California-Pacific Society for Range Management

California-Pacific Section, Society for Range Management
September 5, 2025

To: Applicants for the Certified Rangeland Manager (CRM) license and others who want to know the licensing requirements for conducting professional rangeland management activities in California

Re: **Certified Rangeland Manager (CRM) license is required when rangeland management activities are performed on non-federal, forested landscapes in California**

The following information is intended to help ensure that your employees and their scopes of work comply with state-mandated requirements. The following excerpts, with italicized subheadings, are primarily drawn from Professional Foresters Examining Committee (PFEC) policies approved by the California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection on July 14, 2021. Also refer to the analysis by the California Deputy Attorney General on August 4, 2008.

The California-Pacific Section, Society for Range Management (CalPac-SRM) is authorized by the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection to administer the Certified Rangeland Manager (CRM) program, which is governed by the *Independent Program for Certification of Professional Rangeland Managers*.

What is a CRM and what are Rangelands?

"A Certified Rangeland Manager applies scientific principles to the art and science of managing rangelands. Rangelands are lands supporting grass, shrub, and savanna vegetation types." [1]

Which Rangelands are "Forested Landscapes" Covered by Policies of the California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection?

"The CRM license is required for professional practice of rangeland management on non-federal forested landscapes"[1] "'Forested landscapes' means those tree dominated landscapes and their associated vegetation types on which there is growing a significant stand of tree species, or which are naturally capable of growing a significant stand of native trees in perpetuity, and is not otherwise devoted to non-forestry commercial, urban, or farming uses."[2] Although not specified in the regulations, a document written during the development of these rules indicated that forested landscapes could have as low as 10% crown cover.[3] The "CRM license requirements apply to any landscape of mixed forested and non-forested vegetation types with significant interactions of range and forest management."[1] "Landowners are specifically exempted [from CRM requirements]… when directly managing their own lands."[1]

What are non-federal lands?

Non-federal lands include all lands not in the direct control or ownership of the federal government (e.g. U.S. Forest Service, Department of Defense, Bureau of Land Management, National Park

[1] Professional Foresters Examining Committee (PFEC) Policy 12 "Guidance on the Certified Rangeland Manager Program" approved by the California Board of Forestry on July 14, 2021
[2] Public Resources Code 754
[3] CRM Specialty Independent Program for Certification 2021

Service, etc.). Non-federal lands make up approximately 55% of California[4] and include all state-owned lands (e.g. California State Lands Commission, California Department of Parks and Recreation), privately held lands, lands owned by non-profits and land trusts, and other publicly held lands (e.g. lands owned by Irrigation Districts, Water Districts, Open Space Districts, Park Districts, etc.).

What Activities Require a CRM License?

"Tasks associated with the practice of rangeland management in California include but are not limited to the following:[1]

- Drafting rangeland management plans to meet specific natural resource objectives, including:
  - Vegetative fuel management on rangelands;
  - Control or management of invasive species;
  - Reintroduction or increase of desirable species;
  - Improvement of economic viability of rangelands;
  - Mitigation of potential environmental effects.
- Developing and implementing means of improving or maintaining watershed function.
- Conducting rangeland inventories and assessments.
- Making recommendations regarding prescriptive grazing on rangelands.
- Planning and implementation of rangeland monitoring programs.
- Providing recommendations regarding conservation of, and regard for, rangeland as an expression of open space, viewshed, watershed and other public benefits."

Must a Licensed CRM Supervise Unlicensed Persons Working on Covered Work Products?

Yes. A non-licensed individual may engage in this work "provided a registrant [CRM] is in charge of the professional practice or work of that person and all professional work or documents are done by or under the supervision of the registrant [CRM]."[5]

How to Obtain the CRM License?

To begin the CRM licensing process, visit the CalPac-SRM's Certified Rangeland Manager webpage for additional details and to download the application. The first step (qualification) is to apply to initiate the CRM process through the Executive Secretary of the CalPac-SRM Certification Panel. Applicants must be qualified by the Panel before they are eligible to take the CRM exam. If any deficiencies are identified, the Executive Secretary and other Panel members will work with the applicant to resolve any deficiencies – this may include recommendations for ARM (Associate Range Manager) status or additional preparation prior to examination (see flow chart below).

