

Society for Range Management Pacific Northwest Section

Properly functioning ecosystems provide for long-term sustainability of watersheds, plants, animals and people
Volume 55, Number 2 April 2004

See you in
Merritt BC
June 16-18!
Register by May 31

NEWSLETTER

President's Message

Will Keller

In our neck of the woods, this is one of the earlier years on record as measured in "blossom degree days." After a low snow pack year, springs just are not coming back. Today's rain is quite timely and renews my optimism for another good year. All I have to do is fit a new alternator and clutch mainshaft on my old motorcycle...and I will be ready for spring.

Our Second Vice President, **Bob Drinkwater**, graciously took over the Membership Committee. What a sparkplug! **Les Boothe** from Oregon, new member **Darren Mitchell** from Washington, and **Darren Bruhjell** from BC have joined in with the committee. The group has made a list of tasks outlining what, who, and when. Their two prong approach looks to get our name out in the public eye and also review why some have wandered off from the society. I am proposing the next second vice president take over chair of this committee.

First Vice President **Kevin Guinn** has been no less busy with chairing the Advisory Board. The first order of business is to sort out what chapters are no longer active. The Advisory Board is looking at a number of ideas on chapter organization, including the one being used in BC. The Board of Directors will be hearing back from this group in May and then again in Merritt. I am suggesting the next first vice president chair this committee next year.

Tim Ross has been following the parent society's Advisory Board resolution on BSE. The Northern Great Plains Section wanted to urge the US and Canadian governments to work together using sound science to work through this and future animal health issues as they are having a tremendous impact on the range resources as livestock numbers increase. The resolution was not passed by the Board of Directors.

Nancy Phelps has taken the lead on looking ahead to future PNW Section meeting locations. She is visiting with the Idaho section for a joint meeting this fall. We are considering a get together with the Montana group in fall of 2005. This was Tim Ross' vision that is beginning to come together.


The excitement is beginning to take hold with the 2006 Vancouver meeting just around the corner. I will see you in Merritt.

See you in
SE Oregon
Oct. 21 - 23, 2004

Stay Tuned!
Will

PNW Headlines

YOU are needed to help Bill Anderson Celebrate 90 Years

B. E. William Anderson will turn 90 on July 26th. His daughter, Elizabeth, and I are attempting to coordinate a "book of letters" to help him celebrate that milestone. Bill, as many of you know, is suffering from macular degeneration and his eyesight is very poor. Elizabeth will transcribe all letters which we receive onto a large font message which he may be able to read with his magnifying glass. Our suggestion is for each of you who have had contact with Bill over the years to write, to him, a short (about a half page) letter reminding him of some activity or moment which you shared. (We have to keep these short due to the difficulty of printing using the large font size). Please send your messages to John Buckhouse, Department of Rangeland Resources, OSU, Corvallis, OR 97331 (e-mail ok, and even appreciated: john.c.buckhouse@oregonstate.edu , BY THE END OF JUNE. 

Howard DeLano, 1966 Section President, is Lifetime Winner

With his 1939 forestry degree in hand, young Howard Delano began a career of public land management that spanned 34 years, until his retirement in 1972. Returning from Navy duty in the Aleutians, he "became part of the new Bureau of Land Management" with soil and moisture responsibilities in Oregon, Washington and California. He served a detail to Nigeria to aid that country's resource management program.

In September 2003, Howard DeLano received the Outstanding Lifetime Service Award from the Public Lands Foundation for a career which made a positive impact on public lands. He did not stop his involvement when he retired. He continued to "raise the voice of reason on controversial land management subjects". He is now President of the Oregon Gelbvieh Association and raises prize-winning livestock on his western Oregon ranch. *Congratulations, Howard!*

PNW Fall Meeting & Field Workshop, October 21-23

President **Will Keller** said, "None of us can remember recently going to SE Oregon with SRM". He tossed out a hook, and **Marni Porath** bit it.

Marni writes: "We had a small meeting of a few SRM members in Southeast Oregon. We will have plenty of cooperation in putting together a good program for the fall tour. We've decided to go with October 21, 22, 23 as that is not only the weekend that the by-laws would designate, but also the weekend that works best when it comes to avoiding some of the hunting seasons. We look forward to welcoming all PNW SRM members, AND some Idahoans, to our corner of the PNW world this fall."

You have the "heads-up". Mark your calendars now.
We'll meet someplace on the Oregon-Idaho border this fall, October 21 – 23.

