

RANGELAND NEWS

Society for Range Management
Nevada Section

LATE WINTER 2008

TO FOSTER ADVANCEMENT IN THE SCIENCE AND ART OF RANGELAND MANAGEMENT

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SUMMER MEETING: JUNE 6-7 @ UNR GUND RANCH

PRESIDENT'S PONDERERS

Duane Coombs

Hello all. I am finally getting over my Louisville souvenir – a really nice chest cold! It was a super annual meeting as all who were able to attend can attest to. I wish I could have gotten out on some of the tours. I have been thinking about my introduction to the Society for Range Management in 1992. I was pretty well entrenched in my own unique approach to higher education – Going to school in the spring and fall and cowboying during the summer and winter quarters. I was 22 years old, owned a pickup, a saddle, a war bag full gear and a bed roll, boy I had the tiger by the tail! As a totally dedicated student I decided I needed a part time job and my older brother Doug said he knew a fellow with a few cows around the valley who could use some help. "He's a little wild" is all he would tell me – and the adventure began. I met Dr. Lynn F. James soon after and began a whole new kind of friendship, always on the go, never ever sublime. Dr. James was one of the smartest people I had ever met; he is one of those people that never seems to need to sleep and is constantly putting ten pounds into a five pound sack – if the phone rang AFTER 11:30 at night it was usually him with trucks to load at 5 the next

morning. On weekend trips to the family homestead west of Park Valley, UT Lynn began to point out range types and tell me the history of the sheep business and about black sage in the Great Salt Lake Desert. He slowly began to open the eyes of an arrogant young man who had grown up on the desert horseback and figured he had it all neatly penciled out. Dr. James opened my eyes to a whole new world that had surrounded me my entire life. One of the things that I distinctly remember was the little green and white sticker with the trail boss in the back window of his old blue Chevy pickup truck, I finally asked him about it and he said, "I thought you'd never ask." Because of Lynn's passion and counsel I ended up in the Rangeland Resources department at Utah State University under the tutelage of Dr. John Workman; what a blessing both of these great men have been to my career. When I came to Nevada 11 years ago I was pleasantly surprised at the dedication and professionalism of the Rangeland Specialist assigned to the allotments on the ranch and my respect and admiration for those involved in this professional society continues to grow today. I have met and been able to learn from the very best through my membership in SRM, especially here in Nevada. There is such a wealth of knowledge in this group; I am inspired by your dedication and willingness to invest time and energy in the pursuit of excellence. Although Dr. James and I exasperated each other quite often I am thankful for the influence he had on my career path. When I was finally finished with my college experience in 1997, Lynn took me aside and told me not to "lose your sensitivities, whatever you do don't ever lose your sensitivities". I often think about that advice. Tonight as the Toiyabe range turned orange then pink then blood red I stopped a moment to appreciate it all – I hope I still have my sensitivities.

ELECTION RESULTS

Congratulations to Section candidates – Ken Conley is our new President Elect and Ryan Shane (Zone I), Marti Butow (Zone III), Don Henderson (Zone V), and Chandler Mundy (Zone VI) were elected to the Zone Council. Thanks to all for your willingness to serve. The Section is still looking for a replacement for Treasurer Brad Schultz who deserves a rest from the position. Please advise Duane if you would be willing to take the treasurer's position or serve on a finance advisory committee.

MEMBERSHIP

Barry reports Nevada Section took second place in the international membership drive this year. In Louisville he got his picture taken with the \$500 check. This is our second year as winners!

Welcome, to the new members listed. Please join us at the Summer Meeting at the Gund Ranch in June.

Rixey Jenkins, Bridgeport, CA, rixeyjenkins@gmail.com

Gareth Fisher, Reno, NV, gareth.s.fisher@gmail.com

Charles Johnson, Crescent Valley, NV, cejohnson@barrick.com

Andrea Minor, Carson City, NV, honu_500@yahoo.com

Gary Sundseth, Elko, NV, gsundseth@barrick.com

Megan Wereley, Elko, NV, nca@nevadabeef.org

Michele Wisnefski, Reno, NV, wisnefsk@wncc.edu

SUMMER 2008 MEETING AND TOUR

Mark your calendars for the Summer Tour at the UNR Gund Ranch on **June 6-7!** President-Elect Ken Conley plans an interesting discussion on Targeted Grazing, both from a cheat grass control standpoint and the timing aspect that fits the Gund Ranch's grazing strategies; it may include a few presentations in the barn prior to the tour to set the stage. Plan to come Thursday night and stay through the business meeting Saturday morning. There are a few beds available inside and unlimited space under the stars. Check out the hot springs on site and ask Ken to show you the photo of the alligator that survived there for 15 years! More information soon.

