

Nebraska Section SRM Council Meeting
October 9, 2012
Quality Inn, Ogallala, NE

Curtis called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm MT at the Quality Inn, in Ogallala, NE. Those present were Michael Croxen, Jon Soper, Scott Cotton, Bob Broweleit, Kristin Miller, Curtis Talbot, Shelly Taylor, Cindy Tusler, Chuck Butterfield, Daryl Cisney, and Angie Petersen. Keith Klement attended from SRM headquarters.

Minutes: Minutes were reviewed and a few spelling changes were made. Motion to approve the minutes from June was made by Kristen Miller, seconded by Bob Broweleit. The minutes from June were approved.

Treasurer's Report: The balances of the two checking accounts and three CDs as of Sept. 30th were as follows: \$9275.23 for the SRM account, \$4553.62 for the Range Judging account, \$6804.53 for the Nebraska Section CD, \$2566.97 for the HSYF fund, and \$6282.99 for the NE State Range Judging CD. All three CDs matured this year. All were rolled over, but the interest rate has changed. All were previously 0.15% with monthly interest rates. They now have an interest rate of 0.32% on the 24 month CDs and a 0.25% interest rate on the 15 month CD with quarterly interest rates. We also received another \$1250 anonymous donation to be used for High School Youth Forum and would like to thank that donor for their continued support! Motion to approve the treasurer's report was made by Chuck Butterfield, seconded by Mike Croxen. The treasurer's report was approved.

Committee Reports:

2012 Annual Meeting: Jon Soper reported that everything was ready to go for the meeting the next day. Two students will be presenting for the HSYF. Three graduate students will also be presenting: Ben Beckman, Ben Schiltz, and Ellen Miller. Walt Schacht with UNL will be speaking about his trip and the Rangelands of Namibia. Laura Snell and Lars Anderson will also be speaking about their experiences in Namibia and the management of game farms and nature preserves in Namibia. John Heaston from The Nature Conservancy will discuss public relations work in his agency including private land ownership and riparian areas. Calamus Outfitters, an outfitter as well as a working ranch, will present what they do to promote business despite their rural area. The day will wrap up with the Crazy Auction and banquet. On Thursday we will tour the Keystone Sod Farm, owner Loren Soper will discuss the business and how it has diversified his ranching operation; and the Rex Ranch – Eldred Unit, manager Chip Ramsey will discuss how acquisition and management of such a large unit and how they work toward their goals. Thank you to Jon for preparing and planning the Annual Meeting with such short notice.

Nominations: Daryl Cisney reported with a committee report submitted by Dave Cook. Two excellent candidates agreed to run for the council position this year. Candidates this year were Shelly Taylor and Karla Jenkins. The newly elected council member will be announced tomorrow. Electronic balloting was used again this year. Paper ballots were sent to members who do not have e-mail. Participation in voting has increased from 2011.

Awards: Michael Croxen encouraged members to nominate individuals for next year. We have no awards being presented this year.

Range Camp: Shelly Taylor reported that Range Camp was held June 11-15th this year with 59 students. Outreach was extensive with letters or emails throughout Nebraska to high schools, NRCS and NRD offices, UNL extension offices, and newspapers. There is also information up on the Nebraska Section SRM website. There is also a Facebook page maintained to promote Range Camp as well. The financial and overall support of sponsoring ranches continues to be essential to the camp's success. Thank you to all of the sponsoring ranches for supporting Range Camp. One third of the students were returning campers. This year's winning ranch crew was the Reverse S S Crew – Adkinson Inc., with team leader Jeff Nichols. The Overall Top Camper was Taylor Hornickel from Ord. The Top First Year Camper was Jared Crosley from Wilsonville. Twelve adults spent the entire week at the camp with 14 other professionals supporting Range Camp by leading tours and providing presentations on range-related information. Wayne Rodocker Ranch was the site of the Ranch Tour; a special thank you goes out to them. Also thank you to Leah Carson's crew for putting together the Range Judging Contest. All students were encouraged to compete for the HSYF. Range Camp continues as one of the Nebraska Section's most important activities and its success has been and continues to be dependent upon the involvement of Section members, Nebraska ranches, and other professionals and organizations that support the activity. Thank you to everyone who helps make Range Camp possible. Thank you to the Sandhills Task Force and the Nebraska Grazing Lands Coalition who continue to sponsor Range Camp. Thank you to all of our sponsors who continue to support Range Camp and help keep costs down for individual campers.

