



NE Section Council

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Amanda Hefner

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Nebraska Section Society for Range Management Newsletter



Section Meeting Held in Gothenburg on October 12-14

The Nebraska Section held another successful annual meeting, technical training, and tour in Gothenburg, Neb. on October 12-14, 2016. The focus of the program was Capitalizing on Range Management Opportunities.

The morning program began after the business meeting with two presentations from high school students competing to be High School Youth Forum delegates (see article on page 2). Then Graduate students from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Jace Stott, Brad Schick, Josiah Dallmann, and Martina LaVallie, presented information from each of their respective projects.

The afternoon program began with Jim Robb, the director and senior economist for the Livestock marketing Information Center in Denver, Colo. summarizing the current outlook for the livestock industry in Nebraska.

Then Skip Marland, a real estate appraiser and land broker/manager from North Platte, Neb. discussed approaches for setting fair pasture rental rates between landlords and tenants.

A historical perspective and forecast on drought tied to stocking decisions was presented by Justin Derner, from the USDA-ARS in Cheyenne, Wyo.

Applying the behaviors of cattle for grazing management was led by Mitch Stephenson, a range management specialist with the University, located in Scottsbluff, Neb.

Dirac Twidwell, rangeland ecologist within the University concluded the session summarizing his experiences with red cedar control.

The students from CSC and UNL once again brought unique items for the crazy auction.

The evening concluded with the banquet and historical presentation on Nebraska pioneer John Bratt by Jim Griffin, curator at Lincoln County Museum. Bob Browleit received the Range Service Award. Scott Stout received the Rangeman's Award, and two scholarships were presented (see articles on page 3).

The tour was held on Friday at the Broken Box Ranch, owned and operated by the Sundstrom Family, recipients of the 2012 Twin Platte NRD Grassland Award and 2014 NE-SRM Rangeman's Award.

Congratulations and thanks to Jeff Nichols for arranging a wonderful meeting!

President's Corner from Jeff Nichols

We have had a beautiful fall so far. I hope everyone has taken advantage of this nice stretch of weather to get caught up on all their outdoor activities and ready for winter. So far, this year is reminding me a lot of 2011 when we had good moisture through most

of the growing season, abundant grass growth, and then the rain shut off in the fall. We all know where it went from there in 2012 and I certainly hope we are not headed for a repeat drought of that severity. The drought monitor map is showing more areas of

"abnormally dry and moderate drought" creeping in to the western and south central portions of Nebraska. Let's hope that this trend reverses soon.

I want to thank the NE-SRM membership for a strong
(continued on page 3)

Summaries of submitted Council Reports

Treasurers Report

The balances of the two checking accounts and three CDs as of October 15th, 2015 were as follows: \$4378.45 for the SRM account, \$6280.67 for the Range Judging account, \$6868.91 for the Nebraska Section CD, \$2586.91 for the HSYF fund, and \$6342.91 for the Nebraska State Range Judging CD.

Range Camp

Shelly reported that Range Camp was held June 8-12th, 2016 at the Nebraska State 4-H Camp at Halsey. This was the 52nd year for Range Camp. Thirty-two high school students attended this year's camp. This was a large decrease in attendance from last year. Sara Winslow acted as co-chair this year. A huge thank you to her for volunteering and taking on this task. Thank you for all of the entities that sponsor students to attend. Local area ranches sponsor the Ranch Crews as well as entities such as Sandhills Task Force and the Nebraska Grazing lands Coalition also provide financial support that make this camp possible. Thank you to all the sponsors. Eight adults served as crew leaders as well as 14 other professionals who helped with presentations. Registration rates did increase to \$325, due to rising costs. Thank you to all the people who help make camp possible. Top overall camper was Jaythan Scheideler. Top first year camper was Henry Scheideler. It was a great group of kids this year.

HSYF

Trent Elsen was elected as HSYF president for the upcoming meeting.