BOISE SHEEP SYMPOSIUM Respiratory Disease in Wild and Domestic Sheep

This research symposium is set for March 7 and 8, 2008 in Boise, Idaho as part of an informational package for a task force appointed by Idaho Governor Otter. Sponsors for the event include the University of Idaho, Washington State University, University of Nevada, the States of Idaho and Nevada, USDA, and the Idaho Department of Fish and Game. Friday's sessions include a "review of literature and overview of disease, organisms, and population and stress factors" including Dr. Anette Rink and Dr. Bill Foreyt in the morning, and "epidemiology and the respiratory disease complex" in the afternoon. Saturday's session is entitled "environmental and management factors" and will cover history, management, and conflict resolution efforts ending with a moderated round table discussion. Each session consists of multiple presentations from a suite of researchers, agency staff, and professionals representing both agricultural and wildlife interests. Registration is \$100, and space is limited to 100 participants; available at <http://www.cainecenter.uidaho.edu/wildlife.htm>.

For more information about the symposium, or to become involved with the Wildlife Habitat Committee please contact Jeremy Drew at jeremy@rci-nv.com. Jeremy plans a follow-up discussion on the subject at the summer meeting in June at the Gund Ranch.

SAGE GROUSE DECISION

"Ninth Circuit Court rules in favor of [Western Watersheds] WWP on Sage Grouse. The Court entered summary judgment for WWP on December 4, 2007, which reversed and remanded the 2005 "not warranted" determination for greater sage-grouse at issue in this case. WWP and the Service both agree that it is most consistent with the "best available science" requirement of the ESA for the Service to utilize the updated Conservation Assessment in making a new listing determination for greater sage-grouse upon remand, after allowing public comment upon that Assessment." If you would like to see the Complete Stipulation, contact Maggie or Gary.

IMPRESSIONS FROM LOUISVILLE

Gary McCuin: Louisville was an interesting meeting. Nice country, a little chilly but not bad compared to Eureka. Around the Louisville/Lexington area there are a lot of fancy horse farms and Churchill Downs. In Lexington is Keeneland Race Track where they put in a new track consisting of dead tires and plastic bottles mixed with sand, very expensive but much safer for the horses. Also nearby is the National Horse Park and

museum which features all breeds, including mustangs and the museum provides a history of horses and their interaction with man, very interesting and educational.

We also toured the Woodfords Distillery; these folks know what to do with corn, put it in a jar not in the tank. The company owns Jack Daniels and plus several other liquors and a buffalo farm and restaurant in Louisville. They also know how to cook barbeque, catfish and cobbler. I bought a recipe book of old Kentucky recipes to try out some new things in the big black pots. We had a County agent for a guide that indicated that not all of Kentucky looks like the area we saw, much of Kentucky is struggling economically due to the hit on tobacco. They are trying to diversify their agriculture into cattle, pasture and other crops. They indicated that their ground is not that productive (much better than the best of ours) and they have had several years of drought and no irrigation systems. As an interesting side note, the sale of high dollar race horses is exempt from state tax, they get some of the money back in the local economy through the operation of the farms, but most of the money leaves the area in big expensive jets after the sale.

As to the meeting, the Galt House was very nice with an enclosed catwalk complete with a bar and deli. The bar was about a 50-foot long glass aquarium. Many of the fish squeezers were seen loafing at the riparian area staring at the fish. This was also a very handy area to locate people. You could hang out like an old bull at the water hole and see everybody that came to the meeting. There was a rancher from AZ that I observed using this method of networking very effectively. Advisory Council had two days of full agenda with the highlights being a recommendation to the Board to accept the task force recommendation for selecting meeting sites: the Society will have set criteria for meeting and travel facilities which sections can use to bid for meetings in their area. The Society will also work with a professional meeting facilitator to find cities that fit our criteria. Another subject of extensive discussion was a report from a task force headed by Joel Brown regarding what to do with Rangelands. Apparently this publication costs the Society approximately 100K annually to produce. It is also the publication most read and enjoyed by general membership. After much discussion the advisory council decided to delay a recommendation until the sections could review the report and make a considered recommendation to the Board. I am one of several on the ad hoc Advisory Council sub committee to review recommendations and provide our decision to the Board. We have a 30 day window in the Section to get our thoughts back to the Advisory Council. The Rangelands report and several questions to the Section will be forthcoming very soon by email.

