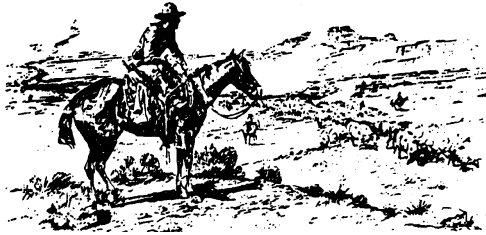


RANGELAND

NEWS



TO FOSTER ADVANCEMENT IN THE
SCIENCE AND ART OF RANGELAND
MANAGEMENT

NEVADA SECTION – SOCIETY FOR RANGE MANAGEMENT

March 2012

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(see map on last page for zones)

PRESIDENT'S PONDERERS

Chris Jasmine

It is hard to believe that on January 1st of 2012 there was no snow on the ground in Elko, NV. It was strange to have wildfires burn 200,000 acres in Elko and Humboldt Counties in October, just two days before a snow storm. (Well over 50 structures were destroyed (affected) in wild-land/urban interface fires around Reno this winter) Weather is an unpredictable beast and I am sure we have not seen such crazy patterns in a long time. Years like this one, make us question everything we think we know and hopefully reminds us that weather, just like natural resources, will often throw us bigger curve balls than we ever thought possible. With changing weather patterns and new weed problems, it is difficult times to be a rangeland operator or a natural resource manager.

Changes in the natural resource world are inevitable; changing weather patterns, changing natural resource policy, changing plants and landscapes. However, we sometime forget that the changes and patterns that we perceive are just now happening have been taking place for many years, and these changes, for better or worse, perplexed natural resource manager before us as well.

I often thumb through Aldo Leopold books since as a conservationist and bow hunter I can't help but relate to many of his writings. In an essay titled “Cheat Takes Over” Leopold discusses *Bromus tectorum*, and although he wrote the essay in the 1940's the message still rings true today. Take the following excerpt for example:

“These prickly awns cover the autumn hills with a yellow blanket as inflammable as cotton-wool. It is impossible fully to protect cheat country from a fire. As a consequence, the remnants of good browse plants, such as sagebrush and bitterbrush, are being burned back to higher altitudes where they are less useful as winter forage.”

Excerpts like this show us that we are still trying to answer the same questions today that natural resource managers were trying to address 70 plus years ago. The same is true for the politics of our professions:

“While the sportsmen and the stockmen wrangle over who should move first in easing the burden on the winter range, cheat grass is leaving less and less winter range to wrangle about.”

Sound familiar? Not much different from the discussions we “wrangle” with today is it? Leopold goes on to write:

“I listened carefully for clues whether the West has accepted cheat as a necessary evil, to be lived with until kingdom come, or whether it regards cheat as a challenge to rectify its past errors in land-use. I found the hopeless attitude almost universal. There is, as yet, no sense of pride in the husbandry of wild plants and animals, no sense of shame in the proprietorship of a sick landscape. We tilt windmills in behalf of conservation in convention halls and editorial offices, but on the back forty we disclaim even owning a lance.”

It does not happen often but I respectfully disagree with Mr. Leopold’s last statement. I do find that although attitudes today regarding cheat grass are dismal at best, there are many land managers and researchers that are tilting at “windmills” both in convention halls AND the back forty. Cheat grass will always be a problem for managers in the West, but I believe that in the last 20 year there has been great progress in the research related to restoration of these cheat grass dominated systems. Much of the research has confirmed what we have known since Leopold’s time; cheat grass is here to stay. But, we have also learned that there are ways to manage landscapes to minimize its effects, ways to use it for forage, techniques to help native plants to re-establish, techniques to minimize the fire impacts associated with cheat grass.

Since the 40’s, we have slowly learned what works and what doesn’t work. So, now it is time to start applying the tactics that researchers have demonstrated work and stop practicing the management that doesn’t. Now is the time for all of us to tilt our lances, and face cheat grass and wildfire head on, both in convention halls AND the back 40. We have already lost millions of acres that may never come back. The Wildlife and Livestock of Nevada depend on us, as rangeland managers, as rangeland scientist, to run towards the annual grasses full tilt ahead.

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!

Stephen Perry Boyte, Sioux Falls, SD, sboyte@usgs.gov

Meagan Carter, Reno, cartermeagan@ymail.com

Brian Taylor, Spring Creek, bdtaylor@barrick.com

Amira C Dittrich, Reno, acditttrich@gmail.com

Bill Dragt, Burns, OR, William_Dragt@nv.blm.gov

Austin Schultz, Winnemucca

Alyson Andreasen, UNR, Reno, amandrea@unr.edu

Julie Yvette McKnight, Reno, jmcknight@thegreatbasininstitute.org

Suzi Miller, Warm Springs, OR, suzi.miller@wstribes.org

Jim Howell, Boulder CO, jhowell@grasslands-llc.com

We welcome you to the Nevada Section and look forward to your participation in our activities. To remind all members, any SRM member can log into the www.rangelands.org website under Member Login and find the full contact information of any SRM member in the Member Directory.

