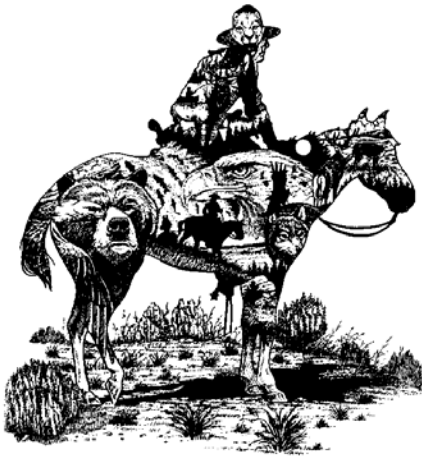


Society for Range Management Pacific Northwest Section

Properly functioning ecosystems provide for long-term sustainability of watersheds, plants, animals and people
Volume 58, Number 1 April 2007



See you in Kamloops
June 20-22
Flying? You'll need a passport. Driving? You'll need passport or birth certificate.

President's Message

Joe Wagner, Lakeview, Oregon

NEWSLETTER

Hi Folks:

The Nevada Section put on an excellent Annual Meeting in Reno, with approximately 1,900 people attending. The PNW Section was well represented; our members helped as volunteers for various sessions. There were many unique events: Nevada Section raffled a beautiful Silver State saddle, a trained wild horse was auctioned, and McAvoy Layne, portraying Mark Twain, visited twice.

As Mark Twain said "Sagebrush is a very fine fuel, but as a vegetable it is a distinguished failure. Nothing can abide the taste of it but the jack-ass and his illegitimate child, the mule." As millions of acres of sagebrush have burned in the last few years, sagebrush has crossed a transition from a failed vegetable to a plant of major concern. Many sessions involved sagebrush management, effects of fire, weed invasion, and wild horse and sage grouse management in sagebrush. The 60th Annual Meeting captured this transition very well.

Our own **John Tanaka** had a broad beaming smile-of-release from 110 days of on-the-road travel as he morphed into the Past-President. It was good to see **Ann Tanaka** and the **Tanaka daughters**, also. **Hugh Barrett** was nominated to run for a position on the Board of Directors in the coming SRM election. We support him. Our members in the Advisory Council helped raise about \$900 for a sign to identify the new SRM office in Wheatridge, Colorado. Many members supported the "Silent Auction", and the Endowment Fund raised \$11,000 for the Parent Society. **John Buckhouse** was a major contributor to the "Noisy Auction" conducted by the Wild Women of the Range! **Les Boothe** and the membership expanded the PNW Section membership by 21

people. Many PNW members were represented on SRM committees, presented papers or posters and organized symposia. Thank you to all!!!

Our PNW students were well represented during the University competitions and the High School Youth Forum (HSYF). Thank you to HSYF students **Kelsey Kennedy** (Sheridan, OR) and **Kurtis Doerfling** (Yarrow, BC) – you did a great job! Thank you to **Will Hudson**, E.Oregon U., for serving as HSYF President this past year. Congratulations to **Amber Greenall**, Thompson Rivers University, on 5th place in the URME competition; to **Jamie Jaberg**, OSU, on 4th place in the university speech contest; and to **Rae Haddow**, Univ. of Alberta, the daughter of our own **Brian Haddow**, for 1st place in the Masters Poster Competition. **Oregon State University** placed 2nd in the University Student Display. We also recognize the parents who support these students. They should all be proud!

We meet next in **Kamloops, B.C., June 20-22**, for our summer workshop. **Vic Wright & Team**, with support from **Nancy Portman** at the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands Office, are putting a real interesting session together. Remember that U.S. travelers need identification. If you drive, take your birth certificate. If you fly, you need a passport. I look forward to seeing you there.

Until then – I leave you with this tidbit of wisdom from Henry Ford –

"Obstacles are those frightful things you see, when you take your eyes off the goal."



Reno Review

“A-ha!” moments from Reno

Several PNW members who attended the 60th International Meeting of SRM shared many and varied “highlights”. Enjoy them, and get to know your fellow PNW SRMers as you read on!

Jim Brunner: 1. Two guys came up, introduced themselves and asked if I remembered them. Of course! I gave them their first jobs in Las Vegas on a watershed inventory crew. That was a great bunch. One got the Chapline Award for Research. Both blamed me for starting their careers! 2. I’m always amazed at the new information coming out. There is always more to learn!

Richard Fleenor: Bats! I had no idea! The 45 species of bats in North America eat insects harmful to crops and forests. Because bats swoop in and drink on the wing, plan water developments carefully. Rules of Thumb: 1. minimize obstructions to the water surface; 2. the larger the water trough the better; 3. good escape routes. Watch for more details from Richard in the next edition!

