

CCRC Spring 2010 Meeting Evaluation Results
Summarized by Grey Hayes, PhD
Elkhorn Slough Coastal Training Program
May 14, 2010

Background

This report presents the participant evaluation data from the CCRC Spring 2010 Membership meeting. The meeting took place on April 15, 2010 at the McGrath Ranch and was attended by more than 80 people. The meeting agenda and advertisement are presented in Appendices 1 and 2, respectively. As planned by the CCRC Steering Committee, the meeting was the first of the ‘boots’ meetings, with an agenda formed and informed by the active lands manager contingent of the CCRC. These ‘boots’ meetings will be alternated with ‘pens’ meetings, which will mostly be informed by those who pursue rangeland conservation and sustainability through office jobs.

Summary

Evaluations of the event were largely positive and comments from the evaluation provide important insights into improving future meeting design. Response rate for the survey was good with greater than 50% (48, total respondents) of attendees responding. While the logistics of the meeting (venue, format, facilitation, lunch) were well received, there were more mixed responses for the presenters and the meeting goals. Presenters mostly met people’s expectations while many of the meeting goals fell below participants’ expectations. Decreasing the amount of content to allow for more discussion is a major recommendation from the evaluation. Future facilitators need to be cognizant of the breadth of perspectives within the CCRC and to acknowledge these perspectives during the program. Participants were very pleased with the diversity of audiences represented in the group and commend the group on the time allowed with which to interact with others. The Fall 2010 Membership Meeting will build on these recommendations and work to address participants’ diverse requests for the meeting focus.

Details

Much of the following data is represented graphically and described in text. In most cases, respondents were asked to indicate satisfaction using 5 categories in a Likert scale: 1 = Not satisfied; 2 = Less than satisfied; 3 = Satisfied; 4 = More than satisfied; 5 = Very satisfied; as well as the typical “n/a” choice. Coastal Training Program and other educational programs generally rate satisfaction levels of 4 or higher as their goal, with the bulk of respondents responding that their satisfaction level was higher than satisfactory.

Respondent Mix

Evaluation survey respondents well reflected the mix of attendees, the majority of which were conservationists, lands managers, and ranchers (Figure 1).

Satisfaction with Presenters

The survey asked how satisfied the participants were with each of the presenters. All presenters met typical goals of average satisfaction levels higher than satisfied (Figure 2). Participants ranked Brock Dolman, John Wick, and Joe Morris significantly higher than other presenters.

There were 14 additional thoughtful comments about the presenters. 5 of these comments suggested that many of the presentations suffered from lack of evidence or scientific reference. 3 comments suggested that there was a good mix of presenters with informative talks. 2 comments pointed out that the agenda and the presentations did not match – mix ups with speakers in one case and mismatched description of one presenters’ item being more of a presentation than a moderated discussion as billed.



Participants gather to hear Joe Morris on his rangeland management practices during the CCRC Spring 2010 Membership Meeting