"Obtaining a Certified Rangeland Manager (CRM) license is a two-step process in which an applicant is first certified by the California-Pacific Section of the Society for Range Management ("CalPac-SRM"), followed by issuance of a license by the California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection ("Board"). The Board has certified CalPac-SRM's independent program as protecting the public interest in accordance with Public Resources Code §§ 762 and 772 and 14 CCR §§ 1650

[4] Federal Land Ownership: Overview and Data
[5] Public Resources Code 756

and 1651, such that certification by CalPac-SRM qualifies an individual for a state CRM license without further examination but subject to the Board's additional licensing fees. This program serves the unique needs for certification of professional rangeland managers in California."[3]
If you or others in your organization have questions about this program or would like to apply for certification, please contact Dr. James Bartolome, Executive Secretary of the CRM Certification Panel at jwbart@berkeley.edu.

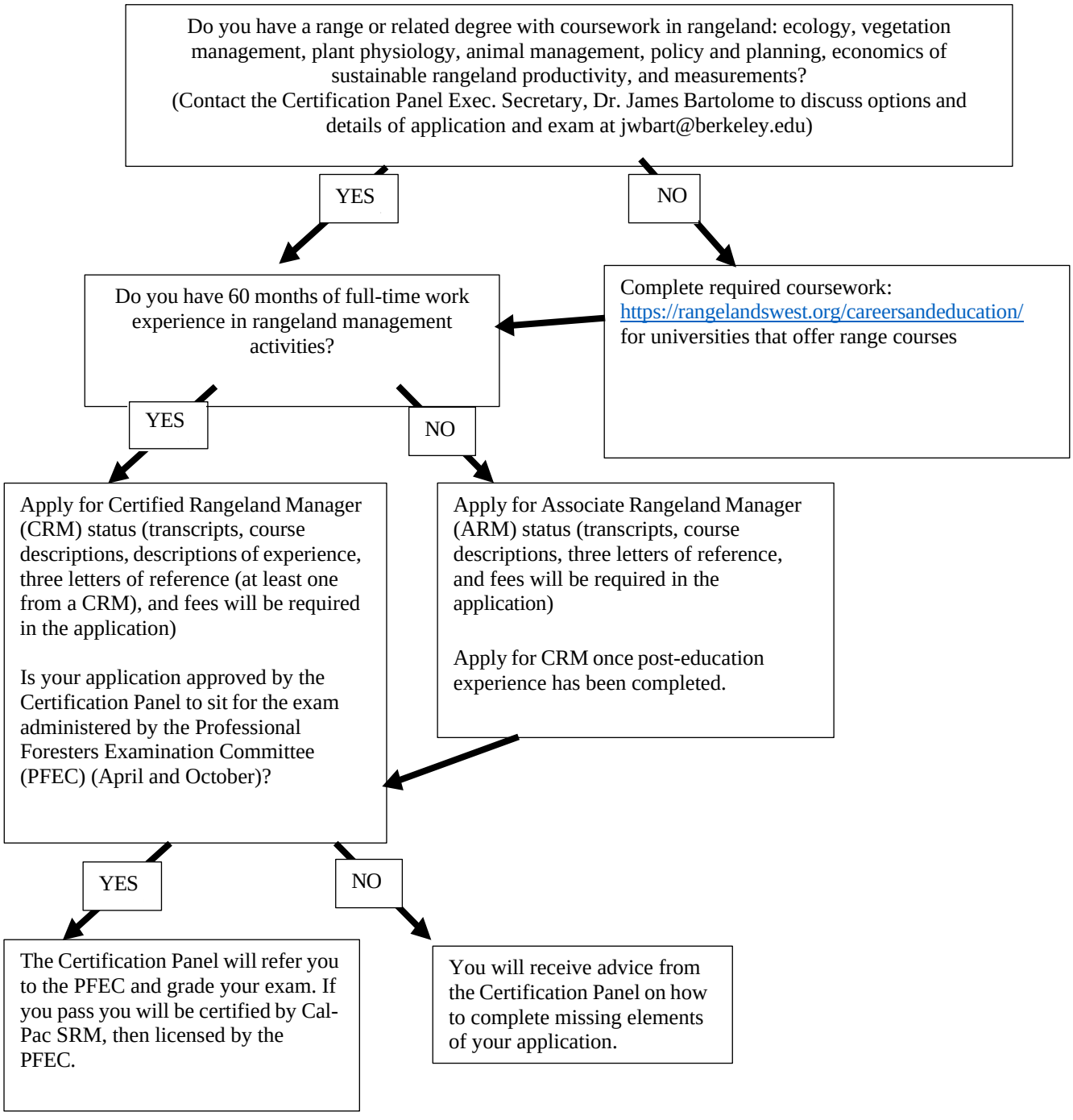
Sincerely,

MNicoletti

Mindy Nicoletti
President, California-Pacific Section Society
for Range Management

California-Pacific Society for Range Management

CRM Certification Process (Simplified)



3800 Cornucopia Wy, Ste A
Modesto, CA 95358

calpacsrm.org
info@calpacsrm.org