

RANGELAND NEWS

Society for Range Management
Nevada Section

EARLY FALL 2006

TO FOSTER ADVANCEMENT IN THE SCIENCE AND ART OF RANGELAND MANAGEMENT

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PRESIDENT'S PONDERERS

From Bob Wilson

As I write this it appears that the fire season is finally almost over. The large amount of burned rangelands reminds us again that our ecological systems in Nevada are out of kilter. Somehow we need to figure out how to change the way we do the business of natural resource management. We've all heard the old saw that the definition of insanity is to continue to do things the same and expect different results. In Nevada, the problem has gotten so tilted that we might want to reexamine our basic management premises – some of these premises might need to be modified.

Let me help put the recent rangeland fire years in perspective. Starting in 1999 fires burned about 1.8 million acres, again in 2000 nearly 700,000 acres, in 2001 over 600,000 acres, a slight reprieve in 2002-2004 with only about 100,000 acres, over 1.0 million acres again in 2005, and now again in 2006 nearly 1.5 million acres at last count. While this is sometimes the same acres burned repeatedly in subsequent years; it still totals something approaching 3.7 million acres burned during the past 7 years. These are more acres than were burned during the entire 53 year period from 1945 through 1998. The resulting economic and environmental costs are staggering – especially for something that is a natural and rejuvenating process when it occurs under more favorable circumstances

Nevada section of SRM voted at our summer meeting to spearhead discussions and education about this issue. Energy and other commitments have limited (including myself) how far forward we have gotten. These burned acre numbers demonstrate the urgency of looking for a better approach. It is time to have discussions about how we manage rangelands so inevitable fires can fulfill their natural rejuvenating role, rather than cause wholesale ecological change to unstable annual grassland (cheatgrass/red brome/medusahead rye) rangelands which so frequently occurs under current management parameters. We'll be having some of these discussions during our winter meeting. That is just a start on a very important endeavor for our section.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

Please welcome to the Section:

Cory Lytle, NRCS, PO Box 506 Caliente, NV 89008, 726-3101, cory.lytle@nv.usda.gov

Dennis Walker, NDF, 911 Falcon Lane, Elko, NV 89801, 738-3454,

dewalker@forestry.nv.gov

Leslie Haug, UNR Main Station Farm, 5895 Clean Water Way, Reno, 89502-9778,

lhaug@cabnr.unr.edu

Lee Schmeizer, UNR, 1835 Juniper, Reno, 89506-8386, no email

Garry Brown, BYU student, 46 S 500E Payson, UT, 89651, gbrown@byu.edu

Nora DeVoe, BLM, 3443 Skyline View Dr, Reno, 89509, ndevoe@nv.blm.gov

Jacob Tibbitts, Idaho State student, 921 S 8th Ave, St 8130, Pocatello, ID, 83209-8130,

tibbj@isu.edu

Steve Robinson, 2677 Norwood Pl, Carson City, 89703, sarobinson@gov.state.nv.us

Members dropped: Gary Sundseth, Don Henderson, Wes Barry, Kurtiss Schmidt, Bill Morrill, Connie Thompson

Total membership is now 161.

THANK YOU AND REMEMBRANCE

The Nevada Section remembers with great joy and appreciation the many (10+) years of volunteer service as cooks at Range Camp by Debi Benson and her parents, John and Charlotte Adams. You will be hard to replace. Not only were you outstanding cooks, but also mentors and friends who provided valuable advice and substantial wisdom to both participating youth and camp staff. We shall miss our friend, John, who passed away in May. Debi and Charlotte, we wish you Godspeed and hope you keep in touch.

To: The Society for Range Management Members,

Thank you so much for the spa gift certificate and the gift certificate to Kitchen Treasures, and especially for all the wonderful memories! Cooking at Range Camp has been such a positive experience for me, my parents and family. I have enjoyed meeting and getting to know some of you. What special caring people you are! Thank you for sharing yourselves and the special Range Camp experience! I also appreciate your affection and sympathy on the loss of my father and Range Camp cook!

Love, Debi Benson

Dear Range Society Crew,

The family of John Adams acknowledges with deep appreciation your kind expression of sympathy. Thank you for the very appropriate memorial grapevine wreath for John's

service. Helping with Range Camp was a special joy for him that he talked about all year.

Charlotte Adams

Dear Range Management Personnel,

Your most generous gift certificate at the end of Range Camp came as quite a shock. When you said you had a gift for us I was expecting dinner for two, somewhere. Deb and I plan to go to Reno together and do some shopping. Thank you. We loved the camp, the kids, the cooking and I will truly miss doing it in the coming years. Thanks again.

