Managing Land Use
Part IV
Decisions about the ownership, use, and management of American land always have evolved out of conflict. Treaties, legislation, and court decisions have been our traditional means for resolving land disputes.

Today, while people must deal with land and resource issues more and more, legislation often seems too vague and courts too slow. This is increasingly true in the Western States where Federal lands are a major resource, multiple use is an economic and political necessity, and where many issues require local solutions.

Resource managers, landowners, and public officials, are exploring new ways to work with people to resolve these kinds of resource problems. The process they developed is called Coordinated Resource Management (CRM). CRM advocates feel it applies wherever people want to work together to resolve resource conflicts.

What Is CRM?
Coordinated Resource Management helps owners, resource managers, and resource users to develop and carry out a plan for managing a specific area. CRM plans can stand alone or be part of a larger, more formal local, State, or Federal plan. The CRM process is sometimes initiated to free up a stalled planning process.

Open communication is the key. All principal participants, including land owners, resource managers and users, and specialists, public officials, and business representatives, consider the available resources, address problems and opportunities, and evaluate management strategies. Their decisions, plans, and recommendations are determined by consensus rather than by majority vote. Owners and managers do not lose authority or legal responsibility. Rather, they make decisions in an environment that generates knowledge, cooperation, and support.

Although CRM is a process, not a program, it has been sanctioned by a Federal memorandum of understanding for at least 15 years. The current agreement is between the Soil Conservation Service, (SCS), the Forest Service (FS), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and the Extension Service (ES). The memorandum encourages
Ranchers and representatives from government agencies and conservation groups discuss a Coordinated Resource Management plan. At the outset, all participants visit the planning area together and discuss conditions “on the ground” where perceptions can be compared to reality. (BLM)

participation by additional organizations within the States.

At least 11 States have CRM memorandums of understanding. These involve States and Federal agencies as well as other organizations. Most agreements provide for a State Executive Committee of agency heads, an interagency task group to provide ongoing leadership and support, and a process for assisting locally formed CRM groups as needed.

Early Work on Rangeland

About 1950, rancher “Speed” Agee and Chet Cleary of SCS were successful in establishing the Northeast Elko Conservation District in Nevada as a model or “pilot” district for developing and demonstrating cooperative, coordinated resource planning and management. The principal cooperators with the S.C. District were BLM, FS, SCS, and the Nevada Fish and Game Department.

At about the same time, E. William (Bill) Anderson, SCS Range Conservationist, began pioneering this approach in Oregon. Now retired, he continues to teach, write, and advise on CRM. Likewise, organizations such as the National Association of Conservation Districts and the Society for Range Management encourage private and governmental support for the concept and the process.
Early coordinated management work primarily involved livestock grazing on interdependent and often intermingled public and private rangeland. The CRM team usually were range conservationists from two or more agencies and the ranchers with grazing privileges on public lands in question. The plan they developed was for both the public and private land and included range improvement projects and grazing schedules designed to meet the needs of the range ecosystems and the livestock operation.

Expanded CRM Applications
Of course, interests beyond those mentioned so far may have good reason to participate in coordinated resource management. Foresters, recreationists, fish and wildlife managers, and local officials all make decisions about the same land. In short, every CRM team must include all the interested parties to be effective.

Some Examples
Residents of Glenbrook Bay, Lake Tahoe, Nevada used CRiM to plan present and future uses of the bay including the protection of historic artifacts.

The Draper Canning Company, Sussex Conservation District, SCS, Cooperative Extension Service, the State Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, and the Forestry Section of the State Department of Agriculture are completing work on a CRM plan in Delaware. It will reduce erosion, protect ground water, eliminate runoff of contaminated water from seven feedlots, and provide for disposing of manure to fertilize crops.

CRM was used extensively for enhancing elk habitat with managed cattle grazing on the Bridge Creek Wildlife Management Area in eastern Oregon. In Benton County, Oregon, CRM was used to reduce damage by geese to private lands near wildlife refuges.

CRM was used in Oregon in managing a coastal forest watershed where the issues included anadromous fish, elk, and deer winter range and recreation. Participants included two lumber companies, two State Agencies, the Northwest Steelheaders Council, three Federal agencies, five private landowners, the Lincoln Soil and Water Conservation District, and Lincoln County, Oregon.

California currently reports 81 CRM plans encompassing 6,644,000 acres. Management objectives include fuel hazard reduction, fisheries and wildlife habitat improvement, drainage outflow reduction, agricultural crop production, watershed enhancement, range improvement, timber improvement, and recreation.

One of the largest CRM plans was developed by users and managers of the Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge in Nevada and Oregon. This plan for 576,000 public and private acres was signed by 11 livestock permittees, four Federal land managers, wildlife biologists from two States, university range extension specialists from two States, and representatives of the Nevada Wildlife Federation, Wild Horse
Organized Assistance, and the Sierra Club. Other plans have dealt with areas as small as a 2,400-acre, State-owned wildlife management area in Oregon.

**Common CRM Elements**

CRM is a social process as well as a mechanism for decisionmaking. No single "right way" to practice CRM exists, but there are elements that can be identified.

- Voluntary participation of all affected interests
- Joint onsite problem identification.
- Open communication among all participants
- Availability of technical expertise
- Strong and effective local leadership
- Agreement by team consensus.
- Commitment to cooperative monitoring and annual review

CRM is built on the idea that when people affected by resource management decisions are responsibly involved in making those decisions, there will be more effective resource management and fewer problems to be settled by courts and legislatures.