

1990 President's Address: SRM Today and Tomorrow

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On this Valentine's Day I want to extend some special valentines of acknowledgement. This past year has been one of the most eventful of my life and it has been a pleasure and an honor to have had this fine opportunity to serve the Society. I sincerely thank you for the trust you bestowed upon me.

Many people deserve recognition, yet I will name only a few in these remarks. Our 1988 President Bill Laycock left us with a healthy organization. One unstated objective was to keep it functioning well; I trust that was achieved. Your Board of Directors has been most supportive although the work hours are long and arduous. They deserve our heartfelt thanks. I feel a special tribute should go to Ray Housley, our Washington, D.C., liaison. Ray plays a special role for the Society and a number of people have given unsolicited thanks for his fine efforts.

Executive Vice-President Pete Jackson deserves our thanks in so many different ways. He is stable in his management style; he is thoughtful and responsive to all I know about; he is positive and persuasive, and his love affair with the Society is a way of life for him. Our Denver staff deserve equal recognition. Thank you all.

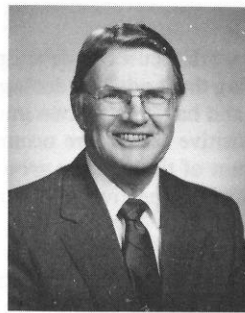
Two special valentines must go to Pat Smith and Gary Frasier, editors of the *Journal of Range Management* and *Rangelands*. These two publications, and a new one, the *Trail Boss News* edited by Jerry Schwien are the Society's mouthpieces. Our "music" would unquestionably be less acceptable and accepted were it not for their good work. Pat's continued cheerful attitude and positive outlook constitute the pick-me-up we all can use.

I want to acknowledge my Oregon State University faculty colleagues, especially Bill Krueger, and my secretary, Bev Clark, for their tireless support and help. Whatever I may have been able to accomplish this past year has been given a great assist by them. Lastly, Gretchen, my spouse, partner, and friend, deserves special thanks for her day-to-day support and keeping things together on the home-front.

1989 Activities

The scope of activities being conducted within SRM is truly awesome. Currently there are 28 Standing Committees, Boards, Panels, and Councils and 9 Task Groups in addition to the Advisory Council made up of 3 executive officers from each of the 20 Sections, plus a chairman and chairman-elect, and the 9-person Board of Directors. Just trying to name all of the committees and to recognize their members is beyond most of us. The strength of SRM lies within the minds, hearts, and spirits of all of you who work on our collective behalf.

Committees this year as in all years do not just do business as usual. They all function well, do what is requested of them, and come back for more. Just think where we would be internally if our Nominating Committee let us down? Or, if the Awards Committee did not solicit, receive, evaluate, and recommend members for our



viable awards program. We could not function. Or, the Membership Committee and what they recently have been doing to bolster our ranks. No—it is not business as usual.

There are some subject areas that bear mentioning, however, because of what I think are of special significance. At this meeting we are making a special effort to find out how we feel about range management through a special survey process. The results should prove quite interesting and insightful since how we feel about our profession has much to do with what we accomplish. The Excellence in Range Management Committee leads this effort.

Our international role has been increasing in past years. It probably is not common knowledge, but, the International Affairs Committee has developed a model approach to international communication—one so simple that it could be used in other contexts as well. We simply interrelate on a personal level with individuals, one-on-one, in over 50 countries. This takes personal commitment and time. But, people are the important factor and this approach exemplifies that.

A number of the outreach activities originate in the Public Affairs Committee. I tabulated about 20 separate kinds of things that either the President or Executive Vice-President were directly involved in through correspondence, with some requiring various levels of follow up. It is hard to know how much impact we have, but just guess how much we have if we do nothing!

The Society has policies, position statements, and resolutions as do most organizations. We now have policies and positions in brochure form that we can share easily with others. Acquaint yourself with these and carry a supply. I would point out only one, although all are significant. Our position statement on professional qualifications developed at the Kamloops meeting shows us to be strongly supportive of diversity in the work place and equal opportunity in employment, yet at the same time upholding the desirability of retaining professional qualifications in natural resource disciplines. Positive educational requirements, we believe, should be maintained for people making natural resource decisions as well as those in professional and scientific positions. We are working to see this position accepted in not only the range profession but other resource professions as well, and, of course, by the public or private bodies where it applies.

Another kind of activity focuses on particular subject matter. These are the 9 Task Groups constituted to deal with timely issues of concern. Some of the tasks are relatively short lived while others are almost of a continuing nature. Three of the seven symposia at this meeting are the result of Task Groups. Each Task Group has well-defined objectives and, when they are accomplished, the Task Group may dissolve. Since much of what SRM does is so dynamic, it is probable some Task Groups will continue over an extended period of time.

