

Management

These articles consider the challenges of managing vernal pool landscapes from different perspectives. The cattle grazing industry uses a large proportion of the remaining vernal pool landscapes in California. The Nature Conservancy has a record of supporting research to understand the consequences of management decisions on its important natural preserves. The Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge Complex is preserving and reconstructing highly impacted vernal pool landscapes near and in the Sacramento River floodplain.

Darrell Woods, representing a family with long-term grazing interests in California, addresses the growing cooperation between the grazing industry and groups interested in conserving vernal pool landscapes. His statement establishes the idea that conservation easements by The California Rangeland Trust and The Nature Conservancy support vernal pool preservation while enhancing the economic well-being of the grazing industry.

Richard Reiner, Peter Hujik and Jacob Pollock address four assumptions associated with the response of native forbs, annual weeds, native grasses and species richness to prescribed fires. Their work, for The Nature Conservancy, supports the use of fire as a restoration tool in annual grasslands. These grasslands form vernal pool mini-watersheds and impact pool dynamics.

Jayne Marty, working for The Nature Conservancy, combines an analysis of the impacts of grazing and fire on vernal pool landscapes. This article reports on changes in native and exotic plants observed in four different grazed grasslands in the Central Valley. This analysis finds that the control of exotic species invading vernal pools may not be easily achieved through the use of fire without grazing.

Joseph Silveira provides a summary of vernal pool landscape management used by the Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge Complex. These pools are in a different region from the pools on piedmont benches considered in many of the previous articles. The preservation and restoration of these pools is critically important, because they have experienced a great loss from human destruction. The article stresses the importance of involving all personnel in the different management activities. He also documents a high level of university/agency research on Refuge vernal pools.

It is highly appropriate that closing remarks were made by Barbara Vlamis, Director of Butte Environmental Council. These comments provide an insight into environmental activism and how the persistence of local environmental groups can impact region-wide preservation of natural environments. The push by BEC for regional collaboration is well illustrated by the diversity of speakers at this conference. The collaboration of individuals from diverse backgrounds who authored articles in this book, illustrates the value of combined efforts to preserve natural areas in general and to preserve vernal pool landscapes in particular.