Mike Borman: 1. There were 75 folks from Canada; a substantial portion from B.C. -- another great representation from BC Chapter in particular, and PNW Section in general. 2. **John Buckhouse** gets credit for orchestrating the “love in” for **Bill Krueger**. Numerous former & current students spoke to the influence Bill has had on their careers & lives. (And some of those “former” students have already retired!)

Carol Engle (MT to OR to AZ): The ’06 HSYF student who gave his talk to the entire SRM at the award ceremony – unbelievable that he is only a college freshman. He was a better speaker than almost anyone else I have ever heard. In his presentation, “Soccer Moms, Senators and Sand Dropseed”, he spoke of the need to educate moms because they are the backbone of the country, and get senators to work to pass good range resolutions, and how all this was important and necessary in order to do proper range management which involved plants such as sand dropseed. He was incredible; I was ready to vote him in as a U.S. senator!

Brian Haddow: 1. Meeting friends, filling information gaps, & meeting new folks – that is what I like about SRM. We have so much to offer in so many disciplines – we should be expounding our diversities, skills & knowledge far beyond our “Range” boundaries. It is incredible to see and feel the knowledge-energy that fills the symposium room. 2. The native drummers at opening ceremony, the Paiute blessing, the Basque dinner and hearing about the Basque herders who came to Nevada. . .

Les Boothe: 1. Congratulations to Nevada Section which won the Member “Round-up” with the highest percent of

new members. However, we can be proud that PNW recruited the most new members, 21, with 12 regular and 9 student members. There will be another contest. PNW can make a run for the money with a good membership drive! Let’s do it! 2. BLM & USFS had a Hiring-on-the-Spot program. Eighteen students were hired “on the spot”. This is a great opportunity for students.

Sandra Wyman: Can cows be bred to stay in the uplands? A 6-year study has been done. What the study did not indicate is the use of riparian loafer offspring versus non-riparian loafer offspring as replacements of those animals culled. Inquiring minds want to know. More details from Sandy in next edition!

Craig Obermiller: 1. Sage-grouse – there are “source” habitats in which birds do well; there are “sink” habitats to which birds are attracted, but chicks & adults die. The use of habitats and the “fitness” of habitats are not necessarily linked. 2. The last synthesis of OHV use and impacts on rangelands was published in 1983. Since then, the use of OHVs has exploded, but little has been done to describe impacts. More coming from Craig!

Recognized in Reno . . .

By John Buckhouse and Tony Svejcar

Reno ’07 was attended by 196 PNW members. 84 gave oral or poster presentations while others participated in symposia, chaired sessions, and participated in committees or boards. Our own **President John Tanaka** presided over this 60th Annual Meeting of SRM. He, **Ann** and their daughters were very much in evidence and were nothing if not elegant! **Mike Malmberg** became chair of the international SRM Awards Committee. **Stephanie Larson** was chosen by other women in range as the 2007 Wild Woman of Range! See Joe Wagner’s message on page 1 for the honors earned by our **university students**.

Outstanding Achievement Awards.

John Williams, OSU/Wallowa County Extension Agent, was recognized for his work in NE Oregon as the “go-to” guy for rangeland management, water quality, land management, weed control and team-building. John serves the land and the people who make their living from the land.

Dr. Roger Sheley, lead scientist for the Agricultural Research Service program in Burns, OR, strives to develop principles for weed management that are based on the best existing ecological knowledge. Roger is a prolific speaker and writer – and outstanding field teacher. Much of his drive to improve rangeland weed management comes from a sincere desire to improve the land for our children.

Reno Review (continued)

Students on the Go in Reno

Students from **Eastern Oregon University** write: “We were one of 19 universities competing in the Undergraduate Range Management Exam, the Student Conclave and the Public Speaking Contest. We attended the wild horse field trip and many technical sessions and poster presentations. We met new people at “Tapping the Top” and learned new skills at the Employment Workshop. Two of us interviewed and obtained permanent full-time positions with the BLM during their “On-the-Spot Hiring Program”.

We thank the PNW Section for your continuing support. Your generous donation helped make it possible for us to attend the 60th Annual Meeting. Thank you!”

Signed: Kyle Jackson, Rachel McNeley, Ricky Knox, Kerry Wilson, Marie Wilson, Kristi Horn, Sadie Duncan, Randi Henderson, Chelsey Wheelhouse, Sam Wyffels, Will Hudson

Will Hudson adds, “Big Thanks to PNW Section for supporting my travels to Reno to serve as president of HSYF”. His advisor, **Mike McInnis** adds, “Will was busy Sunday through Thursday and did an absolutely superb job. He is one of our range profession’s upcoming stars.”

