

# Exacted Easements for Conservation on Cattle Ranches, seeing conservation values but overlooking the value of ranching

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**Redefining a Ranch as an Ecological Preserve. What Conservation Activities are valued? Who benefits from these activities?**

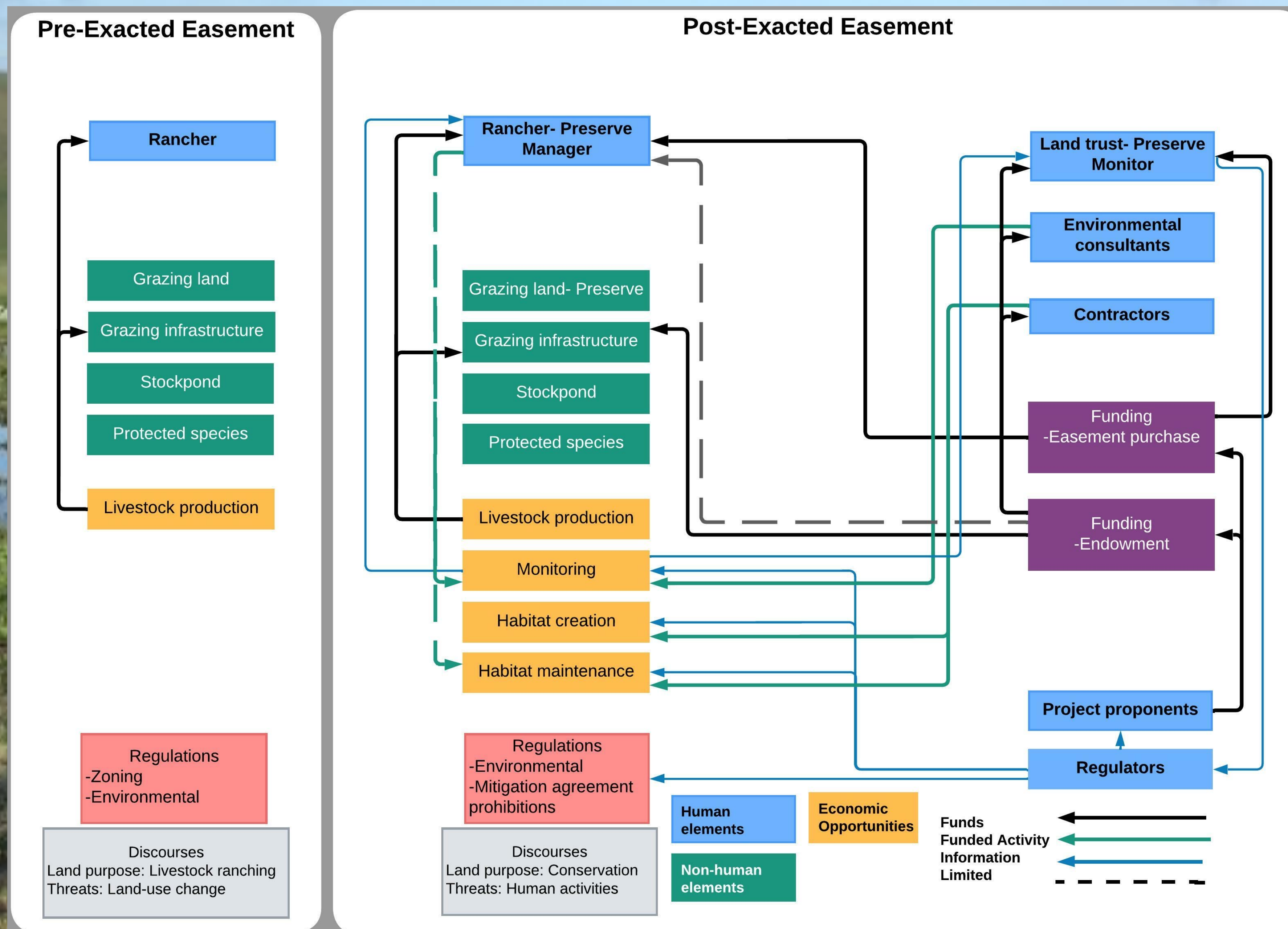
## Methods

Spatial analysis was used to examine the reliance on grazing lands to meet conservation objectives.

A review of case studies with situational mapping shows how partial title acquisitions, through a type of easement, value ranch and conservation activities and change economic opportunities and beneficiaries from grazing lands.

## Grazed Land, regardless of protection status, provides for conservation

In the San Francisco Bay Area of California, a biological hotspot, over 29% of the land, approximately 0.5 million ha, is considered protected, either owned by public agencies, or under easement, where development rights are held by a conservation entity. Of this protected land, 43% is grazed land. Spatial analysis reveals that based on species occurrence, regardless of protection status grazing lands provide the majority of habitat for many threatened and endangered species. Furthermore, over 65% of the land described as essential or important to conservation by a regional planning network is grazed land.



## Findings

An emerging state strategy to support economic development on some land requires compensatory conservation of habitat on other land by partial title acquisition with an exacted easement. The case study of exacted easements on cattle ranches reveals how reterritorialization alters the perceived purpose of the land and its ecosystem services and creates new opportunities for capital accumulation from conservation services that both challenge and support a rancher's place on the landscape. Activities valued and funded by the exacted easements include resource management, infrastructure maintenance, monitoring, reporting, and easement administration. Some activities can only be provided by qualified resource management professionals and solely benefit habitat. Although some funded tasks support land sharing by livestock production and conservation, including maintenance of stock ponds, and invasive species control, livestock production is expected to fund most rancher stewardship including grazing management.



Barry, S., 2022. Sustain livestock ranching to sustain habitat: land sharing at risk on San Francisco Bay Area exacted conservation easements. *Ecology and Society*, 27(3).

