



University of California Cooperative Extension

Livestock, Range & Watershed

Division of Agriculture & Natural Resources

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Announcements

Range Improvement Association Annual Meeting, March 26, 2001

The SLO RIA annual meeting will be Wednesday, March 26, 2002, at the historic Loomis Family Tar Springs Ranch off Huasna Road in rural Arroyo Grande at 6:00 pm. Chris Dicus from Cal Poly will speak on fire ecology and controlled burns. Skip Dyke will report on his 2000 mile ride along the original Pony Express Trail from St. Joseph, MO to Virginia City, NV. The dinner is \$6.00 and the annual membership is \$2.00. Attendance and/or membership is open to all interested persons. For more information contact Skip Dyke at 489-1832.

PLEASE RSVP

If you have not already done so, Please RSVP the UCCE office at 805-781-5940 by Friday, March 22 so the cooks will know how many to prepare for.

Directions:

To get to Tar Springs Ranch, go east from Arroyo Grande toward Lopez Lake, about 1 ½ miles to Huasna Area sign. Turn right and go about 7 miles toward Huasna to the Tar Springs Ranch where there will be driveways on both sides of the road (you can see a house on the top right). Take the left driveway up the hill to the old west village.

Ranch Water Quality Short Course

Please see the enclosed flyer on page 5 for the upcoming Ranch Water Quality Short Course to be held.

Open Your Window Up To Overcome Impediments To Controlled Burning

Ben Parker, Vegetation Management Program Coordinator, California Department of Forestry & Fire Protection, San Luis Obispo

A successful control burn can achieve multiple benefits for a rancher. Forage production can increase, wildlife habitat be improved, water production increase, and wildfire hazard be reduced. However, there are many real and perceived impediments to burning, too.

- It can be expensive to burn
- Burns can be cancelled or postponed by weather and other events
- Liability issues

- After going to the expense of conducting a burn, the result may not meet expectations

All these impediments can be addressed and overcome to achieve a successful result.

- The expense for an individual can be reduced by including adjacent landowners to reduce the cost per acre; contracting with an agency or to conduct portions of the project; and burning at a time of year when the burn will require fewer resources.
- There is always the possibility that a burn will get postponed because of severe fire weather or poor air quality conditions. Some of the best burn conditions on the Central Coast may coincide with the more severe wildfire weather. Widen your burn window to take advantage of burning when these conditions are less likely to conflict. Treated (e.g. crushed) brush can be burned in the early summer or late fall. Another way to open the window wider is to use tools such as a helitorch that can achieve a hotter burn under less severe conditions.
- Reduce liability by working with programs offered by public agencies such as the Vegetation Management Program. Additionally, remember to educate your neighbor and anyone else who will listen that fire has always been an important influence on the Central Coast environment. When prescribed burning is recognized as a common and usual event there are fewer complaints. Be an advocate.
- Getting the results you are looking for from a prescribed burn can be achieved by treating the fuels to allow burning in the “off-season”, sharing the cost and liability – opening your burn window.

Evaluating Riparian Zone Literature Used To Make Management Decisions

Royce Larsen

Riparian zones are often the focal point of many on our natural resource issues facing many land owners today. These issues include water quality and quantity, endangered species, habitat and esthetic values. There is a wide range of values from individuals regarding specific uses of riparian zones. These values range from commodity production to environmental preservation. A persons view towards values is moderated by ecological objectives, protocols, financial constraints, laws, policies and regulations. The use of values is an appropriate mechanism in making management decisions. However, these same factors have no place in science. Science must be objective evaluation of cause and effect or other relationships. Science is information gathered according to specific protocols, commonly called the scientific method.

The literature written and used by natural resource managers varies widely in its scientific and utilitarian characteristics. When research is focused on values it loses objectivity and violates the scientific method. Natural resource professionals need to be proficient at evaluating science and integrating it with these other factors. Society generally trusts science. If we believe that a decision is based on science, when in fact it is not, a false confidence is created when decisions are made.

Environmental assessments and reports often use publications based on opinions, observations, scientific studies, and experience as references.