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Range Management Advisory Committee (RMAC) Strategic Plan



January 2020

Dr. Keith Gilles – 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

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Approved by:

Chair, Range Management Advisory Committee

Chair, Board of Forestry and Fire Protection

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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. Dr. Marc Horney, a professor of Rangeland Resource Management at California Polytechnic University in San Luis Obispo is the current chairman.

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 and the public. This Plan will be implemented in accordance with state law, Board of Forestry and Fire Protection policy, regulation, and budgetary authority. Changes in any of these areas may require modifications to various elements of the Plan.

Through the Strategic Plan process, RMAC has developed a suite of Goals which address three Areas of Focus. RMAC uses this Areas of Focus and Goals framework to drive individual projects and priorities which are detailed in RMAC's annual list of Priorities. Through this process, RMAC aims to support healthy and productive rangelands in California that result in various ecological, environmental, and economic benefits for wildlife, soil and water quality, and rural communities.

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 annually and present it to the Board for approval.

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SECTION I – SETTING THE STAGE

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).

Ecosystem Services of Healthy Rangelands

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. 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, compared with 32 million acres of forestland, suggesting that proper management of rangelands in California is of particular importance ((FRAP), 2017). This importance is also clear when considering California's current fire regime and the effect that healthy, managed rangelands can have on preventing large fires and protecting communities.

- a. Hardwoods
- b. Biodiversity
- c. Wildlife Habitat
- d. Carbon Sequestration
- e. Good water quality
- f. Recreation
- g. Open space
- h. Supporting rural economies

Threats to Rangeland Health

- a. Conversion/Land use change
- b. Invasive Species/Weeds
- c. Climate Change & Drought
- d. Wildfire Impacts
- e. Impacts to grazing/browsing and their potential impact on rangeland health
 - i. Decreased federal allotments
 - ii. Reduction in Williamson Act spending?
 - iii. Economic feasibility

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Two “niches” – Targeted grazing and traditional ranching

- a. Similar ecosystem benefits
- b. Different objectives

Data gaps

- a. Post-Fire BMPs
- b. Quantitative benefits of grazing for fuel reduction

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SECTION II - ADMINISTRATION

Advisory Mandate

The chartering of PRC 741 provided RMAC's mandate to advise the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection, the California Natural Resources Agency, the California Environmental Protection Agency, and the California Department of Food and Agriculture on issues under their consideration which pertain to rangeland resources. It is the only standing committee in the state government that addresses range issues. RMAC operates under a charter from the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection.

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..."

"...(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."

Committee Composition

Leadership

Chairperson: Marc Horney, PhD, California Polytechnical University, San Luis Obispo
Vice Chairperson: Lesa Osterholm, California Farm Bureau

Ex Officio Member

Katie Delbar serves on the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection as the member representing rangelands. She also serves as RMAC's Ex-Officio Member.

General Membership

Eleven people participate in this committee; each member serves a four-year term. The Board of Forestry and Fire Protection appoints the members from nominations submitted by the represented groups and the public.

PRC 741

"(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."

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Current representation is as follows:

- 2 members California Cattlemen's Association
- 2 members California Wool Growers Association
- 2 members California Farm Bureau Federation
- 1 member California Association of Resource Conservation Districts
- 1 member California Forestry Association
- 1 member Watershed Fire Council of Southern California
- 2 members General Public

Technical Consultation

Advisors from state and federal agencies provide current technical information to RMAC on rangeland and wildland related issues and assist RMAC in recommending policy to the Board and the Agencies.

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.

Annual Funding

RMAC receives \$20,000 annually to fund Committee travel and to support projects identified by the Committee. This funding is provided by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's Forest Practice Division.

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SECTION III – MISSION AND GOALS

Vision of RMAC

The vision of RMAC is to develop and maintain relationships with various state agencies which will facilitate a more transparent environment for RMAC and members of the public to engage in the development of programs and policies affecting California's rangelands.

Mission Of RMAC

The mission of RMAC is to provide recommendations on issues relating to California's rangeland resources that are based on environmental, social, and economic information that is current, data-driven, and considers diverse perspectives.