Oregon State University sent 4 vans of students, (2 vans of undergrads and 2 of graduate students). They participated in the contests and several graduates presented research papers, poster and co-chaired technical sessions. **Christine Boulester** was elected to serve as recorder for college student activities in '07-'08.

Some received jobs and others received interviews.

On-the-Spot Hire placed these students with BLM or USFS: Chelsey Wheelhouse and Kyle Jackson of EOU; Sheena Miltonberger, Kristin Coons, Jamie Jaberg, Jamie Wages and Vanessa Prileson, OSU. Other students were offered seasonal jobs through Student Career Experience Program (SCEP).

High School Youth Forum is Represented Well

The High School Youth Forum was “an amazing experience” according to students

Kurtis Doerfling, BC., and **Kelsey Kennedy, OR.** Kelsey writes, “Thank you for allowing me to represent the Section. I learned so much listening to all of the delegate presentations, as well as in many workshops. The great thing about all of this was that the knowledge I gained was something I could apply the second I got home.” Kurtis agreed; he works at a dairy after school, and was ready to put the workshop on “Fecal Analysis for Predicting Diet Quality” to work! Kurtis adds, “Meeting the people from the PNW Section was a highlight. If each HSYF student could meet with their Section that would be awesome. **Will Hudson**, HSYF president, did a fantastic job.” Kurtis and Kelsey strongly encourage their peers to participate in HSYF and the PNW Section to support this “phenomenal program”.

Karen Raven who coordinated the HSYF selection process in BC comments: “PNW members really took time in Reno to visit and interact with our HSYF students, Kurtis & Kelsey Thanks everyone! Both students enjoyed that, and they did a fantastic job representing PNW Section”. **Darci Doerfling** who accompanied her son Kurtis to Reno adds, “As a parent, I observed Kelsey & Kurt when they met with their mentors from the PNW Section. It was a wonder to see these two students, with differing interests, in conversation with people who could broaden their horizons and guide them toward what they might want to be.”



Kurtis, Joe, Karen & Kelsey. Photo by Don Blumenauer.

Here's a Program for You!

Riparian Grazing School

May 15 – 17, Reardan, WA, 22 miles SW of Spokane
Presented by National Riparian Service Team for ranchers, land managers, agency personnel, conservationists
Register by May 8, \$100; \$50 refundable to those completing the school. Contact dlundgren@wadistrict.net

Assessing Riparian Condition

May 30, Redmond & May 31, Sisters, Oregon
Presented by Oregon Riparian Training Network for landowners, ranchers, and agency personnel
Limited to 25 participants. Contact Darren Brumback, 541-573-4558 or Darren_Brumback@blm.gov

Joint International Grassland Congress & International Rangelands Congress

Call for papers (**Titles due June 1, 2007**) Information: <http://www.IGC-IRC2008.org>
June 29 - July 5, 2008, Hohhot, Inner Mongolia, China

Ecological Restoration in SE British Columbia: Grasslands to Mountaintops

Call for papers & posters (**Information due June 1**)
Jackie Morris, 250-837-9311 or www.cmiae.org
October 12 – 13, Cranbrook, B.C.,

PNW Society for Range Management Annual Fall Meeting & Workshop

October 18 – 20, 2007, Corvallis, Oregon
18th, Board & Committee Meetings & Social; 19th, Workshop & Dinner; 20th Breakfast & Business Meeting

61st Meeting of the Society for Range Management with American Forage & Grassland Council

January 27 – 31, 2008, Louisville, Kentucky (note from Florida – “We hope to see you in Looovieville!”)
“Building Bridges – Grasslands to Rangelands” was chosen as the theme to remove a barrier created by labeling land as grassland or rangeland. One expected outcome is to increase communication between grassland managers in the east and rangeland managers in the west.

PNW Section Officers

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2 nd Vice Pres.	Dana Peterson	509-662-6951
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	Teal Purrington	541-923-6924
	Debbie Bunch	541-462-3383

PNW's strength is in its Chapters — contact yours today!

British Columbia — Vic Wright — 250-558-1787
Washington — Richard Fleenor — 509-754-3023 x102
Oregon State U. — Jimmie Hayes
Eastern Oregon U. — Mike McInnis — 541-962-3812
Central Oregon — John Swanson — 541-447-1735
Southern Oregon — Les Boothe — 541-947-6141

Watersheds or Water Catchments?

