

## BOARD OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION

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# RANGE MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Monday, November 14, 2022, 12:30 PM  
Hybrid Teleconference and In-Person Meeting

### **ROLL CALL**

#### **RMAC Members Present**

Chair, Dr. Marc Horney – virtual  
Vice Chair, Rich Ross – in person  
Joel Kramer – virtual  
Dr. Paul Starrs – virtual  
Cole Bush – virtual  
Bart Cremers – virtual  
Dr. Stephanie Larson – virtual  
Billie Roney – virtual  
Andrée Soares – virtual  
Taylor Hagata – virtual

#### **RMAC Members Absent**

Lance Criley  
Katie Delbar, ex officio member

#### **RMAC Staff**

Dr. Kristina Wolf, Environmental Scientist – in person

#### **Department Staff**

Curtis Yee, IT Manager, Technical Support – in person

**Public Attendees** – John Austel, Theresa Becchetti, Maurica Fitzgibbons, Elizabeth Garcia, Grey Hayes, Roger Ingram, Takeshi Kaji, Mo Loden, Stephanie Lopez, Hope Wentzel, Stephanie Yelenik, Samantha Salaz

*The Board's mission is to lead California in developing policies and programs that serve the public interest in environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable management of forest and rangelands, and a fire protection system that protects and serves the people of the state.*

Items are numbered by their corresponding Number on the agenda and documented below in order of their introduction during the meeting. The meeting webinar may be viewed by registering your information at: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/recording/3062427283016225550>

## **AGENDA ITEMS:**

### **1. Call to Order, Webinar Meeting Format, and Roll Call – Dr. Kristina Wolf, Board Staff**

See results of roll call, above. Dr. Wolf reviewed the webinar format and functionality.

### **2. Staff/Chairman's report – Dr. Marc Horney, Chair**

Dr. Horney provided updates on several items in motion:

- Since the last meeting in Sept, the chair and Dr. Wolf have worked on several items:
- Continued discussion regarding progress of the State Lands Grazing License and Land Management (SLGLLM) subcommittee
- Dr. Horney and Dr. Wolf met with the Deputy Secretaries of the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) and California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) to continue building connections with the RMAC for the future and to obtain feedback and input on developing the RMAC's annual priorities
- Ongoing planning for the RMAC educational series coming up in January/February

### **3. Approval of July 2022 meeting minutes – Dr. Wolf, Board Staff**

The draft meeting minutes were sent out to the RMAC members for their review in the previous week. There were no corrections required.

There was discussion around Agenda Item #4: Grazing Lands Coalition Initiative Funding Announcement and Potential Partnership – Bre Owens, *Western Lands Alliance*. This discussion was initiated by Vice Chair Ross, who voiced concerns that Chair Dr. Horney and staff Dr. Wolf had met with the Board of Forestry & Fire Protection ('Board') Chair Keith Gilles and that approval was potentially given at that time for writing an RMAC support letter before the RMAC meeting on Sept 16<sup>th</sup>.

Dr. Wolf clarified that the meeting with Chair Gilles was merely to discuss the kinds of actions that the RMAC could take without official Board discussion and approval beforehand. Chair Gilles indicated his support for the RMAC to partner with reputable range organizations on efforts to support the RMAC agenda, including priorities and goals stated in the Strategic Plan, and to support the mandate given in PRC Section 741 in regards to elevating rangeland resources issues to the Board. There was no specific discussion at that meeting in regards to RMAC writing a letter of support for the Western Lands Alliance in their pursuit of a grant from the GLCI; the decision to write a letter of support was discussed and made by majority vote at the September 16<sup>th</sup> meeting, and not prior to that.

