



Arizona Section Newsletter

MARCH 2015



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President's Message:

Thank you to all who helped to make the Winter Meeting a success. Twenty speakers covered a wide range of topics addressing change in Arizona. We are all very tuned into rainfall patterns, and drought is always a concern, but the varied perspectives presented at the winter meeting remind us that discussions of change in Arizona are not limited to weather and climate. The plant ID contest and auction were both very successful. The winter meeting was preceded by a UA Extension Drought Scenario Workshop lead by Dr. Doug Tolleson. The Tucson workshop was a great opportunity to share experiences and sharpen management skills, and dovetailed nicely with the AZ-SRM Winter Meeting. There is a lot of overlap between UA Range Program topics and the interests of AZ-SRM members and I support continuing to coordinate future activities to benefit the greatest number of people.



Meeting logistics are always difficult and this year was no exception. We have received some great feedback from members, and one suggestion was to hold the general membership meeting during the day (not in the evening) so that attendance is maximized. Certainly getting the dates set and sending announcements earlier will be our goals for 2015/2016. Several students voiced concern about the timing of the meeting. Juggling dates around everyone's work schedules, University breaks, class schedules, travel logistics (especially for those who travel long distances within the state), and local civic and sports events is a challenge, but not a new problem. Attending and participating in meetings requires a substantial commitment of time and energy, so again, thank you to all who attended the Winter Meeting. If you have suggestions regarding logistics, schedules, or other ideas for improving our annual meetings, please sent them along – we are listening and will strive to make meeting attendance as easy as possible.

Plans are underway for Spring and Fall field tours to be organized by our Director's North (Chris Bernau and Joelle Walker) and South (John Hall, and

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Comments from the Editor

I can't help but smile as I read through this edition of the Section Newsletter. You see in recent years our profession has said there needs to be a large increase of graduating students in the field of Natural Resources to replace those getting ready to retire. This year our section had 3 high school students and 9 students from UA and 7 from ASU, representing the future of Arizona Rangeland Ecology and Management, at the Annual meeting in Sacramento. I don't know if that is a record, but it is heartwarming to see. I know it is the first time we have sent three students to the High School Youth Forum.

Our three high school students presented well researched topics related to Natural Resources Conservation. ASU set records by having 5 student score over 600 on the 1,000 point Plant ID competition and junior Julia Steier scored a 790, the highest for an ASU competitor! They placed 10th as a team out of 26 in the plant ID competition. The UA team placed 6th overall in the Undergraduate Range Management Exam. Let's not forget those students receiving scholarships, Congratulations.

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Board of Directors*President*

Mary Nichols

Mary.nichols@ars.usda.gov

President-Elect

Christine Thiel

cathiel@fs.fed.us

Past President

Willie Sommers

wsommers@azland.gov

Vice President

James Heitholt

jheitholt@fs.fed.us

Secretary/Treasurer

Ashley Shepherd

AshleyS3@email.arizona.edu

Director North

Joelle Acton

jwalker6@email.arizona.edu

Director North

Chris Bernau

cberna9@email.arizona.edu

Director South

John Hall

jahall@blm.gov

Director South

Kelsey Hawkes

khawkes@email.arizona.edu

U of A Student President

Emily Pecilunas

epecilunas@email.arizona.edu

ASU Student President

Matt Kilford

mkilford@asu.edu

President's Message...continued

Kelsey Hawkes). Stay tuned for more information.

We are continuing to update the committee chairs and fill vacancies where needed. Thank you to Vanessa Prileson for her service, and welcome John Hall as chair of Young Professional's Committee. Last, but certainly not least, we all extend a big Thank You to Willie Sommers for his service to AZ-SRM. Willie requested a low key send off, and I am responsible for what is likely the lowest key send off in the history of winter meetings. Willie stepped up and volunteered to fill a vacant Vice President position in 2013 and has been critical in ensuring the future success of AZ-SRM. This was not a light-weight job, so we Thank You Willie.

Mary Nichols

Comments from the Editor...continued

Having spent some time around some of these young men and women I feel confident they will adequately fill the void in the wake of retiring professionals in our field. As you read through this edition you too will get the feeling these future managers have a fire inside to learn and get their hands dirty in the process.

Did you notice our Range Manager of the Year? It was great to have Reuben and Katherine Verner bring their 3 children to the banquet!

With that said, I want to challenge those already in the profession, and those on their second career as consultants, to step up to the plate. The section is committing to workshops/field days in the spring and fall. Do you have something to share? Contact a board member and help plan a field day. We all want to leave the land in better shape than we received it, but that is not the end of our responsibility. It is also our responsibility to pass on the lessons learned to the next generation. As we all know, that is best done in the field. Sit back and enjoy reading this issue, then get back up and continue mentoring our future rangeland managers.

