

Range Management Advisory Committee (RMAC) Strategic Plan



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Dr. Keith Gilless – Chair, California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection

Thomas Porter - Director, CAL FIRE

Wade Crowfoot – Secretary, California Natural Resources Agency

Gavin Newsom – Governor, State of California

Approved by:



Dr. Marc Horney, Chair, Range Management Advisory Committee



Dr. J. Keith Gilles, Chair, Board of Forestry and Fire Protection

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of RMAC's Strategic Plan is to identify and communicate RMAC's objectives and goals to provide a foundation for future tactical planning and maintain a high level of transparency with the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection, RMAC's appointing body, and the public. In addition to laying out RMAC's objectives, the Strategic Plan documents RMAC's administration, procedures, funding, and membership. RMAC will review and update the Strategic Plan every five years and present it to the Board for approval.

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Definition

A **Rangeland** is land on which the existing vegetation, whether growing naturally or through management, is suitable for grazing and browsing. **Rangeland** includes any natural grasslands, savannas, shrublands, deserts, woodlands, and wetlands, which support a vegetative cover of native grasses, grass-like plants, forbs, shrubs or naturalized species. **Rangeland** is land dominated by vegetation other than trees. Many woodlands (including Eastside ponderosa pine, pinyon, juniper, chaparral, and oak) are included in **rangelands** because their response to range management principles and activities are similar to those of other shrubby ecosystems (14 CCR § 1561.1).

California's rangelands support a variety of native plant and wildlife species, provide clean water, productive soil, carbon sequestration, open space, and help support rural economies. These ecosystem services are essential for maintaining habitat and wildlife in California, and healthy, managed rangelands are essential for preventing large fires and protecting communities.

There are over 57 million acres of grasslands, savannas, shrublands, deserts, wetlands, and woodlands that have sufficient vegetation cover as to be considered rangelands in California. There are also 32 million acres of forestland, some of which may be appropriate for grazing activities for a variety of goals related to fire and ecology (FRAP, 2017).¹ California's rangelands are currently threatened by several human and environmental impacts. Some of those threats include conversion and land use changes, invasive species, and climate change and wildfire impacts. Other issues include the long-term financial viability of maintaining grazing on rangelands and data gaps that create challenges for policy development.

About the Range Management Advisory Committee

In 1945 the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (Board) requested the appointment of the Range Improvement Advisory Committee (RIAC) which was established in 1946 to advise the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection on rangeland matters. In 1967 the RIAC was reconstructed and chartered with 11 voting members and nine non-voting technical consultants. The RIAC slipped into a period of dormancy and was reactivated and re-chartered as the Range Management Advisory Committee (RMAC) in 1975. Legislation was introduced in 1984 to make RMAC a statutory advisory body of the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection and the California Natural Resources Agency. Additional legislation in 1996 expanded the advisory role to include the California Environmental Protection Agency and the California Department of Food and Agriculture.

The Range Management Advisory Committee (RMAC) is authorized by Section 741 of the Public Resources Code of the State of California to provide a source of counsel for the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (Board) concerning the rangelands of California. The Secretary of the Resources Agency, the Secretary of the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Secretary for Food and Agriculture (Secretaries) are required to notify, and encouraged to consult with, RMAC on rangeland issues. RMAC members serve without compensation.

¹ (FRAP), C. D. of F. and F. P. F. and R. A. P. (2017). *Forests and Rangelands 2017 Assessment*. Retrieved from <https://frap.fire.ca.gov/media/3180/assessment2017.pdf>

Vision of RMAC

The vision of RMAC is a resilient rangeland landscape in California that provides a diversity of ecosystem services to support the state's ecological and human health.

Mission of RMAC

The mission of RMAC is to consider issues related to California's rangeland resources, provide recommendations on addressing them, facilitate strong relationships with local, state and federal agencies and develop solutions that are based on environmental, social, and economic information that is current, data-driven, and considers diverse perspectives.

Strategic Plan

Strategies

In pursuit of the mission enumerated above, RMAC will employ the following strategies:

- A) RMAC shall obtain and present cross sections of informed public opinion with respect to the rangeland resources of the State for guidance in formulating policy and programs.
- B) RMAC shall consult as needed with technical experts.
- C) RMAC shall encourage public participation at its meetings.
- D) RMAC shall solicit priorities from the Board and the Agencies annually, no later than October 15, for incorporation into each year's projects and priorities. Priorities will relate to programs under the purview of, or under consideration by, the Board and the Agencies and their relationship to rangelands and rangeland resources.
- E) RMAC shall establish its annual priorities at the first meeting of each calendar year to be approved by the Board at their next meeting.

Objectives

1. Consider matters related to California's rangeland and forested rangeland resources that are under consideration by the Secretaries, the Board, or Federal agencies (as appropriate given the Board's role in representing State interests in Federal timberlands), offer advice and consultation, and recommend appropriate policy measures or administrative actions;
2. Share information and educational opportunities to Certified Range Managers and government agency rangeland and forestry staff to grow professional knowledge in this field;
3. Consult on the development and implementation of the Noxious Weeds Program through the California Department of Food and Agriculture (FAC 7271 and 7273);
4. Monitor for issues in rangeland science and management and convene groups of relevant professionals to address these issues

To facilitate the successful deployment of these strategies and objectives, RMAC shall utilize the following membership and meeting procedures:

Membership

Consistent with Public Resources Code §741, RMAC shall consist of eleven (11) voting members. The term of office shall be for four years with the terms staggered.