Dr. Wolf noted that the letter of support that was drafted after the September 16<sup>th</sup> meeting and is available online under the September meeting minutes on the RMAC website:

[https://bof.fire.ca.gov/media/pvnov2da/rmac-glci-letter-of-support-2022-10-06\\_ada.pdf](https://bof.fire.ca.gov/media/pvnov2da/rmac-glci-letter-of-support-2022-10-06_ada.pdf)

Member Larson motioned to approve the September 2022 meeting minutes; the motion was seconded by Member Soares. The meeting minutes will be posted on the RMAC website in the "RMAC Links" box under the link for "Agendas and Meeting Minutes".

**Roll Call Vote:**

Soares	Aye
Bush	Aye
Dr. Starrs	Aye
Kramer	Aye
Cremers	Aye
Dr. Larson	Aye
Soares	Aye
Ross	Abstain
Roney	Abstain
Dr. Horney	Aye

The motion passes by majority vote with two abstentions.

**4. Wildfire Prevention Grants Workshop – Maurica Fitzgibbons, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo’s Swanton Pacific Ranch**

Maurica Fitzgibbons joined the RMAC to talk about the Wildfire Prevention Grants workshop. Ms. Fitzgibbons coordinates trainings on topics related to fire and fuels reduction utilizing funding from a CAL FIRE grant. Ms. Fitzgibbons has been working with Dr. Larson and Dr. Wolf in developing a webinar to assist interested parties in navigating the Request for Proposals (RFP) for Wildfire Prevention Grants. These grants have always included targeted grazing (or “prescribed herbivory”; the terms are used interchangeably here) in its eligible activities for grant funding, but this year the CA legislature explicitly called out prescribed herbivory for fuel reduction purposes. This is still in the planning stages, and we are working with the Wildfire Prevention Grants Program representative Diane Carpenter. The program is working through development of the grant guidelines and usually has a webinar for any interested parties to guide them through the application process, but this particular webinar is supplementary to that activity and is intended to focus on grazing practitioners interested in applying for grant funding for projects including targeted grazing for the intent of fuel reduction and wildfire mitigation.

December or early January is the targeted grant release date, and this webinar is tentatively being planned for the week of January 18<sup>th</sup>. Speakers would include the Wildlife Prevention Program Grant Analyst Diane Carpenter, UCCE advisor Stephanie Larson, and a CAL FIRE forester(s) (TBD).

Ms. Fitzgibbons background is in forestry and fire ecology, and she coordinates a workforce development grant via CAL FIRE, which has the intention of increasing the workforce around wildfire. Their job is to put on at least two webinars and 1 field workshop each month until 2025. The Director of the Program is Dr. Grey Hayes, the research and education coordinator for the Swanton Pacific Ranch in the Santa Cruz mountains.

**Question:** Member Soares asked: for the webinar, who is the target audience?

**Answer:** Targeted audience is practitioners, land managers, and anyone interested in prescribed herbivory for fuels reduction, which includes fire responders, scientists, educators, community members, CAL FIRE, and more. The Wildfire Prevention Grants webinar audience would be those interested in applying for that grant, including grazing practitioners. Applicants could include agency personnel, non-profits, grazing practitioners, and land managers, etc.

Member Dr. Larson added that she will be working with Diane Carpenter and other fire professionals to help the grants program and participants better understand what is needed for the grazing piece of a project that would include that. Dr. Larson is working with CAL FIRE personnel

to help them better understand the components of a grazing plan and what needs to go in it as they develop the grant guidelines; they have also discussed whether or not a Certified Range Manager (CRM) needs to be the one to write a grazing plan, if this is included as a requirement for projects including prescribed herbivory. The CAL FIRE battalion chief from Sonoma County, Marshall Turbeville, is a likely speaker for this webinar as she has his tentative agreement.

The webinar is still in development, so information will follow via email and will be posted on the RMAC webpage as soon as more of the specifics are hammered out.

Dr. Larson clarified that the \$80 million added to fuels management in the state's budget this year is not *all* for prescribed herbivory, but it is included as an eligible activity for the Wildfire Prevention Grants.

