

# Speaking With People in Our Society

An interview with Dr Jeff Mosley

Jeff Mosley is a Professor of Range Science and Extension Range Specialist at Montana State University in Bozeman. Jeff is on the ballot of the Society for Range Management in 2007 as a candidate for Second Vice President, a position that would serve as President of the Society in 2010. Jeff received his Bachelor's degree from Montana State in 1981, his Master's from the University of Idaho in 1983, and his PhD from Texas Tech University in 1987. His professional interests include habitat management practices, large-herbivore behaviors, and riparian systems. He has served the SRM in numerous capacities over the years, most recently as a member of the Board of Directors from 2004–2006. Jeff is a regular contributor to *Rangelands* through his Browsing the Literature column published each issue.

## Running With the Ball

*Question: What made you decide you had the time, if elected, to serve as President of this nonprofit, volunteer organization that is the Society for Range Management?*

*Answer:* I've made an increasing commitment to volunteer within SRM as my children have gotten older. Now that my days coaching youth basketball and baseball and officiating soccer games are over, I feel I have more time that I can commit to SRM. Plus, my past 3 years on the SRM Board of Directors have given me at least an inkling of the time commitment necessary to be an SRM officer.

*What is it about this Society that piques your interests and has kept you so involved in various capacities over the years?*

Like many range people, range management is my passion (along with the Green Bay Packers and sports in



general). Doing what I can to support SRM is fun for me. I also feel that I have a responsibility to do my part to try to keep SRM going strong. We have the privilege of building upon what the leaders in our profession have created over the past 60 years, and I believe it's the duty of each generation to pick up the ball and run with it when their turn comes.

*Who have been your influences in this profession and organization?*

I've been very, very fortunate in my career to have worked with so many great people, so many people who took the time and made the effort to teach me things along the way. I will always be grateful. One of the best things about my current job as Extension Range Management Specialist in Montana is that I get to visit many different ranches and rangeland situations, and I am continually learning from others. However, I should certainly mention some particular individuals who have mentored me and to whom I feel a deep sense of respect, friendship, and gratitude: Monte Miller, a Range Technician with the Boise National Forest; Drs Kendall Johnson, Min Hironaka, and Steve Bunting at the University of Idaho; Elmer Bowman, an Idaho cowboy who taught me the most about herding and cattle behavior; the late Dr Bill Dahl, my PhD advisor at Texas Tech University; Drs Lamar Smith and Phil Ogden at the University of Arizona; and Dr Don Ryerson at Montana State University, who I met in high school and who later became my undergraduate advisor.

*How does SRM move forward in the 21st century?*

I think the pieces are in place and the planets are aligning to enable SRM to make a significant step forward. The new Young Professionals Conclave (YPC) should help keep younger members more involved, our Certified Professional in Rangeland Management (CPRM) program will elevate the professional standing of range management, and both of these programs bolster the need for SRM to continue to deliver top-notch workshops, symposia, and technical sessions. Finally, as we continue to strengthen the presence of SRM and increase public awareness about rangeland management, SRM will have greater opportunities to influence public policies.

*Nearly 30 years ago, you were a student at Montana State University, and now you are a faculty member at MSU. How have students and professors and the profession changed over the years?*

One positive change is that I believe the quality of range science research has improved. Students have access to better information, and the Internet has made information easier to get. One unfortunate change is that there is less cross-fertilization in university curricula, especially for students in wildlife biology. Fewer wildlife students are able to take courses in rangeland habitat management. One success we've had here at MSU is to emphasize wildlife habitat management in our upper-division undergraduate courses and our graduate research program. We've had great success with students who received a BS in wildlife and then enrolled in our MS range science program with an emphasis in wildlife habitat or livestock-wildlife relationships.

*Many people in SRM work for various government entities or nonprofit organizations. How can we expand membership in this Society?*

It's a simple fact that the more members we have, the more SRM can accomplish. But I believe the range profession will always be relatively small. Therefore, we need to continue to improve SRM so that as many range people as possible will join and participate. SRM does a pretty good job of enrolling new members, but we need to do a better job of retaining our members for the long term. I think one way to improve retention is to do a better job of informing our members about everything that SRM is doing. One benefit of being a member of the Board of Directors was that I was able to learn the breadth of SRM activities. I believe most members would be very impressed with SRM if our leadership and staff could find ways to better communicate this information to our entire membership.

*So, what is it you're doing in your spare time?*

I only made it to one branding this season, but that's something I really enjoy every spring. I've also been attending my children's track meets, and I recently finished reading a novel by one of my favorite authors, Ivan Doig. He writes historical fiction, and many of his stories are set in Montana. Now it's time for camping and golfing season to begin. I'm among the world's worst golfers, but I've recently found peace in that fact and, usually, enjoy the game anyway.

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