The 2013 Range Camp is scheduled for June 10-14. Due the high number of students this year it was discussed as to how many students we may have to limit the Camp to next year and how those limitations would be placed. Having to put a limit on the number of students is a great problem to have as it shows the younger generation being interested in range management. Next year the Nebraska Grazing Lands Coalition grant will run out unless they choose to renew it. We need to continue to look for additional sponsorship to keep registration costs down.

Next year is also the 50th Anniversary and we would like to have a special celebration to commemorate this anniversary. There was a brief discussion about possibilities on what could be done in regards to this celebration. Possible ideas will be further discussed in January. Shelly also agreed to get some information in Rangelands concerning the 50th Anniversary of Range Camp. There could also be a poster presentation or possible an HSYF presentation regarding the 50th Anniversary or history of Range Camp.

HSYF: The Nebraska Section has traditionally annually sponsored delegates to the High School Youth Forum at the winter parent Society meetings. Cassidy Linabery from Valentine, Laura Gorecki from Farwell, and Tevyn Baldwin from Mitchell represented Nebraska at the meeting in Spokane, Washington in January 2012. All three did well with Lara receiving 4th place and Cassidy receiving 5th place. This year two range campers will participate in the Section Meeting tomorrow, Cody McBride from Burwell and Cheyenne Doremus from Polk, for the opportunity to represent Nebraska the Annual Meeting in Oklahoma City. We may only sponsor one student to the meeting this year in Oklahoma City, OK.

Range Judging: Daryl Cisney, Range Judging Committee Chair presented a report. This is a standing committee of the Nebraska Section and involves many non-members who participate and work to help host these contests. Thank you to everyone how helps with this contests! Six area range judging contests are normally held across Nebraska. This year Area 5 cancelled their contest. The Old West Regional was also cancelled due the weather and travel concerns. The combined area contest participation was reported at 1102 participants. The State Contest was held in Stanton and

had a total of 369 participants. It was reported that all the contests went really well with few problems or concerns. The Ag Ed instructors were very enthusiastic about the program and continue to support participation. Participation would not be possible without the support of the Ag Ed instructors and FFA programs across the state. We have many other partners who help in hosting our contests including the Game and Parks Commission, NRDs, NRCS, Forest Service, University of Nebraska Extension, and the landowners, who we want to recognize and thank. This year we had banners with the SRM logo welcoming students to the State Range Judging contest with our sponsors. Daryl will work on developing better cases for them. The banners were great to publicize NE SRM.

The 2013 Area and State Range Judging Contests are already in the planning stages and they are trying to get tentative dates set earlier. Discussion was held about the possibility of increasing participation by multiple states in the Old West Regional Contest and approaching other Section presidents to redevelop communication. All the contests try to include an educational program after the students are done with the contest itself so that it will continue to be a school sponsored event. It's tough to get students to participate as other student activities and commitments continue to increase. Thank you to all who help support the Range Judging Contests and continue to encourage participation.

Envirothon: Chuck Butterfield reported. Chuck was unable to attend this year, but Austin Horn filled in for him. The Nebraska State Envirothon was held in Halsey, NE, on May 5th, 2012. Eleven schools competed with 80 students competing. The team from West Holt, coached by David Gibbens, won the State and Range competitions. They then competed at the International Envirothon in Selinsgrove, PA against 55 other teams. Next year's state competition will be in eastern NE, with the International Envirothon to be held in Montana with a focus on rangeland management. It should be noted that Nebraska was the first state to add range to the competition in 1992 there have been many questions from other states about how to add range into their programs. Many times the International competition is held on the coast. Logistically it is hard to host in Nebraska and we have not been able to do so, but would like to see it in the future.

Thank you to Austin Horn for filling in. There was also discussion concerning how to get more Ag Ed instructors and FFA sponsors trained for both Envirothon and Range Judging. There is a focus coming out of the State Legislature concerning increasing Ag Education programs in the classroom, which would be great to get youth back into some of these programs.

Scholarship: Casey Lancaster reported that the scholarship committee had received several applications for the two \$1000.00 scholarships that will be given out tomorrow at the Nebraska Section Annual Meeting. Thanks to an anonymous donor who helps to provide one of these scholarships. One winner is from Chadron State College and the other winner is from UNL. Discussion was held as to the concern of lack of participation and interest in students applying for the scholarship. Discussion included handing out scholarship applications to students at the National SRM meetings and finding new ways to remind students to apply such as through e-mail or new ways such as Facebook and twitter to reach more students. This year they did have a digital form that was able to be filled out and saved on the computer, which was easier for the students. Casey also read a letter from Nick Simonson regarding his intentions to step-down from the scholarship committee as Co-Chair, but that he has enjoyed being involved in the past. Casey also expressed that he can no longer be the Chair of this committee, but would still like to serve on the committee. Discussion was held regarding the potential for a new chair to replace Nick. Thank you to both Casey and Nick for their years of involvement and service.