AWARDS

EXCELLENCE IN RANGE MANAGEMENT

DUANE COOMBS

Ranch Manager
Smith Creek Ranch, Nevada
2011

In recognition of your sustained, comprehensive efforts, working in a cooperative manner and applying high standards of quality, as a steward of both private and public rangelands of the Smith Creek Ranch and the Porter Canyon & Edwards Creek Federal Grazing Allotments.

For your excellence in implementing animal husbandry and resource conservation practices, your demonstration of leadership, and your accomplishments in promoting the principles of good rangeland management. Your efforts have increased ranch profitability and sustainability through the development and implementation of a comprehensive management system resulting in an improved condition of both upland and riparian wildlife habitats.

Thanks for your leadership to improve Nevada's Rangelands.

EXCELLENCE IN RANGE MANAGEMENT

RAY HENDRIX

Managing / Partner
Smith Creek Ranch, Nevada
2011

In recognition of your sustained support and responsible leadership directed toward the realization of your vision for the improved health and productivity of the private and public lands of the Smith Creek Ranch and the Porter Canyon & Edwards Creek Federal Grazing Allotments.

For your comprehensive efforts, working in a cooperative manner and applying high standards of quality, as a steward of both private and public rangelands in Nevada. Your efforts have increased ranch profitability and sustainability through the development and implementation of a comprehensive management system resulting in an improved condition of both upland and riparian wildlife habitats.

You also shared and demonstrated the knowledge gained from this management change with rangeland managers, producers and citizens of Nevada through educational tours of the ranch and other educational efforts such as hosting the Nevada Youth Range Camp and SRM meetings as well as your current field studies with the University of Nevada, Reno which has gained knowledge on several rangeland related subjects. Thanks for your leadership to improve Nevada's Rangelands.

**GREAT BASIN AWARD
2011
SANDI HIGA**

In appreciation for your sustained commitment as Camp Director of the Nevada Youth Range Camp for 8 years. While Camp Director you performed many duties as needed to make the camp experience a positive one for our youth. These tasks required your time prior to as well as during camp and included reserving the Big Creek Campground, the Austin swimming pool and space for the evening educational programs, the selection of counselors and the preparing of meals for counselors prior to the start of Range Camp. You worked with the Vya Conservation District to sponsor deserving youth, several of whom went on to represent Nevada at the National SRM meetings. You recruited, registered campers, made and enforced camp rules, and made daily trips to Austin for supplies. You often pitched in to help cook and teach camp life skills. You were truly the "Backbone" of the Range Camp. We appreciate your tireless efforts in the promotion of, the participating in and your dedication to the youth of Nevada and the Nevada Youth Range Camp.

GRACIAN UHALDE

**NEVADA RANGELAND MANAGER
OF THE YEAR
2011**

BARRY PERRYMAN

**NEVADA RANGELAND PROFESSIONAL
OF THE YEAR
2011**

HEATHER MOBLEY

PRESIDENT, NEVADA SECTION 2011

These awards were presented at the Section Winter meeting in Winnemucca in December. Congratulations to all award recipients and thank you for your service. SRM is seeking award nominations at the national level; see the information at <http://www.rangelands.org/>. For Section awards contact Cub Wolfe at 775 465-9099.

ELECTIONS

We welcome Ryan Leary as President Elect; Ryan Shane, BJ Raymond, and Mark Freese were continued on the Zone Council. Courtney Ghiglieri now represents Zone 5. Thank you to all for your work for the Section.

A BIG THANK YOU DUE

The Nevada Section owes a huge debt of gratitude for the outstanding work of Gary McCuin as Executive Secretary for the Section and Range Camp chief cook. Thank you, Gary, for your vision, commitment, perseverance, determination, and general all around inspiration to certain Range Camp campers! Good luck in your new career at the JD Ranch.

Thank you is also due to Jeremy Drew for years of work on the Zone Council. Thank you, Jeremy.

SUMMER MEETING 2012

President Elect Ryan Leary reports that the plan for the Summer Meeting became unfeasible; she is working on a new plan. Stay tuned.

WINTER MEETING 2011 NOW ONLINE!

Chris Jasmine

As many of you know the Winter meeting for the Nevada Section was held in Winnemucca this last December. As usual, it was great to see all of our colleagues from around the state and get caught up on the current gossip. Our section meetings are always enjoyable and the social aspect is one of the best parts. However, the content of the meetings is the real meat and potatoes of our Section. Year after year we have great presentations on current natural resource topics. This year we focused on Ecological Site Descriptions and Soils relationships. Most of the meeting was spent talking about MLRA 24; however many of the talks had value well beyond the MLRA boundary.