Your editor, John

Blast From the Past

1985 Arizona State University Range Plant Team
 Top row – Tony Moreland, Judith Dyess, Bruce Campbell, ??
 Bottom row – Julie Decker, Phillip Jacquez

Director North Report

Hey guys! My name is Joelle Acton and I am working as the Director of the North under Christopher Bernau. Thanks for electing both Chris and I, we are very excited to be working together. I mainly report from Kingman, which is located within the northeast of the state in the Mohave Desert.

We've actually had some good winter precipitation here in Kingman. January 1st we received about 6.5 inches of snow and ended up closing I40 and US93 for about 24 hours. We usually average about 3.7 inches within the year, so it was an unexpected surprise. With all this good precipitation and the weather warming up, the Mohave Desert now looks like a green and yellow carpet with all the ephemeral vegetation. What I really love about this time of year is that it is nice and warm while out in the field, but when you look up at the Hualapai Mountains you can still see the winter's snowfall on top of the peaks. The Hualapai's are one of the best features about Kingman. They are a great place to go hiking and camping during the warmer months of the year. They also have a nice lodge and restaurant if anybody is in need of a weekend getaway.



Around the first week of May, the University of Arizona with the collaboration of the Bureau of Land Management plans on putting on a drought workshop available to anyone interested. Once details are sorted out, we will have dates provided.

Chris and I look forward to seeing everyone at the upcoming spring tour!

Tierra Seca Treks to Sacramento

University of Arizona's excursion to this year's SRM meeting started around 5am on January 31st. Team URME departed in two Chevy Suburbans and drove for about sixteen hours from Tucson to Sacramento. Our stay provided plenty of opportunities: engaging seminars about topics pertaining to almost every field within natural resources, networking with career experts and alumni, and the chance to see parts of nature that we had previously not explored.

We were fortunate enough to be awarded a weekly stipend from the Phil Ogden Range Management Scholarship & Stipend Fund, and ran a booth for Tierra Seca at the trade show to sell our shirts and koozies. Most importantly, the team banded together and took the Undergraduate Range Management Exam, placing sixth overall. Each and every one of us would like to extend a heartfelt 'thank you' to AZSRM for their contribution to Tierra Seca & for this opportunity. We hope we have made you proud!

Jennifer Hanson, Team URME and Tierra Seca Secretary



2014 Range Awards



Jake Russell received the Arizona Section of the Society for Range Management (SRM) Outstanding Young Professional Award for 2014. The citation for his award stated: Jake exhibits a great mixture of youthful energy and high professional and personal ethics that he uses to great effectiveness building and maintaining productive relationships with Prescott National Forest grazing permittees. Jake is devoted to providing “boots on the ground” management for the allotment’s he administers. Long field days ensure first hand assessments to adapt grazing management as conditions warrant.

Range Manager of the Year Award for 2014 went to Almida Cattle Co., This 4 generation ranching family is currently being managed by Reuben Verner and encompasses over 71,000 acres on the Prescott National Forest. The Verner’s spearheaded an annual cooperative monitoring program on the ranch that started in 2008. Monitoring partners include AGFD, NRCS, Univ. of Arizona Cooperative Extension, and Forest Service. Many areas have been targets of watershed and wildlife habitat improvement projects such as development of waters and cutting juniper that has invaded grassland habitats. Congratulations to Almida Cattle Co. and the Verners.



Congratulations to the Plant ID Winners From the Winter Meeting

1st place went to Mike McIntire and 2nd place went to Christopher Higginbotham.



Christopher Higginbotham and Mike McIntire

Student Scholarship Recipients Recognized at Annual Meeting

At the Annual Meeting in Tucson on 15 January 2015, recipients of the Section’s three scholarships were announced. Those scholarships are Outstanding Undergraduate at Arizona State University and University of Arizona, and the S. Clark Martin Memorial Scholarship. The Outstanding Undergraduate Student Scholarships recognizes the outstanding student in a degree program emphasizing rangeland management. Each recipient received a check for \$300. The S. Clark Memorial Scholarship recognizes the undergraduate student at either university with the highest rank score for a competitive contest at the national meeting of the Society for Range Management. The recipients received a check for \$350 in Spring 2014.

