

[excerpt from RPA Newsletter, Nov 06, pg 3]

An Exciting Prospect for Cooperative Action on Grazing

Two members of the East Bay Chapter of CNPS (the California Native Plant Society) met with the RPA board of directors on Monday, November 6 to describe their organization's current efforts and longer range plans to bring about improved resource management policies in our East Bay Regional Parks - especially with regard to cattle grazing.

Lech Naumovich, the East Bay Conservation-Analyst for CNPS, and Peter Rauch, long-time CNPS volunteer, shared their organization's thinking about how Park District grazing practices could be improved so as to do a better job of protecting native plants and ecosystems for the education and inspiration of the public.

CNPS is proposing that the Vargas Plateau Regional Park be used in part as a pilot study area for understanding how to more effectively utilize grazing as a tool for managing grasslands in the regional parks. Rauch and Naumovich pointed out the need for more and better scientific studies of cattle grazing policies and procedures, and recommended that special attention be given to investigating the effect of timing of grazing on native plant populations. They also emphasized the need for grazing practices to be tailored to specific sites. Local differences in soil, climate, etc. are major variables and must be carefully considered.

RPA agrees with all of these conclusions and recommendations! We look forward to working closely and cooperatively with CNPS and other environmental organization as well as East Bay Regional Park District to bring improved cattle grazing practices to our regional parks.

PAR 11/12/06 11:17 AM

Comment: Comments by Peter Rauch to clarify CNPS's positions and statements on the matter of "grazing".

PAR 11/12/06 11:17 AM

Comment: Not so. The CNPS efforts are directed specifically to improved *native* habitat / *native* grasslands resource management. Whether or not cattle grazing should be an element or tool in the management program for reaching CNPS's goals is strictly a function of the potential for grazing (by cattle and/or other beasts) to serve the native habitat goals well.

CNPS's especially regards the issue of EBRPD native grasslands goal setting and monitoring progress to be primary concerns of the Society.

PAR 11/12/06 11:17 AM

Comment: Again CNPS is thinking about how Park District *grasslands* management practices can be directed to protect and improve *native* grasslands habitat.

PAR 11/12/06 11:17 AM

Comment: The Vargas Plateau RP is currently undergoing a Land Use Plan (LUP) development, and a concurrent Grazing Use Management Plan (GUMP). It is in this specific context that CNPS is suggesting the timely consideration of our CNPS concerns about improving management for native habitat / native flora values.

... [1]

PAR 11/12/06 11:17 AM

Comment: I would simply delete this text ("utilize grazing as a tool for" because CNPS's goal is to more effectively manage for "more native-like" grasslands values) ... [2]

PAR 11/12/06 11:17 AM

Comment: CNPS believes that "different" and additional, not "better", studies are needed. The issue is to perform studies which address questions needing answers, and that means more and different studies to complement those studies which have been ... [3]

PAR 11/12/06 11:17 AM

Comment: "timing of grazing" among *many other inquiries* of special attention, should be made.

PAR 11/12/06 11:17 AM

Comment: Again, CNPS emphasizes, not "grazing practices" per se, but grasslands management practices for protecting and improving native habitat, need to be tailored to site-specific situations.

PAR 11/12/06 11:17 AM

Comment: CNPS is focussed on bringing improved *grasslands* management practices to the Regional Parks -practices which will protect and improve (recover more of) the Parks' *native* flora.