Numerous Nevada Section members made presentations and exhibited posters at the meeting. A group from the Wildlife Habitat Committee is reviewing a letter and draft situation paper from Jeremy Drew of the NV Wildlife Habitat committee to begin working on wildfire and pre-suppression efforts policy, position, and a white paper from the Society to improve the public's and policy makers' awareness of this serious matter. A number of Nevada members will be involved in the ongoing process. The Idaho Section also advanced a resolution regarding Society position and policy regarding livestock/wildlife interactions and disease transmission which will ultimately result in a position statement from the Society. The Idaho Section also indicated a desire to work with us to host a regional summer meeting in 2009 focusing on wildfire and proactive vegetation management. We will have to make a decision as to our willingness to do this. I hope the NV section will seriously consider this as a priority.

Jack Alexander: Tapping The Top was another success. Toned down from past years, TTT provided opportunity to students to find out from seasoned professionals the wide variety of jobs available to people with range degrees and to ask what it is that a range person actually does day to day. James Gatzke graciously volunteered to take over as chair of the Student Activities committee. Jim has been an important part of SAC for several years. Thanks Jim for taking on this important task.

Long-time friend of the Nevada Section, Lamar Smith, was deservedly bestowed with the Frederic G. Renner Award. Lamar has worked with Nevada producers, supported the Nevada Section, and collected rangeland data on hundreds of thousands of acres of Nevada's Great Basin. Congratulations to Lamar and thanks for all the hard work that led to this award.

Jack Alexander was appointed to chair the new Marketing and Outreach subcommittee on the renewed Membership Task Force. The Marketing and Outreach's first objective is to work on SRM's materials to tell what a great organization SRM is and what great things its members do. The group is looking for input and ideas – contact Jack at jack@countgrass.com or 775 772 5123 with inspiration about what we should do or gripes about what we are doing wrong. If we all work together we can help SRM grow by spreading the word that Range Management works for Rangelands. NvSRM's representatives to advisory council were instrumental in passing resolutions and creating grassroots support for additional emphasis on membership recruitment. Both Gary McCuin and Duane Coombs were observed making smoky back room deals to move SRM forward into the 21st century.

Rick Orr: I started my term on the Board of Directors and will be liaison to the following committees: Invasive species, Wildlife habitat, Remote Sensing/GIS, Rangeland Assessment and Monitoring, Watershed and Riparian, and a new committee being formed on Targeted Grazing. There was a great English Pub down the street from the Galt House.

STUDENT UPDATE

Brittney Askew, UNR Range Club President

The Range Club was able to send five of its members to the SRM meeting in Louisville this year. It was an educational as well as an entertaining experience. We attended many symposiums including things such as the wolf problem in Montana and cheat grass projects here in Nevada.

Two of our members, Heather Mobley and Ken Vicencio participated in the “on the spot hiring,” both of which were offered jobs. All five members participated in both the URME and Plant ID contest. We have yet to see the grades, but both tests were valuable experiences for us all.

We would like to express our gratitude to the Nevada section for the help and support that was given to our students to attend the meeting. Our club has already come up with some possible fundraising ideas to get students to the meeting next year in New Mexico.

2008 RANGE CAMP

Greg Beasley

SRM annual Nevada Youth Range Camp will be held this year from June 15 to 21 at Big Creek Campground south of Austin, Nevada. We will have a newly remodeled Sonoma kitchen with Gary McCuin as lead cook. Last year we had 35 young men and women of high school age attend the camp and are looking to host as many this year. We will need people to be counselors/instructors to help the students learn various natural resource concepts including; plant identification, forestry, range, watershed, wildlife, soils and team work. Participants in the camp are expected to camp out for the full six days.

If you would like to help with this year's camp please contact Greg Beasley at gbeasley@forestry.nv.gov or NDF Fuels Mgt., PO Box 694, Eureka, NV 89316.

BISHOP TOUR: fall meeting notes continued

Stop 1 was in chilly Long Valley on the Upper Owens River. In the late 1980's after surveying several creeks to find eroded banks, no vegetation and shallow streams, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) put in riparian pastures in 1992. They are not enclosures but have wide gates so the cattle can move back and forth. They are grazed one in three years until 30% utilization is attained when the gates are closed. Staff saw an almost immediate positive response to where the river banks are armored with vegetation, the channel is narrower and deeper and there are good pools; no planting was done. LADWP paid for the fences and the lessees maintain them. They are laid down from November to late May/June after the sage grouse are done strutting and are made with high tensile wire with super stays that resist snow problems. They have a top solid bar between braces in established game travel areas which Montana State research has shown the animals prefer to jump. Their real on-going problem in these meadows is recreation, both yearlong fishing now and hot tubbers seeking the geothermal sites to soak at all hours of the night and day. Staff even encountered a cement truck wandering the meadows looking for the pool the contractor wanted to "develop."

Stop 2 was at Pleasant Valley on the Middle Owens River which also has huge impacts from recreation use so management plans are being written and cooperative efforts done with Inyo County for fencing to keep people from driving to the river's edge. They have developed a conservation strategy acceptable to USFWS for the approximately 28 pairs of Southwestern Willow Flycatchers by grazing only until the end of May.

