

Workgroup Meeting 1

Grassland Project Protocol



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July 9, 2014



Agenda

1. Background
2. Introductions
 - a) Reserve staff
 - b) Contractor
 - c) Workgroup Members
3. Process overview and expectations
4. Initial policy questions





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Item 1

BACKGROUND





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Who are we?

- Not-for-profit founded in 2001 (formerly known as the California Climate Action Registry)
- Voluntary offset project registry
 - Develop standardized offset protocols and issue CRTs to projects verified against those standards
 - U.S. and Mexico
- Accredited Offset Project Registry
 - Process projects and issue credits under the CA cap-and-trade program
 - Five Reserve protocols have been adopted for compliance use





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Current U.S. protocols

- Forest*
- Urban Forest
- Livestock Manure Management*
- Ozone Depleting Substances Destruction*
- Coal Mine Methane Capture
- Landfill Gas Capture*
- Organic Waste Digestion
- Organic Waste Composting
- Nitric Acid Production
- Rice Cultivation
- Nitrogen Management

** These protocols also have international versions*



Agriculture & land use protocols at the Reserve



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- 4 current protocols:
 - Forest (FPP)
 - Livestock (LSPP)
 - Rice Cultivation (RCPP)
 - Nitrogen Management (NMPP)
- Prior exploration of a Cropland Management protocol identified grassland and rangeland soil carbon as a high priority for future consideration
- Grassland issue paper published Dec 2012

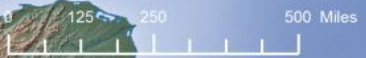
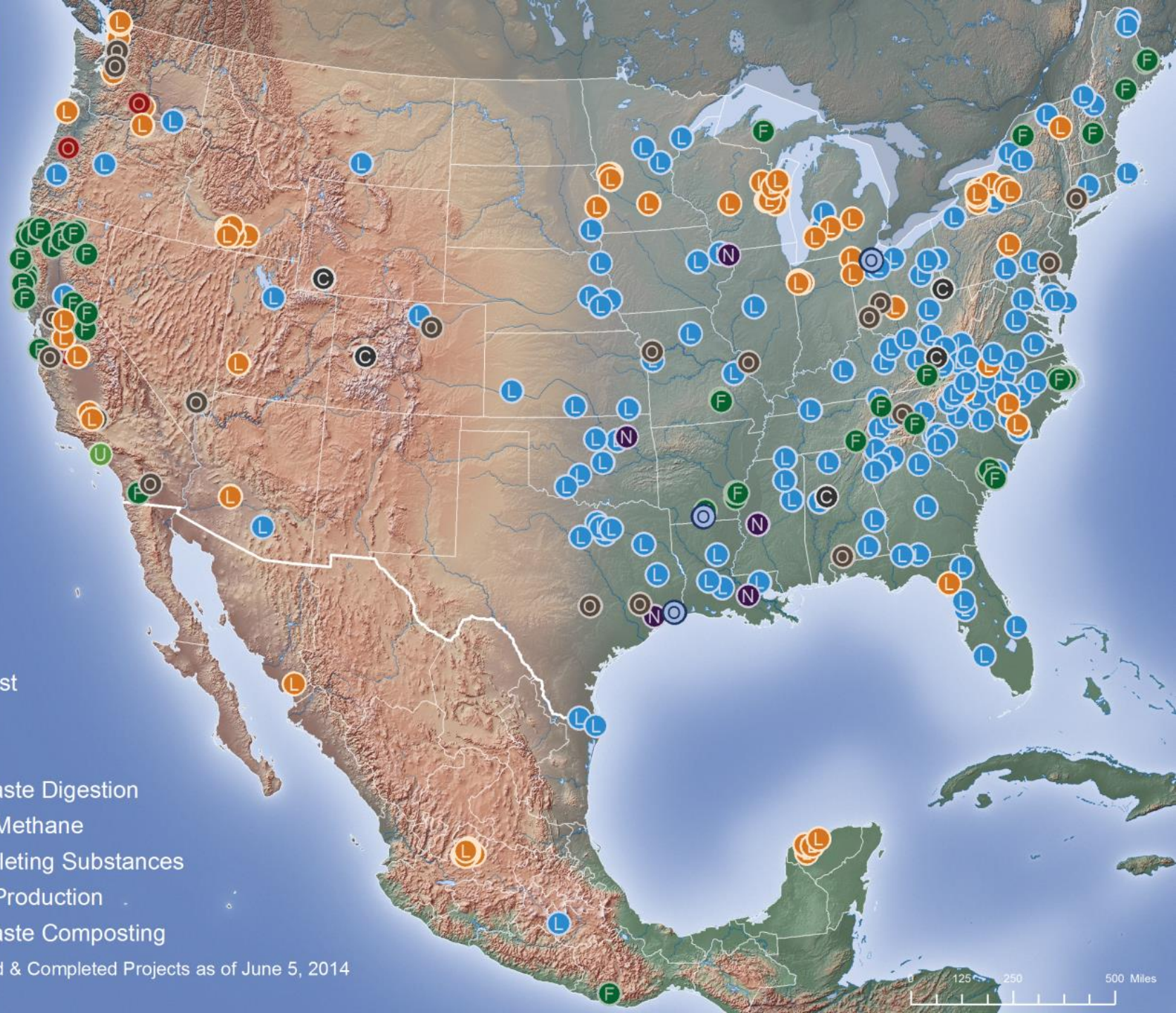