Ms. Fitzgibbons provided the following contact details and program information:

<https://www.fire.ca.gov/grants/wildfire-prevention/>  
[mafitzgi@calpoly.edu](mailto:mafitzgi@calpoly.edu); (805) 215-2529

## 5. Educational Workshop Series Planning Update – Members Cole Bush and Joel Kramer, Educational Outreach Action Team

Ms. Fitzgibbons is also heavily involved in the development and planning of the RMAC Educational Workshop Series coming up in early 2023.

The educational series seeks to provide information to a wide audience including anyone interested in finding out more about the use of prescribed herbivory for vegetation and fuels management in California, with a focus on state lands (i.e., state responsibility areas) although this will not be the exclusion of other lands, as the concepts are going to be generally applicable well beyond state lands in terms of ecological ramifications and outcomes. There will be four field workshops: East Bay (north), Ojai Valley (central-south), San Diego (south), and Paso Robles (central coast); and three learning workshops/webinars. We are shooting for late January to early March for these events. The events will be free to attend, and the webinars will be open to everyone. At least one of the webinars will occur in Stockton at the Robert Cabral Ag Center (2101 E Earhart Ave #100 Stockton) on February 24<sup>th</sup> in partnership with the California Rangeland Conservation Coalition (CRCC). The CRCC Summit (<https://www.cafiresci.org/events-webinars-source/category/crcc2023>) will follow the RMAC learning session in the afternoon; a bountiful lunch offered by the MidValley Cowbelles will be provided in between the two related events, and will have a small cost associated with it. ***The RMAC's first 2023 meeting will also occur in Stockton the day before on February 23<sup>rd</sup>.***

Member Bush indicated we have a broad range of field site locations and thus a wide audience across the state. Member Kramer has also been working with local partners for the San Diego field day; there is a lot of support from the US Geological Survey, local association of governments, and the local fish and wildlife preserve (CA Department of Fish & Wildlife) where the grazing project is occurring.

***Action Item:*** *The planning team will continue its efforts and report back to the RMAC at the next meeting. More information will be sent via email and will be posted on the RMAC (<https://bof.fire.ca.gov/board-committees/range-management-advisory-committee/>), CA Fire Science Consortium (<https://www.cafiresci.org/>; <https://www.cafiresci.org/events-webinars-source/category/rmac2023>), and SPR (<https://spranch.calpoly.edu/RMAC>) websites as details are hammered out.*

**6. State Lands Grazing License & Land Management (SLGLLM) sub-Committee Update – SLGLLM members and Dr. Wolf, Board Staff**

The Department of General Services (DGS) had provided a SLGLLM team member to join and advise the sub-committee in the development of the grazing templates, but they retired and we have not received any feedback from DGS on the draft documents since June. We have identified three new folks willing to look at deliverables and provide input and feedback on them. Chair Dr. Horney has also received the templates and is contributing to efforts to finalize the drafts. The original timeline had draft deliverables slated for presentation to the Board in the summer of 2022, but due to the disconnect with DGS over the last several months, that timeline has been pushed out and is still in flux.

**Action Item:** *Vice-Chair Ross volunteered to meet with DGS to review the draft license template to resolve any legal, issues, and between him and Member Bart Cremers, they could likely button up the license template. A new timeline will be developed, and any updates will be provided at the next meeting.*

**7. Technical Paper on Integrating Prescribed Herbivory with Other Fuels Treatment and CAL FIRE Fuel Reduction Guidance: Prescribed Grazing Addendum – Dr. Horney, Chair**

Dr. Wolf and Dr. Horney opened up a conversation with CAL FIRE about a lack of information on prescribed herbivory in their fuel reduction guidance, and suggested that grazing be added to the fuels reduction guide either in a future edition or as an addendum. More information should be provided to the public about individual practices for fuel management and how they are integrated and interact; there is a need to fill this gap for guidance and recommendations for combining different fuel management practices, alone or in combination with grazing management, to manage vegetation. Dr. Horney asked the committee if the RMAC should begin developing some guidelines around this, and if the RMAC should try to get other agencies to share this information in their guidance.

