

# COORDINATED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING

-WINNING COMPROMISES IN RESOURCE COMPETITION-

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## ABSTRACT

Coordinated Resource Management and Planning is a cooperative planning effort that sets aside agency, political and private land boundaries. Resource problems are solved based on resource boundaries. It relies on reasonable compromises between and among public and private participants. It allows a cost effective and efficient method of obtaining multi-resource outputs over large areas of mixed ownerships and provides the machinery to minimize the encroachment on our natural resource base.

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## INTRODUCTION

There are resource managers today that consider compromise a poor solution to preserving or enhancing our natural resource base. On the other side of the fence, there are those that consider compromise the only way to satisfy diverse public demands and conflicting resource needs. Compromise, like ex-State Senator Peter Behr's view of mitigation, has been considered a consolation prize for the loser. Conversely, resource managers struggling to find reasonable compromises encounter "obstructionist" attitudes from fellow professionals. More specifically, Bill Anderson (who originated the concept I will be discussing) noted that professionals tend to become fragmented in their efforts and suffer from "disciplinary tunnel vision" (Anderson 1977). We all want to take the best possible care of the particular resource under our stewardship. The result is the heinous crime of omission: resource management decisions are delayed; nothing positive happens on the ground; and the degradation and encroachment of the resource base continues.

We are fully aware that there are limits to our natural resources. In the "Global 2000 Report to the President", Gerald O. Barney predicted severe shortages of resources such as oil and timber by the year 2000, should current consumption rates continue (Barney 1980). In its 1979 Biennial Report, the California Energy Commission predicted that California could not meet its energy needs by 1992 because of the shortage of resources like oil and gas. Furthermore, environmental groups continually remind us of our declining rare and endangered species throughout the world. All of these emphasize the fact that competition for space and resources will only get worse.

The picture is bleak, but there are solutions to these problems; for example, wise consumption of renewable resources combined with ecosystem management and less depletion of scarce natural resources. We have government programs now that provide incentives and assistance to landowners - public and private - to be better stewards of our wildland resources. The common trend of these programs is to optimize the multiple resource outputs from limited land resources. Optimization includes ensuring the continued existence and productivity of these wildlands. Some examples in California are the Chaparral Management Program and the

California Forest Improvement Program (both administered by the California Department of Forestry (CDF), and the Private Game Management Bill administered by the Department of Fish and Game (CDFG). But the bottom-line solution hinges on the cooperative efforts between all of us striving for reasonable compromises.

This paper demonstrates a process for managing resources and developing winning compromises in resource competition through Coordinated Resource Management and Planning (CRMP).

### A SPIRIT OF COOPERATION

The main thrust of CRMP is improved land management through cooperation. It is an approach to land and resource management wherein individual, agency, and political boundaries are set aside, and resource problems are solved based on resource boundaries. CRMP embodies the concept that integrating and coordinating resource uses will result in the best use of each acre, with the least conflict among users, owners and public agencies. CRMP was developed in the 1950's in Oregon, (Anderson 1977) and is being applied nationwide.

Coordinated Resource Management and Planning is designed to achieve:

- 1) Compatibility between uses of natural resources such as, mining, grazing, water production, timber production and recreation; and
- 2) Improvement of the resources and their perpetuation in a high quality condition.

In general, a Coordinated Resource Plan is appropriate when:

- 1) Ownerships are intermingled (public and private).
- 2) Conflicts are likely to develop.
- 3) Resource needs extend beyond individual, political, and agency boundaries.
- 4) Common use areas exist.
- 5) Resource problems cannot be as effectively solved using other techniques.

It involves all ranchers, landholders, interested state and federal agencies, interested users and local government. To determine specifically who will be involved at the local level, CRMP relies on a common sense approach.

The major resource concerns of the area determine the boundaries, and the boundaries determine the participants. For example, if several landowners in a small valley in the foothills perceive the need to cooperate in wildlife habitat improvement through prescribed burning, then the CRMP boundaries should include any area likely to be affected by the fire. The surrounding ridge top, river course, or highway also provide very tangible and easily recognized boundaries. Property ownerships should be included in their entirety if at all possible. Agency, political and individual boundaries are set aside because erosion does not stop at a property line.

Once the boundaries are drawn, the participants become readily apparent. As a general rule of thumb, the owners of all private and public lands necessary to solve the local resource problems are included. Participation is strictly voluntary, so some ownerships may be excluded. However, the exclusion of a few ownerships will not severely hinder the process. Besides, when on-the-ground actions start to occur, credibility is established and non-participating landowners become more interested in participating.

In addition to the obvious participation by local ranchers and government agencies, invitations should be extended to interested user groups, local planning commissions, and special interest public. Most importantly, the participants need to be qualified and authorized to speak for the agencies, ownerships or organizations they represent. This is critical to the decision-making process.

CRMP is not a rigid process, on the contrary, flexibility, local control and facility of procedures are the primary components of the process. The key difference between CRMP and other planning efforts is that it is undertaken and led by local groups.

I might point out that Nevada is very involved in Coordinated Resource Plans, and has a CRMP group in nearly every county. These planning groups are the primary flow of information into the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Environmental Impact Statement process. Also, Nevada has one CRMP group that deals solely with the problems of off-road vehicles in the desert areas. So as you can see, there really are no constraints as to the purpose, intent or function of a CRMP.

#### GETTING STARTED

The CRMP process may be initiated and driven by anyone who perceives a need for cooperation to solve local resource management problems. The process is fourfold: 1) gather the participants; 2) collectively determine the major resource problems; 3) develop planning objectives and specific actions to resolve the problems; and 4) implement the plan.