After several years of assisting campers attending the HSYF youth to the International Meeting, Shelley Kelly will not be able to attend this year due to time conflicts. If anyone attending the International Meeting and would be able to fly with the campers and assist them with their meeting, please contact Shelley and let her know.

Kasey VanWinkle of Palmer, Neb. and Cade Francis of Imperial, Neb. presented during the meeting. (continue on pg 4)

Range Judging

A report was submitted by Kristin Miller. It was the 61st year of Range Judging Contests. There were a total of 1285 students who participated. There were 427 state contestants. Nebraska will be the 2017 host for the Old West Regional. There are updates to the Range Judging Handbook this year. Instead of Range Judging sites there will be Ecological Site Descriptions. Nadine worked hard this summer to get ready for the 2016 contest. There was a workshop this summer for instructors and there may be future workshops next summer to help. North Dakota was the hold for Old West Regional. It was the same time as our area contests. The handbook may

potentially raise the cost to participate to \$3.00 to help cover rising costs. Thank you to Daryl, Kristin and the entire committee who helped manage the contests. Great job and thank you to everyone who helped.

Envirothon

The Envirothon study guide needs to be updated and they are working to find new reference materials and make revisions. The State Envirothon is scheduled to be held on April 27th, possibly around Nebraska City. It was a great learning experience to attend and help with setting up the contest.

Scholarship

Eight applications were received this year. If anyone is interested in taking over for Jess Milby as chair of this committee please let us know. There will be two \$1000.00 scholarships awarded.



Do you have information you want to share with other SRM members?

Send an email to

Laura.Rubeck@ARS.US

DA.GOV or

amanda.hefner@tnc.org

High School Youth Forum Competition at Section Meeting

Two students that successfully completed the Nebraska Youth Range Camp this summer gave presentations at the Nebraska Section Society for Range Management meeting in Gothenburg, Nebraska on October 12, 2016.

Cade Francis of the Imperial, Neb. area's presentation summarized range judging.

Kasey VanWinkle of Palmer, Neb. highlighted her presentation on prescribed fire.



Kasey VanWinkle



Cade Francis

President's Corner *(continued)*

showing at the annual meeting held at Gothenburg in October. We had a very successful meeting with over 100 folks in attendance for the program on Thursday and over 70 people at the banquet that evening. I was particularly pleased with the turnout of college students from UNL and CSC. It was great to see the very bright future for the range management profession through their presentations and participation. Thank you all for your generous support of the student's activities by being good bidders at the crazy auction.

Congratulations to the recipients of NE-Section SRM awards. Scott Stout of Curtis Nebraska, received the Rangeman's Award for his strong commitment to the prescribed burning efforts over the last decade. Bob Broweleit of Seneca, was presented the Range Service Award for his strong commitment and service to the Nebraska Section-SRM in recent years. The NE-Section scholarships were presented to Dakota Altman, student at UNL and Kylie Knigge, student from CSC.

The SRM tour of the Broken Box Ranch

hosted by the Sundstrom family was well attended. There were over 50 people who enjoyed the beautiful October morning and got to see the excellent range management being implemented on the ranch. The cedar control, grazing strategies and newly established pollinator habitat were highlight areas of discussion.

I am looking forward to the next year of activities for the Nebraska Section. We have a rich tradition of successful activities in youth education, with Range Judging and the Nebraska Youth Range Camp. Shelly Kelly and Sara Winslow do an excellent job of organizing and facilitating the Range Camp. If you have not had the opportunity to contribute to this activity, I strongly encourage you to do so if you are asked. Range Camp has instilled the interest for many of the young people in the range profession, and is a very rewarding activity to assist with.

The Range Judging program in Nebraska continues to thrive and be a favorite activity for many FFA Vocational Agriculture programs at high schools throughout the state.

Participation has been at all-time highs over the past several years. Kristin Dickinson does an excellent job of chairing this committee and leading this effort. The Range Judging Handbook has undergone a revision in 2016 and is ready for use, thanks to the leadership of Jerry Volesky of UNL, with the assistance of several other authors and contributors.

