



Managing Rangelands in Increasingly Uncertain Times

Wednesday, December 4, 2013

Workshop Summary

Workshop description: On December 4, 2013, the Bay Area Ecosystem Climate Change Consortium (BAECCC) convened a half-day workshop, *Managing Rangelands in Increasingly Uncertain Times*, at the Martinelli Center in Livermore for ranchers, public rangeland managers, and rangeland experts. Participants totaled 47 with roughly 20 ranchers and rangeland advisers/experts in attendance. The list of participants is Attachment 1.

Workshop goal: The goal of the workshop was to bring ranchers, public rangeland managers, and rangeland experts together to begin to identify conservation strategies to sustain the numerous ecosystem benefits of rangelands, support the needs of public land managers, and those of the Bay Area ranching economy, which could be at risk in an increasingly uncertain environment.

Workshop background: BAECCC undertook the workshop because rangelands make up approximately 1.9 million acres of the 4.5 million acres in the nine-county Bay Area. Well-managed rangelands provide numerous ecosystem services including wildlife habitat, connectivity, water quality and storage, recreation, and resilience to climate change. However, approximately 1.35 million acres of rangeland are privately owned and many are managed by ranchers who are experiencing increasing uncertainty due in part to climate change along with many other factors. BAECCC is interested in collaborating with a larger community working to preserve the ecosystem services provided by rangelands.

The workshop agenda was shaped by the Rangelands Workshop Committee that provided invaluable direction to meet BAECCC and participant objectives. The committee members are:

Sheila Barry, Natural Resources/Livestock Advisor, University of California Cooperative Extension
Wendell Gilbert, Working Landscapes Program Director, Point Blue Conservation Science
Pelayo Alvarez, Director, California Rangeland Conservation Coalition
Clayton Koopmann, Rancher, Rangeland Ecologist for Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District
Lynn Huntsinger, Rangeland Ecology and Management, University of California Berkeley
Mark Swisher, Watershed Resources Specialist, Contra Costa Water District

The Workshop. The following presentations constituted the first half of the workshop and each talk included time for questions and answers. The workshop presentations are posted on California Climate Commons at <http://climate.calcommons.org/article/workshop-managing-rangelands-uncertain-times>.

Ranching in the San Francisco Bay Area – Lynn Huntsinger, Rangeland Ecology and Management, UC Berkeley

Drought strategies for Bay Area ranchers - Sheila Barry, Bay Area Natural Resources/ Livestock Advisor, University of California Cooperative Extension

Challenges facing public land rangeland managers – Clayton Koopmann, Rancher and Rangeland Ecologist, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

Predicted climate change impacts for rangelands – Pelayo Alvarez, Director, California Rangeland Conservation Coalition

Conservation strategies from the Sacramento Valley - Wendell Gilgert, Working Lands Program Director, Point Blue Conservation Science

The second half of the workshop consisted of break out groups addressing five topics selected by the participants. The topics were:

- Education and outreach on the importance of rangelands and the role of ranchers in providing ecosystem services
- Strategies for cross-jurisdictional coordination
- Synergies or conservation strategies with multiple benefits
- Data and information needs
- Rangeland conversion

Each group was asked to answer the following questions:

1. Describe the issue your group is addressing and why it is important to rangeland management or the ranching economy.
2. What are the most troubling future trends identified for this issue? What are some potential solutions to address the problems suggested by these trends?
3. What would it take to implement the solution(s)? Are there barriers to implementation of the solution(s)? Are there solutions that might provide multiple benefits beyond just the ranching economy?
4. Other comments or ideas not captured under the questions above.

Brief summaries from these groups as recorded by participants are below. A summary of the post-workshop survey responses are in Attachment 2.

Education and Outreach

Facilitator: Sheila Barry, Bay Area Natural Resources/Livestock Advisor, UC Cooperative Extension

Problem:

Lack of understanding of rangelands, ranching and natural resource benefits provided.

People ask: Why are the cattle there?