By Steve Nelle, NRCS, San Angelo, Texas, and a good friend of the National Riparian Team. Steve wrote this article with thanks to Wayne Elmore, PNW Section, for passing along the Plato quote and “for educating many of us about catching water.” We’ll share more of Steve’s writings in future newsletters.

About 2400 years ago, the great historian and scholar, Plato, described the condition of the landscape in ancient Greece as well as a dramatic change he observed. The description below is a paraphrase of the English translation.

“In the primitive state of the country, the mountains and hills were covered with soil and there was an abundance of timber. The plains were full of rich earth, bearing an abundance of food for cattle. Moreover, the land reaped the benefit of the annual rainfall, having an abundant supply of water in all places; receiving the rainfall into herself and storing it up in the soil. The land let off the water into the hollows which it absorbed from the heights, providing everywhere abundant fountains and rivers. Such was the state of the country, which was cultivated by true husbandmen, who made husbandry their business, and had a soil the best in the world and abundance of water.

In comparison of what then was, there now remain only the bones of the wasted body. All the richer and softer parts of the soil have fallen away with the mere skeleton of the land being left. For the fact is that a single night of excessive rain now washes away the earth, and lays bare the rock. Now the land is losing the water, which flows off the bare earth into the sea.”

In the earlier account, Plato described what must have been a near perfectly functioning water cycle. The land was well vegetated, and the soil was rich. When it rained, the land caught the water and stored it. Excess water was slowly released and emerged as springs and flowing streams. As a result of these things working together, the land produced a great bounty of timber and grazing. He went on to describe those early land managers as “husbandmen”, who apparently practiced a high form of land stewardship. Those lands can be accurately described as water catchments, not watersheds.

After some unknown interval of time, Plato wrote a disturbing account of what had happened to the land. Erosion had been rampant, indicating an extreme loss of vegetation. The loss of vegetation and soil was so severe that bare rock was being exposed. Rainfall was quickly transformed into runoff, and very little water was retained on the land. We can assume that springs declined or dried up, and streams ceased flowing continuously. We might be able to imagine the condition of the riparian areas. We can also assume that sedimentation was greatly accelerated, and water quality declined. This land could accurately be described as a watershed, but not a water catchment.

The question we must ask ourselves is – are our lands functioning more as watersheds or water catchments?

As we consider the land and the water cycle, we would do well to revise our thinking, our management and our terminology to emphasize the catching water instead of shedding water.

Ranching is more than food production

Following the Reno meeting, Tip Hudson wrote this news article. Tip is the Rangeland & Livestock Management Educator for Washington State University Extension in Ellensburg, Kittitas County. He can be reached at 509-962-7507 or hudson@wsu.edu

Food production is important; the percentage of the U.S. population that has the skills to produce food is decreasing, about 1% today, and experts from a variety of disciplines have identified food security as a national concern. There is lots of talk throughout the world about what will happen when we begin to feel the effects of oil running out. Many experts believe, with decent logic, that no alternative fuel is going to substitute equally for petroleum. Human ingenuity goes a long way, but petroleum has been so abundant and so cheap that it has fueled a standard of living the world has never known. Any alternative fuels (that will run an internal combustion engine) such as ethanol or biodiesel require significant inputs of petroleum to both produce and process the raw material. Food production and transportation is one segment of our culture likely to change.

Livestock production is significant west of the 100th meridian because cattle and sheep production is one of the only agricultural enterprises that can make efficient and *sustainable* use of semi-arid ecosystems; these food systems do not require petroleum to function indefinitely. The livestock business in Kittitas County, mostly a semi-arid ecosystem, has changed dramatically in the last 100 years. In the 30's and 40's dairying was dominant, hay production supported dairying, and sheep were the species of choice on the range and dry forest. Through the next 40 years, beef cattle increased, dairies decreased, and the focus of hay production shifted toward the higher-value export markets. In the last 20 years, beef cattle have decreased and leveled out, the hay export market has strengthened, and farm ground has begun to come out of production. The number of beef cows declined from 22,300 in 1985 to 13,700 at the last census in 2004. The last time milk cow numbers were reported was in 1997; that year there were 600. Total cattle and calves declined from 58,000 in 1985 (down slightly from 64,000 in 1969, possibly the maximum) to approximately 35,000 today.

The last several years have been seen excellent calf prices but those prices have come down dramatically as the price of corn across the U.S. has gone up, nearly doubling in the Midwest. The principles of supply and demand still work, and so much corn went into ethanol plants following the harvest in fall of 2006 that there was a shortage of feed corn. When it costs feedlots more to feed calves they pass those costs along to their suppliers, cow-calf producers.

