



Society for Range Management Pacific Northwest Section

Properly functioning ecosystems provide for long-term sustainability of watersheds, plants, animals and people
Volume 59, Number 2 April 2008

PNW Summer Field Workshop
June 11-12 (13), Okanogan, WA
Meet you there!

President's Message

Karen Raven, Seba Beach, Alberta

NEWSLETTER

Spring, a great time of year and of new beginnings. I hope this spring finds you well and excited to attend the Washington meeting this June. I have been recruiting new attendees for our Williams Lake October meeting and encourage everyone to bring a potential member to one or both of the meetings. Hugh Barrett and Sonja Raven have offered to help with mentorship coordination. If anyone else is interested, please contact Hugh and Sonja. The more the merrier!

The following article (a bit of a rant) is something that has my blood boiling lately and I just wanted to stimulate some discussion.

Are we relevant? Does anybody know this except us?

I pose these questions because in my work in rangelands and from a provincial perspective, I see the prodigious amount of quality work being done by Rangeland Agrologists (Range Conservationists in the U.S.) that impacts the stewardship on millions of acres of Public Land. They complete hundreds of detailed rangeland health assessments each year, and most importantly, follow up on stewardship issues that need improvement – a vital link to good land management. We practice the art and science of Range Management in our daily work – maintaining ecosystem functions and processes. Does anyone within the agency or broader public know or even understand this?

Many view those “range people” as individuals who count blades of grass for cows to eat.

In actual fact, we are some of the few who work on a broader scale managing and improving ecosystem function and processes. For example, we support biodiversity in our work and in many cases have the best understanding in theory and practice as to how this is expressed on the landscape and what can realistically be supported given site conditions and the influence of climate and processes.

My article is based on some frustration that we are not seen as relevant by the broader community, though we actually understand, support and deliver on a lot of key issues the public wants addressed. Yet we as range managers are often overlooked and others with less expertise or narrow agendas get the job or are viewed as the premier caretakers of the land. So if what we’re doing now isn’t working for us, what are the implications and what should we do about it? The implication from my perspective is that we will not be in key positions of authority when land management decisions are made. Ultimately the land will suffer if those with less expertise and without a holistic view and understanding of ecosystem processes and function take over this management role.

We need to sell our expertise in a language that people, both interagency and the public can understand. Our range credo has been to put our heads down, do a good job, work hard and the work and management will speak for it self. It should – but it doesn’t, to those who don’t have an understanding and are raised on sound bites and Discovery channel.

How do we make ourselves and the work we do relevant to others and why should we?

Because the danger is that if we don’t, we may not be making the key land management decisions or even involved in a meaningful way. In my opinion this would have a profound and potentially negative impact on the land and its sustainable management for future generations.

Hopefully this article and the ideas expressed herein will generate more discussion and ultimately a strategy. As I stated in my last article we have a lot of expertise and experience within our section. Let’s put it to use in making the perception of our profession as relevant as our work.

Warmest regards to you all. See you in June!

Karen

PNW Opportunities – Mark Your Calendar!!

Wanted!!!

Names for PNW Ballot. Call Joe by June 1. One 2nd Vice-President & two Directors for PNW Section, 2009-2012, will be elected.

Contact **Joe Wagner** if you wish to suggest someone or throw your own hat in the ring. Directors and 2nd v.p. serve our Section for three years. 2nd Vice-president moves up to 1st v.p., then Section President. “Campaign Speeches” must be in the summer newsletter so that voting can occur prior to the Annual Fall Meeting in Williams Lake. Contact Joe by June 1. Better yet, call him now. Joe Wagner: 541-947-6175 (daytime) or joseph_wagner@or.blm.gov