Dr. Wolf reminded the committee that at the last meeting there was RMAC support to develop some kind of guidance around this topic. Dr. Wolf shared that in 2020 there were RMAC efforts to get U.C. Cooperative Extension to write something on prescribed herbivory, but that was unsuccessful at that time. Since then CAL FIRE has put out a fuels reduction guide which does NOT include information on prescribed herbivory as a covered activity. Dr. Wolf reported that we do have potential interest from CAL FIRE, and we are waiting on the final go-ahead from CAL FIRE to develop and include this guidance, including a 1-2 page short version to go along with the similar short format of the current CAL FIRE Fuels Reduction Guidance document, as well as a longer white paper that provides a deeper dive into the state of the science around prescribed herbivory alone or in combination with other activities for fuels management in different ecosystems, and some general technical guidance to support managerial decision-making. Dr. Wolf heard from Member Cole Bush and the California Wool Growers Association that they may be interested in working on his.

Member Rich Ross noted that cattle grazing does reduce fuels, and he feels that cattle are left out of prescribed herbivory conversations. Dr. Wolf mentioned this was brought up in the meeting with CAL FIRE, and cattle would be included in this, along with goats and sheep. Member Bush noted that she and Member Andr e Soares could share information on prescribed grazing with sheep and goats, and case studies on grazing post-fire with cattle. Cattle should absolutely be involved. Mastication and its relationship to prescribed fire, fuel breaks, and post-fire grazing are all topics that she and the CWGA could contribute information on.

Public audience attendee Roger Ingram commented that the word counts in the CAL FIRE Fuels Reduction Guidance range from 60–120 words per treatment type currently; so this will need to be a very short, brief, and to the point explanation for the fuels reduction guidance. The CWGA Targeted Grazing committee would be happy to support this effort or be involved in spearheading it. Member Cremers asked if the RMAC had done something similar to this before to get grazing into the California Vegetation Treatment (CalVTP) Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) as an approved method, and is there a lot of overlap in what was already done?

Chair Horney responded that Member Bush was heavily involved in that effort to produce a white paper on prescribed herbivory to inform discussions about the inclusion of this treatment activity in the CalVTP, and that paper was written about the scientific justification for the use of prescribed grazing for fuels management, and it wasn't written to be a guidance document of any kind. Member Bush stated that she can look into this as well, and see if there is any information in the archived files that was separate from the white paper, and if any efforts were made to develop this kind of guidance. Dr. Wolf stated that the white paper is now 7 years old, so it might be worthwhile to revisit that and see if it needs to be updated. This current effort is different in that it would include technical guidance, along with new information about prescribed grazing research and case studies.

Dr. Wolf also noted that she spoke with Dr. Roxanne Foss who has been researching the effectiveness of grazing treatments before prescribed fire, and there seems to be evidence to support the combination of these treatments to more effectively reduce the weed seedbank. A deeper dive really fleshing out the science behind these treatments would be helpful to support the development of technical guidance about how to apply prescribed grazing either alone or in combination with other fuel reduction treatments. She noted that CAL FIRE also made it clear that the Fuels Reduction Guidance document is not meant to be a management document, and was intended more to provide information to the public about the tools that CAL FIRE regularly employs for fuels management; because CAL FIRE does not generally apply prescribed grazing, they did not include that activity in their guidance.

Member Paul Starrs noted that working landscapes are an ongoing phenomenon; they are not a one-off activity. So including that as the context in the CAL FIRE document might help better explain how these activities must be ongoing, and how they can protect landscapes while generating an economic benefit. Member Dr. Stephanie Larson suggested that we include definitions in this document as well. Member Starrs responded that it is significant that social media is being more and more attentive to working landscapes.

