

THE PLAINSMAN

SOCIETY FOR RANGE MANAGEMENT
NORTHERN GREAT PLAINS SECTION

MARCH 22, 2006



WHAT'S INSIDE?



President's Message

Lance Vermeire, NGP-SRM President

In recent years, there has been much discussion on the subject of membership in the section and the parent society. Generally, the dialogue has suggested that we have too few members, or that we have fewer than we did at some benchmark in time. Many of our efforts, or requests for effort, have concentrated on recruitment. Although recruitment is important, we may be skimming over more basic issues and simply treating symptoms. Concern arises from the fact that membership is often interpreted as a reflection of an organization's quality or the demand for its services. If this interpretation is correct, then we should ask ourselves about the quality of existing services and whether demands have changed. In fact we should be asking these questions constantly, regardless of member numbers at any given time.

To be an organization that people wish to join and remain a part of, the Northern Great Plains Section needs to be informative, interactive, and productive. The exchange of rangeland information is one of our primary services and we provide this exchange through three avenues; a newsletter, a website, and an annual meeting. Your gut response as you read the preceding statement was a quick assessment of the current quality of our services. We can and should improve the quality of these services, a responsibility that lies with each member, not just the editor, webmaster, or current president. Regarding the demand for our services, I know of no simpler or better way to find out what people want than to ask them directly. So, I am sincerely asking you, what do you want from the Northern Great Plains Section of SRM? What services do prospective members of our section want?

I offer a few thoughts to get the ball rolling. Agency and landowner involvement in the section are below their potential because we often lack timely, applied information through our newsletter, or training at our annual meetings. Our members are a wealth of information and people are interested in hearing the latest in rangeland research, policy, programs, and techniques. Why are you holding back your information or releasing it only through other media? I invite you to offer reports and discussions for the newsletter. The newsletter should be a great medium for staying informed on regional rangeland activities, getting your message out, and receiving feedback. Elaine Grings has graciously agreed to be newsletter editor. Please keep the articles flowing to her. Relative to training, I am interested in setting up symposia or workshops associated with our fall meeting and would like to hear from you what training or topics require our attention. This should be a great opportunity to hear and respond to what you and potential members of our section need.

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Mark your calendars! Upcoming events:

Nomination materials for SRM awards are due April 30, 2006. See information on the SRM website at www.rangelands.org

December 10-13, 2006
Third National Conference on Grazing Lands, St. Louis, Missouri. Deadline for abstract submission is April 1, 2006. More information can be found at www.glci.org

Do you know of an upcoming event? Want to report on a past event? Do you have new information to share? Send information for **The Plainsman** to Elaine Grings at elaine@larl.ars.usda.gov.

The Plainsman is published 4 times per year. The deadline for the next issue is **May 15, 2006**. We welcome information on events, current projects, research results, extension activities, and items of general interest to the membership.

Future newsletters are scheduled for the first week of June, September, and December. Please have information and article submitted by the 15th of the preceding month.

Section Business:

*Northern Great Plains Section, Business Meeting Minutes,
February 14, 2006
Milestones Restaurant, Vancouver, BC*

6:30 pm President John Hendrickson called the meeting to order.

Old Business – none

New Business

Newsletter – Elaine Grings has agreed to be the new newsletter editor

Planning for future section meetings: It is helpful to have some kind of training included as part of the section meeting. This allows more people to be able to obtain travel funds to attend. There was also some preference expressed for a fall annual meeting over summer. The location of the section meeting is up to the discretion of the Section President. Lance Vermeire and Ross MacDonald will take these comments under advisement while planning the next few section meetings.

Committee Reports: Awards – Duane McCartney, chair of SRM Awards Committee (in the absence of Chuck McGlothlin, section awards chair) – Chuck McGlothlin needs assistance in getting awards moved from the section through to the parent society. Winning a section award first, strengthens the case for a national award. The DEADLINE for national awards is April 30, 2006. Information on the nomination process is available on the SRM website.

Membership – Kim Brunelle (In absence of chair, Bernadette Braun) – Kim attended the membership chair meeting. The section currently has 219 members, which is a loss of 45. Kim has membership applications.

Youth – Bret Olson – The section was represented by 3 students in the High School Youth Forum. Two are speakers, Spurr Watson and Sarah Anderson, and one is last year's HSYF winner, Naomi Cox, who will present her talk at the Awards Ceremony. The section provided each student with

\$300 to help defray travel costs. North Dakota State University has 5 participants in the URME contest and University of Saskatchewan has a 6 member team. Students are also involved in the Plant ID contest and the Undergraduate Technical Paper Presentations.