Stop 3 was at the head of the Lower Owens River Project (LORP) where we discussed the late spring recharge of the system with 200 cfs for five days up and five days down to the required 40 cfs. They also hope to stimulate the growth of woodies. Last December was the first time they put water back into the LORP area and they saw a tremendous response in the salt grass, alkali sacaton and creeping wild rye and sedges and cattails on the edges. In the north it stayed in the channel, at the south end where there had been some water since the 1980's there was no channel and it flooded. They expect to recharge again in March 2008 as their first flows now come in the winter instead of late May as it used to be. The March date will be easier on the fish but harder on the ranchers as it will be calving time and they will lose ground. The hope is it will give them a bigger pie ultimately but the adjustment period is hard.

Stop 4 was in the waterfowl unit where they do the rotational flooding. Tamarisk really spread in the 1969 floods; Inyo County is clearing it out. Stop 5 was along the Lower Owens River where they expect as the water table comes up will convert to alkali meadow. In this area each 6th grade class in the valley do ecology studies for six weeks. They have six years of information now.

Stop 6 was at Flowing Well 368 which has created this riparian habitat which is one of four places where the Owens Valley Pupfish live. Pupfish are aggressive and will confront bass who eat what appears before them! So CA Fish and Game work to keep bass out of the area though they want grazing to keep open water for the pupfish. To maintain the area LADWP had moved the road and installed fencing because the lessee thought he was impacting the fish. Now the area is included in a riparian fence area so everyone's needs are met. A humorous note at this juncture was noticing the pass through gates were wider than those we had seen on the upper river. Apparently warm water fishermen need wider gates than fly fishermen not due to pounds of fish but pounds of fisherman! And coolers!

Stop 7 overlooked Owens Lake to see the water on the lake for dust control. Other measures for dust abatement are gravel or salt grass. Of historical interest was the information that before LADWP started diverting water not much made it to the lake due to its use upstream. When the local Indians were surrounded here they wouldn't get into the water to escape as it did nasty things to skin, rather, they buried themselves in the sand. The *Bessie Grady*, which used to ply the lake carrying supplies to mines, reportedly ended her career by crashing into the pier in a dust storm. However, ducks and shore birds love the delta area, 14,000 Shovelers were observed the week before. Stop 8 was at the Pump Back Station which has a 50 cfs capacity.

2007 RANGE MANAGEMENT SCHOOLS

Fifty two participated in the three Range Management Schools in Pioche, Paradise Valley and Winnemucca. The following are some selected comments from program participants, in answer to the question, "What did you like best about this workshop?"

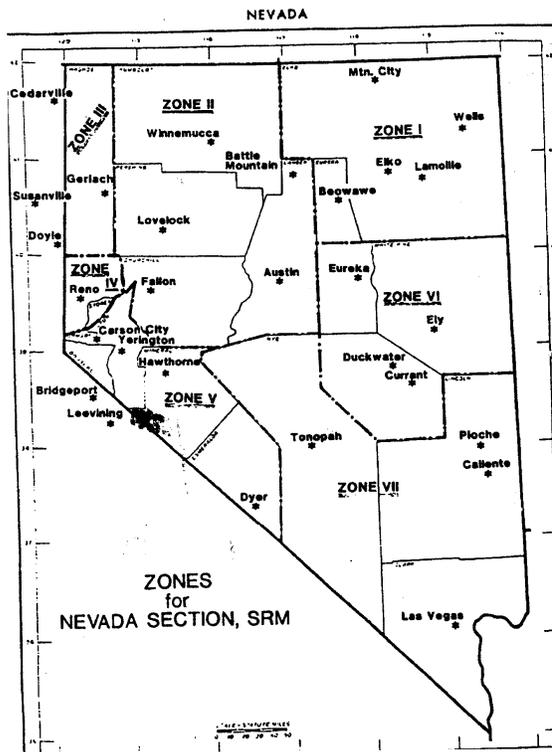
- "Based on sound biological principles"
- "Incredible knowledge from career-long and experienced professionals imparted and received"
- "Appropriate to problems faced"
- "Emphasis on adaptive management and working together"
- "Provided easy to understand and attainable information"

NOTES AND DATES OF INTEREST

~Great Basin Environmental Program: <http://www.cabnr.unr.edu/gbep>. Workshop in Reno on Feb. 20-21, info at website, or call Janet Corty at UNR at 775 784-1616.

~Cooperative Weed Management Area National Conference, April 15-17 in Reno, http://www.weedcenter.org/CWMAconf/cwma_conf.htm

~Fallon rancher invents the Sticker Stalker: <http://www.stickerstalker.com/index.htm>



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