Current Objectives

Areas of Focus

1. Maintain productive and ecologically and environmentally healthy rangelands
2. Vegetation Management
3. Education and Outreach

Goals

Focus Area 1:

- a. Consult on Program Development or Amendments
 - a. Maintain working relationships with the Board and the Agencies and their departments
 - b. Provide science-based recommendations for requested changes to existing programs and for program development on issues related to California's rangelands
 - c. Communicate issues of importance to the Board and the Agencies regarding rangeland science and health using recent science
- b. Support biodiversity and habitat retention on California's rangelands
 - a. Engage in efforts to support native grasses and/or reduce invasive species and noxious weeds
 - b. Engage in the Noxious Weeds program under the California Department of Food and Agriculture as statutorily mandated (FAC §741)
 - c. Support research and management of California's hardwoods
- c. Support healthy soil and water quality on California's rangelands
 - a. Maintain working relationships with the California Department of Food and Agriculture's Healthy Soils Program and the State and Regional Water Quality Control Boards
 - b. Develop science-based reports regarding issues of rangeland water quality and soil quality

Focus Area 2:

- a. Support fire science research as it relates to grazing and rangeland health

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- a. Connect landowners and researchers
- b. Identify suitable programs for application
- b. Support fuel reduction efforts that include targeted grazing as a treatment type
 - a. Act as a liaison for connecting interested parties
 - b. Identify suitable programs for application

Focus Area 3:

- a. Host and co-host workshops aimed at increasing understanding of principles of rangeland health and management
 - a. Grazing and fuel reduction
 - b. Native plants and noxious weeds
 - c. Grazing and water quality
 - d. Ecosystem services of rangelands
 - e. Ecological benefits of grazing
 - f. Rangeland diversity
 - g. Land use change and global change – threats to rangelands
- b. Collaborate with the University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) and other organizations to develop workshop series that can be delivered state-wide
- c. Coordinate reports and presentations to the Board and the Agencies on relevant topics of concern
- d. Collaborate with UCCE and other organizations to develop outreach materials

Annual Call for Priorities

RMAC solicits priorities from the Board and the Agencies annually on _____ 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.

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SECTION IV APPENDICES

APPENDIX A - RMAC CHARTER

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. RMAC is also mandated to consult with the Secretary of the Resources Agency, the Secretary of the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Secretary for Food and Agriculture (Secretaries) on rangeland issues. RMAC consists of persons representing specific organizations that have a direct involvement with the rangeland resources of the State, and members of the general public.

Objectives:

1. To counsel with the Board on programs or issues under consideration by the Board that deal with the rangelands of California;
2. To consider questions or matters related to California's rangeland resources that are under consideration by the Secretaries and offer advice and consultation; and
3. To periodically inform the Board and/or the Secretaries of issues affecting rangeland resources and to recommend appropriate policy measures or administrative actions.

In pursuit of these objectives, RMAC should 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. RMAC should provide leadership and coordination for rangeland research and program development of issues under consideration by the Board and/or the Secretaries. RMAC should serve as a vehicle for exchange of technical knowledge related to rangeland science. RMAC shall encourage public participation at its meetings.

Membership:

Consistent with Public Resources Code §741, RMAC shall consist of eleven (11) voting members. On behalf of the Board, the Director of CAL FIRE shall request nominations and the Board shall make the appointments. The term of office shall be for four years with the terms staggered.

Voting Members:

1. Two (2) 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 each from the California Resource Conservation Districts and the **Watershed Fire Council of Southern California**.
3. The remaining seven (7) members shall be nominated from the following organizations representing rangeland owners:
 - i. California Cattlemen's Association

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- ii. California Farm Bureau Federation
- iii. California Forestry Association
- iv. California Wool Growers Association

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.