Downturns in the cattle cycle are traditionally times of egress from the business. For the health of Western rangeland, I hope this is not borne out in the next decade.

Scientists, environmentalists, ecologists and many other publics have fretted for the last several years over fragmentation of the landscape. This was originally an ownership fragmentation not necessarily visible on the ground and the concern was over differences in management priority. Today it is more severe and visible in effect. Twenty years ago we were concerned with suburban sprawl, but this land-eating phenomenon has been replaced by a more pernicious threat – exurban development. Low-density exurban development is the fastest growing type of land use in the United States. Sometimes called rural sprawl, the term refers to population growth in remote areas that offer scenic and cultural attraction. Exurban development contributes to each of the four major threats to the health of national forests and grasslands identified by the U.S. Forest Service: 1) fire and fuels; 2) invasive plant and animal species; 3) loss of open space; and 4) unmanaged recreation (see <http://www.fs.fed.us/projects/four-threats/index.shtml>).

Perhaps most significant in the West is conversion of adjacent private lands to residential areas. Private ranches have served as valuable buffers to publicly owned land, in part because private lands experience much *less* human disturbance than protected areas. These areas are more likely to be developed because ranches adjacent to public lands are worth more; therefore, they are less likely to get purchased by another rancher. Although livestock management has not always resulted in maintaining rangeland health, the state of

(article continued from previous page)

the science and the willingness of graziers to adopt new practices are much different than they were in the first half of the twentieth century when most rangeland health problems were initiated. The problem is not the cow, it's the management.

Livestock are increasingly understood and used as a versatile and powerful tool for low-cost, natural management of rangelands and forests. While mismanaged livestock grazing has contributed to the problem of invasive species, new evidence suggests that many of the problem plants we have in the West would have arrived and established without the disturbance of overuse by mismanaged domestic livestock (or wild ungulate) grazing. Today, domestic livestock are being used all over the United States to control and eliminate local weeds such as knapweed, yellow starthistle, cheatgrass, juniper, thistle, kudzu, and many others. Prescribed grazing can adjust plant communities toward greater diversity of plant functional groups and species. Grazing animals are used to improve habitat for wildlife species and to expedite arid land revegetation efforts through controlling competition and facilitating seed-soil contact, a more common limiting factor in western restoration efforts than inadequate moisture.

Through a collaborative planning process called Coordinated Resource Management involving all landowners and user groups livestock grazing will be used between Ellensburg and Vantage in the Whiskey Dick area to improve forage quality on the winter range of the resident elk herd and to control certain weed species on land for

which chemical controls are economically infeasible and socially undesirable. The effects of this "prescribed grazing" will be measured and the following years' plans adjusted based on the results.

Dr. Mark Brunson, Utah State University, said recently at the Society for Range Management annual meeting in Reno, Nevada, that the West suffers from a plague of popularity – ranches preserve things that we value. But this attraction is rapidly destroying those things, such as open space and working landscapes. We need to encourage ranchers to make constructive changes to remain profitable. However, one of the chief reasons ranchers retire or quit is because of perceived societal hostility rather than marginal profitability, although this doesn't match with surveys of how the general public views ranching. Most of the identifiable public concerns with ranching are controllable factors such as fence trespass, cow-car collisions, etc. Nevertheless, not least among the factors contributing to a decline in ranches is the absence of new ranchers. The barriers to entry are many and high, and for children who saw their parents work their fingers to the bone to go under or barely break even there is no economic or lifestyle incentive to take up the reins.

Our country needs food producers for many reasons, and we need open space for the production of clean air and water and wildlife habitat and less tangible things that we will not recognize until they're gone.

Mark your calendars!!

Fall Annual Meeting

October 18-20

Corvallis, Oregon



Calendar of Events

- May 15-17 Riparian Grazing School, Reardan, WA. Contact dlundgren@wadistrict.net
- May 30-31 Assessing Riparian Condition, Central OR. Contact Darren_Brumback@blm.gov
- June 21-22 **PNW Section Summer Field Workshop**, Kamloops, BC
- October 12-13 Ecological Restoration in SE BC. Contact www.cmiae.org
- October 18-20 **PNW Section Annual Meeting & Workshop**, Corvallis, OR
- Jan. 26-Feb.1 2008 SRM International Meeting, Louisville, Kentucky

Building Bridges: Grasslands to Rangelands

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

Want to alert members to an upcoming event? Comment on an article? Give us your new address? Brag about another member's contribution to range management? Tell us a story? Contact the Newsletter Editors! jlbreese@crestviewcable.com or Teal_Purrington@or.blm.gov

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