Beneficial Grazing Lease Strategies for Landowners and Ranchers

Ryan Nielsen

Introduction
- Family history of bay area ranching since 1890's
- Multiple grazing scenarios
  - Public Lands
- 5 conservation easements
  - Watershed
  - Sensitive Species

Overview
- Grazing Leases Arrangements - What is the best and most sustainable?
- Goals of Landowner
- Goals of Rancher
- Finding the right arrangement - added services, local knowledge?

Long Term Goal
- Las Vegas
- Hotel/rent/house
- Rental Car/Lease Car/Purchase Car
- How many Landowners?
- How many Ranchers?
- Not too Long ago short term leases/ no responsibility/ environmental cost

Landowner Goals
Question Landowner of Goals
- Conservation Goals
  - Riparian Management
  - Invasive Species Management
  - Fuel Load reduction
  - Maintaining (hopefully increasing) habitat values of property or easement
- Compensation
  - Acre/AUM

Ranchers Goals
- Sustainable
  - Environmental
  - Profitability
    - How do we as ranchers get there?
    - Commitment to a partnership
- Long Term Leases
  - Management of rangelands and disturbances for duration
  - Rangeland improvements and infrastructure investments
Ranchers Goals

- Identify issues-work with partner to remedy.
- Flexibility and adaptive management
- Key to success is a willing partner and longevity of the relationship

The Present Situation

AKA “the big question”

- Rancher will retain lease for 20+ years
  - IF the lease was short term for example (yearly) a rancher would not have made the investment
  - With Long term leases greater opportunity to find a management partner
  - Short term leases- puts all responsibility & financial stress on landowner to ensure adequate infrastructure for management.

- Short term Leases – my opinion promote negligent grazing practices

The Present Situation

AKA “the big question”

- All Lease contracts have “exit clauses” for landowners with ranchers that have come to an impasse
  - If there are no issues and the rancher has been a good partner and he/she is willing then his lease should continue indefinitely
  - I believe that leases should include successor clauses for the younger generation

RFP’s should have Young Rancher bonus

Recommendation

- RFP solicit to long term partners
  - 10 years at least
- RFP to give preference points to qualified beginning farmers and ranchers
  - Model after States Certified Small Business
- Thanks