Consultants:

- California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
- California Air Resources Board
- California Department of Fish and Game
- California Department of Food and Agriculture
- California Department of Water Resources
- California Water Resources Control Board
- U.S.D.A. Farm Services Agency
- U.S.D.A. Natural Resource Conservation Service
- U.S. Bureau of Land Management
- U.S.D.A. Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Forest and Range Experiment Station
- U.S.D.A. Forest Service Region V
- University of California, Cooperative Extension
- University of California, Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources
- California State Polytechnical University, San Luis Obispo California

Officers:

RMAC shall annually elect from its voting membership a Chairperson and vice Chairperson. The Director of CDF shall appoint an Executive Secretary who will act as a liaison to the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection and serve as a non-voting member and technical consultant.

Procedures:

Quorum

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

Meetings

RMAC shall meet at least once a year prior to April 1, and additional meetings may be held as needed. Meetings shall be called at the request of the Chairperson, or in his/her absence, by the vice Chairperson. The meetings of RMAC shall be duly noticed and open to the public.

Subcommittees

The Chairperson may appoint subcommittees to facilitate the duties of RMAC. Membership may be drawn from RMAC, technical consultants, and others as required.

Minutes

The draft minutes of RMAC meetings shall be approved by the Committee Chairperson before distribution by staff.

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Reports and Recommendations

RMAC shall report its findings and recommendations to the Board 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.

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APPENDIX B – 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

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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.

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APPENDIX C - CERTIFIED RANGELAND MANAGERS (CRMs)¹²³

Name	CRM Number
Dr. James Bartolome	1
Pete van Hoorn	101
Jeff Kwasny	103
Devii Rao	105
Josh Davy	107
Jeff Stackhouse	113
Sharon L. Larivee	15
Dr. Mitchel P. Mcclaran	21
John M. Harper	23
Dr. Melvin R. George	27
Donna S. Lindquist	3
Dr. Samira A. S. Omar	31
Ceci I. Dale Cesmat	37
Larry C. Forero	39
Timothy S. Koopman	41
Richard C. Platt	47
Craig D. Thomsen	49
Richard King	5
Thomas A. Wright	51
Glenn A. Nader	55
Dr. Barbara H. Allen-Diaz	59
Sheila J. Barry	63
Richard L. Westman	67
Richard Delmas	69
Neil K. McDougald	7
Dr. Stephanie Larson	73
Dr. Jeffrey A. Creque	75
Thomas Walter Frolli	77
Royce E. Larsen	81
Dr. Marc Horney	83
Michael Dolan	89

Name	CRM Number
Peter Hopkinson	93
Don Henderson	95
Breanna E. Owens	97
J. Lance Criley	99
Michele Hammond	102
William H. Weitkamp	52
Dr. Kenneth O. Fulgham	54
Bruce S. Reinhardt	56
Henry J. Giacomini	6
Edith A. Jacobsen	60
Dr. Orrin G Sage	64
David Lile	66
Dawn Marie Lawson	68
Dr. Leonard D. Jolley	72
Robert A. Pearce	74
Mark D. Collins	76
Clayton M. Koopmann	100
Julie Finzel	104
Denise Defreese	106
Philip Brownsey	110
Sasha Gennet	112
Sarah Dawe	114
Miao Ling He	115
Billy Freeman	116
Robert Lee Gillaspay	117
Fadzayi Mashiri	118
Todd Golder	119
Dr. Duane C. Cornett	14
Gary G. Markegard	20
Elizabeth M. Kellogg	28
Mitchell A. Perdue	30

¹ <https://bof.fire.ca.gov/media/8125/crm-public-list-as-of-3-7-19.pdf>

² <https://bof.fire.ca.gov/media/8929/crm-consulting-list-as-of-3-7-19.pdf>

³ <https://bof.fire.ca.gov/media/8928/crm-cfip-list-as-of-3-7-19.pdf>

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Name	CRM Number
Donald H. Behrens	34
Keith S. Guenther	40
Garry S. Mahrt	42
Dr. Susan Edinger-Marshall	78
Dr. Lynn Huntsinger	80
Dennis Dudley	82
David D. Witt	86
James Sullins	88
Barton Cremers	92
Matt Wacker	96

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APPENDIX D – REFERENCES

(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>

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APPENDIX E – SUPPLEMENTAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

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