Okanogan PNW Summer Workshop wants YOU

- **June 12** ☺ **Poster Presentation** ☺ Have a poster to share at the Wednesday Poster Presentation? Call **Mel Asher**, 509-754-4627 x 40.
- **June 13** 🎵 **Dinner** 🎵 The Okanogan Team wants YOU to entertain folks at dinner! **Tom Brannon** writes: “We know that our PNW membership possesses more talent besides being top-notch range managers. So, bring your skill & equipment and share with us. We welcome anything from a GOOD joke, to music, skits, poetry, tall tale, sword swallowing, . . . Please call **Tom Brannon** so we can line things up: 509-665-8931 or tbrannon@crcwnet.com” (*Hey, do we hear guitars strumming?*)

Forest and Range Owners Field Day Saturday, June 14, Blue Mountains

Hosted by WSU and co-sponsored by Washington Chapter SRM, the field day will focus on “best practices” for the long-term condition of forests and rangelands. To register, ask questions or volunteer assistance, contact **Andy Perleberg** at 509-667-6658 or andyp@wsu.edu . Participants can attend six 50-minute classes taught by experts from Idaho, Washington and Oregon. Classes may include:

Rangeland health “tool” – identify weak areas & translate into management actions; Noxious weed; Grazing following fire; Cost-share programs; Monitoring. . . The final schedule will be available May 1 and posted at <http://www.ncw.wsu.edu/foreststewardship/> Information will also be at your local County Extension Office, State Forestry, or USDA Service Center. *Andy is the WSU Extension Forestry Agent in Wenatchee and serves on the WSU Extension Rangeland Leadership Team, providing expertise in forest grazing. “I’m also concerned about transitions of ranches and forests from one generation to the next.”*

15th Wildland Shrub Symposium – Shrubland: Wildlands & Wildlife Habitats, June 17-19, Bozeman, MT

Montana State is hosting this session of presentations and field trips. PNW’s **Jim Brunner** is presenting Intermountain Sagebrushes with photos of various brushes and thin-layer chromatography slides of various species, sub-species and forms. **Go Jim!!** Information for registration, classes, motels, CEUs and more is at <http://eu.montana.edu/shrublands> If other information is needed, contact Carl Wambolt at cwambolt@montana.edu

PNW Society for Range Management Annual Fall Meeting & Workshop October 2-4, Williams Lake, British Columbia

Save the date for a program focused on ecosystem restoration in Bechers Prairie. Agrologists will discuss early work and current proposals for the Prairie. Hear local rancher perspectives on the impacts of encroachment on grasslands plus impacts of the Military Reserve. See the changes in an older range enclosure. Full information & registration will be in the summer newsletter. *Thanks to BC Chapter President **Bob Fowler** for the heads-up. Bob is at Bob.Fowler@gov.bc.ca*

What can a Riparian Buffer Do?

Steve Nelle, NRCS, San Angelo, Texas

Riparian buffers are strips of grass, trees or shrubs established adjacent to streams, ditches, wetlands or other water bodies.

A properly functioning riparian buffer will accomplish several things.

1. Banks and channels will become more stable with the right kinds and amounts of vegetation, resulting in less erosion.
2. The high energy of flood flows will be dissipated by riparian vegetation, especially woody vegetation.
3. Water velocity will be slowed down, allowing more sediment to drop.
4. Sediment will be trapped and stabilized by riparian vegetation.
5. Excess nutrients will be utilized by riparian vegetation; contaminants or pathogens (if any) will be broken down or destroyed by microbial activity in riparian areas.
6. Organic materials will be trapped by riparian vegetation, providing a more favorable situation for additional plant establishment.
7. Riparian banks and floodplains, when properly vegetated, will act as a sponge to absorb and store a portion of flood flows. This water will then be released slowly to improve the hydrology of the stream after a run-off event.
8. The diversity of vegetation will provide improved habitat for wildlife and aquatic species.

Riparian Buffers

Good for the land

Good for landowners

Good for America

Next issue: How to manage riparian buffers.

October 2-4, 2008
PNW Section Annual Meeting & Workshop
Williams Lake, British Columbia

PNW Section Update

Welcome to PNW SRM

Sue Greer, Condon, OR
Andy Kelher, LaGrande, OR
Ian Levitt, Edmonton, AB
Nik Nilson, LaGrande, OR
Sara Reed, LaGrande, OR
Teresa Smergut, Enterprise, OR
Mike Spicer, LaGrande, OR
Thanks, Curt Yanish, Mike
McInnis, Amy Derby & Debra
Bunch for inviting these folks!