All Task Groups are noteworthy but the newest one deserves mention. The Unity in Concepts and Terminology Task Group under Lamar Smith's chairmanship is making significant progress

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toward their objectives. Their work focuses on developing a unified approach toward characterizing the landscape ecology. They have a well-balanced membership and have met in two multi-day meetings in Tucson and Reno. Positive results are occurring because they spend a significant amount of time on the ground with each other, sharing their expertise and perspectives about tangible range sites.

Any leader asks himself or herself what it is they want to see happen for their group. The Society has a long-range plan and yearly objectives so there is something definite to be doing. A legitimate question certainly can be—is that what you as members want to see happen? We must uphold the tenets of our profession. It is good to remind ourselves of what we are, what we do, and what we want. All of what we do relates to rangelands.

We can take pride in what we do. Just looking at the scope of program activities at the annual meeting and articles published in the *Journal of Range Management* and *Rangelands* will provide both us as members and any non-member reader or participant with the sense of comprehensiveness we have. Obviously, we want others outside the membership to be receptive, appreciative, and interested in what SRM is and does. We must be more forthright in using outreach opportunities. We have many good products and we have a just cause.

Let's look at a few more examples of how SRM can be effective and improve our stature and working relations with other groups. Lorenz Bredemeier called for this in his talk at Billings that was published in the December 1989 *Rangelands*.

- *Glossary of Terms*. Although not perfect, the *Glossary* provides evidence of technical knowledge and serves as an oft-cited reference. We need to make as much use of it as we possibly can and publicize its value. We will be updating the *Glossary* on a more frequent basis than in the past.

- *Assessment of Rangeland Condition and Trend of the United States, 1989*. This publication is the first effort at compiling these kinds of data for all rangeland ownerships in the U.S. We are indebted to the Public Affairs Committee for this. This is not the same kind of effort that the U.S. Forest Resources Planning Act staff makes in their assessment process, so it is not duplicative. The effort brought out many data gaps and discrepancies and the Unity in Concepts and Terminology Task Group will be addressing these in the near future.

- Complimentary copies of *Rangelands*. In 1989 the Society started a small program to give complimentary subscriptions of *Rangelands* to ten other organizations. These are: National Wildlife Federation, Izaak Walton League, American Forestry Association, American Fisheries Society, Wildlife Management Institute, International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, The Nature Conservancy, the Audubon Society, the Sierra Club, and the Wilderness Society. Several of the groups send us their materials although some do not. We encourage them to reprint material from *Rangelands* as one means of getting a broader outreach.

- Inter-society relations. A number of natural resource professional societies have similar goals and some SRM members no doubt are members in other societies. One area of potential cooperation is the public policy arena. To that end, a meeting was held in Washington, D.C., in November 1989 to explore how cooperative efforts might be beneficial toward meeting joint objectives. Participants were representatives of the Society of American Foresters, the Wildlife Society, American Fisheries Society, Soil and Water Conservation Society, and American Society of Agronomy and ourselves, who initiated this. Dialogue was quite productive

with mutual exchange of ideas and each organization's public policies and policy development procedures. We agreed to continue this working relationship, and as each group develops its policies and positions, they will be shared.

A great deal of the success for this particular meeting needs to be credited to the already good relations developed and maintained by Ray Housley.

- Resources Planning Act Assessment Process. The Society developed an opportunity to work more closely with the RPA effort of the U.S. Forest Service. Every 10 years the Forest Service must, by law, assess the capability of all U.S. forests and rangelands to supply products and services to meet projected demands. The next complete assessment of both supply and demand will be completed in 1998. After initial study and comment by the Public Affairs Committee, two separate meetings were held which culminated in 4 substantive recommendations to the Forest Service. We were fortunate to have the participation of interested representatives of the Society of American Foresters and the Wildlife Society at the second meeting. This, I believe, is a good example of inter-society activity to work directly with a major governmental agency (actually 3 since the BLM and SCS play a significant role in providing information to the Forest Service).

- Conservation Reserve Program. Some 34 million acres currently are enrolled in this program. Most groups of people agree the CRP is an effective program to conserve soil and water resources while providing some damper on excess commodity production.

Of concern to the SRM is the very real possibility that a significant proportion of these lands will be plowed out following expiration of 10-year contracts. Why? We believe inadequate policy and program incentives exist to keep the lands in permanent cover. Some changes from the current situation need to occur. After studying the situation and convening a meeting of farmers who hold CRP contracts to assess which changes might provide sufficient inducements to keep land in permanent cover, we developed recommendations to be presented to both the administration and to Congress. Our strategy is to involve other groups with similar concerns and to the extent possible make coordinated and unified recommendations. Our CRP Task Group and Public Affairs Committee have been instrumental in this effort.