Member Kramer: Noted that the CAL FIRE guidance doesn't talk about ecological impacts (e.g., slope stability, erosion, etc), and maybe we should include that as well, and perhaps CAL FIRE should consider adding that for the other sections as well. Chair Dr. Horney noted that all of the activities have pros and cons, and those should be discussed for using any one or multiple of the tools.

Dr. Wolf stated there would be 2 Deliverables: 1) 2-page document to append to or add to CAL FIRE Fuel Reduction Guidance, and 2) literature review and technical guidance paper. Dr. Horney suggested we develop a team to work on this for Item 1 with some photos, and then perhaps by March something could be put together to deliver to CAL FIRE for their considerations.

Chair Horney asked for volunteers to work on this: CWGA Targeted Grazing committee would work with Member Larson, and Member Kramer would also be happy to help and glean information on the forestry/fire side in Southern California from the local Prescribed Burn Association (PBA). Member Dr. Larson also suggested that grazing be acknowledged as a

**maintenance** tool. Mr. Ingram stated that agency and public education is also important, and this is an important first step to acknowledging that grazing is an equal tool to those that are already listed in the Fuels Reduction Guidance.

**Action Items:** Roger Ingram stated that the Feb 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting would be a good time to present a draft of this. Member Bush stated that the Targeted Grazing Committee would move forward on producing the 1–2 pager for February. Member Starrs stated they are also willing to chip in. Dr. Wolf will follow up with CAL FIRE and get confirmation about the pamphlet (1–2 pg). Mr. Ingram stated have encouraged the CWGA to develop more robust information on prescribed herbivory and technical guidance, and that deeper dive paper will have to come later on.

Member Starrs stated that the RMAC departs from forestry concerns in that ranchers understand things are going to change inter-and intra-annually on a very short cycle (weeks, months, etc). Livestock are a fuels and fire reduction tool, and knowing what is happening on the ground via monitoring is really helpful because livestock management does this on the regular, as a matter of course. The Jan/Feb workshops are crucial for this.

## 8. RMAC Annual Priorities – Dr. Horney, *Chair*

We sent out requests for input on the annual priorities to the advised agencies (CNRA, CDFG, the Board of Forestry & Fire Protection, and the California Environmental Protection Agency), and are awaiting feedback from them. Chair Horney reviewed the draft annual priorities, objectives, and action items. The RMAC has been significantly ambitious over the last couple of years, and is getting a lot of support and kudos for that, but we also need to be mindful of the workload. In an aspirational sense, Dr. Horney likes the current set of priorities; logistically, they need to be reasonable in terms of the workload for the committee. A lot of the work of the committee has been offloaded to Dr. Wolf, but a lot of the tasks need to be taken up by committee members, with support from Dr. Wolf. He would like to see some individuals on the committee to step up and take some of the objectives on, and we should consider reducing the objectives to what can be done in 2023. If we wind up with objectives with no committee names assigned to them, perhaps then we should hold off on those for 2023. Member Cremers agreed, and had similar concerns, and thinks Dr. Horney is on the right track. Member Soares stated that she likes being able to accomplish more, but feels that she personally cannot contribute more at this time, so she is sensitive to the issues discussed here. Extending timelines or dropping off some objectives could be reasonable solutions.

The SLGLLM committee was tasked with developing some license and land management templates that could be used by any state agency and would be accepted by the Department of General Services (DGS). This task still has some work to go, but good progress has been made so far. The goal is to end with the form templates that meet the needs of state agencies. If to our knowledge the current members of the committee are willing to continue working on this, it seems reasonable to extend the timelines, without delaying too long unnecessarily. Member Bush stated that so much work has been put into this, and a lot of feedback has been given, and it would be a fantastic deliverable to complete. If we can identify the steps for completion and who will take the lead, we should move forward to keep this one. Dr. Wolf asked if June 2023 would be a reasonable goal. Member Cremers noted that we have made more progress on this effort than we have in years in the past, and he is committed to continuing to work on this with his limited time. Dr. Wolf stated that the guidance booklet and license teams were going to have to delay until early spring for resuming work on this anyway. Member Starrs noted that Section 2 flows over nicely into the next objective relating to educational opportunities for CRMs. He also noted he will be gone in March, April, and May and will have to hold off on committing to some of the objectives until he has a clearer idea of the dates for each objective/goal.

