

Central Coast Rangeland Coalition April 18, 2019

Agency Panel Questions

East Bay Regional Park District

Denise Defreese

In 3 minutes, tell us about your agency's grazing program and your role and experience with public lands grazing.

- East Bay Regional Park District has used grazing as a vegetation management tool since 1962. We have over 81,000 acres under cattle or sheep grazing licenses to reduce fuel loads, maintain grassland habitat and support special status species.
- As the vegetation program manager for the last five years I oversee all the grazing leases and give technical advice to the staff who implement the grazing plans on the ground. I work as the bridge to resolve issues between ranchers and staff and I advocate or explain the needs of the program to other departments such as park planning or design. I have worked with ranchers managing vegetation in the parks since 1999.

What are the biggest challenges to maintaining the grazing program that your agency faces?

- Difficulty finding cattle or sheep leaseholders willing to manage some of the smaller parks that have vandalism, heavy dog and predation issues or those left landlocked by housing development all around them.
- Increased urban populations lead to increased recreational use conflicts and subsequent increased effects on livestock.

What is your agency doing to sustain the grazing program and support livestock production?

- Implemented changes to District Ordinance 38 dog rules that require dogs to be on leash when livestock are in sight. Previously they were allowed under "voice control".
- Drafted language for our procedural manual to authorize one-year rent reduction in the event of predation events where losses are > 3% and circumstantially supported by specific documents, and in the cases of physical evidence, reimbursement for the value of the animal at the time of the loss.
- Working on nuisance factor reductions in AUM rates for such issues as heavy vandalism, dog impacts, increased need to visit the sites due to increased recreational conflicts for parks that have these issues.

What processes are you using to change the program and improve its sustainability?

- Listen to issues our leaseholders bring forth

- Gather information from other public land managers and/or Central Coast Rangeland Coalition meetings regarding similar issues to consider as solutions
- Form internal working groups of affected or knowledgeable staff across departments to discuss and collaborate on possible solutions
- Bring information to upper management, District Counsel or the Board depending on the change, for review and approval