Finally, I would encourage everyone to get involved with the activities, committees or leadership of the NE Section -SRM. Ask a committee chair if you can help on their committee, volunteer for range camp or range judging, or bring forth a new activity that you would like to champion and lead. Reach out and recruit new members. Ask them to assist with something you are working on. If anyone has questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to me. I will assist in whatever way I can.

If you are planning to attend the international SRM meetings in St. George, UT on January 29th - February 2nd, 2017, now is the time to get registered. Best Regards, Jeff Nichols, NE Section - SRM, President

Collegiate Range Clubs

UNL Range Club members meet every two weeks in the Range Department's lobby in Keim Hall on UNL's East Campus.



UN-L Range Club 2016-17 Officers

President: Ethan Freese

Vice President/Treasurer: Autumn Dunn

Primary Programmer: Ellen Dolph

Collegiate Advisor: Walt Schacht

Pictured right: Walt Schacht instructs a group of young range professionals



Pictured above: UNL Range Club students currently preparing to compete in the URME and Plant ID competitions at the International Meeting.



Chadron State College Range Club members have bi-weekly meetings and attend several events. They attend the Nebraska Section SRM meeting, the Crawford Cattle Call, decorate a Christmas tree for charity, and participate in the Homecoming parade and bed sheet competition.



Chadron State 2016-17 Officers

President: Cole Kayton

Vice President: Spencer Gerk

Secretary/Treasurer: Meliss VanDerslice

CAB: Kortni Burnett

Collegiate Advisor: Anthony Perlinski

Curtis Man Recognized for Contributions to Rangeland Management by Nadine Bishop

Scott Stout of Curtis, Nebraska was recently awarded the 2016 Nebraska Section, Society for Range Management (SRM), Rangeland's Award. This award recognizes ranchers for their outstanding success in management and improvement of Nebraska rangeland resources.



Scott Stout (left), 2016 recipient of the SRM Rangeland's Award, along with Doug Whisenhunt, NRCS, Ecological Sites Specialist. Doug has served as a long time mentor of Scott's for the prescribed burn efforts in Nebraska.

Scott and his wife Morgan, ranch in southeast Lincoln County for their family owned operation, N-N Ranch Inc. Jeff Nichols, president of the Nebraska Section of SRM and Bob Browneleit, Awards Committee Chairman, presented the award to Scott during the Section's annual banquet which was held in Gothenburg.

Over the last 20 years, eastern red cedar encroachment on their ranch had become an increasingly serious problem. Cedar encroachment produced negative economic impacts in terms of carrying capacity and added expenses for herd management and health. Wildlife populations shifted and were on a negative trend. Scott and his father-in-law, Gary Nel-

son, recognized the threat of this problem to their long term livelihood, and chose to do something about it.

They conducted their first prescribed burn to control cedars on their ranch in 2008. Since that time, Stout has become a leader in the prescribed burning effort not only in the loess canyon portions of Lincoln County but also throughout Nebraska. For eight years, he has served as the "burn boss" for the Loess Canyon Rangeland Alliance (LCRA), a grass roots association of local land owners who help each other conduct prescribed burns on their properties. In addition to the "burn boss", Scott has served in many other capacities for the LCRA organization over the years.

Since 2008, Stout has provided leadership in burn unit layout, line preparation and conducting over 60 prescribed burns covering approximately fifty thousand acres in the loess canyons of SE Lincoln County. His leadership and willingness to take on the challenge of conducting these prescribed burns provided the confidence for other landowners to implement the practice. Many landowners rely on Scott's expertise and experience with prescribed fire, which he readily offers to reclaim grazing lands which have become dominated by cedars.

Federal and state agencies and other non-governmental organizations involved in natural resource management across the state recognize Stout for his knowledge and skills with prescribed burning. He is a reliable resource to these organizations in the transfer of knowledge and promotion of prescribed burning as a viable cedar control practice. Scott has provided "on the ground" guidance and training to countless individuals. He has served as a mentor to other aspiring burn boss' and is bringing up the next generation of prescribed fire practitioners.