GLCI - Keith Bartholomay - The National Grazing Lands Conference will be held in St Louis, Dec 2006. Information is available at the GLCI booth and the webpage (www.glci.org)

Announcements - An announcement was made about a meeting to be held in Regina in March 2007: Homes on the Range: Conservation in Working Prairie Landscapes. Brochures were handed out. There is currently need for funding. The organizers hope to attract about 500 people.

A mention was made about the Young Professional Conclave that was held this year. Lance Vermeire was a speaker. The conclave included presentations about career issues. It was attended by about 100 individuals. It was noted that the NGP section is weak in its recruitment of youth.

Advisory Council report – Ross MacDonald and Lance Vermeire

There was a focus on increasing membership and increasing revenue. There were some questions about what the target membership should be.

Several items were sent to the SRM Board of Directors to vote on for approval.

Future SRM meetings will be in Reno, NV, 2007; Louisville, KY 2008; Albuquerque, NM, 2009; and Denver, CO, 2010.

Excellence in Range Management Poster - Duane McCartney mentioned the Excellence in Range Management Poster contest. This is a poster competition for those who have excelled in range management. A poster is prepared describing what management has been done. Abstracts for these should be submitted at the same time as other abstracts in June.

A motion was made by Ross MacDonald to adjourn. It was seconded by Paul Nyren. Meeting adjourned at 7 pm.

2006 Recipient of the Society for Range Management of the Gerald Sharp Memorial Scholarship in Range Management at the University of Saskatchewan is Ms Nadia Mori

Ms. Mori was chosen as the recipient of this scholarship based on excellent academic performance in the Rangeland Resources: Ecology and Management course at the University of Saskatchewan. The Northern Great Plains Section of the Society for Range Management annually presents the Gerald Sharp Memorial Scholarship to an undergraduate or graduate student in the College of Agriculture at the University of Saskatchewan who has a high academic standing, and has demonstrated a commitment to the profession of range management and the prudent use of rangeland resources.

Nadia, a fourth year student majoring in Rangeland Resources, was raised on a mixed field crop and dairy farm in Switzerland. Ms. Mori plans on enrolling in graduate studies following completion of her Bachelor of Science in Agriculture in December 2006. Eventually Nadia hopes to apply her rangeland resources training in conservation and restoration.

**NORTHERN GREAT PLAINS SECTION
Society for Range Management
2-01-05 to 1-31-06 Income and Expenses**



1/31/05	Balance	\$18,118.07
	Scholarship	\$ 0.00
	CD	\$12,000.00
	Working Balance	\$ 6,118.07
Income		
	Savings and Money Market Interest (2/01/05-1/31/06)	\$ 31.06
	Dues Rebate	\$ 875.00
	Plant Summit	\$ 1,866.46
	Print sale	\$ 307.41
	CD interest (to scholarship)	\$ 480.00
TOTAL INCOME		\$ 3,559.93
Expenses		
	New checks	\$ 13.50
	Incorporation Fee	\$ 15.00
	Newsletter	\$ 9.24
	MT Range Days	\$ 125.00
	Scholarships (MSU, US, NDSU)	\$ 600.00
	ND chapter dues rebate	\$ 70.00
	PP chapter dues rebate	\$ 58.00
	HSYF	\$ 895.00
TOTAL EX-PENSES		\$ 1,785.74
1/31/06		
	Total Balance	\$19,204.40
	Scholarship	\$ 0.00
	CD	\$11,312.88
	Working Balance	\$ 7,891.52

Current Balances:

CD	\$ 11,312.88
Checking	\$ 522.83
Savings	\$ 3,610.19
Money Market	\$ 3,758.50
Total	\$19,204.40

ENDOWMENT FUND BALANCE

1/31/05	\$2,042.46
12/30/05	\$2,049.58

**Northern Great Plains SRM
Youth Activities Committee - February 2006 Report**

MONTANA

- 1) HSYF delegate - Spurr Watson, Pompey's Pillar, Montana "Grazing 101"
- 2) 5 students from Montana State University attend SRM meeting in Vancouver. All took part in URME, several in Plant ID contest
- 3) Range Days - June 19-21 Clyde Park (north of Livingston), Montana
- 4) Range Youth Camp, Highwood Mountain area. Montana, last week of June
- 5) Natural Resources Youth Camp, Lubrecht Forest (near Missoula), July 23-28

NORTH DAKOTA

- 1) HSYF delegate - Naomi Cox, 2005 Illustrated Talk winner, "Range Trend - Quantity versus Quality". Naomi is a freshman at Calvary Bible College in Kansas City

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CONGRATULATIONS!!