Congratulations

Congratulations to . . .

Tip Hudson, WSU Extension Agent, for successfully completing the proficiency examination to become a Certified Professional Range Manager.

Going to China!

Three (at least) PNW members will go to Hohhot, China in June for the Joint International Grassland & Rangeland Congress. **Joe Wagner**, **Berta Youtie** and **Sandra Wyman** will represent us AND they will have articles to submit for the next newsletter! If you know other PNW folks attending, please let us know.

Reminders

First Response Team is for you!

If you need ideas, counsel, or advice in technical or controversial topics, a team of PNW past-presidents and others is here for you. The immediate Past-president coordinates this activity. Call or send your question to **Joe Wagner**, 541-947-6175 or Joseph_Wagner@or.blm.gov The process works. Try it – you’ll like it!

PNW Bulletin Board

A fine tri-fold felt-covered board, ideal for many uses, is available for chapters. **Fred Hall** “houses” the board. Contact Fred at Fred_C_Hall@plantecolnw.com

Lost Resources

During World War II, **Earl Hardie** received a Purple Heart for service in Normandy, then went to the Battle of the Bulge, and Czechoslovakia. Returning to Oregon State College, he earned his bachelor’s degree in 1949. Earl worked two years for the Pendleton Grain Growers, and several years for the State Department in West Africa. When his father died, Earl assumed responsibility for the family’s Lost Valley Ranch in Gilliam County, Oregon. Care of the land was one of his passions, and led to his becoming the 1978 Oregon Conservation Man of the Year. Earl loved square dancing, bag pipes, serving his community and university, and managing his land with care. *Thanks to Mary Beth Smith, NRCS, Moro, OR, who knew Earl to be a steward of the land.*

Robert W. Harris, SRM charter member, USFS Associate Deputy Chief for Research, National Science Foundation, California Condor Advisory Committee, Oregon Board of Forestry, City Councilman, . . . Bob wore many hats. He earned a forestry degree from the University of Idaho in 1941. A World War II Marine radar officer, he led nighttime operations in the Pacific. Returning to forestry in 1946, he soon had a 10-year study plan to investigate the effects of systems & levels of grazing at the Starkey Experimental Forest & Range in NE Oregon. Bob needed a peer network, contacts with users, and an outlet for research results. SRM and its *Rangelands* met those expectations. Bob served as President of PNW Section, VP of the National Capitol Section, and chaired Section and Parent Society committees. Robert Harris was an “Outstanding Alumnus” of the U. of ID, a “Fellow” of the Society for American Foresters, and proud to be in SRM. *Thanks to Marguerite Harris Fitzpatrick, Milwaukie, OR. for sharing the life of her father.*

PNW Summer Field Workshop

**June 11, 12
(13)
Okanogan,
WA**

PNW Section Officers

President	Karen Raven	780-644-8521
1 st Vice Pres.	Dana Peterson	509-662-6951
2 nd Vice Pres.	Les Boothe	541-947-6147
Past President	Joe Wagner	541-947-6175
Secretary	Brian Haddow	250-719-1414
Treasurer	Craig Obermiller	541-923-2777
Director	Lavona Liggins	250-554-5211
Director	Tip Hudson	509-962-7507
Director	Brian Haddow	250-719-1414
Director	Pete Schreder	541-947-6054
Director	Mike Dedels	250-371-6500
Director	Michael Fisher	541-383-7755
Membership	Les Boothe	541-947-6147
HSYF	Pete Schreder	541-947-6054
Awards	John Buckhouse	541-737-1629
Newsletter	Lynne Breese	541-447-6762
	jlbreese@crestviewcable.com	
	Teal Purrington	541-410-7728
	Debbie Bunch	541-462-3383

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

British Columbia

Bob Fowler, Burns Lake, 250-692-2275

Washington

Mel Asher, Ephrata 503-754-4624

Oregon State University

Sarah Noelle

Eastern Oregon University

Mike McInnis, La Grande, 541-962-3812

Central Oregon

John Swanson, Prineville, 541-447-1735

Southern Oregon

Les Boothe, Lakeview, 541-947-6141

Mountain Meadows – Here Today, Gone Tomorrow?

