Ranch Surveys

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- Environmental values
- Ecosystem services
- Real things
- Look who is talking
- The enterprise and the landscape
Many surveys of California ranchers

- McClaran et al. 1985
- Liffmann et al. 2000
- Forero 2002
- Eagle et al. 2007
- Huntsinger et al. 2010
- Ford et al. 2010
- Cheatum et al. 2011
- Ferranto et al. 2011, 2012
- Lubell & Tate et al. 2011

- Ranchers are very consistent in their beliefs, and always average 58-62 years of age.
Some highlights

- Stated choice: Cheatum et al. 2011
- Network analysis: Lubell and Tate et al. (now!).
“I keep the oaks because I want it to look like a ranch not a farm.”
Rancher environmental & lifestyle values

• In 1969 survey, 91% said “feeling close to the earth” a reason to ranch (Liffmann et al. 2000).

• Increased over 30 years (Huntsinger et al. 2010).

• Nearly a third restore wetlands and meadows; plant native plants (Lubell et al. 2011).

• Majority use off-ranch income to support the ranch because they like being ranchers (all studies up to 3/4): “Being a rancher is all the recreation I need” (Lubell et al. 2011).

• Shared values are a foundation for working together.
"Tiger salamanders are the most lucrative livestock I've ever raised."
Markets and payments for ecosystem services

- Payments: Williamson Act (more than 2/3 of ranchers), cost shares (almost 1/3 of ranchers).
- Markets: conservation and mitigation easements (About 12% of ranchers) (Lubell et al. 2011); niche marketing (grassfed, natural, sustainable)
- 77% interested in payments or markets.
- Prefer to increase productivity, improve habitat (Cheatum et al. 2011).
- What are the other opportunities and where will the money come from?
"I like to produce REAL things."
Ranch goals

• Livestock production is the rancher’s main goal (Lubell et al. 2011)

• Production ranchers are the most active managers (Ferranto et al. 2011)

• Diversification an important goal (1/3 Liffmann 2000) but need reliable livestock production

• Campos et al. 2009: Lifestyle values/ecosystem services + production income = strong motivation to keep ranching = sustainability = working landscapes!
"Why didn't they have a rancher explain it?"
“Who says it” matters

• Ranchers get info from ranchers –96% (Liffmann 2000).

• Trust and value advice/info more from advisory, rather than regulatory, entities, including land trusts and private consultants (Ferranto et al. 2011). Most feel “over-regulated” (Liffmann 2000).

• Ranchers want 10x larger payment from a state agency than a private entity or advisory agency for the same ecosystem service (Cheatum et al. 2011).

• The messenger is as important as the message, need to work with the ranching community.
"They think we can put the cows on a shelf when they don't need them."
The landscape and the enterprise

• Leasing has increased (Huntsinger et al 2010); almost 2/3 of ranchers lease, about 1/5 have public leases (Lubell et al. 2011), some have both.

• Hard to get leases, one rancher had 11 (Sulak & Huntsinger 2007) to provide year round forage.

• Ranches anticipating permanence find it easier to justify long term investments in their land, like some range and habitat improvements (Huntsinger et al. 2010)

• The rancher’s autonomy-making decisions for their own operation-- is key (Huntsinger et al. 2004).

• Need understanding of ranching constraints, support for private land to provide ranching sustainability and stability.
“It’s not open space.”
The California landscape, and ranching, are interdependent.

Survey research lets us tell the story of the “landscape builders” of California.
Some references...

Thank you!

Rangeland Survey

1. Do you eat native grasses? (please check one)
   a. all the time
   b. only when really hungry
   c. prefer filaree

2. Do you rotate or stay?
   a. rotate
   b. stay
   c. wherever grass.

3. How much RDM or leave behind each year?
   a. 1/2
   b. 1/3
   c. depends on the rainfall

4. What would it take...