2006 SRM Honor Award Citations

Outstanding Achievement Stewardship

Castleland Ranch (Ted & Olive Perrin)

Ted and Olive Perrin own and operate Castleland Ranch near Beechy, Saskatchewan. Ted and Olive are extensively involved in the ranching industry and community activities. They have received several awards recognizing resource conservation and environmental stewardship on Castleland Ranch. Ted and Olive Perrin realize that ranching and range management are all about grass management and conserving natural resources for future generations. Forward thinking and conservative grazing management on Castleland Ranch ensures sustainable grazing resources through extremes in climatic conditions over the short- and long-term. Applying principles of range management that allow sustainable use of rangeland resources have been rewarding as evidenced by humble and happy landowners as well as healthy rangelands.

Outstanding Achievement Stewardship

Jeffrey L Printz

Jeff Printz has been a gracious contributor to rangeland management technology in his various positions throughout the state of North Dakota. His current position, NRCS State Rangeland Conservationist, has enabled him to be involved with the development and implementation of technical guidelines and standards, technical presentations and publications, and the education of peers, agency personnel, and producers. Jeff has participated in the statewide collection and interpretation of rangeland related data. He has helped complete studies of ecological sites and forage suitability groups for use in planning and application of rangeland resource management systems. Jeff has worked with individual producers, producer groups, and state and federal agencies to help correlate these standards and promote a uniform understanding of rangeland management objectives.

Jeff has also been very dedicated to the Society. He has served as an inspirational force for both new and old members alike. His cheery attitude creates a positive and inviting environment for members to become involved in SRM activities. Jeff has served on various committees over the years and has even served as a ND Chapter President as well as a NGPS President. He has also been involved with youth activities such as the ND Regional Range Judging Contest and ND Youth Range Camp. For these reasons, Jeff is being recognized with the Society's Outstanding Achievement Award.

Michel E Tremblay

Michel Tremblay is presented the Outstanding Achievement Award for his continued service and dedication to improving the management and conservation of rangeland resources and the rangeland management profession. As Provincial Forage Specialist for Saskatchewan since 1992, he has consistently played a key role in delivering sound technical advice to a wide variety of organizations. He has authored numerous fact sheets and helped revise range related documents - these publications are considered as keystone information on forages and range management for Saskatchewan. Michel has been instrumental in his role as Provincial Forage Specialist with Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food in bringing together and working with partner agencies to develop programs and extension materials that benefit Saskatchewan's livestock and forage industry. His ability to work effectively in partnerships is a much-appreciated quality.

His long-term service and passion in advancing the art and science of rangeland management makes him a most worthy recipient of a SRM 2006 Outstanding Achievement Award.

(Continued from page 4)

2) 5 students from North Dakota State University took part in URME, 2 undergraduate students presented Undergraduate Technical Papers, 4 graduate students presented 1 poster and 4 oral presentations. 3) Range Youth Camp (ages 13 – 18), Logging Camp Ranch, near Medora, ND, June 13-16.

PRAIRIE PARKLAND

1) HSYF delegate – Sarah Anderson, Sceptre, Saskatchewan, “Oil, Gas, and Ranching in the Great Sandhills” - additional sponsors included Ducks Unlimited Canada, The Saskatchewan Watershed Authority, and Prairie Parkland Chapter SRM. Sarah placed 5th in the contest

2) 7 students from University of Saskatchewan took part in URME.

Youth Activities in Prairie Parkland Chapter

Submitted by: Julie MacKenzie – Prairie Parkland Chapter Youth Director & Krista Connick Prairie Parkland Chapter Communications and Promotions Director

Before Vancouver I can hear SRM members thinking “hmm, the prairies...grass, birds, and Sask-at-chew-what?”. But that has definitely changed after Vancouver. Seven young women made an impressive name for themselves during the week and put the prairies, our grass, and the University of Saskatchewan on the map.

On the university side, the University of Saskatchewan team placed 3rd out of 18 teams in the URME. Team members included Nadia Mori (2nd), Denise Benfield (18th), Shannon Poppy (30th), Adrienne Worley (36th), Holly White (50th), and Beki Gummesson (65th). Nadia also braved the intense Plant Identification Exam, placing 39 out of 95. Nadia, Holly, Shannon, Adrienne, and Beki participated in the Undergraduate Paper Presentation session. This is the second year the team participated, and composed over one third of the presenters!