Regarding the objective for educational opportunities, Dr. Horney felt he could be involved in coordinating the goal of working with the CRM panel and the California Licensed Foresters Association (CLFA) to get a subcommittee established. Member Starrs would be willing to give Dr. Horney some ideas, and be involved in this subcommittee, but also noted he is a parent of someone who might take the CRM exam, and in that case he will recuse himself if performance on the exam is involved. Action Item 1 is do-able this year, and the second item is likely to roll over into 2024. If the sub-committee is smaller than 5 people, then the Bagley Keene Act may not be a problem, as long as communications were kept tight among the sub-committee members.

**Action Item:** *Dr. Horney and Member Starrs can start putting together an Action Team/subcommittee.*

Regarding the objective to increase CRMs and their utilization in the state, Member Kramer noted the value of this objective, particularly in his role with the RCDs. Dr. Horney referenced the debate about what exactly a CRM could or should do. Currently there is a lot of investment from Cal-Pac SRM in the CRM program; that organization organizes and maintains the committee of individuals who develop the test, grade it, and provide feedback on the program, so this is their responsibility primarily, although RMAC may participate in that, or support those efforts. He is invested in this, is on the licensing committee for the CRM program, and is a CRM himself. Should RMAC continue to maintain investments in this, given Cal-Pac SRMs role in this already? He also noted that some seed money has been granted to Dr. Susan Marshall for CRM workforce development, and he is working with her to continue promoting and developing that effort.

- Member Ross asked what the connection was between being a Burn Boss and a CRM. Dr. Horney was not sure how that came into this, as there is no tangible connection. In the San Luis Obispo area, one of the last Range Improvement Associations exists, and many members are ranchers, and it primarily exists to do prescribed burning for brush control on the central coast, so that is the main connection there.
- Dr. Horney also noted that the Board of Forestry & Fire Protection seems to think that the RMAC is the grazing expert, but has nothing to do with fire, and that is problematic, since prescribed burning is a common tool used by ranchers.
- Member Roney mentioned involving the US Forest Service (USFS) in this effort as well, and Member Ross noted that they have a difficult time finding Range Cons. Dr. Horney mentioned that we should invite the members of the Cal-Pac SRM and affiliates to discuss if RMAC should be involved in this effort.
- Member Starrs asked how many CRMS of the ~86 left in the state are active or available for consulting work; we believe it is well less than 50%. Member Kramer noted that in the CA RCD in San Diego, they noted there are more CRMs than there is demand for it, but also that there doesn't seem to be a real requirement for grazing management plans written by CRMs anyway. Perhaps identifying where there is a requirement would be helpful. Dr. Horney suggested the committee explore this objective more going forward.
- Member Cremers stated he would be happy to lend a hand on this as well. When he was being certified, the process was confusing and convoluted, so he would be happy to try to develop some more concise, clear guidance.

**Action Item:** *Member Cremers will assist in this objective.*

Regarding the next two objectives for establishing guidance and education/outreach for post-wildfire grazing and fuel reduction methods, Dr. Wolf suggested these two could be combined; Member Starrs agreed. Dr. Wolf also asked if the post-burn grazing paper referenced here could be incorporated into the deliverable discussed earlier in the meeting that would be produced by the



CWGA Targeted Grazing Committee and other RMAC members (Member Bush, Soares, Starrs, Larson, and Kramer). Member Starrs agreed, as did Member Dr. Larson. Dr. Wolf will work on developing that with Chair Dr. Horney.