There was also discussion regarding the previous discussion about hosting a Plant Judging Contest and URME practice to help students practice for the National Annual Meeting. This was

hard to get organized this year and this year's Nebraska Section meeting is during mid-term exams for college students.

Membership: Kristin reported that we currently have 102 members. It tends to fluctuate between 95 and 105. We have lost a few members that were multiple Section members. It is only \$5 for each additional Section membership. Kristin continues to maintain a list of current and expired members. Mike Croxen has been helping to contact expired members to encourage them to renew their membership. There are still a few problems regarding the transition to Allen Press, who now maintains SRM memberships, but there have been a lot less and when a concern or problem is brought forth it has been handled quickly. There was a brief discussion concerning new ways to alert members to expired membership such as through a text message. The possibility of automatic renewal of memberships for those who chose that option was also discussed. Thank you to Kristin and Mike for their efforts. She is also serving on the membership committee at the national level working to handle any issues that come up and deciding if there are any changes that need to be made regarding membership.

Producer Affiliations: Scott Cotton reported. He has been working with and is affiliated with several other groups such as NGLC, Nebraska Cattlemen, and Independent Cattlemen of Nebraska (ICON). He discussed the summer tour held on June 19th, 2012 sponsored by SRM and NGLC. Approximately 230 people attended and he has received many positive comments regarding the tour. It is a great way to get landowners engaged and discussion was held as to if we would again be involved in organizing a summer tour next year. It requires a great amount of planning, coordination, and availability of tour sites. Discussion was held about ideas that Scott could take back to the NGLC meeting as possible ideas for another tour. Discussion included topics such as better transportation for so many people to decrease the number of vehicles traveling into each site, and the possibilities of future tour focus topics such as drought and grazing management in drought conditions and recovery, and grazing management after fire. Everyone express support for doing the tour again, possibly in close timing with the Range Camp 50th Anniversary celebration. Timing for the tour was discussed and late June seems to provide the most opportunity to avoid other commitments such as harvest and local fairs. The possibility of locations was also discussed as well as other collaborators or sponsors that may want to be involved. If you have any ideas for next year please bring them forward soon to Scott Cotton.

Historian: Jeff Nichols submitted a report. The Nebraska Section SRM 60 Year History 1952-2012 publication has been updated. Finishing out the year at the business meeting in Ogallala the publication is ready to be loaded to the section's website. The Section website will be the sole source of this publication going forward unless there is a demand for printed hard copies by the membership. He will file a written report for the meeting and continue to collect and file the committee reports. He also continues to submit articles for the newsletter titled, "Do You Know What Happened in the Nebraska Section..." He welcomes any ideas or suggestions for improving this section of the newsletter, and if anyone is interested in working with the Historical affairs of the Section to please contact him.

Investments: No report. A report will be available tomorrow at the meeting.

Information and Education: No report. A report will be available tomorrow at the meeting.

Student Activities: No report. Students from both Chadron and UNL will report tomorrow at the meeting.

Newsletter: Kristin Miller reported that she has completed and gotten out one newsletter so far. There will be another one in November after the Nebraska Section meeting. There will continue to be just 2 newsletters per year with other information that does not fit the newsletter schedule to be sent out by e-mail. She currently mails out 12 copies, but would like to e-mail these if possible in the future. She continues to encourage students and members to submit articles or updates about their projects to be included in the newsletter. Allen Press has offered to provide the service of sending out mass e-mails to the membership, but they would continue to come from Kristin and responses would be sent to Kristin. She has not used this service yet, but plans to in the future. Three businesses pay advertising fees and are included in the newsletter, but should also be included on the website. Thank you to Kristin for continuing the newsletter publication!

Report from the SRM National Board of Directors:

Keith Klement from the SRM Board of Directors was present to report.