Managers/interpreters don't understand ranching economy, rangeland management, and benefits provided by private landowners

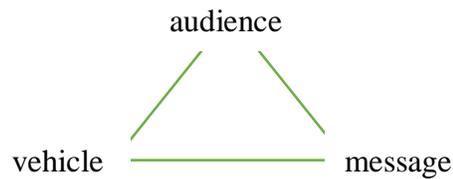
Troubling Trends:

- Some people think ranchers are lucky and privileged to be living in beautiful landscapes but don't see all the hard work required
- Low literacy level – disconnect with where food comes from
- Few opportunities to promote understanding

Solutions:

1. Agencies and ranchers working together
 - Local agriculture
 - Sustainable agriculture
2. Disciplined branding effort – Bay Area Ranching Network (BARN)
 - a. Goals:

- i. change public opinion
 - ii. gain public support
 - iii. create culture
 - iv. create advocates
- b. Peer to Peer – decision makers to decision makers



- c. Healthy rangelands mean healthy people
- Beef by-products
 - Cattle producers provide products, habitat, etc
 - Educate educators
3. Support ranchers in outreach on public and private lands – give them tools, i.e., messages, resources)
 4. Partnerships
 5. Target influencers with one-on-one tours, etc – select top 50 and tailor messages
 6. Connect with targeted/relevant groups
 7. Outreach to kids
 8. Set up a steering committee and start small

Barriers to implementation:

1. Funding, grants
2. Critical mass of ranchers
3. Need spokespeople
4. TIME

Data and Information Needs

Facilitator: Pelayo Alvarez, Director, California Rangeland Conservation Coalition

Problem:

Researchers do not know what ranchers and land managers need to know to deal with increased uncertainty. What do we need to monitor?

Solutions:

1. Scenario planning
 - Cost of impacts/strategies
2. Communication and integration
3. Incentives for monitoring
 - Incorporate into payment programs
4. Information clearinghouse
 - Data
 - Practices
 - Monitoring (standards/integration)

5. Connecting scientists, ranchers, and public land managers
6. Make research available and relevant (time/scale) to ranchers and managers.
7. Better monitoring that includes:
 - Tiered system based on cost and goals.
 - Better communication and integration
 - Adaptive management
 - Document successes and cost of strategies

Rangeland Conversion

Facilitator: Clayton Koopmann, Rancher and Rangeland Ecologist, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

Problem:

Conversion of rangeland to urban development, golf courses, vineyards, orchards, and intensive agriculture. Result is habitat fragmentation, loss of valuable grassland habitat, vernal pools, water storage, etc and loss of available forage for livestock producers which decreases the sustainability of ranching operations and decreased food production.

Troubling Trends:

1. Competing economics, *e.g.*, orchard trees produce more \$ than cows
2. Increased technology puts more land into production
3. Increasing population in the Bay Area
4. Once the land is converted, it never is restored to rangelands
5. Agencies have funding to buy more land, but do not have the staff time or resources to properly manage more lands - "Open Space" needs to be managed – ranchers are land stewards that manage the natural resources, infrastructure, and food production

Solutions:

1. Purchase of rangeland conservation easements – several land trusts are already purchasing easements – protect ranch and habitat from development in perpetuity and keep the rancher on the ranch to steward and manage the property (kill two birds with one stone) – provide a payment to the rancher
2. Identify additional sources of income for ranchers such as hunting, mining, recreation, board horses – ranching has high labor costs and low economic return
3. Secure long-term lease agreements on public lands to provide ranchers with some security
4. Convince public agencies/park districts to shift toward easements as opposed to fee acquisition.

Barriers to Implementation:

1. Economic return from orchards or selling to a developer significantly higher.
2. Securing funds to purchase conservation easements.
3. Disagreements among family members and inheritance issues (taxes?)

Strategies for Cross-Jurisdictional Coordination

Facilitator: Wendell Gilgert, Working Lands Program Director, Point Blue Conservation Science
Reported by Jake Smith, Santa Clara County Open Space Authority

Problem:

1. Beneficial practices should be shared across jurisdictions, *i.e.*, academia, ranchers, public land managers.
2. Need consistent management for multiple resource concerns, *i.e.*, habitat.

3. Need local examples of success.
4. Opportunities for efficiencies.
5. Fences need to be more wildlife friendly.

Solutions:

1. Simplify landscape for management purposes, objectives, and expectations.
2. Rancher synergy, *e.g.* grassbanks.
3. Pasture scout (<http://pasturescout.com/about/>)
4. Develop structure for addressing grazing issues.
5. Increase awareness of and demand for local beef, etc
6. Technology solutions such as digital and social networking opportunities such as farm stackers (<http://www.farmstacker.com/about/>)
7. Work with early adopters/innovators
8. Form a coalition to address issues
9. Regulation - create a regulatory requirement that organizations with overlapping jurisdictions coordinate and collaborate with each other on rangeland management issues.
10. Political solutions - education of decision makers.