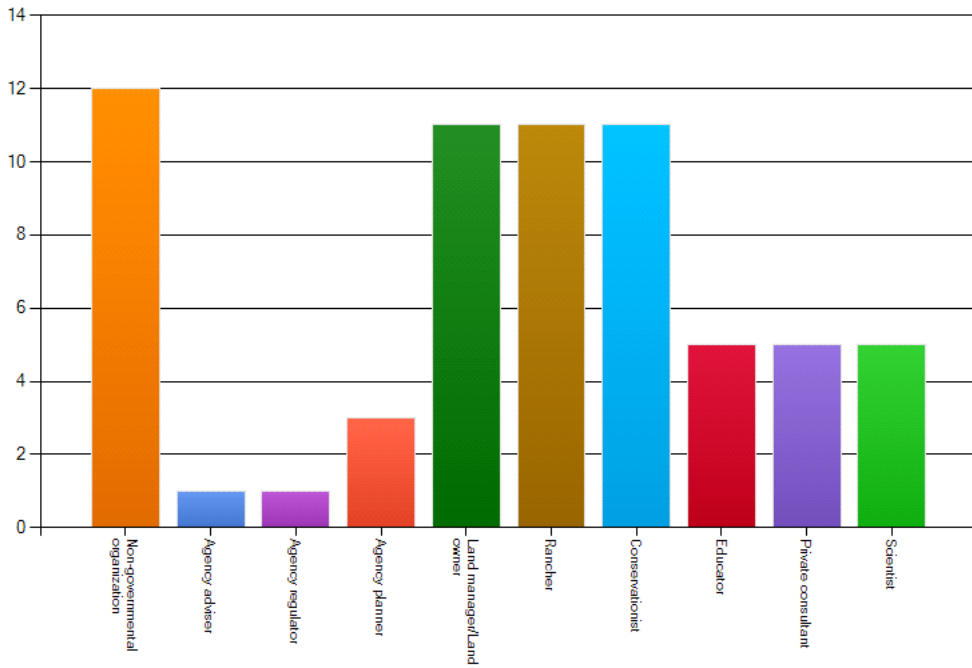


Figure 1: Audiences responding to the survey.

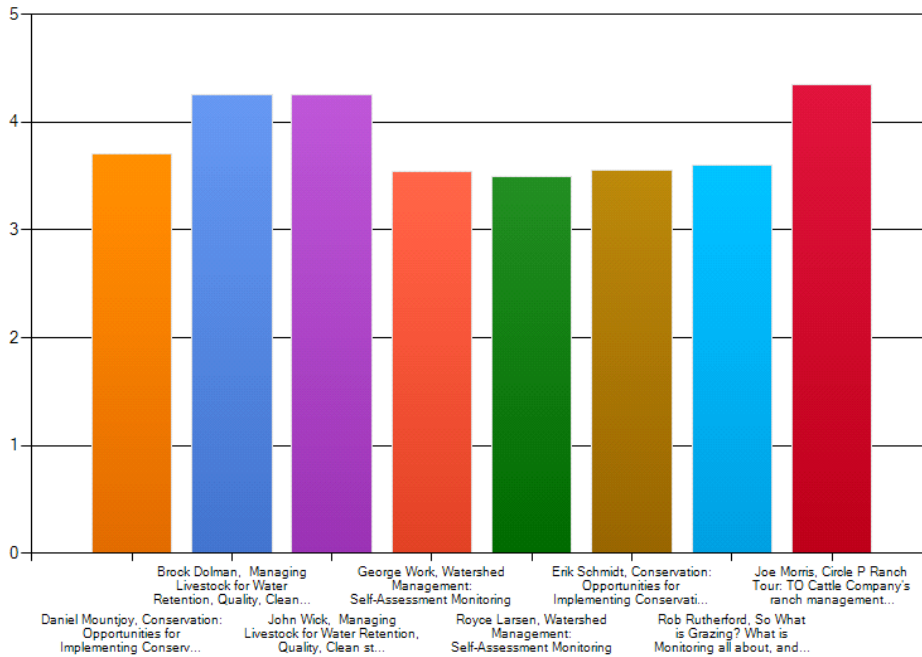


Figure 2: Average participant satisfaction level with each of the presenters. 1 = Not satisfied; 2 = Less than satisfied; 3 = Satisfied; 4 = More than satisfied; 5 = Very satisfied

Meeting Goals

Participants were less satisfied with a number of the meeting goals (Figure 3). Meeting goals included the following, with participants' average rating noted in bold in parentheses:

These goals fell below participants' expectations:

- Better understanding of rotational and continuous grazing systems in light of ecological, economic and social goals. (**2.69**)
- Opportunity to hear late-breaking news and science affecting rangeland health. (**2.78**)
- Create common understanding and definitions for the terms grazing, overgrazing, and animal impact. (**2.76**)

These goals met participants' expectations:

- Better understanding of Holistic Management and Holistic Management-based planning approach. (**3.03**)
- Bridge gaps between rangeland management practitioners ("on the ground" folks) and others interested in sustainable rangeland management (**3.29**)
- Better understanding of rangeland management practices and impacts to the water cycle- storage, runoff, and water quality (**3.21**)

This goal exceeded participants' expectations:

- Opportunity to speak to leading conservation and land management groups, ranchers, biological consultants, regulatory agencies, private land owners, businesspeople, and many others actively pursuing better grassland stewardship. (**3.42**)