Sincerely, Charlotte Adams

CALL FOR ELECTIONS

Barry Perryman is seeking candidates for President-Elect and Zone Councilpersons for Zones II, IV, and VI. Check out the map on the outside page and let Barry know you are willing to help!

JOINT RESOLUTION FOR RANGELAND MONITORING IN NV

Please be prepared to comment on this resolution at the winter meeting. We will be seeking joint signatures from 23 groups around Nevada to submit to our federal representatives.

Whereas Nevada's public rangelands provide essential ecological services, such as watershed functions, wildlife and wild horse and burro habitat, livestock forage, recreational opportunities, and multiple other resource values that are deeply appreciated by a diversity of Nevadans;

Whereas rangeland vegetation is the foundation for most ecological services and resource values;

Whereas monitoring is the basis of all land management;

Whereas Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management budgets have not provided adequate staff for monitoring important vegetation changes and their linkage to land management decisions and actions such as management of fire and fuels, livestock recreation, wild horses and burros, and weeds;

Whereas other urgent land management needs often capture fiscal resources that would have been invested in rangeland monitoring even though monitoring data collected consistently through time is ultimately more important;

Therefore be it resolved:

Rangeland monitoring should become a designated line item for land management agency budgets;

And furthermore, this line item should be funded at a level sufficient to match current investments in vegetation monitoring and provide at least one additional rangeland management specialist for each Forest Service District and two for each BLM District.

WINTER MEETING

Make plans to be at the Nugget in December for an important Section meeting and 2007 Planning meeting. **Friday, December 15**, 8-Noon, is the Section business meeting.

Lunch is on your own. Friday afternoon, 1-5 PM is the *Wildland Fire and Sagebrush Ecosystem Management Symposium/Workshop*. **Saturday, December 16**, 8-Noon, 2007 Planning Meeting followed by an Awards Luncheon. More information in the next newsletter, call Gary McCuin with any questions.

SUMMER MEETING

The 2006 Nevada Section SRM meeting was held in Ely, Nevada July 13-15. The topic of the meeting and summer tour was aspen ecology and management and interactions with wildlife and livestock. Thursday was an afternoon session with Wayne Shepperd, Dale Bartos, Elizabeth Ammon, and David Burton as speakers. On Friday we took a tour up Success Loop and looked at various aspen stands and different types of management, such as campgrounds (exclusion), aspen being replaced by conifers (lack of fire), aspen groves subject to livestock and elk grazing (reduce recruitment) and several exclosures (no grazing by cattle, deer and elk). We looked at stands of aspen that were regenerating successfully and we looked at other small isolated stands where no regeneration was occurring. The tour was very informative and educational and was well attended by SRM and non members. At the conclusion of the tour the final message is that there is a west-wide trend of declining aspen, but that there is no one cause, and there is no one solution, but that all land managers need to be aware of this trend. After the tour the attendees were served a lamb barbeque at the Kennecott Ranch. In between the meeting and dinner, several members did some fishing and were fairly successful in catching a few nice trout.

Thanks to Tracey Wolfe for the write-up.

Highlights of the business meeting included a discussion of Range Camp priorities. We will need a new director, cook and nurse, a way to get the trailer there and a place to store the trailer. We need a timeline for jobs to do each year and a commitment from the Section. We need to get going on it in February and the information out to the Districts earlier. We need four, eight would be better, counselors. We will leave the cost at \$125 for two years and then reevaluate. We need to decide if the directorship should come with an incentive.

Smoke hung in the air as we discussed this fire season as an opportunity for SRM to take leadership in an education campaign. We need to get our information into the press when people are listening; we need to make it about the resource and not the arguments in a way that urban society can understand these systems do burn. If we could make a power point to facilitate the message and put the logos of all groups involved at the front, it could help. We need to decide what we want to teach-disturbance, and to who-non-natural resource people. Bob Wilson will lead a committee of Sherm, Gary, Gail Durham or Pete Anderson and John McClain.

2005 RANGELAND PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR AWARD

Gerry Miller has a long and distinguished career addressing rangeland and natural resource issues in Nevada, and providing service to the Nevada Section of the Society for Range Management. Gerry's professional career started in 1980 as a seasonal employee with the US Forest Service on the Ruby Mountain Ranger District. For seven years, he administered 30 cattle allotments and two sheep allotments, representing 24,000 animal unit months of cattle use and 29,000 sheep months. His effort brought

stocking rates in line with resource capacity, and notably did result in one legal action during his tenure. Since 1987, Gerry has been employed by the Natural Resource Conservation Service in Ely and Elko, where he currently is the Resource Conservation and Development Coordinator for the Da Ka Doiyabe Resource Conservation and Development Area. During Gerry's 18-year career with the NRCS, he has become widely recognized for his ability to address conflict and improve collaboration among polarized individuals, groups and/or organizations. His efforts have included facilitating and co-authoring the White Pine County Elk Management Plan, the White Pine County Water Resources and Management Plan, the White Pine County Land Management Plan, the Northeast Nevada Resource Conservation and Development Plan, the Elko County Water Plan and over 300 individual Natural Resources Conservation farm plans.