Stout is one of the founding members of the Nebraska Prescribed Fire Council, which serves as an umbrella organization for the various prescribed burn associations and other entities that promote the safe and effective use of prescribed fire as a tool. He is currently the president of this organization.

Scott and Morgan have recently started their own business, Prescribed Fire Planning of Nebraska LLC, where they contract with landowners to assist them in process of planning prescribed burns on their property. Scott is the first certified Technical Service Provider (TSP) for planning prescribed burns according to national NRCS planning criteria in Nebraska.

Eastern red cedar encroachment has become one of the greatest threats to the rangeland resources in Nebraska and it is imperative to utilize prescribed fire to control its spread. Scott Stout has been a pioneer in implementing this practice to shape the landscape. Through his determination and wise implementation, he has made great strides in increasing the acceptance of the practice and developing a "fire culture" throughout Nebraska and surrounding states. He has, and continues to create a lasting legacy for the health and improvement of the range land resources of Nebraska.



Photo Courtesy of Amanda Hefner

Seneca man Recognized for Contributions to Range Management Profession by Nadine Bishop

Bob Browleit of Seneca, Nebraska was recently awarded the 2016 Nebraska Section, Society for Range Management (SRM), Service Award. This award recognizes individuals for their outstanding contributions in service to the range industry or range management profession. Jeff Nichols, president of the Nebraska Section of SRM and Karla Jenkins, past president, presented the award to Bob during the Section's annual banquet which was held in Gothenburg.



Bob Browleit (center), 2016 recipient of the SRM Range Management Service Award, along with SRM Pres. Jeff Nichols and Karla Jenkins, past president. Browleit was recognized for his longstanding efforts within his career and our state section.

Nebraska Section Field Tour

The state section field tour was highlighted the management efforts on the Loess canyons of the Broken Box Ranch, owned and operated by the Sundstrom Family, recipients of the 2010 Twin Platte NRD Grassland Award and 2014 NE-SRM Rangeman's Award.

Rangeland management efforts have focused on annual removal and burning of cedars.

Browleit has been a member of SRM since 2004. He has served on the Nebraska Section Council beginning in 2011 through 2016. Bobs tenure on the council and time as President was extended to two terms due to a prior council member being unable to fulfill their term after moving out of state. As president, Bob was responsible for planning two annual Section meetings, one in Ainsworth and one in North Platte. He has served as the Awards Committee chair for two years and has represented the NE Section at the National Advisory Council meetings at the International SRM meetings.

Bob is currently serving as the chairman of the nominations committee, which recruits and facilitates elections to fill the successional council seats for the NE Section. Bob has stepped up to serve as interim News Letter Editor on various occasions in order to get the business of the Section distributed to the membership.

Browleit graduated from Kearney High School in 1977, and received his Bachelor of Science from University of Nebraska - Lincoln in 1982. He earned his Master of Science degree in Agronomy in 1997. Bob is a Nebraska Lead Program Fellow, class 29 (2009-2011).

Bob began his career as an Ag Research Technician for UNL and worked in that capacity

until 1998. He then spent 6 years as an Ag Extension Agent in Kansas for K-State University. In 2004, Bob moved back to the Nebraska Sandhills where he was employed by the NRCS and served as the Coordinator for the Sandhills Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) in Mullen, NE. In 2010 Bob took on his present role as a Soil Conservationist with NRCS at Thedford, NE.

Browleit has maintained and worked on his personal ranch, Bent Bar C Cattle Co. in his free time throughout his career. He has implemented wise range management improvements by installing additional livestock watering facilities and cross fencing to facilitate rotational grazing on his pastures.

Bob is an active member of the Thomas County Visitors Committee. He served as one of the initial members of the West Central Weed Management Area and was influential in getting this organization launched in order to bring awareness and action to combat noxious weeds to the area.

