Building Lasting Coalitions:  
The California Rangeland Conservation Coalition

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Kim Delfino  
Defenders of Wildlife
What is a Coalition?

A Coalition is a temporary alliance or partnering of groups in order to achieve a common purpose or to engage in joint activity.
Why is Coalition Building Important?

- Pools Resources
- Builds Power
- Focuses Organizations on Shared Goals
- More efficient and effective
- Increases communication
- Revitalizes “tired” members of diverse groups who are going it alone
Consider Any Disadvantages

- Will this distract you from your work?
- A coalition is only as strong as its weakest link
- Are there strong differences in how groups work?
- Are you willing to live with one group/one vote or veto power from one group?
- Loss of individual organization credit
How to Build a Coalition

Beginning Steps:

- Think about the problem you are trying to solve. What is your goal/solution? Is a coalition a good tactic?
- What organizations share your goals and would help you attain your goals?
- Develop a plan to explain benefits of a coalition.
- Involve key players.
How to Structure Your Coalition?

- Develop a shared vision and mission
- Develop feasible goals
- Create a detailed plan
- Create a sound leadership structure/organization (with no one person taking on all responsibility)
- Clearly establish a decision-making processes
- Ensure you have staff to carry out the work
- Set up a meeting structure
A Very Important Lesson

COMMUNICATE

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An Example of Building a Lasting Coalition

California Rangeland Conservation Coalition

A unique partnership of agencies, ranchers and conservation organizations working together to preserve private ranchlands within California’s Central Valley and surrounding foothills.
Ranchers & Environmentalists Come Together

- Simultaneous Communication
- Pre-Grazing Summit August 2005
- Common Terms
  - Keeping ranching lands ranching
  - Keeping common species common
  - Encouraging habitat protection on ranch lands by providing incentives and minimizing the need for regulation
  - Creating a template for future cooperation among groups
California Rangeland Resolution

- Challenges to develop
- Garnering support
- +50 Signatories

The undersigned recognize the critical importance of California’s privately owned rangelands, particularly that constitute a significant portion of the Central Valley and includes adjacent grasslands and oak woodlands. These lands support important ecosystems and are the foundation for the ranching industry that exists here.

WHEREAS, these rangelands include a rich and varied landscape of grasslands, oak woodlands, seasonal pools, riparian areas and wetlands, which support numerous endangered species, many native plants, and plants common in the Central Valley, and are home to the highest diversity and density of various native mammals and birds; and

WHEREAS, these rangelands are characterized by high levels of economic and social crises, particularly in the Central Valley, and are threatened by the loss of grazing and other historical resources; and

WHEREAS, these rangelands are a critical foundation for the economic and social fabric of California’s ranching industry and rural communities, and will continue to provide this important working landscape for California’s cattle, fish and wildlife if private rangelands remain in ranching;

THUS, the undersigned declare that it is in the public interest to work together to protect and enhance the rangeland landscape that surrounds California’s Central Valley and includes adjacent grasslands and oak woodlands by:

- Keeping common lands open to private working landscapes;
- Working to improve rangeland practices and enhancing habitats on rangelands while reducing the number of areas on private lands and restoration processes;
- Supporting the long-term viability of the ranching industry and its culture by providing economic, social, and other incentives; and by reducing/eliminating processes that are harmful to private rangelands;
- Increasing private, public and federal funding to fund projects and other assistance to continue and support the ranching community’s beneficial land stewardship practices that benefit native species and are fully compatible with natural resources practices;
- Encouraging voluntary, collaborative, and land-based conservation that has proven to be very effective in maintaining and sustaining working landscapes,
- Educating the public about the benefits of grazing and working in these landscapes.

The California Rangeland Resolution

[Signature block with list of signatories]

June 20, 2006
California Rangeland Resolution

- Privately owned rangelands

- Scope:
  - Central Valley
  - Adjacent grasslands and oak woodlands
  - Sierra foothills
  - Interior coast ranges

- Supports important ecosystems

- Foundation for the ranching industry
Collaboratively work together to...

- *Keep common species common*
- *Recover imperiled species*
- *Enhance habitat*
- *Reduce regulatory burdens*
- *Facilitate permit coordination*
- *Education*
- *Increase funding and resources to assist in the preservation and enhancement of rangeland*
- *Voluntary*
California Rangeland Conservation Coalition

- Representatives of signatories to the Resolution
- Structure
  - The Steering Committee
  - Legislative Committee
  - Outreach Committee
  - Interagency Permit Coordination Committee
  - Area Prioritization
- Carryout goals of the Resolution
What Have We Accomplished?
Introduction to California Cattlemen’s Association

- Annual Meeting November 2005

- Panel Discussion
  - Common Goals - Moving Beyond Past Conflicts
  - Collaboration on Issues - Next Steps Together
Annual Summits

- January 2006 and 2007
- Fostered Camaraderie
- Developed Action Items
- Outlined Future Activities
- Set Committees
Washington DC

- March 2006 and 2007
- Common Message
- Meet with:
  - Congressional Representatives
  - Natural Resources Conservation Service
  - Office of Management and Budget
  - Council on Environmental Quality
  - Department of Interior
- Disbelief, Surprise, Support & Enthusiasm
Coalition Achievements

- California Department of Food and Agriculture 2007 Farm Bill Perspective
- White House Cooperative Conservation Listening Sessions
- Joint Letters to Congress regarding Farm Bill Priorities
- US Fish and Wildlife Service and California Cattlemen’s Association Cooperative Agreements
Where We Are Going...

- Defenders of Wildlife Position
- Communication Initiative
- Landowner Outreach
- Safe Harbor Agreement
- Area Prioritization
- Pilot Projects (2-4)
  - Conservation Easement
  - Restoration and enhancement component
Conclusion

We agree on **95%** of the issues & don’t let the other **5%** take up **100%** of our time.

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