Gerry has a long distinguished record of organizing events and activities, including Arbor Day celebrations, Nevada Shade Tree events and National Public Lands Day events. Within SRM he planned and coordinated numerous very successful summer and winter meetings: some of which reversed large deficits in Section finances. Gerry also served as a Zone Councilman for six years; has served on numerous section committees, and was President-elect, President and past President from 1998-2000. Gerry's sustained professional excellence has been recognized by numerous organizations. In 1998, he was the Nevada Wildlife Federation's Soil Conservationist of the Year, and in 2001 the White Pine County Citizen of the Year. In 2004, Gerry received the National Arbor Day Lawrence Enersen Award.

Many of Gerry's accomplishments are largely unknown to the majority of Nevada's SRM members, largely because of his unassuming personality and desire to get the job done as efficiently and low key as possible. Success, rather than flare has been Gerry's long-standing trademark. The Nevada Section recognized Gerry Miller's sustained success by awarding him the Nevada Rangeland Professional of the Year Award in January 2006.

2007 MEETING

Maggie has started a TO DO list for committees. Please check it out when Jim Gifford sends it around. Please let Maggie know what else needs to be on it. Everyone needs to get AV needs to Tom Harris (747-3167, tharris@cabnr.unr.edu), volunteer needs to Patti Novak-E or Marti Butow, thank yous needed to Maggie, any receipts to Brad, and photography times and locations to Kurtiss Schmidt.

NOTES OF INTEREST

*Nevada Cattlemen's Association announces that recently a Coalition was formed named the Sustainable Grazing Coalition. They are seeking a person to fill a Resource Analyst position. Contact Rachel Buzzetti at nca@nevadabeef.org or 738-9214.

*The CEU's for our 2006 Summer Workshop were increased from 3 to 7! Please note in the last newsletter Maggie erroneously named Vicky Skiff, Vicky Skill. Thanks for letting me know, Vicky!

*As of 7/1/06 the REM journal will increase to \$40. Please destroy old membership applications. The current one should be dated 6/13/2006.

*On 6/28 two new species were added to the Nevada Noxious Weed List: *Arundo donax*, Giant Reed (Category A) and *Brassica tournefortii*, Sahara Mustard (Category B).

*Bonnie and Ed Wolfe have goats available for weed control. They can supply up to 160 animals and could obtain more if needed. Address: HC 60 Box 199, Wells, NV 89835, Bonnie's work phone is 775/ 782-2400.

REACH OUT TO PRODUCERS

Please notify any producers you know that the Nevada Section is making good on SRM's desire to increase participation by producers in the organization by offering symposia of special interest to them at the 2007 meeting in Reno. The Producer's Forum will feature Dr. James Young with a history lesson, Duane Coombs showing how agriculture management is wildlife management and sheepherder Hank Vogler proclaiming the Rebirth of Common Sense, aka the Role of Grazing. There will be a panel on adaptive management and cooperative monitoring. On Monday afternoon will be the *Livestock/Landscape Interactions* symposium moderated by Dr. Fred Provenza of USU, long known for his work in plant-herbivore interactions and animal behavior. Joining him will be Kit Pharo of CO and Jim Gerrish of ID, proponents of management intensive grazing and locally adapted livestock. To show how it actually works on the ground will be John Haskell of UT and our own Ken Conley of the UNR Gund Ranch. Following are excerpts from Kit Pharo's presentation:

Ranching is a great way of life, but is it sustainable? Can it produce enough income to support a growing family? Can it be passed on from one generation to the next? Will the next generation want to come back to the ranch?

In recent years there has been much talk about a concept called "sustainable agriculture" but most of the so-called experts fail to mention the two most important ingredients – profit and enjoyment. Agriculture that is not profitable or enjoyable will never be sustainable.