Vancouver 2006 Planning Update

By John Buckhouse & Bob France

Reminder: there will be a Vancouver 2006 committee meeting (*everyone welcome*) at Merritt, BC at 3:00 PM on Wednesday, June 16th. Then on June 19th, for those who are interested and can afford the time and money, there may be a trip to Vancouver to see the hotel and meeting facilities. We look forward to seeing you in Merritt!

Resurrecting PNW SRM Chapters

By Kevin Guinn, PNW 1st Vice President

I've been a member of the Mid-Columbia SRM Chapter more than 20 years. I plan to stay with it another 20 years, growing older and wiser (I hope) in the company of **Chuck, Bob, Andrea, Tom, Dana, Edd, Brent, Nancy, Chuck** and other **Mid-Columbians**.

I can think of no better way to spend the day than with ranchers and range science/management professionals. Of late, it seems we have only two opportunities a year within the PNW Section – the summer tour in June and the October section meeting. How sad, when this Section once had as many as 14 active chapters.

We're in a chicken or egg situation. The PNW Board of Directors is trying to revitalize both the Advisory Council and the local Chapters. The chapter presidents are the Advisory Council representatives. As 1st VP, I head up the Advisory Council along with board members **Dana Peterson & Rob Dinwoodie**.

And why should we do this? First, I truly enjoy the company of my SRM friends. Two times a year is not enough interaction. Local chapter meetings and tours would increase opportunities. Second, I am impressed how diverse our PNW Section is. We cover two US states and one Canadian province to give us an international flavor. We have ranchers, students, range science professors, extension agents, professionals from federal and state agencies, consultants, and owners or employees of agriculture businesses. Local chapters have this diversity. Third, the knowledge and experience base of SRM is amazing! I learn so much at SRM meetings from the social time alone. We are all dealing with difficult issues. Why not use the power of SRM for problem solving and recommendations? Chapters would be the perfect vehicle.

We are looking for a few good women and men to step forward to assist with this charge. Please contact me if you want to help. Don't know what chapter you are in? See the attached map for chapter boundaries as they were in 1996. Please contact me at work or home.

Work: (509) 754-3023 x103 Home: (509) 754-5640 Kevin.guinn@wa.usda.gov

See you in Merritt, BC in June!

2004 PNW Chapter Officers, to the best of our knowledge

British Columbia	Don Blumenauer
Central Oregon	John Swanson
Southern Oregon	Les Boothe
Mid-Columbia, WA	Dana Peterson
Okanogan, WA	Richard Fleenor
Panorama, WA	Ellen Picard

1996 PNW Section Chapter Map

See hardcopy

**Register for Merritt
by May 31**

“R” for Rodent

By Hugh Barrett, Rangeland Management Specialist, Oregon State Office BLM



Range Management textbooks occasionally show up in my mailbox, as informational copies, I suppose, or maybe so I can help promote their use. Whatever the reason, hey, free book! They are interesting to read, or at least leaf through to see how the art and science is progressing, staying the same, or sliding back down the sand pile.

I've come up with a way of kicking the tires on these books to help me decide if I've got something fresh to read, or just a rehash of the same old stuff. I used to skim from Introduction to Glossary to Index, lingering on new topics or new treatments of the older familiar ones. I'd seek out the author's treatment of derelict concepts like "Range Readiness" and "Proper Use Factors" and from that judge their relevance, awareness, hipness. But now I have a shortcut where I take no more than a moment to decide whether to look closer or just put it aside as...I don't know...same church, different pew...lipstick on a pig... lots of different impressions, but I hope you get my point. I'll get to that shortcut in a bit.

Each spring, on the coldest, wettest, snowiest, windiest, gawd-awfulest, most miserable weekend of the year, John Buckhouse leads his OSU Ranch Planning class on its combination field trip and winter survival course. Camp is nestled in a cold-air sump beside an icy, gurgling little stream (Do you have any idea what the sound of a gurgling stream does to a guy waking up at three in the morning in a cold sleeping bag?) in the high desert between Prineville and Brothers.

There's a hillside on the McCormack Ranch that we visit mid-morning. It over-looks a long, low fetch of juniper-covered hills where I get to describe to the huddled group how much has changed in the teaching and practice of rangeland management in the short time since I was in school. How we were led to consider the pros and cons of dozing juniper into windrows or into piles before burning them. How we used 2,4-D in amine form or in ester form to rid the

landscape of sagebrush and rabbitbrush. And when it came to re-seeding those treated areas, we chose between varieties of crested wheatgrass: Nordan, Siberian or Fairway (and maybe throw in couple of pounds of Ladak alfalfa for wildlife). Oh, the good old days when we just did stuff. *“But I was so much older then; I'm younger than that now...”* It seemed like the right thing to do at the time. The neat thing about science is that if you preface your statement with the caveat, “Based on what we know today ...” you're rarely wrong.

