

POLICY NUMBER 12: GUIDANCE ON THE CERTIFIED RANGELAND MANAGER PROGRAM

Introduction

The purpose of this policy statement is to clarify those management activities on rangelands that are most appropriately carried out by a Certified Rangeland Manager (CRM). The Professional Foresters Law, Public Resources Code §750, *et seq.* provides for the issuance of *specialty certificates*, "... in such fields of specialization as the Board may by regulation establish" (PRC §762). The only specialty certificate currently provided by Board regulation is that of the Certified Rangeland Manager. This specialty was created in 1995 through the efforts of the California Section of the Society for Range Management with the support of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. In so doing, the California Section, now the California-Pacific Section (Cal-Pac SRM) sought to promote and strengthen professional standards in all activities devoted to rangeland resources. The Cal-Pac SRM professional certification is designed to distinguish and maintain a professional level of rangeland management expertise and provide continuing education and accreditation services to the profession.

~~The CRM Program provides for professional and ethical standards of performance, and establishes a mechanism for reviewing charges of professional misconduct with associated disciplinary guidelines.~~ The Board of Forestry and Fire Protection, through its Professional Foresters Examining Committee (PFEC), provides administrative oversight and annual review of the Society's program to ~~insure~~ ensure compliance with State-mandated requirements to fully protect the public's interest.

A Certified Rangeland Manager applies scientific principles to the art and science of managing rangelands. Rangelands are lands supporting grass, shrub, and savanna vegetation types pursuant to the Cal-Pac SRM *Program for Certification of Professional Rangeland Managers* (14 CCR §1651(c)). This program of certification is a service provided by Cal-Pac SRM as a means for demonstrating and supporting the special expertise required to practice as a Certified Rangeland Manager. Pursuant to 14 CCR §1651(a), a CRM shall perform professional services only in those subjects in which he or she is competent by training and experience.

The CRM license is required for professional practice of rangeland management on non-federal forested landscapes as a specialty authorized under a modification of the Professional Foresters Licensing Act (AB1903) that requires the Registered Professional Forester license for the practice of forestry. The CRM license recognizes expertise that is desirable, and recommended for all rangeland management activities, but it is not legally required unless the activity occurs on forested landscapes.

Statement I:

The Board recognizes that rangelands may be identified using a variety of vegetation classification systems including but not limited to the California Wildlife Habitat Relationship System (see the [California Department of Fish and Game Wildlife website link to the CWHR System](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/wildlife/wildlife.html)

(<https://wildlife.ca.gov/Data/CWHR><http://www.dfg.ca.gov/wildlife/wildlife.html>) and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection-Fire and Resources Assessment Program link [to CWHR map layers](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/wildlife/wildlife.html)

(<https://map.dfg.ca.gov/metadata/ds1327.html><http://frap.cdf.ca.gov/data/frapgis/maps/select.asp>); A Manual of California Vegetation by Sawyer and Keeler-Wolf; CDFG's Vegetation Classification and Mapping Program (VegCAMP); various California Native Plant Society (CNPS) publications; and Preliminary Descriptions of the Terrestrial Natural Communities of California by R.F. Holland (updated 1996).

The board further recognizes the boundaries between forests and rangelands and the associated professional practices are often overlapping. Thus the CRM license requirements apply to any landscape of mixed forested and non-forested vegetation types with significant interactions of range and forest management.¹

Statement II:

Tasks associated with the practice of rangeland management include but are not limited to the following:

- Drafting rangeland management plans to meet specific natural resource objectives, including:
 - Vegetative fuel management on rangelands;
 - Control or management of invasive species;
 - Reintroduction or increase of desirable species;
 - Improvement of economic viability of rangeland;
 - Mitigation of potential environmental effects.
- Developing and implementing means of improving or maintaining watershed

¹ In the opinion of California Deputy Attorney General Shana Bagley received by Eric Huff, then Executive Officer, Foresters Licensing, California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection, on July 25, 2008, applicable rangelands include:

"Forested landscapes are defined by California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 754 as: ... tree dominated landscapes and their associated vegetation types on which there is growing a significant stand of tree species, or which are naturally capable of growing a significant stand of native trees in perpetuity, and is not otherwise devoted to nonforestry commercial, urban, or farming uses. California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 1561.1 (under the Chaparral Management Chapter) states: "Rangeland" means the 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 that is dominated by vegetation other than trees. Many \woodlands (including Eastside ponderosa pine, pinyon, juniper, chaparral, and oak woodlands) are included in 'rangelands' because their response to range management principles and activities are similar to those of other shrubby ecosystems."

function.

- Conducting rangeland inventories and assessments.
- Making recommendations regarding prescriptive grazing on rangelands.
- Planning and implementation of rangeland monitoring programs.
- Providing recommendations regarding conservation of, and regard for, rangeland as an expression of open space, viewshed, watershed and other public benefits.

Statement III:

The Board recognizes that performance of the following tasks does not constitute the practice of rangeland management, under the Professional Foresters Law, unless the tasks are ~~exclusively~~ principally directed toward the management and treatment of rangelands:

- Mapping, acreage/vegetative cover determination or other site evaluations through photogrammetry, Geographical Information Systems (GIS), and/or surveyed location.
- Mitigating or recommending mitigation of impacts from previous or proposed land use activities by other environmental experts within their field of expertise.
- Determinations of significance pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

It is important to note that, pursuant to PRC §757, landowners are specifically exempted from the necessity of compliance with the Professional Foresters Law, including the provisions of the CRM Program, when directly managing their own lands. It is likewise noteworthy and illustrative of the distinction between the roles of the CRM and the Registered Professional Forester (RPF) that pursuant to 14 CCR §1651(b), a CRM providing range management services related to rangeland resources on forested landscapes must consult with a RPF if there are potential impacts on related forest resources. And conversely, RPFs providing services related to forest resources must either have rangeland experience or consult with a CRM if there are potential impacts on related rangeland resources.

Statement IV:

The Board acknowledges that pursuant to 14 CCR §15149(b) a CEQA document such as an EIR is not a technical document that must be prepared solely by state certified professionals. CEQA documents are intended to disclose for public benefit and agency review the potential adverse effects of a proposed project on the environment and to identify ways to reduce or mitigate such potential adverse effects. The extent to which full and accurate disclosure of potential adverse effects and mitigations necessitates the preparation of technical studies by state certified professionals is at the discretion of the lead agency consistent with Professional Foresters Code and State Law.