Barriers to Implementation:

1. Political territorialization (*e.g.*, turf wars)
2. Rigid organizational policies.
3. Differing mandates.
4. City and county policies are pro-development policies
5. California Department of Conservation's Farmland Monitoring and Mapping Program should be more accurate

Synergies: Conservation Strategies with Multiple Benefits

Facilitator: Mark Swisher, Watershed Resource Specialist, Contra Costa Water District

Problem:

1. Continued loss of opportunity and cannot move quickly enough.
2. Focus on economics.
3. Many of the benefits produced from rangelands are shared among sometimes disparate groups that are not in coordination.

Troubling Trends:

1. increased wildfire frequency
2. food policies
3. divisive marketing strategies of niche meat producers/retailers vilifying more industrial production chains
4. talk but no action with regards to the discussed value of ecosystem services but little apparent market activity or discovery

Solutions:

- There are several stakeholder groups with interest in conserving rangeland resources. Some are relatively active (*e.g.* ranchers, government, academics, conservation activists/enthusiasts, hunters/anglers), while others are more passive and perhaps even unaware of their connection to rangelands (*e.g.* beef and lamb consumers, equestrian enthusiasts, residential water customers, voters, residents adjacent to wildfire prone lands).

- Synergies can and do occur when stakeholders work towards common values and shared benefits as evidenced by California Rangeland Conservation Coalition, Central Coast Rangeland Coalition and other activities that align two or more stakeholder groups in activities intended to benefit rangeland resources in some way
- Central Coast Rangeland Coalition is working on leasing instruments that incentivize conservation on ranches.

ATTACHMENT 1 - Rangelands Workshop Attendees

Last Name	First Name	Email	Title	Organization Name
Alvarez	Pelayo	pelayo@carangeland.org	director	California Rangeland Conservation Coalition
Banke	Paul	wpcattle@hotmail.com	rancher	
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ATTACHMENT 2 - Post-Workshop Survey Results

The six questions from the post-workshop survey and a summary of responses are below:

1. Did this workshop touch on rangeland management issues that are of concern for you? Please explain why or why not. *18 out of 19 said “yes” due to concerns over ranching viability, watershed health, and what actions can ranchers and land managers take to mitigate climate change impacts.*
2. Was this workshop with the Bay Area Ecosystem Climate Change Consortium (BAECCC) useful to you, and do you think future dialogue with BAECCC will be useful to the Bay Area ranching community and public rangelands managers? *18 out of 19 responded “yes” with a few comments about the break out groups not having a direct relation to climate change. Another comment mentioned duplication with CRCC and CCRC programs.*
3. Did this workshop increase your knowledge of potential impacts to rangelands due to a changing climate? *13 out of 19 responses were positive with a few “no” answers and one comment on the level of uncertainty making long-term planning difficult. Another noted that the issues raised at the workshop have existed for a while and will only get worse with climate change.*
4. How could we improve workshops of this nature in the future? *Responses to this question are more difficult to categorize. For example, some thought more presentations would be better while others thought more time for break out groups would be better. One comment voiced several times was the interest in letting the ranchers talk and present more. And that more ranchers should be in attendance. The issue of the lack of empirical evidence for the Point Blue/holistic management grazing strategy was raised by one respondent.*
5. Please rate your level of satisfaction with the following aspects of the workshop (1 = low satisfaction, 5 = high satisfaction). *79% of the workshop participants rated the workshop format as high or nearly high (rating of 4). An even higher percentage, 89%, rated the speakers as a 4 or 5 in satisfaction level.*

	5	4	3	2	1	Total
Workshop Format	26.31% 5	52.64% 10	21.05% 4	0% 0	0% 0	19
Speakers	50% 9	38.89% 7	11.11% 2	0% 0	0% 0	18
Venue	63.15% 12	26.33% 5	5.26% 1	5.26% 1	0% 0	19
Food	50% 8	37.5% 6	6.25% 1	6.25% 1	0% 0	16

6. Other comments? Please feel free to make additional comments or suggestions. *Several positive comments were made and noted the diversity of participants, while another suggested casting the net even more broadly for rancher perspectives. A couple comments were mixed on the value of the break out groups.*