*Note from your editors: Summer of '98, Williams Lake, BC. Tim Ross points to trees and says, "They are encroaching". "What? Well, up here in BC, maybe, but OUR pines wouldn't do that." Fall of '99, Cranbrook, BC. Fred Hall, Bob Gray, Mike Malmberg & Maurice Hansen point to the meadow: "Encroachment". We cringe. We come home to Dixie Meadow in Central Oregon. Fellow editors **Robert & Teal** go out with us to take core samples. We count. "80 years". There was a saw mill nearby in the 1920's. There should be remnant stumps. There aren't. **E. William "Bill" Anderson** visits and gently asks, "Do you see what's happening to the meadow?" "But, not our pines. They wouldn't, would they?" "Yes." See **Bob Fowler's** lead-in to the **PNW SRM return to Williams Lake this fall**. There it is again, "encroachment"- 1998-2008.*

Mountain Meadows – Here Today, Gone Tomorrow? is Issue 94, June 2007, of **Science Findings** published by USDA Pacific Northwest Research Station. Fred Swanson, research geologist has been studying forest disturbance processes and landscape dynamics in the PNW for 35 years. Cooperators include researchers from Univ. of Victoria, Univ. of WA, and OSU. Meadow loss touches all of us in PNW Section of SRM.

From Issue 94: "Cascade meadows are biological hotspots. They are home to unique communities of plants that cannot survive under the forest canopy. Deer and elk depend on them for forage. Predatory birds, unimpeded by trees, use meadows as hunting grounds. And a diversity of butterflies, moths and insects rely on meadow flowers for pollen and nectar.

The trouble is, through much of the Northwest, montane meadows – those at elevations where snowpack is not deep or persistent – are slowly giving way to forest in a phenomenon referred to as

'conifer encroachment'".

The PNW Research Station studies suggest land management implications.

"Mountain meadows have been susceptible to conifer encroachment during the past century. In some instances, this may reflect a process of contraction following a disturbance such as wildfire. Elsewhere, it may reflect a change in land use, such as cessation of sheep grazing, or a shift in climate. That meadow types vary in their susceptibility to encroachment provides a basis for prioritizing current restoration efforts and anticipating future maintenance needs.

The most effective strategy for conservation and maintenance of meadow habitats is one that targets tree removal during the early stages of encroachment. At later stages, restoration is likely to be hindered by a variety of factors: loss of meadow species from the vegetation, absence of a soil seed bank for most meadow species, and changes in soil properties that facilitate further recruitment of tree seedlings. Restoration efforts should target forest-meadow edges or small tree islands to maximize the potential for dispersal of meadow species.

Studies of a chronosequence of open meadow to old forest indicate that soil seed banks are dominated by early-successional herbs. Management activities that disturb or heat the soil may facilitate germination and growth of weedy species that can compete with species targeted for restoration."

The full paper is at <http://www.fs.fed.us/pnw/science/scifi94.pdf>

*Thanks to: Pacific Northwest Research Station, USDA Forest Service, Science Findings. Thanks also to **John Buckhouse** who shared his Issue 94 with us.*

Fire on the Land – a Burning Need!

It has been a good snow year in the PNW. Ground moisture is good. Plants will do well. When things dry out, what then? A good fire year, too? Here are two approaches to fire.

