

RANGE MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

P.O. Box 944246
SACRAMENTO, CA 94244-2460
Website: www.bof.fire.ca.gov
(916) 653-8007



The Range Management Advisory Committee (RMAC) would like to issue comment on the scope and contents of the [State Parks Plan and/or EIR].

Specifically, RMAC suggests grazing by herbivores such as goats or sheep be utilized as a management tool in the park to meet the park's ecological and hazardous fuel reduction goals. Herbivores are currently an underutilized tool for strategically reducing hazardous fuel loads. Prescribed herbivory for hazardous fuel reduction is the intentional use of domestic livestock to remove, rearrange, or convert vegetation to reduce the costs and losses associated with wildfires and to enhance ecological conditions. Sheep and goats are the favored animals for small scale projects, such as those that might be undertaken on state parks, because of their grazing and browsing habits and their relative ease of transport.

Prescribed herbivory can offer a variety of benefits in comparison to other types of vegetation treatments. Herbivory is a historic, natural way of removing biomass and can yield a quality protein product for commercial benefit. Herbivores are essentially a "biological masticator" that can reproduce themselves and turn unwanted biomass into a consumable product. In addition to fire prevention benefits, carefully managed grazing can provide important environmental benefits such as increased soil organic matter, control of invasive species, and improved plant and wildlife habitat.

RMAC suggests [State Park] consider using prescribed herbivory as a vegetation or ecological management tool in the park when the following concerns arise:

- Air quality, when compared to the use of prescribed fire.
- Noise, when compared to mechanical and some manual treatments.
- Proximity to structures, when compared to risks of using prescribed fire or mechanical treatments.
- Steep slopes, when compared to prescribed fire, manual, or mechanical treatments.
- Soil compaction and surface disturbance, when compared to mechanical treatments.
- Noxious weed control, when compared to manual or mechanical treatments.

RMAC recommends the following sources for more information about incorporating herbivory into the [State Park's] General Plan as a management tool to achieve the park's ecological and hazardous fuel objectives:

American Sheep Association. Targeted Grazing: A Natural Approach to Vegetation Management and Landscape Enhancement – A Handbook on Grazing as an Ecological Service. American Sheep Association, 2006.

http://www.woolgrowers.org/targeted_grazing/handbook.html

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Navaez, Nelmy. Prescribed Herbivory to Reduce Fuel Load in California Chaparral. University of California, Davis. ProQuest, 2007. PhD Dissertation.

Ingram, Roger S., Morgan P. Doran, and Glenn Nader (2013). Planned Herbivory in the Management of Wildfire Fuels, Herbivory, Dr. Breno Barros (Ed.), ISBN: 978-953-51-1052-1, InTech, DOI: 10.5772/48673. Available from:
<http://www.intechopen.com/books/herbivory/planned-herbivory-in-the-management-of-wildfire-fuels>

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http://www.bof.fire.ca.gov/board_committees/range_management_advisory_committee/

Thank you,

Lesa Osterholm
Marc Horney
RMAC Co-Chairs