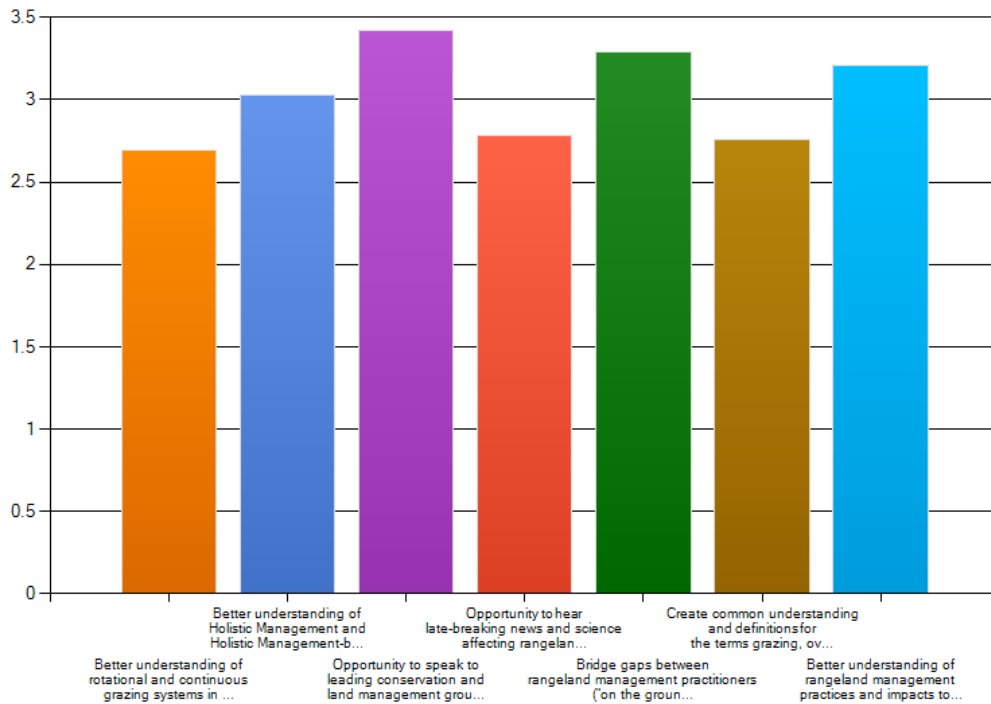


Figure 3: Participant satisfaction with the event achieving the goals. 1 = Not satisfied; 2 = Less than satisfied; 3 = Satisfied; 4 = More than satisfied; 5 = Very satisfied.

Helpful comments on this item included 3 comments suggesting more substance – data or proof of some sort – would have been helpful in meeting the goals. 3 comments also suggested that the meeting failed to adequately address differences between various management approaches used in rangelands.



The CCRC Steering Committee meets regularly to carefully design programs that meet the group's membership interests

Logistics Ratings

For meeting logistics, participants roundly reported the meeting met or exceeded their expectations (Figure 4).