Rangeland Fire Protection Association – Neighbors Helping Neighbors

A **Rangeland Fire Protection Association (RFPA)** is a voluntary non-profit corporation to prevent and suppress range fires in a local area. It is governed by the members in a community who wish to protect their homes, barns, crops and range. Participants can get assistance in purchasing equipment and receive training in wildland firefighting from the Oregon Department of Forestry. RFPAs are not “government control”, “taxing districts”, or Rural Fire Districts. **Rural Fire Protection Associations are Neighbors Helping Neighbors promote good range management through protection and the use of fire.** Eleven RFPAs are active in Central & Eastern Oregon. For information, contact **Gordon Foster**, Rangeland Fire Protection Coordinator, Oregon Department of Forestry, Prineville, OR. 541-447-5658

North Central Washington Prescribed Fire Council

In 2006, over 50 people representing nearly 30 federal, state, county, tribal and private groups attended a Prescribed Fire Workshop in Chelan, WA. Presenters from Florida (*which has a model prescribed fire program*) discussed fire dependent ecosystems, prescribed fire and prescribed fire management. From that meeting, the Council formed with its mission **to protect, conserve, and expand the safe use of prescribed fire on the North Central WA. landscape to meet both public and private management objectives.** From that, four objectives were identified:

1. Promote understanding of benefits of prescribed fire.
2. Promote safe and responsible use of prescribed fire.
3. Promote an accurate application of smoke management policies.
4. Provide communications regarding prescribed fire objectives, techniques and issues.

The purpose of the NCW PFC is predicated on situations pertaining to the area:

- Fire is an ecological imperative and the fire of choice is prescribed fire.
- No fire is not an option.

- No smoke is not an option.

The Council’s highest priority is to address four issues precluding prescribed fire (Rx).

1. Lack of qualified Rx burn managers to conduct Rx burns.
2. Rx burners are liable for damages from fire or smoke regardless of qualifications & precautions.
3. Confusing policy, laws, rules and restrictions regarding prescribed fire and smoke.
4. Lack of understanding about Rx fire by general public and lack of coordination and communication between Rx fire managers and regulators.

Education about importance of fire by-products in fire dependent ecosystems is crucial to understanding and acceptance of prescribed fire. By-products and effects include: 1) seeds of certain plant species, when exposed to wood-derived smoke, have a higher germination rate and the seedlings are more vigorous in growth than cohorts not exposed to wood-derived smoke; 2) changing soil pH to favor fire dependent species; 3) heat induces germination of some seeds; 4) fire dependent (use less water) species are favored over fire sensitive (use more water) species, thus impacting landscape water regime; 5) exposure of mineral soil provides conditions needed by seeds of certain species to germinate; 6) maintenance of a mosaic of varying stages of plant succession meeting the needs of numerous wildlife species; 7) reduction of accumulation of organic matter which in turn reduces fire severity; 8) release of nutrients tied up in twigs, branches, limbs, leaves, needles, stems of vegetation and make available for use by living plants; 9) reducing density and distribution of both plant and animal diseases and parasites; 10) maintaining healthy functioning ecosystems.

To learn more about the NCS PFC, contact **Dale Swedburg**, Manager, Sinlahekin, Driscoll Island and Chiliwist Wildlife Areas, Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife, P.O. Box C, 1680 Sinlahekin Road, Loomis, WA 98827 phone: (509)223-3358

http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/sinlahekin/index.htm

*Thank **Tom Brannon** for introducing you to **Dale Swedberg**, Chair of the NCW PFC, who says, “I like talking to people about fire ecology, fire dependent ecosystems and fire effects as related to fish and wildlife habitat. I like to beat the drum regarding the need for Rx fire as a tool for land management.”*



Calendar of Events

June 11-12 (13), 2008
June 29-July 5, 2008

October 2-4, 2008
Feb. 8-13, 2009

Summer 2009
Fall 2009

PNW Section Annual Meeting & Workshop, Okanogan, WA
Joint International Grassland & Rangeland Congress, Hohhot, China
You know some folks who are going!

PNW Section Annual Meeting & Workshop, Williams Lake, British Columbia
62nd Annual Meeting of the Society for Range Management, Albuquerque, NM
Merging Trails: Culture, Science, and Innovation

PNW Section Field Workshop, Oregon
PNW Section Annual Meeting & Workshop, Washington

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