

**Newsletter and Annual Report of the Rangeland Section
of the Ecological Society of America**

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By

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Chair, Rangeland Section, Ecological Society of America

A. Revisit 2003 activities at ESA

The Rangeland Section was active at the 2003 ESA meeting. We sponsored a symposium that was well attended and we had a workshop/discussion following our mixer/business meeting.

2003 Symposium. Biogeochemistry of grassland and shrubland ecosystems: Local to regional linkages and impacts of land use. Co-organizers: Bob Nowak and Sam Fuhlendorf.

The primary focus of this symposium was on the effects of land use and land use change on biogeochemical cycles of grasslands and shrublands. Biogeochemical cycles are central to many components of global change and land management, including increases in greenhouse gases, land conversion, and nitrogen deposition. The speaker list included prominent scientists from diverse backgrounds and was well attended by a broad group of ecologists. Topics covered included 1) the global role of rangelands in biogeochemical cycles, 2) cycles of urban and livestock wastes, 3) the role of disturbance and invasive species, 4) dust redistributions, 5) carbon sequestration and land management, and 6) the impacts of woody plant increases on biogeochemical cycles.

2003 Workshop/Discussion. Strategies for Increasing the Relevance of Rangeland Ecological Research. Co-organizers: Jeff Herrick and Sam Fuhlendorf.

This workshop focused on: (1) exploring opportunities for increasing the relevance of ecology to the management of grassland, shrubland and savanna ecosystems, (2) defining strategies for increasing the ability of managers to apply the results of both basic and applied research in these ecosystems, and (3) considering options for collaboratively addressing each of the first two options together with the Society for Range Management. A good discussion led to several objectives that we have worked toward over the past year, including: (1) Increasing opportunities for international participation in US professional societies, (2) conducting joint symposia with other societies, and (3) and encouraging ESA members to collect/report management-relevant data. Some of the resulting interactions with other societies are reported below.

B. ESA Rangeland Section at the Society for Range Management Meetings, Salt Lake City, Utah, January 25-30, 2004. The ESA Rangeland Section sponsored a symposium and a workshop at the Society for Range Management meeting.

2004 Symposium. The Big Stuff that matters. Co-sponsors: Lori Hiding and Carolyn Hull Sieg.

This symposium focused on defining the important issues facing rangeland ecosystems. Topics included climate change, biodiversity, human population and landscape fragmentation. There was considerable discussion following the symposium on future directions and positions that the SRM should take on these topics.

2004 Symposium/workshop: "Is Rangeland Ecology Relevant? Research Needs for Rangeland Management Research Needs in the 21st century" Co-Sponsors Sam Fuhlendorf, Bob Budd, Jeff Herrick.

Ecological research often falls short of true application. It is clear that the large gap between science and application is driven by limitations in research, limited understanding of ecological science by managers, and perhaps most important a lack of communication between scientists and managers. This workshop focused on continuing the discussion from the ESA meeting to determine how ESA and the Society for Range Management can work together to help resolve these problems. Issues that have contributed to the lack of application of rangeland ecology research include 1) public perception of terms such as ecology and rangeland, 2) reduced funding from USDA for applied ecological work, 3) lack of political clout for rangeland ecology, 4) no mechanism to make research results understandable to the general public, and 5) need to develop a solid and broad ecosystem management approach. At the completion of the program it was determined that this discussion was important and should continue.

C. Plans for ESA Rangeland Section at 2004 meeting in Portland

The Rangeland Section will again be busy at the ESA meeting in Portland. Activities that are sponsored by the Rangeland Section or organized by members that represent our section are listed below.

- **Business meeting/mixer will be held at 6:30 on Wednesday, August 4 in the OCC Portland Ballroom.** Finger foods and a cash bar will be available.
- **Workshop/discussion** will immediately follow the mixer. The topic will be *Ranches, ranchettes, recreation and conservation: strategies for increasing the contribution of science to land use debates*. The majority of this session will be devoted to an informal discussion of the topic. Organized by Jeff Herrick. Wednesday, August 4, 8 PM - 10 PM, OCC, Meeting Room E-147-148

- **Symposium: Ecohydrology: Towards an Ecologically Meaningful Water Budget-** Co-organized by David Breshears and Osvaldo Sala. Tuesday, August 3, 1:30 PM – 5 PM, OCC, Oregon Ballroom 203
- **Symposium: Ecological Theory and Rangeland Sustainability: Local Strategies, Global Solutions** - Co-organized by Elizabeth King, Jeffrey Herrick and Jacoby Carter. Friday, August 6, 8:30 AM – 12 NOON, OCC, Oregon Ballroom 203
- **Organized Oral Session: Interannual Climate Variability: How temporal signatures can drive ecosystem processes-** Co-organized by Linda Wallace and Jay Arnone. Tuesday, August 3, 1:30 PM – 5 PM , OCC, Meeting Room E-148

D. Ongoing activities

Website development:

Section website (<http://www.ag.unr.edu/esa/>)

The Section also has a draft rangeland forum website to informally post, describe and discuss observations, data, and results (<http://www.ag.unr.edu/esa/rangetalk/>).

Your critique and suggestions of this forum are needed!

Section role: sponsor, Lead contact: Bob Nowak (nowak@cabnr.unr.edu)

Society for Range Management, Annual Meeting, Fort Worth, Texas, February 5-11 2005. We are currently planning a symposium and workshop that will be sponsored by the Rangeland Section of ESA.

E. Requests for Evening Session and Symposium Proposals for the 2005 meeting in Montreal Canada.

The Ecological Society of America and the International Association for Ecology will be holding a joint Annual meeting and International Congress in Montreal, Canada from August 7 through August 12, 2005.

The Calls for Symposium Proposals and Organized Oral Session Proposals, as well as information about the joint meeting, the theme, the Palais des Congres (the Montreal Convention Center) and the city of Montreal are included on the ESA meeting website. <http://www.esa.org/montreal>

The deadline for submission of proposals for Symposia and Organized Oral Sessions is Wednesday, September 15, 2005 at 5 PM Eastern Daylight Time. Submissions will then be peer reviewed and ranked prior to selection by the ESA Program Chair, Paul Ringold and INTECOL Program Chair Rebecca Sharitz.

The Rangeland Section typically submits a proposal for a symposium, so the membership should be considering potential topics that would fit with the theme at the Montreal Meeting. Multiple topics can be proposed but the section can only sponsor one symposium.