- Grazing Lands Forum. The Forum is an outgrowth of the Grazing Lands and People Conference in 1982. A fourth Forum on a substantive subject did not occur. Momentum and interest had appeared to wane among some of the participating organizations. An in-depth assessment of the Forum was made by about 25 people representing the most interested organizations and agencies in November 1989. The outcome was a re-organization of purpose and structure and plans for at least two years in the future. It is gratifying to be able to report SRM's strong support for this renewed effort and our continued significant involvement. There probably will be 11 professional or private organizations and 7 federal agencies all participating on an equal basis.

Achieving the Future

Someone has stated to that achieve the future, one must create it. To what extent can SRM create the future, or at least the professional environment for that future? Obviously, we first must define what it is we want to be. We then have to define, describe, and understand the limiting obstacles, real and perceived.

Perhaps if we had a better understanding of all this there would be less concern and interest in what is termed the SRM image. I want to share an exercise the Pacific Northwest Section went

through last October. In a collaborative setting, all were asked to state what we are and what we want to be. I will quote from the Section newsletter and Editor Rick Miller's summary of the exercise. I believe we will find this both instructive and insightful.

"What we believe we are is: We are making a difference on the resource and the land; managing the big picture, horizon to horizon; an organization with a lot of integrity; the recognized authority and professional organization promoting the recognition and understanding of the values of a healthy range ecosystem; expanding and growing in our understanding of the needs of the resource; the recognized authority in natural resource management; leaders in caring for and managing the ecosystem as a whole; we are sought out by leaders for social and biological issues relating to rangeland resource.

We want to be perceived by others as: A cohesive, open, responsive, intelligent group of resource managers who can address resource problems. A resource-based organization. People who integrate grower needs, social needs and resource needs. Members who provide effective leadership in resolving resource issues. An organization which provides leadership and technical information. Scientists, managers, and educators of the rangeland resource.

From this we believe our mission is to be an organization made up of land resource managers, educators, and scientists that are a recognized authority on rangeland ecosystems; promoting knowledge, recognition, and understanding of the values of a healthy rangeland ecosystem."

How, then, can we do this better? I'm sure we all have some ideas. First, I firmly believe SRM has the structure, the people, the will, and commitment. We may be short on some of the means to accomplishment. Therefore, we must:

1. Keep ourselves educated—continually on the threshold of knowledge. We must be correct in what we know and clearly recognize what we do not know. We then can use our talents and abilities to teach/share this knowledge, based on practicality to the maximum extent.

2. Continually work on motivation, of our own membership and those who need to understand in order to practice the good stewardship and management necessary to care for rangeland resources.

3. Communicate—This is side by side with motivation. We in SRM must continue to strengthen our commitment with other professions, special interest groups, and political leaders. Of special importance, I believe, are the landowners and managers who make land management decisions. This is especially critical in the larger world setting. Correctly identifying the individuals who make decisions is mandatory to achieving success.

4. Strengthen coalitions and build new ones where we can. Although individuals make management decisions, most often we all function in some group context. Group ownership of the outcomes will occur when every one is considered. This is at the heart of Coordinated Resource Management Planning.

The 5,200-member SRM has much yet to do. From our humble beginnings 42 years ago, we have played a singular role in the world. Other societies for range management are developing and we applaud them. SRM has significant numbers of new members to provide stimulus to change with the times. Many people do not like change because of the discomfort perceived. Yet, we do not really have a choice. Management is people and, for SRM, the people who manage rangeland resources. If we *continually* keep the health and integrity of the resource foremost, we will grow, not without some risk, but grow nevertheless toward achieving the goals we have set.

We do not, and cannot look to others to do this. We are the people to tell the range management story. We have the mechanisms to do this. Sections always can be strengthened and this is possible by using your newsletters, committees, and outreach more vigorously. Each of us has roles to play both in our Sections and at the SRM level.

We can never know too much about rangelands, but what we do know must be used for the land's benefit. Products and services can only be sustainable when the land base is healthy. As long as we address the causes and not the symptoms of problems, success is more assured.

In concluding my year as President, I have been honored by you and I greatly thank you for that honor and privilege. We are all volunteers. Our headquarters staff can only do so much. They can facilitate what we want to do but we must be the doers. We are a rich Society, not in monetary resources—but in knowledge, spirit, concept, practice, and people. Let us strive to keep it that way.