified within the TMDL "Action Plan" is the development of a water quality compliance program for grazing and irrigated lands in the Klamath Basin only.

*The Range Management Advisory Committee is a statutorily authorized advisory committee appointed by the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection. The Committee is responsible for assisting the Board in the review and development of statewide rangeland policy and serves as an advisor to the California Natural Resources Agency, Environmental Protection Agency, and Department of Food and Agriculture on issues pertaining to California rangeland resources.*

The compliance program might subsequently be applied to the entire region dependent upon the outcome of the initial effort for the Klamath Basin. The goal is to have this program ready for the Regional Board's consideration by the end of 2012. At this point, Regional Board staff is in the very preliminary steps of establishing the process by which the compliance program would be developed. It is anticipated that development of the program would be complete within a year's time and the remaining six months would be spent in the formal public process of review. Mr. Zabinsky noted that the Regional Board would likely appoint a technical advisory group to help with the technical/scientific elements of the proposed compliance program. The Regional Board is likewise considering the creation of a stakeholder group to assist in the process.

Mr. Justin Oldfield of the California Cattlemen's Association (CCA) summarized the joint efforts of CCA, the California Farm Bureau Federation (CFBF), and the California Forestry Association (CFA) to participate in the process of development of the compliance program. The three organizations have provided extensive comments on the proposed program (comment letter provided by Elisa Noble of CFBF and circulated to meeting participants in hard and digital formats).

Mr. Oldfield and Ms. Noble also summarized the status of a State Water Board waiver proposal for all National Forest lands in California's Region 5. They expressed concern for the possibility that two or more competing waivers could be in effect for public grazing allotments in the state. Discussion also touched on the larger controversies with public lands grazing across the west.

Chairman Horney questioned Mr. Zabinsky as to the possible elements that would be included in a water quality compliance program for grazing and irrigated lands. Mr. Zabinsky reported that North Coast Board staff is reviewing existing examples from other regional boards, the San Francisco Bay Regional Board in particular. But, at this point no firm waiver elements have been identified.

Chairman Horney further inquired if the Ranch Water Quality Management Planning program could be useful to this waiver development effort. Mr. Zabinsky responded that this program and the individual plans that were developed could be informative to this waiver effort, but it's difficult to be more definitive in terms of the utility of that program at this point.

RMAC Chairman Zimmerman inquired as to the role of Best Management Practices (BMPs) in the North Coast Board's compliance program. Mr. Zabinsky replied that the North Coast Board does not intend at this point anyway to specify BMPs. Instead, the Regional Board would specify a reporting program under which any number of BMPs could be utilized to achieve compliance.

Chairman Horney and other Members expressed their interest in continued participation in the North Coast Board's development of the water quality compliance program. Mr. Zabinsky likewise agreed to keep RMAC informed as the process moves forward

### **Item 3: Discussion of Ranch Water Quality Short Course Program.**

This item was deferred to the next Water Focus Group Meeting to allow for a presentation by Mr. Mel George of UC Cooperative Extension who has been intimately involved in the program throughout its history. Ms. Elisa Noble of CFBF noted that her organization has continued to promote the use of this program in other venues. There was general consensus that this program was very useful and could benefit from a renewal of financial and staff support.

### **Item 4: Public Comment.**

No public comment was offered.

The meeting was adjourned by consensus of the Focus Group participants.

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