But now we're out here on these field trips looking directly at soil profiles; considering plant residue accumulation, ground cover, infiltration rates and sub-soil permeability; observing pathways of overland flow and telltale debris dams and soil deposition; contemplating soil moisture budgets and envisioning the stiff competition for moisture among western juniper, sagebrush, grasses and forbs; connecting upland watershed function to the timing and duration of streamflow; and making the connections to water quality and fish habitats. We look at soils and slopes where, if fire had its rightful place in the landscape, juniper belongs and where it doesn't; asking if and how we might treat juniper to promote watershed processes. If we treat, do we burn, and if so this year, or how many years from now? What is the risk of cheatgrass or medusahead invasion? Are there enough natives plants on site to re-occupy it, or what shrubs, grasses and forbs should be seeded to recover watershed function, provide wildlife habitat and, yep, livestock forage.

Rangeland management has become more complex and more fascinating than I could have imagined when I was in school and during my years as a puppy Range Con. And what we know now seems so overshadowed by the things we (or I) have yet to learn. In spite of that, or maybe because of that, our profession is evolving in the way we address the management and care of these lands and their attendant resources and their true value. To quote my dear late friend Dick Whitsell, an Oklahoma rancher and conservationist, reacting to BLM's Rangeland Health proposal incorporating this evolving view: “You should be proud of yourselves - you have successfully moved from an agronomic approach to Range Management to a truly ecological one”.

Now, the shortcut: I think the importance of watershed function is of the highest order in rangeland function, but I'm so often disappointed by what I've seen in these textbooks that I don't look for it. It's usually treated as one more use (like grazing, wildlife habitat, recreation, and, oh yeah - watershed) in a multiple use context. Water quality would be an interesting topic to tie to the management of rangelands and a logical place to look, but that too gets treated more like a caboose than an engine. Where to start? Well, if I were to write such a book and my interests were focused on the agronomic or commodity side of these lands, I suppose it would flesh out those things that help or hinder forage production or other economic outputs. For example, I might portray rodents or coyotes in most despicable ways and get right into a discussion about their control. On the other hand, if I wanted to present a more ecological perspective, and build a case for the

importance of ecological functions as essential underpinnings of any subsequent economic use of these lands, I'd probably introduce rodents, for example, in their role in the process of soil development, soil mixing, soil aeration and nutrient cycling, perhaps mentioning the causes of explosions in their population, or the cyclic nature of their populations in relation to disease, predators and predator control. So, when I start my review, I go to the index - to "R" for rodents, then turn to the author's first treatment on the topic where, in the case of this particular book, it reads: "... and destructive smaller animals such as grasshoppers and rodents ..."



What color lipstick is that?

**Register for Merritt
by May 31**

PNW Section Officers

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1 st Vice Pres.	Kevin Guinn	509-754-3553	Director	Les Boothe	541-947-6147
2 nd Vice Pres.	Bob Drinkwater	250-565-4115	Director	Nancy Phelps	503-808-2940
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A Range Guy's Big Adventure, Part II

Victoria Falls & Points South

By Joe Wagner, BLM/USFS Fire Ecologist, Lakeview, Oregon

Editors' note: Joe shares the travel adventures of his 2003 trek to the International Rangeland Congress in South Africa.

Joe's next article will focus on fire ecology, plant ecology, elephant management, and Kruger Park.



Flying to Zimbabwe's Victoria Falls, I saw the cloud of mist, once referred to as "smoke and thunder", above the bushland from 20 miles away. Water falls about 1,000 feet; the mist cloud can rise 2,000 feet above the canyon. The Zambesi River was putting about five million gallons per minute over the falls - definitely a "go-to-place" to experience the awesome power and beauty of nature.

Victoria Falls lodge, surrounded by irrigated vegetation, appeared as a green island in a sea of 3rd year drought vegetation. A chest-high 8 strand electric fence to manage large wildlife was angled about 30 - 40 degrees so that impala could jump it. Warthogs crawled under. It was effective in keeping elephants and cape buffalo away from the lodge and green vegetation. The argument of whether there should be an electric fence or not, was put to rest when a young bull elephant almost entered the hotel lobby, while the crew tried to scare him away.

Elephants are smart; they can defeat some types of electric fences. In Botswana, bachelor bulls grab herd youngsters and push them into the fence to take the shock and break the wires; then the bachelors pass through! Warthogs strategy differs; they back up 20 feet, squeal, charge & squeal as they hit and break the low wire, then keep on running and squealing.