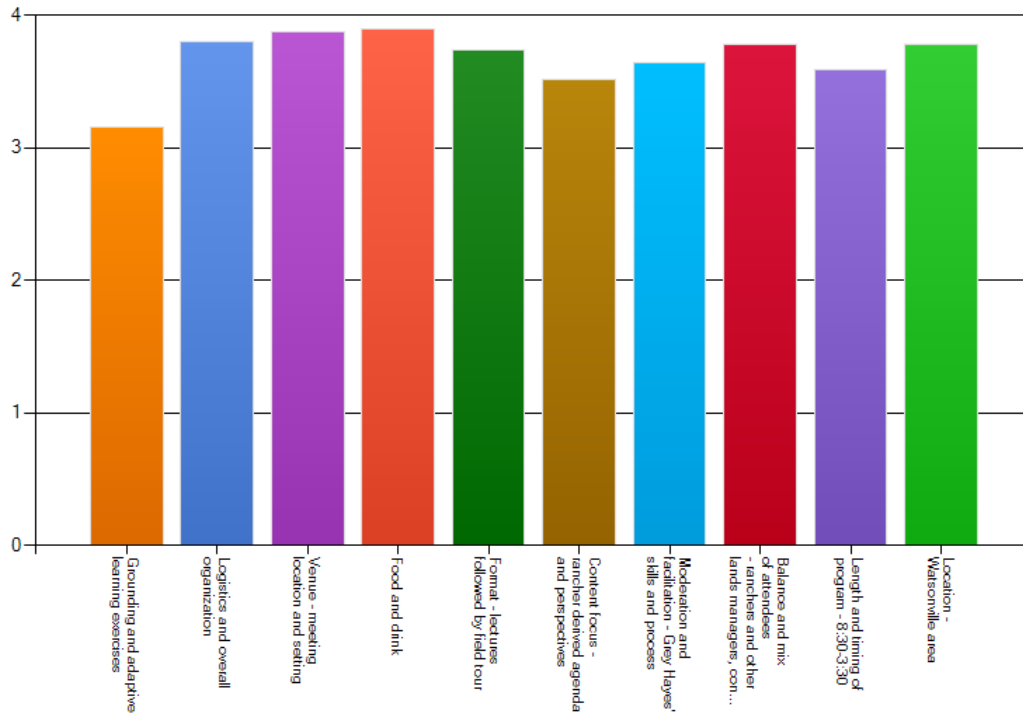


Figure 4: Participant ratings for meeting logistics. 1 = Not satisfied; 2 = Less than satisfied; 3 = Satisfied; 4 = More than satisfied; 5 = Very satisfied.

Again, some helpful comments suggested how to improve the logistics at future events. 3 comments suggested that facilitation could be improved – because the group is large and because of the diverse viewpoints, it was suggested that the facilitator needs to ground the discourse using ways to better highlight the diverse viewpoints held by the group.

Suggestions for Improvement

Participants were given the opportunity to comment in an open-ended format about the things that they would like to see improved at future meetings. The vast majority of respondents – 36 – provided some level of feedback. The largest number of responses (8) suggested that the event needed more time to successfully meet its objectives; this group divided equally into ‘more field time’ and more time in general categories. Almost all of these responses specifically called out for more time to interact during the meeting. The next largest group of respondents (6) called for more fact-based or science based information during the day. Another common theme was the desire for more representation of diversity during the meeting, from inviting and involving more ranchers

to better representation of diverse perspectives on rangeland management techniques. A few comments suggested improvements on the venue – the barn being too cold and it being difficult to hear.

Things to Repeat

Participants were given the opportunity to comment in an open-ended format about the things that they would like to see improved at future meetings. The vast majority of respondents – 38 – provided some level of feedback. Table 1 presents the common themes.

Theme	Number of respondents
Diversity of attendees (ranchers, scientists, conservationists, etc)	14
Time for interaction	9
Collegiality between diverse perspectives	4
Food	4
Valuable information	3
Joe	3

Table 1: Themes that the participants particularly enjoyed about the meeting

Fall Meeting Suggestions

Participants offered a quite varied number of suggestions for the fall meeting, reflecting the breadth of interest and perspectives in the CCRC. Common themes included focusing on a more science-based perspective for rangeland management, perhaps with a focus on conservation-based outcomes. There was some call for more information about HM, including a critique of it from scientific research and engaging science to address some of the social and economic aspects of HM planning and monitoring. There was encouragement to maintain ranchers in the planning and presentation of the event. Monitoring – including remote sensing, specifically – as well as wildlife, permit coordination, lease arrangements, and climate change were also mentioned as important subjects to address.



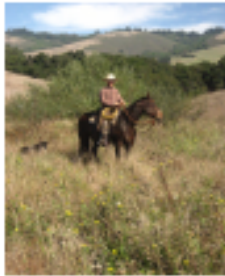
Participants continue to report that CCRC meetings are successful because of the chance to be ‘on the land’ where rangeland management practices are taking place

Conclusions and Recommendations

The author suggests the following recommendations for future meeting design and implementation:

- 1) Keep attracting the diversity and numbers of attendees – create programs of interest to a wide variety of attendees and hold programs near population centers to attract new audiences to the CCRC. Note the large numbers of regional lands managers in the audience and the large level of satisfaction with the meeting location.
- 2) Allow for adequate discussion and interaction time. Time walking around, lunch time, small group discussions, and other methods to allow people to interact with others are highly valued.
- 3) Increase focus on meeting goals for better outcomes. Goals were not adequately formed and communicated to the attendees, and so expectations were not met. Narrowing the number of goals and better designing a program to address those goals could help. Communication of the goals in the agenda and advertising materials will also help attendees to engage with the program.
- 4) Better portray and act upon the diverse perspectives within the CCRC. The strength of the CCRC is in attracting diverse audiences and providing a collegial atmosphere for them to interact. However, the group should consider ways to acknowledge differences at all stages of interaction and provide ways to further explore those differences in a collegial way. Otherwise, the CCRC risks alienating certain contingents of the ranching, scientific, or conservation communities.

Appendix 1: Meeting Agenda



Central Coast Rangeland Coalition
SPRING MEETING - April 15, 8:30 - 3:30
(Circle P Ranch, 300 Thompson Road, Watsonville)

Managing Relationships of Earth's Communities with Soil, Sun and Water

8:30 *Registration and refreshments*

Grounding - Introductions, Expectations - Joe Morris

*Rangelands: Managing Livestock for Water Retention, Quality, Clean streams
and Ponds, Forage and Carbon*

John Wick, Wick Ranch, participant Marin Carbon Project

Brock Dolman, The Water Institute, Occidental Arts & Ecology Center

Watershed Management: Self-Assessment Monitoring

George Work, Work Ranch; Royce Larsen, UCC Extension

10:20 *Break*

*Conservation: Opportunities for Implementing Conservation Practices on
Rangelands within the Upper Pajaro River Watershed*

Stacey Sullivan, Policy Director

Tim Vendlinski, Restoration on Private Lands Program Director

Both with Sustainable Conservation

So What is Grazing? What is Monitoring all about, and Holistic Management?

*How many ways can these tools be used to make what we want our
rangelands to be?*

*Rob Rutherford (Cal Poly) will lead a discussion of terms that we all use: Do we
have the same understanding of what they mean? Does it make a difference?*

12:15 *Lunch: Morris Grassfed hamburgers*

Courtesy Circle P Ranch, TO Cattle Co

CCRC Monitoring, Status Report

Dr. Lawrence Ford, PhD

*Circle P Ranch Tour: TO Cattle Company's ranch management for watershed,
forage and carbon.*

Joe Morris, TO Cattle Company, lessee

3:30 *Wrap up and farewells*

*Directions - From Hwy. 101 take Highway 129 west toward Watsonville. After about ten miles, in the
middle of the Pajaro Valley Hwy. 129 turns and Carbon Rd. takes off on a tangent. Take Carbon Rd. for
about .25 mile to Thompson Road. Turn right (there is a warehouse on the right), and follow Thompson
Rd. for about a mile and a half to #300, a dirt road to the right. Follow the road toward the hills, through
a berry field along the creek to the Ranch headquarters.*

Appendix 2: Meeting advertisement

2010 Central Coast Rangelands Coalition Spring Meeting, Watsonville, California
April 15, 2010

What is 'Overgrazing?'

Are ranch lands critical to California's water issues?

Twice a year, the Central Coast Rangelands Coalition meets to hear about late-breaking news and science affecting rangeland health along California's central coast. This is an excellent and rare opportunity to speak to leading conservation and land management groups, ranchers, biological consultants, regulatory agencies, private land owners, businesspeople, and many others actively pursuing better grassland stewardship.

During this spring meeting, join meeting host Joe Morris in touring the Circle P Ranch.

Participants will:

- tour a working ranch and examine rangeland management practices and discuss the resulting ecological effects of these practices with ranchers, scientists, regulatory agency personnel, and conservation lands managers
- assist in formulating a definition for the commonly used term 'overgrazing'
- hear about an initiative to document the services provided by ranch lands in sequestering carbon and providing clean water

Please see the attached agenda for additional details and directions.

If you are planning on attending, please contact Daniel Olstein (dolstein@tnc.org, (415) 281-0422) or Grey Hayes (grey@elkhornslough.org, (831) 274-8700).

Sincerest Regards.

Daniel

Please consider the environment before printing this email

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