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- Forest
- Urban Forest
- Livestock
- Landfill
- Organic Waste Digestion
- Coal Mine Methane
- Ozone Depleting Substances
- Nitric Acid Production
- Organic Waste Composting

Listed, Registered & Completed Projects as of June 5, 2014





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Reserve by the numbers

Total offset credits registered 52.7 million tCO₂e

Retired 11 million

Transferred to ARB 9.5 million

Total projects 325

Completed verification 237

Account Holders 308

As of 6/20/14





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Item 2

INTRODUCTIONS





Roles and responsibilities

- Reserve staff
 - Process management
 - Protocol drafting
- Contractor
 - Technical assistance
- Workgroup
 - Policy assistance
 - Expert feedback





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Reserve staff

Max DuBuisson

Sr Policy Manager

- Protocol development lead
- Run workgroup process
- Manage contractor
- Focus on eligibility and quantification

Anna Schmitz

Policy Associate

- Major assistance with protocol development
- Focus on legal requirement test, regulatory compliance, and verification

Teresa Lang

Policy Manager

- Minor assistance with protocol development
- Assistance with aggregation, reporting, and other issues that we have encountered with ag protocols

Heather Raven

Policy Coordinator

- Coordinate the development process





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Technical Contractors

- Coordinated by **WSP's** Sustainability and Energy practice, and supported by **Colorado State University** Department of Soil and Crop Sciences and Natural Resource Ecology Laboratory
- Team combines specialized offset protocol and agricultural GHG emissions experts
 - Individuals with over 22 years work on GHG policy, accounting, and mitigation
 - Expertise in offset protocol development, GHG accounting and verification, and carbon markets
 - Worked on multiple Reserve protocols including landfill gas, ODS, and scoping exercises for agricultural offsets
 - Led soil carbon inventories for U.S. EPA, and helped develop Century, DayCent, COMET-Farm simulation models
 - Extensive work with IPCC, VCS, and related GHG measurement efforts
- Primary Team Members
 - **Tim Kidman**, Senior Consultant, WSP Sustainability and Energy
 - **Dr. Keith Paustian**, Professor in the Dept. of Soil and Crop Sciences and Senior Research Scientist at the Natural Resource Ecology Laboratory at CSU
 - **Michael Mondshine**, Vice President, WSP Sustainability and Energy





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Workgroup members

Name (alphabetical)	Organization
Joel Brown	USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service
Adam Chambers	USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service
Richard Conant	Colorado State University
Joe Fargione	The Nature Conservancy
Billy Gascoigne	Ducks Unlimited
Teresa Koper	The Climate Trust
Robert Parkhurst	Environmental Defense Fund
Richard Scharf	Environmental Services, Inc.
Patrick Splichal	SES, Inc.





Attribution

- Workgroup members will be listed on the website by organization only
 - Let us know if you want the listing formatted differently from what was on the last slide
- Workgroup members and their organizations will be listed in the front of the protocol document





Observers

- Workgroup meetings are public, but each meeting is not widely publicized
- Interested stakeholders may register as “observers” at any time, and will be invited to listen to meetings and review materials, but not participate directly in WG activities
- Current observer organizations:

Ag Methane Advisors, LLC	Bolsa Chica Land Trust	Delta Institute	Natural Resources Defense Council
Ontario Ministry of the Environment	SCS Global Services	UC Berkeley	Unaffiliated individuals





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Item 3

PROCESS OVERVIEW AND WORKGROUP EXPECTATIONS



Protocol development timeline



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This schedule is preliminary and subject to change