- Keith has served on the Board of Directors for 3 years and will step down in 4 months. Curtis Talbot will be moving onto the Advisory Council.
- Allen Press continues to control the membership activities and there have been fewer problems regarding memberships and renewals. If there is a problem, they have been quickly addressed and resolved. They are also developing plans to gain memberships to help sponsor the website and other operations.
- The Director of Finance is looking to implement some more finance changes so that accounts can be reconciled faster. They are also looking for a new accountant as the current one is stepping down.
- Due to a drop in membership there has been reduced income. The Finance and Endowment Committees are working to get new investment and financial policies in plan and develop a better long term financial plan. In the past the Annual Meeting is SRMs largest source of income. This is no longer enough to cover all of the expenses and there is a need to look for new ways to generate income and cut expenses. The Financial Task Force is a new ad-hoc committee to deal with this need. Spokane did make a profit and not a loss for SRM in 2012.
- SRM is transitioning to a virtual office, as the previous office building where SRM was based out of in the past is up for sale. There have been a few offers made on the building, but all of have been unacceptable so far.
- Regarding the Annual Meeting in Oklahoma City, there has been an effort to coordinate between several entities to increase possible training sessions during the meeting so that employees could be sent to the meeting and qualify it as training.
- Rangeland Ecology & Management (REM) is becoming a prime journal and both BioOne and JSTOR archive both REM and Rangelands, and are available on-line. Not every member receives the Rangeland publication. SRM is under contract to print a certain number of publications, with only half being used.
- The website continues to improve. There was some discussion as to why at times members have encountered the site not being recognized as a trusted site. There was also discussion about Rangeland News becoming available in an electronic version that could be printed off as a .pdf document. Rangleands.org has had an increase the number of hits, with over half being new visitors. Rangelands News has had fewer hits on-line.
- The deadline to vote is Friday Oct 11, 2012 for new Board members. We need nominations to serve on the National Board as there are currently no candidates.
- There has been an effort to revise the SRM Strategic Plan at the Oklahoma City Annual Meeting. Currently it is more of a mission statement rather than a strategic plan as it does not cite any benchmark goals or ways to quantify or judge progress. There needs to be hard, strong, quantifiable goals set. This would also allow a cost efficiency analysis to be done.

- The Endowment Fund has had a new financial policy approved and the Finance Committee is currently reviewing it.
- Things are going well regarding planning the Annual 2012 Meeting in Oklahoma City. The registration is still open. The hotel is not full yet despite some members being told that it was.

New Business:

Cindy Tusler is currently enlisted in the Army Reserve and will likely be deployed to Afghanistan during 2013 to serve as a member of the National Guard's Ag Development Team #4. She will serve as a Rangeland Management Specialist, with the primary mission of training the Afghani extension educators. Due to her deployment Bob Broweleit and Cindy will switch positions on the council and planning efforts on the 2013 Nebraska Section meeting. Bob Broweleit will plan for the 2013 meeting and Cindy will plan the 2014 meeting. Thank you to Cindy for your service and we look forward to your safe return and hearing about your experiences.

Chuck Butterfield discussed the Nebraska Range Short Course. This course has been organized by Chuck Butterfield and Walt Schacht and is a joint project between the Chadron State College, UNL, and Nebraska Section SRM. There was not great attendance this year and they just broke-even. Some of the focus or support for the program has been lost and we need to increase support from the Nebraska Section SRM. Ideas for increasing participation and possibly changing timing of the course were discussed. The idea of also making it a summer training session was also discussed. In 2012 it was at the same time as the NGLC/SRM summer tour. We need ideas for getting greater attendance, particularly by producers. The course can also be taken for college credit. They may change the program slightly to focus on drought and fire recovery next year.

The NRCS Human Resources personnel would like to visit students or host a program on how to get jobs with the Federal government. They are available in Lincoln to meet with UNL students in-person, but may be able to correspond with Chadron via other routes.

The 2017 SRM Annual Meeting will be in Minneapolis, MN. They may partner with the North Central SRM Section in co-hosting the meeting. There is a lot of work and planning that goes along with organizing these meetings and few people that have experience planning these meetings for so many people. There has been discussion on the need to develop a template and timeline to help plan these meetings, and maybe even one individual that is assigned the task of helping to coordinate and plan these meetings from year to year.

Jon Soper discussed the possibility of developing a NE Section SRM Facebook page. The parent society and Range Camp both have a Facebook page. Soper would like to develop one to reach out to the younger generations who use Facebook to correspond and get information. It is a big task to keep it updated.

Meeting adjourned at 8:25 pm.

Respectively submitted,

Angie Petersen
Secretary-Treasurer