Bob and his wife Connie have two grown children. In his free time you will find Bob primarily working on the ranch, but you may catch him fishing on the banks of the Middle Loup River, which flows directly past his front yard in Seneca.

This year's tour and highlighted a native seed planting on a diverse assortment of forbs.

Thank you Russ and family for a wonderful outing full of provisions for a cold day!

Pictured right: Russ Sundstrom entertains a group of listening ears on the results he and his family have put towards their management efforts.



Notes of Gratitude

SRM,

Thank you sincerely for your kind expression of sympathy and thoughtfulness. It is deeply appreciated and will always be remembered. Thank you for the beautiful arrangement in honor of Michelle. We truly appreciate your sympathy and kindness.

Sincerely,

Dave, Annsley, and Garrett Cook.



THANK YOU PARTNER!

Scholarship Awards

Two \$1,000 scholarships were presented this year by Jess Milby, Scholarship Committee. Dakota Altman received financial aid as well as (unknown) to aid their scholastic pursuits in natural resources. Congratulations!



Dear NESRM,

I am writing you to give my deepest gratitude for the \$1,000 scholarship you have awarded me. I was ecstatic to learn that I was chosen as one of the recipients of your scholarship. I am currently a School of Natural Resources student at UNL finishing up my Fisheries and Wildlife Major in the spring of the upcoming year. Although I am not a Range Management major, during the past year I have come to find deep respect for grasslands. I recognize that wildlife and range are closer neighbors than one would think. I plan on attending a University of Nebraska-Lincoln trip to Puerto Rico in the spring for a week long immersion into the natural history of the main island's ecosystems. The finan-



Pictured above: Kylie Knigge (right) a student at Chadron State College is awarded a scholarship by Jess Milby.

Pictured left: Dakota Altman (right) of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln is awarded a scholarship by Jess Milby.

cial aid that you have so generously provided me will go towards helping pay for this trip, where my field experience and knowledge of conservation will be broadened. Along with the trip I will also be attending the SRM Annual Meeting in St. George UT. This scholarship will also help to pay for the entry fee and airfare so that I may compete with my team in the plant ID and URME tests. Thank you again for your support. This scholarship is a helpful step towards my career path that eventually will benefit our planet.

Sincerely,

Dakota S. Altman

Dear Nebraska Section SRM,

I am honored to have been selected as one of the recipients of the 2016 Nebraska Section SRM scholarships. I am currently a senior majoring in Rangeland Management at Chadron State College and I am on track to graduate in the Fall of 2017. After graduation I would like to continue my education and pursue a Master's degree and the generous scholarship from the Nebraska SRM will help me work towards that goal. So, thank you again, and for your continued support of Nebraska's Range Students.

Sincerely,

Kylie Knigge

Do You Know What Happened in Nebraska... by Jeff Nichols, Historian

Five Years Ago (2011)

The Nebraska Section officers were: Curtis Talbot, President; Michael Croxen, Past President; Jon Soper, President Elect; Leslie Stewart-Phelps transitioning to Angie Petersen, Secretary/Treasurer; Kristin Miller, Newsletter Editor; Cindy Tusler and Bob Browleit were Council Members.

The 48th annual Nebraska Range Youth Camp was held June 13th - 17th at the Nebraska 4-H Camp near Halsey, NE. There were 38 high school students from across Nebraska and one from eastern Colorado who attended this week long educational activity. The overall top camper was Johnny Ference of Ord. The top first year camper was Reid Stagemeyer from Cambridge.

Jess Milby and Laura Snell, two UNL students, traveled to Windhoek, Namibia to assist UNL Professor, Walt Schacht with research and do mission work. Snell said of her trip; "It was an exhilarating experience that really opened up my eyes to a different part of the world. It was wonderful to help others while conducting research and visiting a new place."

The first North American Invasive Plant Ecology and Management Short Course (NAIPSC) was held at North Platte, July 6th - 8th. There were 38 participants. Steve Young, former Weed Ecologist with the UNL, West Central Research and Extension Center organized and facilitated the course.