Conflicts of Interest:

As an advisory committee under the oversight of the Board, members of RMAC may be perceived as quasi-public officials even though the committee lacks decision-making authority. As such, it is important that the members be aware of and avoid potential conflicts of interest, and even the possible perception of a conflict of interest. Generally, members must avoid participating in or influencing any decision in which they have a direct or indirect financial interest or other personal interest. The California conflict of interest rules that may apply to a particular member, or in a particular situation, can be very complex. If any questions or concerns arise regarding a potential conflict of interest, RMAC members should seek guidance from the Board's legal counsel.

Voting Members:

1. Three (3) members shall be nominated and appointed from the public. They should have an interest and background in the management and conservation of range resources or special knowledge in the protection of rangeland soils and watersheds.
2. One (1) member from the California Resource Conservation Districts.
3. The remaining seven (7) members shall be nominated from organizations representing rangeland owners.

Ex-Officio Member:

A Board member shall be appointed by the Chairman of the Board to serve as an ex-officio member of RMAC. The Board member shall have no vote in Committee actions except in the case of a tie.

Officers:

RMAC shall annually elect from its voting membership a Chairperson and vice Chairperson.

Procedures

Quorum

A quorum shall consist of a minimum of six (6) voting members.

Meetings

RMAC shall meet a minimum of four times annually. Additional meetings may be held as needed. Meetings shall be called at the request of the Chairperson, or in their absence, by the vice Chairperson. The meetings of RMAC shall be duly noticed and open to the public in compliance with the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act.²

Subcommittees

The Chairperson may appoint subcommittees to facilitate the duties of RMAC, as needed. Membership may be drawn from RMAC, technical consultants, and others as necessary. These subcommittees operate under the requirements of the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act.

Reports and Recommendations

RMAC shall report its findings and recommendations to the Board and/or Secretaries as soon as possible after each meeting. Recommendations by RMAC for action by the Board or the Secretaries shall be on matters within the purview of the Board or the Secretaries, respectively, and shall clearly indicate what action, if any, is requested.

² See the Office of the Attorney General: <https://oag.ca.gov/open-meetings> and "The Handy Guide To Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act" pdf

APPENDIX A – RELEVANT CALIFORNIA STATUTE SECTIONS

PRC 741

- (a) The board shall appoint a Range Management Advisory Committee and shall consult with the advisory committee on rangeland resource issues under consideration by the board.
- (b) The advisory committee shall consist of 11 members, who shall be selected as follows:
 - (1) Three members of the general public, who have an interest and background in the conservation of range resources or special knowledge in the protection of range and brushland soils and watersheds.
 - (2) One member nominated by the California Association of Resource Conservation Districts.
 - (3) Seven members nominated by organizations representing owners of range and brushlands.
- (c) Members of the advisory committee shall serve without compensation.
- (d) The Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency, the Secretary for Environmental Protection, and the Secretary of Food and Agriculture shall notify the advisory committee of, and are encouraged to consult with the advisory committee on, rangeland resource issues that are under consideration by the Natural Resources Agency, the California Environmental Protection Agency, and the Department of Food and Agriculture, respectively.

FAC 7271

- (a) The Legislature designates the department as the lead department in noxious weed management and the department is responsible for the implementation of this article in cooperation with the Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency.
- (b) There is hereby created in the Department of Food and Agriculture Fund the Noxious Weed Management Account.
- (c) Moneys appropriated for expenditure by the secretary for the purposes of this article may be spent without regard to fiscal year and shall be allocated as follows:
 - (1) Sixty percent of the moneys in the account shall be made available to eligible weed management areas or county agricultural commissioners for the control and abatement of noxious and invasive weeds according to an approved integrated weed management plan. These control moneys shall be made available through a grant program administered by the department. Proposals shall be evaluated based on the strategic importance for local and regional eradication of high priority noxious and invasive weeds.
 - (2)
 - (A) Twenty percent shall be made available toward research on the biology, ecology, or management of noxious and invasive weeds; the mapping, risk assessment, and prioritization of weeds; the prevention of weed introduction and spread; and education and outreach activities. These moneys shall be made available to qualified applicants through a grant program administered by the department. **Proposals shall be evaluated in consultation with the Range Management Advisory Committee, established pursuant to Section 741 of the Public Resources Code, with an emphasis placed on funding of needs-based, applied, and practical research.**
 - (B) For purposes of this paragraph, a qualified applicant includes nonprofits,

publicly funded educational institutions, state and local agencies, and California Native American tribes.

(3) Twenty percent shall be made available to the department, and shall only be used for the following purposes:

(A) Carrying out the provisions of this article.

(B) Developing noxious weed control strategies.

(C) Seeking new, effective biological control agents for the long-term control of noxious weeds.

(D) Conducting private and public workshops as needed to discuss and plan weed management strategies with all interested and affected local, state, and federal agencies, private landowners, educational institutions, interest groups, and county agricultural commissioners.

(E) Appointing a noxious weed coordinator and weed mapping specialist to assist in weed inventory, mapping, and control strategies.

FAC 7273

(a) The department shall designate and provide staff support to an oversight committee to monitor this article and shall consider input from weed management areas, county agricultural commissioners, and the Range Management Advisory Committee.

(b) The membership of the oversight committee shall include an equitable number of representatives from each of the following interests:

(1) Livestock production.

(2) Agricultural crop protection.

(3) Forest products industry.

(4) California Invasive Plant Council.

(5) Research institutions.

(6) Wildlife conservation groups.

(7) Environmental groups.

(8) Resource conservation districts.

(9) The general public.

(10) Local government.

(11) The Department of Fish and Wildlife