The recipient from Arizona State University was Jacquelyn Evans. She was raised in Gilbert, Arizona and attended High School at Chandler High School. Ms. Evans has always enjoyed the outdoors and is preparing herself for a career in the natural resources fields. She has worked as an intern with the Arizona Game and Fish Department, and she volunteers with Liberty Wildlife and the Wild Horse Rescue program in Gilbert. Jacquelyn is a Junior at ASU in the College of Letters and Sciences majoring in Applied Biological Sciences with a concentration in Natural Resources, and emphasis in wildlife and range sciences, and is also in ASU’s Barrett Honor College. She will be graduating in the Spring of 2016. She has exceptional plant identification skills. She on the Rangeland Plant Identification Team at ASU, and will be competing in the student Rangeland Plant Identification contest in Sacramento at the Society for Range Management Annual Meeting.



Jacquelyn Evans and Eddie Alford

The recipient from the University of Arizona was Emily Pecilunas. She is a Senior and will be graduating in May 2015 with a degree in Natural Resources with emphasis in Rangeland Ecology and Management. Ms. Pecilunas was born and raised in Peoria, AZ. She is the current President of the University of Arizona Student Chapter of the Society for Range Management, also known as Tierra Seca be Club. She will be competing in the student Undergraduate Range Management Exam in Sacramento at the Society for Range Management Annual Meeting. She is currently applying for jobs, hoping to obtain a position related to wildland fire and its impacts on ecosystems.

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East Bay Regional Park District in California use cattle to manage open space. This barn is part of the historic ranch that once operated in the area. These are great signs. AZ may need to adopt these as rangelands become increasingly surrounded by urban sprawl.



2015 High School Youth Forum

From the SRM website: “The High School Youth Forum (HSYF) program began in 1966 at the Salt Lake City Annual Meeting as the Youth Range Forum. High school age delegates are selected for participation in the Forum by the Sections of the Society based on their interest, achievements and activities in range and natural resource management at the Section level. Beginning in the early 1970's, the program format began to encourage youth thought and enhancement of communication skills. A taste of what range professionals do was achieved by asking each Forum delegate to prepare a 6 to 8 minute formal presentation on a range related topic. The HSYF paper presentation session today is treated similar to other formal, educational annual meeting sessions, except that it is a competition. In the late 1980's, the top 2 to 3 winning papers began to be published in Rangelands. For our Section sponsored youth, this effort has brought about a true educational process. These youth select a topic by visiting and working with Society members, research an idea, prepare a written paper, and then present the main ideas of the paper in a formal speaking presentation. The Forum delegates most often continue to use their presentation in other youth competitions, as speakers at various summer camps and local organization meetings, and serve as ambassadors in their states or sections for range stewardship.”



Three students were selected at the conclusion of NRCWAY to represent the Arizona Section during the 2015 High School Youth Forum held as part of the 2015 Annual Meeting of the Society for Range Management in Sacramento, California.

Leighton Dimler, Claypool

Being able to represent the Arizona Section for the SRM HSYF was such a great experience that I am truly grateful to be able to attend. I feel as if many more doors have been opened for me throughout the whole event in more than one way. I got the chance to meet and have many words with experts and college students in many different fields. Having this chance, I really got a feel for which college I would like to attend and narrow down specifically what I want to major in. I truly fell into great friendships with the other delegates as well and meet great people from all over the nation. On top of giving my speech, and learning from all these experts, it was a great experience and I loved every second of it. I am truly grateful for the chance to attend the Society of Range Management High School Youth Forum.

Madison Frary, Buckeye

My name is Madison Frary and I was selected to represent Arizona at the High School Youth Forum SRM. I would like to start out by saying thanks. I never would have had the chance to branch out this far into rangeland without the support of you all. I want you to know this was a once in a life time experience for me that made me grow as a person. I was able to leave the city and see the other side of how the world works.

My experience at the forum was a great one. In the week I was there I met people that I grew close with quickly, at the end of the trip I did not want to say bye. It was amazing to share stories, to see how everyone got there for one reason even if we all had different backgrounds. Presenting was a major part of this trip, almost the whole reasoning for performing. I will admit I was scared; I was shaking as I walked up to that podium, the night before I seriously did not know how the day was going to play out. Being 3rd to present, I did not have to wait long. I am extremely proud of myself. This trip allowed me to see that even when you are scared, you can pull through; it showed that a bunch of people with the same interest who happen to be competing against one another CAN cheer each other on. I would like to thank you for allowing me to be a part of this. The field trip was mind-blowing. I just wanted to stay with the sheep as I thought they were cute, but of course that could be the city in me talking. The diagnostic medicine facility was nothing I imagined it to be. People turn to them to find out what is going on in their livestock, to find the

2015 High School Youth Forum...continued from page 6

missing piece in the puzzle. All the knowledge I gained that week I would have never gotten if it was not for this trip, thank you for the ability to expand my horizons.