Regarding the next two objectives for soliciting research priorities and increasing collaborations with related agencies, Dr. Wolf noted they were strongly tied and could potentially be combined. Fr. Horney noted that Fire and Resource Assessment Program (FRAP) 5-year cyclical analysis of California Rangelands could provide some information to help guide range targets based on threats. Dr. Horney can reach out to FRAP and see if RMAC might have some input on future drafts of this. It makes sense that RMAC, UCCE, and other established entities would be direct consults on this publication. Member Starrs agreed, and referenced a data gathering entity for the state called the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program; they determine ecosystem and habitat cover types, and perhaps they could be involved as well. This is a Department of Conservation program.

In regards to the objective around groundwater management, Member Ross noted this is essential to production graziers. Dr. Horney asked if there are any RMAC members that would be willing to participate in a subcommittee to address water quality issues, and they would interact with the State and Regional Water Quality Control Boards. The RMAC has played an important role in staying apprised of what they are doing, and should continue to do so. Member Larson is going to be involved with the water agencies, and she could represent RMAC as well in that process, and report back to RMAC about that. Member Taylor Hagata has been working on this locally, and he deals with this a lot, and could help with this. Dr. Horney has also mentioned asking Dr. Ken Tate from U.C. Davis to come to RMAC to talk about this topic as well. Member Hagata would also be happy to contact him. Member Ross has been involved heavily in this for decades, and could also assist.

**Action Item:** *Members Dr. Larson, Hagata, and Ross will report back at the next meeting on any new developments.*

Regarding the Livestock Pass Program, Member Roney volunteered to be involved in this objective. Member Ross would also work with Billie on this.

**Action Item:** *RMAC members should provide feedback on a revised draft provided to the committee before the next meeting by sending input to Dr. Wolf on the draft she sends out. The RMAC will then plan to vote on this at the next meeting assuming there is a quorum. Thereafter, this would go to the Board for its review and approval at their subsequent meeting.*

## **9. Identify Working Group or Advised Agency liaisons – Dr. Wolf, Board staff**

- We talked about this already a bit today as we went through the Annual Priorities and in the Chair's report. There are opportunities through CDFA to work with the Healthy Soils Initiative; Members Kramer and Cole both volunteered for this, and both have received Healthy Soils Program grants. This would not likely kick off until February or later.
- The Strategic Growth Council Land Access Task Force with CNRA is another opportunity to provide input, if they are open to receiving feedback. Dr. Wolf will provide more information on this at a future meeting. In regards to land access and equity for beginning farmers and ranchers, Member Cole stated it is almost impossible; she has many thoughts on this topic and collaborations around this topic would be very helpful.
- There is a Natural Working Lands Task Force as well through the CNRA, and the RMAC may have some useful input for them; Dr. Wolf will provide more information on this at a future meeting.

*Action Items: Dr. Wolf will share any new information with the committee as opportunities arise.*

#### **10. Discussion on Identifying California Rangeland Targets – Dr. Horney, Chair**

Dr. Wolf stated that this agenda item was developed in response to CDFA, CNRA, etc. asking about rangeland targets, and this seems like an important opportunity to bring range issues to light and bring more agency attention to them, potentially get some of these goals into strategic plans or policies!

#### **11. Board Away Meeting Field Day – Dr. Horney, Chair**

The Board meets ten times per year, and in May, July, and September, they have away meetings. The Board asked for RMAC's input on range locations to visit. This is an opportunity to highlight range issues and concerns, successes, and needs. The next away meeting will be May 10<sup>th</sup>, and is usually an all-day event (8:30 AM–4:30 PM), with up to 1 hour max between sites, lunch in the field (provided), with capacity for 30–40 people, including Board members, CAL FIRE personnel, etc. July 26 and September 27 are the other tour days.

Member Ross stated he attended the Bishop Board meeting years ago that focused on rangelands; he noted that the California Cattlemens Association (CCA) could be involved, although May 10 would be early for the Lassen area, but it would be workable for July. Member Kramer stated that Palomar Mountain has active forestry and fire management with grazed meadows, tribal lands, and state lands, and this could be a good site. Dr. Larson and Members Starrs indicated this is an important opportunity, and we should also consider inviting the Board members to the RMAC educational workshops/field days. Member Hagata noted that if this was conducted in Lassen/Plumas, he would volunteer his own ranch and his neighbor's ranches, and he would work with Member Ross on this.