- 3. Successful ranchers work smarter, not harder.** *Although they enjoy riding a horse and driving a tractor, they always set aside time to "drive the desk".*
- 4. Profitable ranchers make efficient use of the ranch's available resources.** *Instead of investing in the latest gadget, they invest in education courses that teach them how to get the most from what they already have.*
- 5. Successful ranchers observe and imitate nature.** *Going against nature requires hard work and lots of money.*
- 6. Production and profit are not the same thing.** *In fact, they are often antagonistic toward one another. Successful ranchers realize that some increases in production will actually reduce profit. It's ironic, but many western ranches that were put together and paid for with 350 pound calves are now struggling and going broke with 600 pound calves*

The late Roy Beeby, from Marshall, Oklahoma was one of the few seedstock producers who really understood the importance of cow efficiency. Roy said, "The most efficient cows are those that wean calves weighing over 50% of their own weight and calve on time every year." The only thing I would add to Roy's statement is that these cows need to do this with very little, or no, supplemental feed. A truly efficient cow is one that can survive strictly on what the ranch produces, with nothing added except salt and a little mineral.

When should calves be weaned? *Calves should be weaned when the available forage resources can no longer support the nutritional requirements of a lactating cow. In*

severe drought years calves should be weaned at 60 to 120 days, while in other years they can be left on the cow for most of the year. Some who calve in May and June are able to leave calves with their mothers until March and April.

Shutting calves up in muddy or dusty corrals and hauling harvested or processed feeds to them is not natural. Calves remain much happier and healthier if they are left in familiar surroundings with familiar feeds. We have used a concept called across-the-fence weaning for the past twelve years. It is easy on the calves, easy on the cows and easy on us.

Stay tuned for more. If you have access to an email list or mailing list please let Maggie know; we want to prime the pump for interest in these events at the 2007 meeting.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Thanks to Tracy Benson and Eleanor O'Donnell for ongoing input.

October 4-Cal-IPC's Tools for Early Detection, www.cal-ipc.org

Oct 10-12-Annual Nevada Weed Management Association Meeting, Elko, http://agri.state.nv.us?PLANT_NoxWeeds_index.htm

October 21-team leaders needed for 1st Annual Carson River Watershed Snapshot Day, mriedl@ndep.nv.gov

Oct 11-13, Managing Agricultural Landscapes for Environmental Quality, Kansas City, Soil and Water Conservation Society

Oct 18-20-Lake Tahoe Science Plan Special Workshop, www.nvwra.org

Nov 7-9-National Tribal Invasive Species Conference, Sparks, rpowell@plpt.nsn.us

Nov 13-BLM Noxious Weed Training, LV, Everett Bartz, 702-515-5106

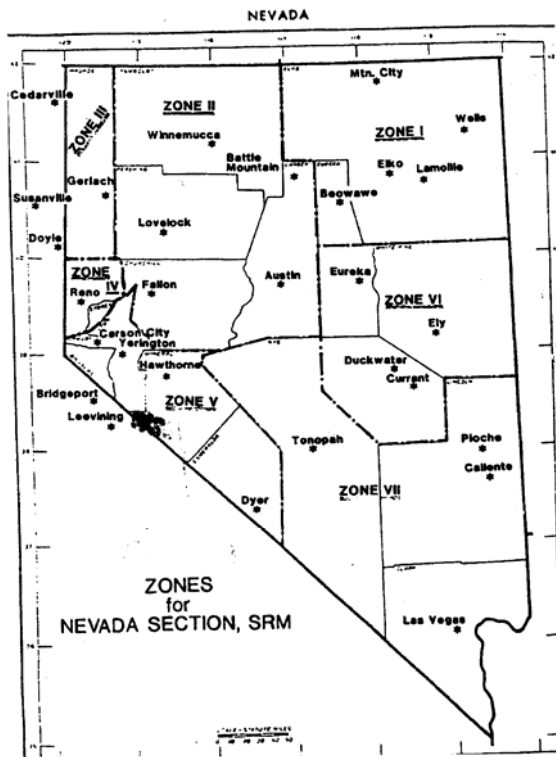
Nov 28-30-Workshop on Collaborative Watershed Management and Research in the Great Basin, Reno, <http://www.cabnr.unr.edu/GreatBasinWatershed>

Jan 30-31, 2007-Wildlife and Invasive Plants, Monterey, CA, www.tws-west.org

SRM NEW MEMBER ROUND-UP

On October 1, 2006, SRM will launch its 1st Annual New Member "Round-Up." This membership contest is for Sections who increase their membership by at least 5% during the contest period. The 1st Place Section will be named 2006 "Round-Up Boss," and will receive a certificate and check for \$1,000, and, have their Section name added to the "Round-Up Boss" plaque, which will be proudly displayed in the reception area of the SRM Headquarters in Wheat Ridge, CO. The certificate & check will be presented at the Membership Forum on Wednesday, February 14, 2007 during the 60th Annual Meeting in Reno, NV. The 2nd Place Section will receive a certificate and check for \$500, also presented at the 60th Annual Meeting.

Watch for an update on Cooperative Monitoring in the next newsletter.



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