Joshua Troub, Buckeye

Dear Arizona Section,

To begin with, I'd like to express my deepest gratitude for sponsoring me to attend the High School Youth Forum at the Society for Range Management Convention in Sacramento. At first I was a little wary of missing my classes during that week since I am participating in the International Baccalaureate Program and have a large workload; however, once I got to the airport in Phoenix and met back up with the other two delegates, I knew that although I was going to miss school, I would learn more at the convention. I came to this conclusion after we began to share some of the information we had collected for our presentations; it was more in depth than anything I could possibly learn in school. Madison's presentation was focused on wolves and their impact on rangeland, Leighton's was on OHV impact, and mine was an analysis of the disappearance and reintroduction of the black-footed ferret. All of us shared an extensive amount of knowledge collected through both research and personal experience.

We didn't win; however, we presented and were part of some of the most brilliant presentations I have ever seen. From FFA to even presentations given by companies like Arizona Game and Fish, these were the absolute best. If you haven't been to convention or haven't watched the High School Youth Forum presentations, I encourage you to do both.

Besides the presentations, the entire workshop proved to be most helpful in networking and education. We watched several professional presentations about managing biodiversity in range management. My personal favorite was given by Temple Grandin on the different minds and ways of thinking that can collaborate to manage range land. I had seen her movie and watched a few of her other talks online. Afterwards, the Youth Forum president, Wyatt Wass of California, and I were able to talk with her about some of her ideas and innovations considering the cattle industry. We even got her autograph. Score!

Additionally, I appreciate all of the Arizona representation we had there. Their support was awesome. One of them, Doug, also showed up to a professional interaction we had at a fancy restaurant where the food was so fancy I couldn't even understand the menu. While there, we had the opportunity to ask several professionals about their work and experience related to range management. Doug sang a couple of songs and recited a poem; he was better than the band who came for the dance. Speaking of the dance, I found it to be a great opportunity to really get to know some of the other delegates from across the country and even Canada. I made lots of friends and contacts.

All in all, your funding me to represent Arizona at the High School Youth Forum was a great honor to me. I plan to seek a career in natural resource management of some sort and found the convention to be a most stimulating experience due to the workshops, career fair, and contest. I learned a lot and plan to share the knowledge I have gained with as many people as I can. Already I will be giving my presentation and encouraging others in my range management contest through FFA and at NRCWAY. You have provided me with a life changing experience that will not only aid me in finding a career, but will also aid in the future of range management.



Student Scholarship Recipients Recognized at Annual Meeting...continued from page 5

Anna Collins and Alanna Riggs from the University of Arizona both received the S. Clark Martin Memorial Scholarship by tying for highest score among Arizona Section students competing in the Undergraduate Range Management Exam at the annual meeting in Orlando, FL in 2014. They tied for 8th place among 153 students representing 21 different universities from Canada, Mexico and the US. Ms. Collins is a Senior and will be graduating in May 2015 with a degree in Natural Resources with emphasis in Rangeland Ecology and Management. She is the current President of the Society for Range Management Student Conclave and will be competing in the student Undergraduate Range Management Exam at the annual meeting in Sacramento at the Society for Range Management Annual Meeting. Ms. Riggs graduated from the University of Arizona in May 2014 with dual degrees in Spanish and Natural Resources with emphasis in Rangeland Ecology and Management. She currently lives and works on the family ranch near Willcox, AZ.

On a related topic, Leland Sutter and Rachel Turner were selected by the University of Arizona faculty to receive the Marcelle E. Schmutz Memorial Scholarship given in memory of Erv Schmutz's father. Erv was a longtime faculty member in Range Management at University of Arizona. Mr. Sutter is the Vice President of the University of Arizona Student Chapter of the Society for Range Management, also known as Tierra Seca Club. He was raised in Arizona including being a member of the rodeo team at Marana High School. He is a veteran of US Army service which included deployment in Iraq and Afghanistan. His passion for all things related to rangeland ecology and management stems from time spent working with cattle and horses on his uncle's ranch in northern Arizona. He plans to pursue a graduate program in rangeland ecology and management, and eventually to buy a ranch and sustainability raise livestock.

