

California Grazing Water Quality Partnership

The California Rangeland Water Quality Management Plan, adopted by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) in 1995, has enabled ranchers, water board staff, educators, and other stakeholders to proactively address grazing related water quality issues for more than 20 years. However, since its adoption, there have been major advancements in on-the-ground practices, science, and education. SWRCB has also adopted new policies such as the 2004 NPS Pollution Implementation and Enforcement Policy.



A new California Grazing Water Quality Partnership is being established to update and renew the cooperative approach embodied in the 1995 plan, address concerns and needs identified during the 2015 SWRCB Grazing Regulatory Action Project (GRAP) discussions, and develop a contemporary, proactive statewide grazing lands water quality protection strategy.

The essential first task for the Partnership is to refresh the California Rangeland Water Quality Plan for 2016 via a number of proposed integrated activities (see Figure 1):

1. Collaborate to develop policies to address Elements 4 (monitoring) and 5 (compliance) of the 2004 SWRCB NPS Pollution Implementation and Enforcement Policy (missing from 1995 Plan);
2. Update the 1995 Plan to include contemporary water quality science, planning, education, management implementation, and policies; and
3. Establish a Research Advisory Committee to address outstanding questions related to grazing lands water quality policy, planning, and protection.

This will lead to a contemporary SWRCB California Rangeland Water Quality Management Plan that charts a collaborative strategy for proactive grazing land water quality protection and regulatory compliance across the state for the next 20 years.

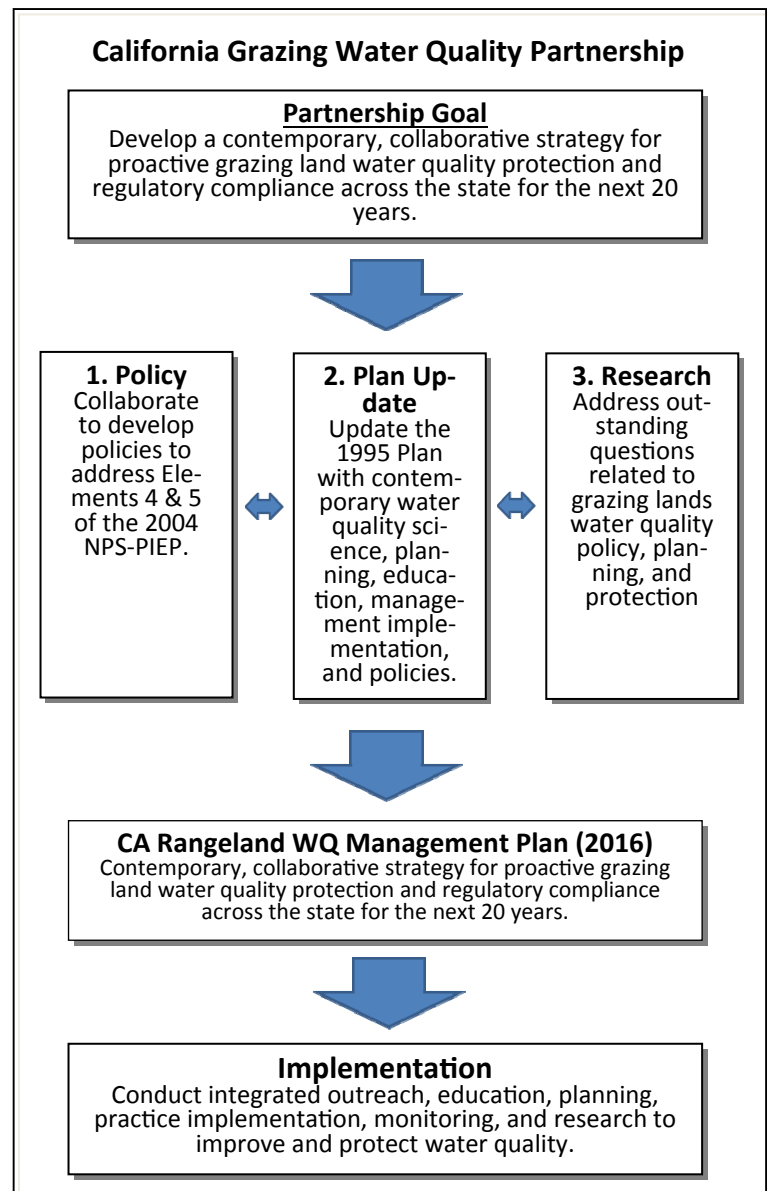


Figure 1



Partnership Goals and Objectives

The primary goal of the California Grazing Water Quality Partnership (Partnership) is to maintain and improve the quality and associated beneficial uses of surface and ground water as it passes through and out of the state's grazing lands. The Partnership is built upon a cooperative approach to protect water quality via education and technical assistance, planning mechanisms, and program incentives to facilitate on-the-ground water quality management and regulatory compliance. Programmatic emphasis will be placed on a collaborative approach to water quality management, using economically and technically feasible means. In order to achieve these goals, the Partnership has set out the following objectives based upon the 1995 California Rangeland Water Quality Management Plan.

- Maintain and enhance the quality of water resources within California, through innovative programs and management practices aimed at conserving valuable public resources while improving the productivity and economic viability of rangelands;
- Facilitate on-the-ground work across public and private land through education, technical assistance and program incentives;
- Focus collaboratively on identified water quality impairments with a demonstrated connection to grazing management practices;

- Assist the state and regional boards in ascertaining the connectivity between listed (and proposed for listing) water bodies and factors associated with grazing management practices (and delisting of water bodies where grazing is determined not to be a factor in impairment);
- Foster innovative stewardship practices that enhance economically viable ranching operations through technical assistance in the areas of resource management, ecosystems enhancement, water quality improvements, financial planning and animal welfare;
- Reduce conflicting regulatory authorities, fees, and permit requirements to encourage implementation of management measures and practices that produce net water quality and/or other environmental gains;
- Focus programs, policies and technical assistance on encouraging local planning, implementation and monitoring at the ranch and/or watershed level;
- Demonstrate and further integrate science-based management strategies in addressing rangeland water quality issues;
- Provide adequate assistance (including educational materials and program funding) to facilitate full participation by landowners in all aspects of rangeland water quality efforts and achievements;
- Allow reasonable timeframe with specific actions for implementation; and
- Balance legal and policy requirements with the

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