

1995 California Rangeland Water Quality Management Planning Program

1

A SHORT HISTORY OF HOW IT CAME TOGETHER

California Rangeland Water Quality Management Plan

2

- The objective of the CRWQMP [was] to guide rangeland managers in conducting their activities in a manner that will prevent sedimentation, nutrients, pathogens and thermal pollution from exceeding prescribed standards established by the Regional Water Quality Control Boards.
 - Program was active from ~1995-2010
 - ✦ CRWQMP short-courses were taught and supported by the University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) and USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
 - ✦ Cost-share for implementing water quality improvements was available through NRCS, and grants through some RCDs
 - ✦ A Web-interface for developing and submitting plans had been established at UCD by 2010, but appears offline at this time.

California Rangeland Water Quality Management Plan

3

• Goals

1. Help participants complete actionable water quality plans

- ✦ Focus plans on
 - a. assessments of nonpoint sources on the property
 - b. development of water quality protection objectives
 - c. implementation of practices
 - d. planning of short and long-term monitoring activities

2. Make training and plan development user-friendly

- ✦ Address the technical aspects of nonpoint source pollution processes in a practical, applied format
- ✦ Deliver material when ranch managers can participate
 - 15 hours of material, usually over multiple weekends/evenings

California Rangeland Water Quality Management Plan

- **Short-course topics**

1. How to determine water quality impairments for specific hydrologic units/basins from state and regional assessments
2. How to document existing ranch practices that protect water quality
3. How to conduct water quality assessments of ranch properties
4. Rangeland best management practices that address nonpoint pollution sources identified by water quality assessments
5. How to select appropriate management practices for water quality protection
6. How to monitor (field demonstration meeting)
 - ✦ nonpoint pollution sources
 - ✦ impacts of water quality management practice effectiveness

Overview of the history of CRWQMP formation

5

- 1. In 1989 the Board of Forestry (BOF) directed the RMAC to address the issue of rangeland riparian system management, which included a water quality dimension.**
- 2. By 1990, the RMAC had decided to make the management of rangeland water quality a priority topic.**
- 3. At some point prior to this time the SWRCB had begun considering the need for NPS regulations to address water quality impacts from uses of non-irrigated grazing lands (rangeland).**

Overview of the history of CRWQMP formation

6

- 4. Learning of this, RMAC members helped facilitate the formation of a committee from representatives of NRCS, UCCE, the California Department of Forestry's Forest and Rangeland Assessment Program (CDF-FRAP), and the SWRCB to determine the content and format of voluntary water quality management plans for rangeland/ranch properties that could meaningfully demonstrate water quality protection efforts.**
- 5. The SWRCB contracted with the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts (CARCD) to draw stakeholders into the process.**

Overview of the history of CRWQMP formation

7

- 6. In 1993 the CARCD subcontracted with AGvocate, Inc., to complete the plan.**
 - AGvocate compiled information on agency roles and responsibilities, policy and coordination mechanisms, sources of funding, and technical assistance.
 - The firm worked with a stakeholder advisory committee to help review and develop the plan.
 - In 1994, 18 input meetings were held with industry and agencies to seek additional input.
- 7. UCCE specialists and advisors began developing short-course**
 - First test-runs delivered to Mendocino, Sonoma, Marin, San Luis Obispo, and Plumas Counties in 1995 and 1996 by UCCE advisors and NRCS staff. A standard package of short-course materials were made available statewide in 1997.

Overview of the history of CRWQMP formation

8

8. The final **CRWQMP** presented to SWRCB represented a voluntary/cooperative (Tier 1) approach to rangeland water quality management under the Nonpoint Source Management Plan (NPS Plan)

Epilogue

- The replacement of the three-tiered compliance approach in 2004 by the “NPS Implementation and Enforcement Policy” substantially removed an incentive livestock managers and producer organizations had to participate in the CRWQMP short-course and planning process
- Several grazing waiver programs have locally “re-incentivized” the CRWQMP by making its completion and/or implementation a mechanism by which grazing operation managers can comply with waiver requirements

Impact of the CRWQMP, 1995–2007

- **George et al., 2011**
 - From 1995 to 2007, more than 70 short courses were conducted in 35 counties with representatives from more than 1,000 ranches and other nonfederal lands attending
 - More than 2 million acres of nonfederal rangeland were voluntarily placed under water quality plans between 1997 and 2007
 - According to a survey in 2002, the majority of the course participants completed a plan and implemented water quality protection practices during and following the short course
 - Landowners implemented watershed groups to collectively address NPS pollution
 - CRWQMP short-course participation helped qualify landowners for USDA cost-share programs such as the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)
 - UCCE created a new state specialist faculty position (Rangeland Watershed)
 - The short course served as a model for the Central Coast Farm Water Quality Program conducted by UCCE

Key Points

10

1. **The 1990-1995 process RMAC initiated was effective in developing a program that achieved generally good support of land managers and regulatory authorities**
 - ✦ The CRWQMP is still used or referenced in many current rangeland NPS programs
2. **RMAC continues to maintain its connections with stakeholders, state and federal agencies, and scientific resources so that it can facilitate solution-finding processes for issues as they arise**
 - ✦ Wildfire and fuels management
 - ✦ Drought
 - ✦ Grazing management
 - ✦ Land conversion
 - ✦ Management of state lands
 - ✦ Wildlife populations and habitats
 - ✦ Water quality
 - ✦ ...