With the current tight budgets of many agencies, there were lots of members who were unable to attend this year. That is unfortunately the times we are living in and who knows how long until the situation will improve. Therefore, the Nevada Section wanted to let members who could not attend view the presentation from the meeting. We have uploaded them to the Nevada SRM webpage in PDF format so feel free to view them. If you have questions feel free to contact the presenters directly. Also, please respect the presenters and do not copy pictures, slides, or content from these presentations without their permission. These may be found on the home page of the Nevada Section website, <http://nevada.rangelands.org/>, on the left side under "Announcements."

Also available online are the outstanding Minutes that Ann Bollinger provided from the Winter business meeting. Highlights include Gerry Miller's appointment as Historian to replace Les McKenzie, the bylaws were approved and adopted, Don Henderson and his committee are now

working on a revision of the Handbook, and Heather outlined a mentoring program for students. A motion was passed to explore the possibility of holding the next winter meeting in the Carson Valley with the Nevada Chapter of the Wildlife Society. Find the minutes in complete detail on the Section website as well at <http://nevada.rangelands.org/Minutes.html>.

UNR RANGE CLUB

Michele Clark

We greatly enjoyed our experience at the annual SRM meeting in Spokane this January. Due to generous donations from the NV Section SRM, Safari Club International, and funding from Jon Wilker (UNR Gund Ranch Manager), we were able to send four members to the meeting. All four members - Stacy Belshaw (President), Meagan Carter (Treasurer), Ashlee Younie and Michele Clark (active alumni) - participated in the Undergraduate Range Management Exam and Student Display Board Contest while two members competed in the Plant Identification Contest. Each student attended technical sessions based on their interests, such as "Vegetation Management and Restoration" and "Range Plants/Physiology," and listened to a variety of UNR graduate student presentations. Student members graduating in May found the Rangeland Job Fair to be beneficial in their search for career opportunities and some were interviewed by potential employers. In addition to taking exams and viewing presentations, one memorable event was touring the Grand Coulees, an amazing piece of geological history.

We all enjoyed the meeting and felt that we gained valuable knowledge and new contacts with professionals and other students that share our interests. We joined discussions about the Student Conclave at the luncheon and spent time talking with other clubs about the events and activities they have planned for this coming semester. Like most other clubs, UNR Range Club spent the majority of last semester having business meetings and fundraiser events in order to fund the annual meeting. In the spring semester we have the opportunity to become more involved in other activities as a club. This semester we are planning events for both members and non-members, such as participating in a collaborative volunteer opportunity with the UNR Wildlife Society involving habitat creation for sage grouse, volunteering for Main Station farm to gain experience in handling livestock, and attending free workshops and trainings. We feel that providing students and members with interesting outdoor events will not only help us gain valuable field experiences in the future, but will also help us recruit and retain new members. We would also like to remain active in our support of Main Station farm and the future of the Range program at UNR.

Finally, the UNR Range club members are thankful for everyone's help and donations in our annual shotgun raffle. The shotgun, a 12-gauge Benelli Nova Pump donated by Safari Club International, helped us raise over \$1,800 dollars in the raffle, which will be used for upcoming events and put towards attending the next annual SRM meeting in 2013. We would also like to thank Jon Wilker from the Gund Ranch for providing the club funds in exchange for assisting with monitoring plots at the ranch this spring. We are all looking forward to the trip and believe it will be an enjoyable learning experience.

Below I have listed the Range Club's mission statement and ultimate goals. If anyone has events coming in the future that UNR Range Club could take part in to further these goals, please contact us at unrrangeclub@gmail.com or www.facebook.com/unrrangeclub.

Mission Statement:

- ~ To build a group of young professionals with similar goals to help them discover new opportunities within the fields of range, natural resources and wildlife.
- ~ Provide a method for communicating with our peers and professionals in order to exchange ideas, foster a learning environment and to encourage professional development.

- ~ Associate with professional groups and attend conferences in order to broaden our understanding of natural resources.
- ~ Encourage the recognition of rangeland resources within our community and promote the importance of resource management in our state.
- ~ Assist in departmental student recruitment, orientation and retention.
- ~ Establish an informal environment for socializing and networking within the field of range sciences.

THE PROGRESSIVE RANCHER PROJECT

Maggie is excited about the upcoming articles for TPR project. In a series of three articles, David Spicer, a rancher and miner from Beatty describes his lifelong involvement with the Amargosa toad and the fascinating story of the collaborative effort to keep it off the endangered species list; his pointed remarks about the Endangered Species Act and all the players involved are quite revealing. Check them out on the Section website at <http://nevada.rangelands.org/>.