The first step is to contact all the possible participants and facilitate a "town hall" type meeting. At the meeting, verify the boundaries of the planning area. Identify any participants who may have been excluded. They should be invited to future meetings. Before delving into CRMP, it may be essential to spend some time discussing the process, and how it may help the group.

The technique I like to use is to progress around the table and have the participants describe, from their individual viewpoint, the MAJOR RESOURCE PROBLEMS and PLANNING OBJECTIVES for the area. It facilitates the process if these are listed in prominent view of all participants. Crucial to the CRMP process is that everyone has their say: indiscriminate exclusion or inclusion of input produces an equally indiscriminate product (Albright 1982). This is not a final plan - only a process for listing ideas, including those that may be controversial or contradictory. As the process develops, compromises will evolve.

The list of problems and the list of objectives will tend to match as we will see in the forth-coming example. But where CRMP pays off is in the next step: the assigning and listing of ACTIONS to achieve the various objectives.

For example, if a rancher describes a Major Resource Problem as "degraded wildlife habitat, and low populations of deer," then one PLANNING OBJECTIVE may be to "increase the deer herd by 25% over the next three (3) years." The ACTIONS would follow as "prescribed burning 100 acres/year in a mosaic pattern - to be done jointly by CDF/CDFG." Notice that the ACTIONS are measurable, accountable and as specific as possible.

Once each problem has been addressed by specific ACTIONS, the group has the start of a Coordinated Resource Plan. At this point, field trips by interagency/interdisciplinary (ID) teams may be necessary to finalize some objectives and actions. The private landowner/rancher becomes the most significant member of the team: his/her goals and objectives must guide any and all activities on private property.

Compromises are developed on-the-ground to best meet the needs of all participants. As a group, the team inventories the planning area; analyzes the information available; sets forth any assumptions; identifies and finalizes objectives and alternatives; and arrives at recommendations which are acceptable to individual landowners.

The ID Team serves as a network of expertise to provide input to the planning group; but the ID Team does not make independent decisions. Any major deviations from the original plan must receive review and consensus by the entire planning group. This is essential to the CRMP process. The process should flow as shown in Figure 1.

**FLOW CHART for COORDINATED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT and PLANNING**

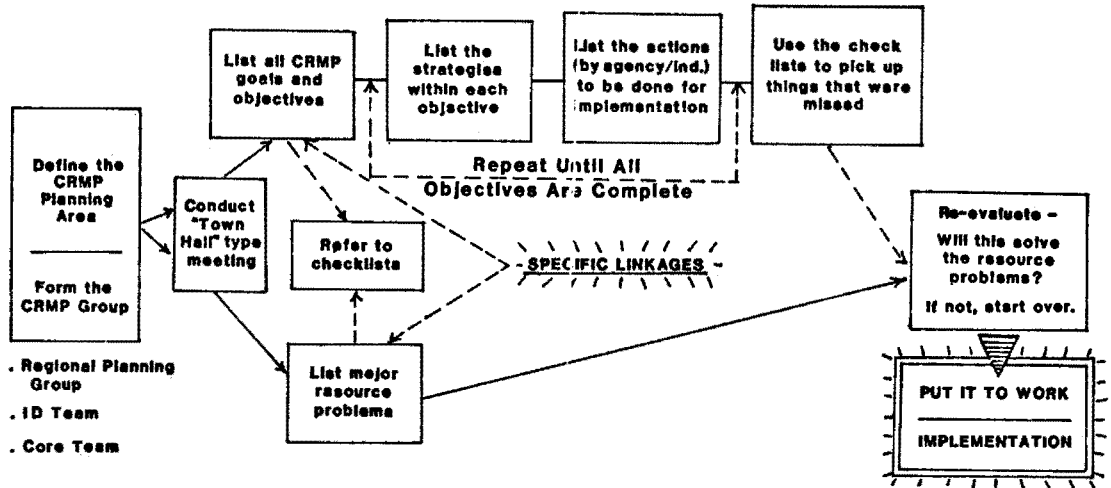


Figure 1. Flow chart for Coordinated Resource Management and Planning.

Several field trips may be necessary to get all the participants to the project site/planning area. In the case of the Englebright Wildlife Project, it required three separate trips to get all 22 participants to the project. I feel it is important to allow for this time in the project planning, because CRMP relies heavily on group interchange and decisions.

The ID Team level is probably the best place to apply tools like the Wildlife Fish Habitat Relationships Program (WFHR), the California Natural Diversity Data Base (CNDDDB), and other programs that assist in assessing, analyzing and managing natural resources. The agency responsible for the particular program should inform the Team as to its application and use.

At this point, the information is pulled together into what the group now can call a Coordinated Resource Plan. Individual land management plans for selected ownerships within the CRMP area may be an added benefit in some cases, but they should be consistent with the Coordinated Resource Plan. The CRP will be a plan for an entire watershed; while individual land management plans or Conservation Plans by Soil Conservation Service may exist for individual ranches within the CRP area.

The final step of the process is for everyone to sign the last page of the plan recording their agreement. Annual review procedures and plan continuity provisions should be noted here also. Where practical, plans should have built-in flexibility to take advantage of changing conditions, special funding opportunities, and to allow adjustment to circumstances beyond local control.

**CONCLUSION**

To more effectively resolve resource management concerns, compromises are mandated. Cooperative planning efforts lead to winning compromises. Resource agencies and private landowners

must band together to optimize the use of each acre of land and habitat. In an era of recessionary budgets, cooperation and coordination are necessary to insure cost effectiveness and reduced duplication of effort among government agencies.

The competition for space will intensify in California and elsewhere, and Coordinated Resource Management and Planning provides the machinery to develop winning compromises.

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