Milestone/Task	Timeline
Initiation	May 2014
1 st WG meeting	July 9, 2014
Staff work with contractor, protocol drafting	June – Dec 2014
2 nd WG meeting	Aug – Sept 2014
3 rd WG meeting	Oct/Nov 2014
WG comment on draft protocol	Dec 2014 – Jan 2015
4 th WG meeting	January 2015
Public comment on draft protocol	February – March 2015
Final protocol adoption by Reserve Board	June 2015





Workgroup expectations

- Attend and participate in WG calls to the fullest extent possible
 - Ideally no more than once per month
- Attend in-person meeting
 - Once draft protocol is ready for WG review
 - Usually in Los Angeles
- Provide feedback on specific policy and technical questions
 - At WG meetings, one-on-one with staff, or in sub-committees
- Provide comments on draft protocols and protocol sections
- Be constructive, collaborative, and productive





Protocol development overview

- **GOAL:** Create a streamlined, standardized, user-friendly, and scientifically credible offset project protocol (*easy, right?*)
- **APPROACH:** Take the best of existing methodologies and focus on the project activities and emission reductions which are most certain and feasible, standardizing the assumptions and methodologies wherever possible





Relevant Reserve policies

- Relevant policies
 - Additionality assessment
 - Permanence requirements
 - Aggregation
 - Ownership
 - Credit stacking
- Relevant sources
 - FPP V3.3 (mainly Avoided Forest Conversion)
 - NMPP
 - RCPP
 - Program Manual





Relevant existing methodologies

- Avoided Conversion of Grasslands and Shrublands to Cropland (ACR)
- Tool for estimation of change in soil organic carbon stocks due to the implementation of A/R CDM project activities (UNFCCC)
- VM0009 Methodology for Avoided Ecosystem Conversion, v3.0 (VCS)
- Others





Protocol organization

1. Introduction
2. Project Definition
3. Eligibility
4. GHG Assessment Boundary
5. Quantification
6. Monitoring
7. Reporting
8. Verification
9. Glossary
- Appendices

This is standard across Reserve protocols. Keep this format in mind, as it is a useful shorthand to enhance clarity and understanding when discussing protocol issues.





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Section 2: Project Definition

- Focus on avoided conversion of grassland to cropland only
- *What is the typical ownership structure that we can expect to see?*
- *Initial thoughts on how aggregation could be structured?*





Section 3: Eligibility

- Performance Standard Test
 - *Feedback regarding use of an appraisal*
- Legal Requirement Test
 - *What laws/programs/common arrangements currently exist which could legally mandate conservation (or inhibit conversion)?*
- Regulatory Compliance
 - *What regulations affect grassland/rangeland owners? What agencies oversee this?*
- Credit/payment stacking
 - *What programs are available to grassland/rangeland owners? What agencies/organizations oversee this?*



Section 4: GHG Assessment Boundary



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- Focus on avoided emissions of soil carbon
 - No plan to credit for increased sequestration, only avoided emissions
- *Should optional pools (e.g. biomass) be excluded for simplicity?*
 - *Do these pools make enough difference to justify the cost and complexity?*
 - *Is this going to be project/location-dependent?*





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GHG Assessment Boundary

Carbon Pools

Soil organic carbon

Soil inorganic carbon

Aboveground woody biomass

Aboveground non-woody biomass

Belowground biomass

Dead wood

Wood products

Litter

Emission Sources

Conversion activities

Agricultural equipment

Fertilization

Grazing

Leakage





Section 5: Quantification

- Technical contractor
 - Stratification guidance
 - Standardized baseline assumptions
 - Emission factors based on models
- The goal is to avoid the use of project-level modeling
 - Explore development of emission factors, balancing accuracy and feasibility





Section 6: Monitoring

- *What monitoring will be required and what methods are available and appropriate?*
- Remote sensing
 - *Generally seen as a cheaper option, is this true?*
 - *Robust and up-to-date enough for our purposes?*
- Existing records
 - *How are grazing activities documented and would these records be useful?*
 - *Other typical records? CRP/GRP payments, etc.?*



Section 7 & 8: Reporting & Verification



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- Annual site verification
 - *Would projects prefer the possibility of delayed verification (e.g. livestock 24-month option)?*





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Next steps

- Staff and contractor work on technical issues and protocol drafting
- We will contact individuals or the group as we have questions along the way
- 2nd meeting in September



Contact Information



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<http://www.climateactionreserve.org/how/protocols/grassland/>