Other anticipated articles include more from SageSTEP, Barry Perryman on monitoring key areas, Jake Tibbitts on the definitions of words, and the new wild horse and burro regulations when they reach Nevada by Alan Shepherd. Thanks to all who responded with your thoughts on “water” articles; Jake and I have not yet been able to determine a focus or author for those so any additional comments you have would be appreciated.

I would also like to have an article on soils. NRCS Soil Scientist, Paul Blackburn, who led the outstanding summer tour at the Gund Ranch two years ago, is willing to write it but he requests focus. I have asked many ranchers but am still looking to crystalize an idea to give to Paul. Please advise Maggie at sideoatsg@yahoo.com if you have any suggestions.

NEWS AND NOTES

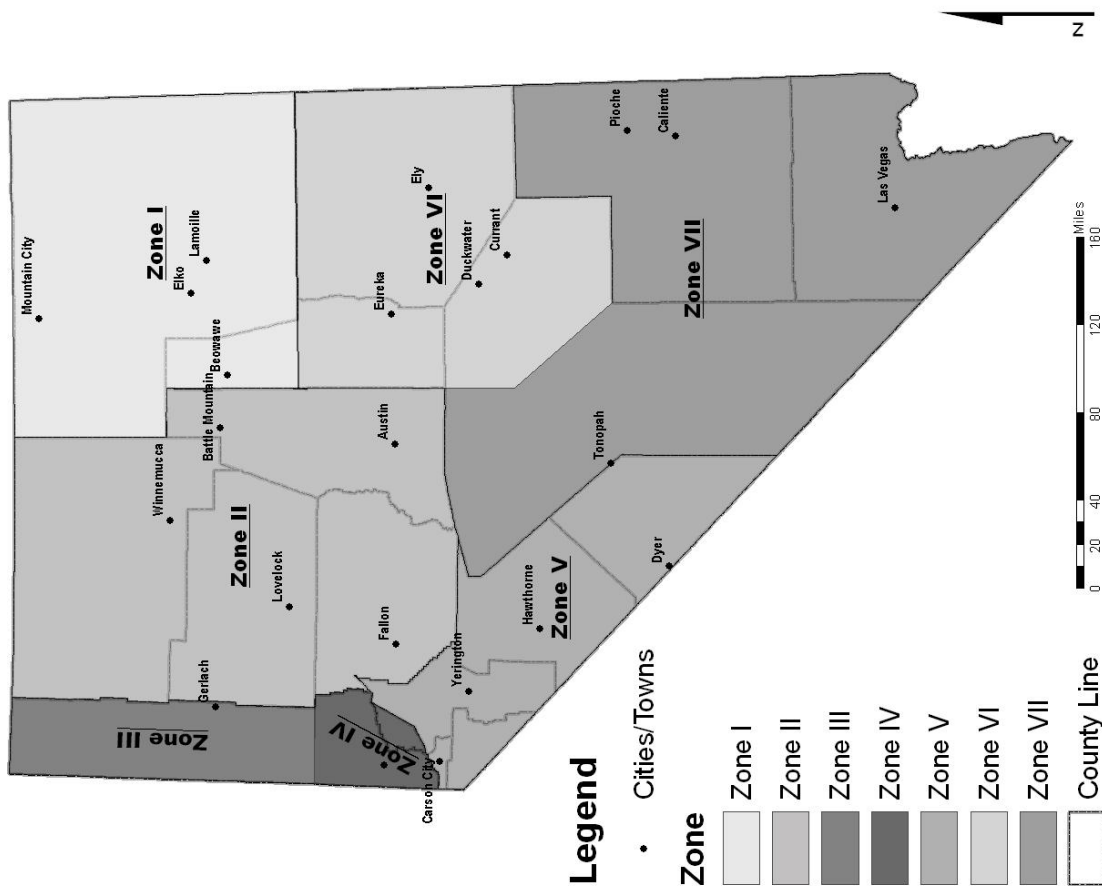
~ Recordings of presentations from the SageSTEP symposium *Disturbance, Resilience and Thresholds in Sagebrush Ecosystems* from the SRM Annual meeting earlier this month are now available on the website at <http://www.sagestep.org/events/2012-SRM-symposium.html>.

~ April 13-14 (Fri-Sat) for the 2012 Cal-Pac Spring Tour in the Sutter Buttes area. The multi-agency planning committee is putting together a FANTASTIC tour that will feature the natural history of the Sutter Buttes and a discussion of Ecological Site Descriptions on California Annual grasslands.

~ NEVADA SECTION STILL SEEKS ENTHUSIASTIC PERSON TO FILL THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY POSITION. Contact Chris Jasmine.

~ Elko Weed Extravaganza will be held May 1 – 3 at the California Trail Interpretive Center. The first day will be the Weed Summit (May 1), followed by Pesticide Applicator Certification Training (May 2), and Certification Testing (May 3). Continuing education units (CEUs) will be available.

Nevada SRM Section Zones



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