*Action Item: Please send Dr. Wolf site ideas. Members Ross and Hagata will look into a field site visit in Lassen later in the year.*

#### **12. Update on “Quarterly” Presentation to the Board of Forestry & Fire Protection – Dr. Wolf, Board Staff**

Dr. Horney took over the meeting at this stage. Dr. Horney noted that the RMAC would like to have something to tell the Board at every meeting, and for a presentation, we would be aiming for March. At the next Board meeting, Dr. Horney will focus on the following:

- SLGLLM updates
- Upcoming RMAC Educational Program
- Progress on Annual Report and Workplan

#### **13. Annual Report and Workplan Update – Dr. Wolf, Board Staff**

*Action Item: Dr. Wolf will send a draft for feedback to the committee.*

#### **14. Updates from Partner Organizations & Public Forum**

- a. **Legislative Updates** – none
- b. **Updates from Partner Organizations**
  - i. **California Farm Bureau**

Member Hagata reported that there was a meeting of the Farm Bureau last week for the Pacific Southwest Region 5 with the USFS, and they discussed some of the major issues graziers are having on their lands; the big topic was completing the

National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) requirements and finding funding to support that.

**ii. California Cattlemen's Association**

Convention Dec 1; will have standard committees as usual

**iii. University of California Cooperative Extension**

Attend the CCA November 30–Dec 1 meeting in Reno

**iv. California Wool Growers Association**

Member Soares stated that the Ag Overtime issue went to the Appellate Court, and there was a bill passed along with a budget at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour, and language embedded it in killed their legislation and solved a semi-temporary goat herder issue (when they were being told they had to pay goat herders \$14K a month). This issue is only temporarily fixed until January 2024, which implies they have something in mind to address this. The Shepherd overtime issue is currently dead (i.e., lost in the Superior Court of Merced County, and had received preferential calendaring in the Appellate Court, but the legislature decided to adopt language that made the claims irrelevant (i.e., range rules state that for shepherds that live in camps with the herd, they must be paid for 24 hours/day, per statute; if there is fixed housing and they are not moving with the animals, then they can be paid hourly).

**v. California Resource Conservation Districts**

Member Kramer stated that one of their local conservationists from NRCS has been promoted to Area 4 range conservationist; and they have a new district conservationist as well. They also have an RCD conference coming up at the end of the month, and there will be a field day where they will demonstrate habitat restoration at a working cattle ranch. Similarly, the San Mateo RCD is restoring wetland and grassland habitat as well on a working ranch. The Sonoma RCD is directly funding infrastructure for graziers through their Land Smart Grazing Program, and they just received 27 new applications, and 14 of them were from contract graziers. In San Diego they are winding down their 3-year Healthy Soils Demonstration Grant at Rancho Jamul; they are transitioning to longer-term funding now to allow for long-term monitoring and results over a 5–10 year period. In partnership with three other Southern California RCDs, the RCD of Greater San Diego applied for another CDFG Conservation Planning Grant, which is important for ranchers that are unable to access funds for Healthy Soils without having a Grazing Management Plan.

**c. Members of the public – no comments**

The next meeting of the RMAC will be held in Stockton at the Stockton Ag Center (2101 East Earhart Avenue) on 2/23 at 12:30 PM, followed by the RMAC educational workshop series on 2/24. The 2/24 morning workshop will be free, as part of the RMAC educational series, and will focus on RFPs and navigating the application process for grazing agreements, with emphasis on state lands. This will be followed by lunch (if you registered and paid for that) as part of the California Rangeland Conservation Coalition Summit, which will follow that day in the afternoon.

**15. Adjourn**