

Nebraska Range Management Cooperative Committee

Arnold J. Bateman, Patrick E. Reece, and Curtis W. Bates

Reductions in both State and Federal budgets have made it increasingly more difficult for agencies and institutions to provide adequate services and educational programs to Nebraska's range industries. Nebraska's rangeland resources provide one of the finest livestock producing areas in the world, abundant wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities. The health of Nebraska's rangeland has a direct influence on the State's water resources and agricultural economy. Each of these uses is important to the people of Nebraska and requires proper management to gain the maximum long-term benefits. Joint cooperation by agencies, organizations, and institutions that have management, service, and education responsibilities has provided an aggressive program for the care of rangeland resources that account for 52 percent of Nebraska's total land area. Fifteen Federal, State, and private agencies, organizations, and institutions including the Governor's Office have organized the Nebraska Range Management Cooperative Committee to help meet the challenge of providing assistance to the ranch industry. This Committee structure has allowed more open communication among each of the representatives and now provides a vehicle to facilitate joint cooperation in areas of common interest.

The Committee believes that it is possible to coordinate program efforts of different agencies, organizations, and institutions in areas of common interest to minimize overlap and maximize total efficiency. Coordinated efforts will improve quality of educational and technical programs and increase assistance to range resource users and owners. Current areas in which the Committee is working to increase cooperation include: sharing available educational and technical information through joint training programs, development of public awareness programs, and cooperative grazing management programs.

To develop this cooperation and increased program emphasis, the Nebraska Range Management Cooperative Committee has established the following goals:

1. Bring agencies, organizations, institutions, and individuals together who have major interest and/or responsibilities for range efforts in areas of shared concerns.
2. Foster cooperation at the State, District, Multi-County, and County level which will result in improving Nebraska's range resources, including but not limited to forage, soil, water, recreation, and wildlife components.

3. Cooperate in a manner which allows range management staffs to be more effective in assisting users of range resources.
4. Promote professional range educational programs by sharing research and training information and providing opportunities for joint publications.
5. Provide a forum within which agencies, organizations, and institutions can interact candidly and enthusiastically in the development and implementation of specific goals.

The Nebraska Range Management Cooperative Committee concept was initiated by representatives from the University of Nebraska Panhandle Research and Extension Center and Nebraska National Forest Service. The initiators of the Committee identified agencies, organizations, and institutions with major range responsibilities in Nebraska, and then asked each of the administrators for their support in organizing the Committee. A Joint Statement of Intent was prepared and a signing ceremony with various agency administrators was held at the Governor's Office. Signed copies of the Joint Statement of Intent were given to each signee to display in their office. Obtaining this administrative support has been vital to the success of the Committee because all participation is on a voluntary basis.

The Committee has adopted By-Laws and prepared Articles of Incorporation. The Committee By-Laws allow for each of the 15 agencies, organizations, or institutions to have one voting representative, appointed by their administrator, to serve on the Committee. Alternate representatives can be appointed by each administrator as needed.

Nebraska Range Management Cooperative Committee Members

Agriculture Research Division, University of Nebraska-Lincoln
 Agricultural Stabilization Conservation Service
 Cooperative Extension Service, University of Nebraska-Lincoln
 Natural Resources Commission
 Nebraska Association of Resources Districts
 Nebraska Board of Educational Lands and Funds
 Nebraska Branch-Center for Holistic Resource Management
 Nebraska Department of Roads
 Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
 Nebraska Forage and Grassland Council
 Nebraska National Forest
 Nebraska Section-Society for Range Management
 Nebraska Stock Growers Association
 Soil Conservation Service
 United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 6

In preparing the Committee's Plan of Work, all Committee members were asked to identify problems and/or opportunities where better coordination would be desirable. Four

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major areas of focus were identified and subcommittees organized to provide program leadership in: (1) public relations, (2) establishment of uniform stocking rate standards for Nebraska, (3) establishment of uniform seeding rate, technique, and species composition recommendations, and (4) compilation and publication of a Nebraska Range Management Directory.

Several public relation activities are ongoing. An official logo and letterhead have been adopted by the Committee. Increased participation by range professionals is being encouraged at the Nebraska Section-Society for Range Management Annual Meetings and Nebraska Stock Growers Association Annual Meetings. Range articles are being prepared for the Stock Growers magazine and other public media and more emphasis is being given to range exhibits at fairs and Stock Growers meetings.

The subcommittee for uniform stocking rate standards has prepared "A Guide For Planning and Analyzing A Year-Round Forage Program." This publication will serve as a basis for developing consistent stocking rate recommendations among all agencies in the State. Its use is optional, but will be promoted by the Nebraska Range Management Cooperative Committee as a means of standardizing stocking rates and animal unit equivalents. Work is continuing on the preparation of a Guide For Range Seeding Rates, Tech-

niques, and Species. When this report has been completed, its use will be encouraged by the Nebraska Range Management Cooperative Committee as a means of standardizing uniform range rates.

A Nebraska Range Management Directory, listing professional range people, place of employment, education, training, and experience has been developed. The directory is a resource tool developed by the Committee to publicize and promote the use of range expertise that exists within Nebraska. The directory will be distributed by agencies throughout the State.

The Committee is one of several sponsors for the 1986 Nebraska-Kansas-Colorado Range Management Tour to be held on August 2, 1986, at Wauneta, Nebraska. All organizations who are members of the Nebraska Range Management Cooperative Committee will use this field day as their major 1986 Summer Range Tour.

Committee participants feel that the Nebraska Range Management Cooperative Committee is serving a useful purpose. We feel that the first 18 months of the Committee's existence have demonstrated that there are areas of common interest in which the different range related agencies, organizations, and institutions can work together. With continued support from administrators and Committee representatives, the Committee will increase its service to the range resource users of the State of Nebraska. ●

The Wyoming State Stewardship Program

Rod Miller, Jeff Powell, and Dan Rodgers

Wyoming has historically been a crucible where all the elements of range management have been mixed, often with explosive results. Natural resources issues usually generate strong feelings and a confrontational atmosphere. From the Johnson County range war in the last century to the Red Rim controversy today, competing interests have continued to fire away at each other. Only the weapons have changed. Combatants have exchanged six-guns and lynch ropes for lawsuits and political action committees. State government in Wyoming was often caught in the crossfire.

The seeds for the Wyoming Stewardship Program were planted in 1978 with the passage of the Public Rangelands Improvement Act (PRIA), Section 12, which authorized the federal Experimental Stewardship Program (ESP). Congress, cognizant of the divisive nature of public lands grazing issues, wanted to explore the possibilities of resolving these issues in a cooperative, coordinated atmosphere. The test case was the Challis area in Idaho. A coordinating committee

was assembled and the experiment begun.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch in Cheyenne, Governor Herschler saw Section 12 of the Act as part of a solution to resource problems in Wyoming. Governor Herschler, realizing that an environment of cooperation was needed to promote wise resource decisions, drew components from the ESP and initiated the Wyoming Stewardship Program. The Governor gave the task of developing a program to the Wyoming Rangeland Management Coordinating Committee. The Committee is an advisory group composed of 35 members representing the various industries, agencies, and interest groups concerned with our rangelands.

The Committee got their marching orders in 1981 and worked diligently for a year developing guidelines for stewardship in Wyoming. It soon became clear that the program must satisfy two requirements: it must provide a conflict resolution vehicle and it must result in increased management efficiency. By late 1982, the profile of the Wyoming Stewardship Program was complete and ready for application.

There are similarities and differences between the federal Experimental Stewardship Program and the Wyoming Ste-

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