Returning to Johannesburg, I rejoined my pre-congress technical tour on game ranching and resource management. With our guide, we traveled to the Towoomba Research Station. Good Grief!! – did I get on the wrong bus and end up in Australia??? No it was just some sun-stroked Aussie range scientist who started a research station here in the 1930s. Four grazing trials were started in 1934; two are still running – making them the oldest veld grazing trials in South Africa. The principle that growing season rest and realistic stocking rates are the best way to recover damaged veld was developed here. These experiments were not designed for statistical treatment.

We learned terms. "Sour Veld" – higher elevation, higher rainfall, more leaching of soil nutrients, less nutritious forage only good feed for 3 months. "Sweet Veld" – lower elevation, less rain, less soil leaching, better feed even when cured out. Maps and a book describe about 100 kinds of veld.

At Tzaneen, with mountains similar to Montana and Canada, we saw planted pine, coffee, and Eucalyptus forests. South Africa claims to have the largest southern hemisphere man-made forests - row after row of fast growing trees, with understory a little sterile.

Lesheba Wilderness, on top of Soutpansberg Mountains, is a private eco-tourism preserve that has been managed for wildlife with no livestock present. White rhinos (with micro-chip embedded in horns, to discourage poaching) could be approached for photographs. Just missed seeing an Aardvark – termites still scurried from his feeding.

Some Wild Observations

- Impala and warthogs on golf courses add a challenge to the game. I guess the rule is that you play the ball wherever it falls, even if you hit a critter.
- Never turn your back on a Rivet monkey in an open air lunch stop. Craftier and faster than our feathered camp robbers, some will take your drink, then drink with your straw.
- Joburg's highway right-of-ways were either black or on fire. I was told that indigents started the fires. I think it was a low cost litter abatement program.
- Finally saw an unexpected secondary use for those ubiquitous plastic grocery bags. Tie them on a long stick and let it them flap in your corn (maize) field.

Most farming and ranching was subsidized for poorer whites under Apartheid; this is no longer the case. Game ranching is taking over because of current economics. Sport hunting and eco-tourism are major uses of the old ranches, although some provide meat. Wild game can be privately owned and all sorts of animals are bought and sold. Live animals can bring handsome prices.

Mashatu, where Botswana, Zimbabwe and South Africa come together, is one of the largest private game reserves in the region. Though the area was in the third year of drought and showed signs of severe grazing and browsing, we saw lots of wildlife – especially high predators like lions and leopards. In two days we saw five leopards and they all looked to be in good condition.

We observed heavy to severe elephant utilization on trees. Damage was obvious; in non-PC talk, it was “hammered”; many preferred Mopane trees were probably dead. Several of us felt that damage was occurring to the tree component and that changes in tree composition were occurring. We met a graduate student who was finishing her Masters thesis and starting a doctoral study in elephant ecology. She proposed another scenario.

The premise of her PhD study seemed to be that current vegetation conditions were natural based upon the following:

- A. Elephants were numerous in the early 1800s; there must have been a natural balanced use on the vegetation.
- B. About the 1820s – white hunters reached the area with guns.
- C. In 1852 – it was documented that 2500 elephants were shot in the Mashatu/Tuli area.
- D. By the 1890s – the elephants were shot out of the area.
- E. In the mid 1900s – elephants were returned to the area.
- F. 50 to 100 years without disturbance by elephants created unusual growth for the trees.
- G. Currently, utilization on trees is heavy. The question is whether the way things look now is natural and what did it look like in the early 1800s???

This discussion bothered me. I couldn't figure out why. The next morning, it dawned on me that this was similar to Natural Regulation management in Yellowstone Park. Another point: there were no electric fences to hold elephants in the area year-long. I'm curious. What do other folks think about the premise???



Upcoming Events

June 16-18, 2004 **PNW SRM** Summer Field Workshop, Merritt BC
October 21 – 23, 2004 **PNW SRM** Fall Annual Meeting and Field Workshop, SE Oregon
February 2005 **SRM** International Meeting, Fort Worth, Texas
Summer 2005 **PNW SRM** Summer Field Workshop, Washington
Fall 2005 **PNW SRM** Fall Annual Meeting and Field Workshop, Oregon
February 2006 **SRM** International Meeting, Vancouver, B.C., *hosted by PNW Section*

Pacific Northwest Section, Society for Range Management
Caring for basic range resources: soil, plants and water

Want to alert members to an upcoming event? Tell us who your Chapter president is? Give us your new address? Brag about another member's contribution to range management? Tell us a story? Call, write, or E-mail the Newsletter Editors! jlbreese@prinetime.net or tpurring@or.blm.gov



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