The State Range Judging Contest was held in the Sidney area on October 4th. The champion individual judge was Taylor Hornickel of Ord. The champion team was Dusty Staab, Cody Drudik, Johnny Ference and Taylor Hornickel, all from Ord. There were nearly 360 participants.

The annual NE-Section meeting followed on

October 5th and 6th, also at Sidney. The theme for the meeting was "Understanding Past Management and what it Means Today". The Nebraska Section SRM Rangeman's award was presented to the Darby Creek Ranch of Sidney. The ranch is owned and operated by Norma, Tom and Todd Johnson. The NE -Section Range Service Award was presented to Leslie Stewart-Phelps. She served as the Secretary-Treasurer for the section for many years and had recently retired to dedicate her efforts, along with her husband Bill, to their small operation south of Crawford, NE.

Two \$1000 Range Management Scholarships were presented by the NE-Section. The first was awarded to Caleb Miles of Theftord, who was a student at UNL. The second was presented to Samantha Evans of Cody, who was a student at CSC.

Ten Years Ago (2006)

The Nebraska Section officers were: Jerry Volesky, President; Chuck Butterfield, Past President; Dana Larsen, President Elect; Leslie Stewart-Phelps, Secretary/Treasurer; John Ortman, Newsletter Editor; Mary Reece and Doug Whisenhunt were Council Members.

The Nebraska Section annual meeting was held in North Platte October 11th-13th. The program centered on drought and there were around 30 producers who attended the afternoon session.

The Section awards were presented to the following: Rangeman's Award, The Prescribed Burn Task Force, accepted by Teri Edeal of Lexington; Range Management Service Award, Jeff Nichols of North Platte; and Special Award of Merit, Mary Reece of North Platte, for her many years of leadership of the Nebraska Range Youth Camp; Nebraska

Section College Scholarships, Shelly Taylor of Taylor and Jessica Milby of Fullerton.

Mary Schrader, Nebraska Section Membership Chair reported that the section had 123 members.

The largest participation for Range Judging in the 50 years records have been kept was recorded in 2006. Total area and state contests combined attendance was 1,432 individuals. The top junior was Tad Judge of West Holt; top senior, Ryan Frickel of West Holt; top junior and senior teams were from Ord.

Twenty Years Ago (1996)

The Nebraska Section officers were: Dave Cook, President; Daryl Cisney, President Elect; Bill Carhart, Past President; Catherine Mills, Secretary/Treasurer; Sherry Preston, Newsletter Editor; Bob Masters and Terry Enfield were council members.

The Nebraska Section Annual Meeting was held in Grand Island. The planning committee consisted of Dave Cook, Brent Lathrop, Kim Stine, Cathie Mills, Beth Hiatt and Gary Lingle. A tour of the Nature Conservancy prairie restoration projects south of I-80 capped off the meeting. The Range Management Service Award went to Catherine Jo W Mills. Kenny and Elaine Fraiser were presented the Nebraska Section Range Manager of the Year Award. Jennifer Hoffman and Kylie Faulk received the scholarships. Mary Schrader received a special award for her dedicated service as the newsletter editor.

The "Rangeland Health" concept that utilizes 20 attributes that focus on rangeland trend was being introduced in Nebraska.

Thirty Years Ago (1986)

The Nebraska Section Officers were : Brent Lathrop, President; Susan Oldfather



Photo courtesy of Laura Rubeck, taken on ranch of Jim and Lora O'Rourke during 2016 Range Shortcourse near Chadron, Neb.



Loess Canyons—Broken Box Ranch



Calendar of Events

2016 SRM International Meeting
Corpus Christi, TX; January 29-February 6, 2016

Nebraska Range Youth Camp,
June 5-9, 2017, Halsey, NE

Photo Highlights of SRM Meeting



Listening intently during Broken Box Ranch—Sudstrom Family Tour



Section Members at the Monsanto Complex in Gothenburg, Neb.