Ms. Turner is a Senior and will be graduating in May 2015 with a degree in Natural Resources with emphasis in Rangeland Ecology and Management. She is active in the Honors College, and will completed an Honors Project in the Department of Nutritional Sciences. Ms. Tuner was raised in Maricopa, AZ and plans to continue her education in the Ecology, Management, and Restoration of Rangelands graduate program at the University of Arizona starting in Fall 2015. Her formal education has provided an opportunity to study plant-animal interactions and to spend significant amounts of time in the field. Ms. Turner would like to work for Cooperative Extension after completing her education. She will be competing in the student Undergraduate Range Management Exam and the Plant Identification contests at the annual meeting of the Society for Range Management in Sacramento, Ca.



Rachel Turner, Leland Sutter, Mitch McClaran, and Emily Pecilunas

SRM Sacramento 2015

When I first heard about the SRM national conference three or four years ago I was not interested at all. It was not until I was exposed to the rangeland management profession, while taking some environmental management classes, that I even realized that range management was a thing. Some of my fellow students received Pathways jobs in the Forest Service and the more exposure I got the more I wanted to be involved. So this last year I decided to prepare to go to the SRM conference in Sac Town.

Even though Arizona State University does not have that big of a range program, we do have a well selected collection of plant mounts. Dr. Eddie Alford and other staff members are pretty knowledgeable from their work in the field and aiding us in understanding the concepts. Our goal as a team was to try and do as well as we could in the plant ID portion of the undergraduate competitions. Most of our team had never been to a national SRM conference, and we needed to focus on plant ID. However, as time grew closer to the competition a couple of us also decided to take the URME test and extemporaneous speaking as well.



The morning of the plant exam was exciting, hundreds of hours of prep work for a 2 hour test. I was afraid of getting burnt out halfway through but I didn't. I thought I would be nervous, but I wasn't. The worst part in my opinion was the dead silence, and the gentleman to my right; for some reason he kind of kept scowling at me. Temple Grandin spoke while we were taking the plant ID exam, but she ended up doing a Q&A for the students that I attended and the room was packed! I quietly listened to her for over 30 minutes squatting in a corner of the room. I would not have known her story had I not come to the conference. After Temple's session we ate lunch and hit up the booths at the conference to try and score some books, cozies and industry information.

The next day our team took the URME test and for most of us it was a last minute idea. Only one person on our team actually studied for the test. We simply did not have enough time to prepare for plant ID and the URME. We had one calculator and decided to give it to the person who had studied the most for it. I'm glad I decided to take it, because I ended up doing fairly well. In retrospect the URME would be very hard to study for because of how wide the scope of the exam is. Afterwards Kelsie Buxbaum and I went and registered for the extemporaneous speaking competition. It was a team effort to prepare for our speeches; an effort that is much appreciated when our topics were CAM photosynthesis and vegetation mapping respectively.

The most memorable moment of the awards ceremony for me was the team from Alberta who seemed to clean house. Now when I see a car with an Alberta plate going 50 on the US-60, I will hopefully recall their excellent range program instead of how slow they drive.

On the flight back it was nothing but re-experiencing to be done with the competition. If the Arizona chapter SRM had not donated money for us to go, I'm not sure how many of us could have afforded it. I had never been to Sacramento, and the town was pretty cool. Overall our team got 10th on the plant exam, which was an all-time best for ASU. Personally I scored a 509, which I am not disappointed with. On the URME I got 36th which far exceeded my expectations; especially since I didn't have a calculator. I ended up getting 7th in extemporaneous speaking, an overall feat for me and enjoyed every bit of it. The scores aside I think the single most important thing that the SRM national conference gave me was this, "It made everything I've been learning in school become real and practical. All the subjects suddenly mattered. Leaders and managers in the profession were all around me, and I could speak to them. It's an industry as well as a career that I feel would be something very rewarding to be a part of". My only regret is that I did not compete sooner.

Christopher Higginbotham, Arizona State University

Calendar of Events

Discovery Talks - Santa Rita Experimental Range. Each talk 10:00am to 11:30 am.
Talks are on the following dates:

- March 21, 2015 The Range and the Ranch – blending tradition and adaptation for family, social and environmental values at SRER
- March 28, 2015 Life on a slippery slope – the Merriam-Powell Research Station and new research on ecological adaptation to climate change
- April 11, 2015 The buzz on the Range – impacts of forage availability and nutritional stress on honey bee colonies
- April 25, 2015 Through the haze darkly – a look at drought, dust, and plant *death*

Ecology Management of Grazing - an online course -
[http://californiarangeland.ucdavis.edu/
Grazing_Management_Course_Description_and_Registration/](http://californiarangeland.ucdavis.edu/Grazing_Management_Course_Description_and_Registration/)



Arizona Section-Society For
Range Management
1195 Solar Heights Dr.
Prescott, AZ 86303

