Women in SRM

Over the years, many women have had a leadership role in developing SRM policies and programs.

By Jan Duck Wiedemann

In 1987, Marliyn J. Samuel was elected as the society's first female director. Succeeding directors have been Barbara Allen-Diaz, Linda H. Hardesty, Carolyn Hull Seig, Meg B. Smith and Angela S. Williams.

Meg Smith, a rancher from Glen, Montana, credits the SRM for playing a positive role in her life—from the High School Youth Forum and College Plant Identification Team days, to the present. As a rancher and range manager, Meg has relied on the organization and its publication to provide her with information and research.

Angela Williams, with the Natural Resources Conservation Service in Oklahoma, has said, "the Society has been my nucleus for professional development and alliance, while I have always believed in the mission and abilities of this Society." Angela says she believes the diversity of the general membership within SRM is a great asset.

A past SRM president, John C. Buckhouse who is a professor in the Department of Rangeland Resources at Oregon State University, commented on how women contributed to the Society: "Women have a long and valued history in SRM. Many sections have or have had female presidents. In the current cohort, 25 percent of those asked to assume committee roles are women. The stance of the board of directors is that SRM is a society of persons interested in the well being of rangeland and in the professional development of people who are interested in these rangelands."

In 1998, the Society had 4,400 members. Of the 443 female members who supplied demographic information, 85 percent lived in the 18 western states, plus a few in Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, Canada, Iceland, Denmark, England and Australia.

The majority of the female members work for federal agencies with more than 100 reporting they were range conservationists. There were 21 women

ranchers, 16 ecologists, two botanists and one nurse practitioner. Occupations ranged from a research professor, range technicians, biologist, manager of an association, a reclamation specialist, a geothermal coordinator to a 4-H agent. Members represent a diverse group of women working toward the goal and objective of taking care of our rangeland resources.

Today, women continue to gain momentum in non-traditional career fields including range management. Their leadership is reflected in the posts they hold—from international and national government cabinet positions to leadership positions in their states and local communities. The SRM leadership also represents this movement, with Angela Williams being elected second vice-president in the fall of 2002. She will take the reins as SRM's first woman president in 2005.

About the author: Jan (Duck) Wiedemann has been a member of the Society for Range Management since 1977, has served as Administrative Assistant in the Denver headquarters office, and was Executive Secretary (Acting) from 1982–1983. She has been Archivist for the Texas Section since 1988, has served on the SRM History, Archives and Library Committee and has served on the Rangelands Editorial Board. Wiedemann lives in College Station, Texas. She has submitted book reviews for SRM publications since 1992 and most recently reviewed Thad Box's book "Me N' Alvin".