Sarah Anderson of Sceptre, SK was chosen from students across the prairies to participate in the High School Youth Forum on behalf of the Prairie Parkland Chapter. Sarah’s riveting paper and presentation “Balancing Native Rangeland Conservation with Economic Activity”, took her first hand experiences growing up on the family ranch in the Great Sand Hills and dealing with oil and gas development and put it into perspective for the audience. Sarah placed 5th in the competition- good job Sarah!!

What do you get when you are the 2nd place SRM University Aggregate? Well up until this year simply recognition- but things have changed. The Prairie Parkland Chapter is very proud to sponsor a new element to this competition by offering the 2nd place winner a one week all expenses paid tour of the Prairies. Jennifer Coleman of Brigham Young University will come to Alberta and Saskatchewan early this summer to take in the sites. Planned stops include The University of Alberta Kinsella Ranch, ranches in the Medicine Hat area, the Native Prairie Appreciation Week tour near Beechy, and The Ag Canada Research Station at Swift Current.

Youth activities in the Prairie Parkland Chapter could not be possible without the generous support of many sponsors: Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada-PFRA, The Saskatchewan Watershed Authority, Ducks Unlimited Canada, University of Saskatchewan’s President Fund, College of Agriculture Education Enhancement Grant, Department of Plant Sciences, Department of Animal and Poultry Sciences and the Saskatchewan Institute of Agrologists.

NDSU URME Team Results *submitted by Don Kirby*

The Undergraduate Range Management Exam Team from North Dakota State University finished in 5th place of the 23 teams competing at the 2006 annual meeting of the Society for Range Management held in Vancouver, British Columbia. The team members were Joshua Peterson, Miranda Vlaminck, Krista Brag, Paula Wolff, and Jill Nannenga. Josh Peterson tied for 3rd overall and Miranda Vlaminck tied for 9th overall of 133 individuals taking the exam. The team was coached by Dr. Shawn DeKeyser a lecturer in the Animal and Range Sciences Department at NDSU.

Past-President's Message

John Hendrickson, Mandan ND

Hello and Goodbye!

I made the mistake of sitting next to Elaine Grings at the SRM Meetings in Vancouver. Elaine has been gracious enough to agree to be our next newsletter editor. However, she asked me to write a report as past president. Since I hadn't written one as president, I felt that I really couldn't refuse. My lack of an introductory report did give me a title for my final report however.

I hope everyone who attended the annual meetings in Vancouver had a good time. I certainly did. We had 29 people attend our section meeting which was held at the Milestones Restaurant in Vancouver. It was a good opportunity for people from the different areas to get together and socialize. I believe that one of our biggest challenges as a section is to bring members from different areas together and develop an identity as a section.

I find myself doing a good job of attending section meetings when they are held at the SRM Annual Meetings but a poor job of attending other section meetings. At our section meeting in Vancouver, the idea of trying to develop a training session during which we could attach a section meeting was raised. In general, people seemed to support this idea. Lance, Ross and I will be working to develop this concept and hopefully will have it in place for this year. We would like to develop a meaningful training session that will address the needs of our membership.

I also learned the importance of the Advisory Council. The purpose of the Advisory Council according to the SRM bylaws is to "serve as a planning, consultative, and advisory body to the Board of Directors, to provide the means for discussion and evaluation of Society affairs by a broad spectrum of membership, and to provide the opportunity for reporting on, exchanging ideas about, and evaluating Section and Society activities and programs". In practice the council is one of the ways section membership can provide feedback to the Board of Directors. However, for it to work well, it needs involvement of the membership. Membership involvement means bringing items concerning the parent society to the section representatives on the council. When I have attended the Advisory Council meetings, our section representatives have been the past president, current president and incoming president. That would be Lance Vermeire, Ross MacDonald and myself.

I have been honored to serve as president during the past year. With Lance Vermeire as our new section president, I look forward to a strong and exciting year.

Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument Update

Public meetings to answer questions and gather comments concerning the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument Draft Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement



(RMP/EIS) were rescheduled for February and early March. **There is still time for Comments on Upper Missouri Breaks** Although public meeting times have past, written comments can still be submitted. Please send your written comments to: **Monument RMP Team, BLM Lewistown Field Office, 920 NE Main St., P.O. Box 1160, Lewistown, MT 59457**, or they may be e-mailed to **monumentrmp@blm.gov**. All letters and emails should include the first and last name of the individual commenting and a complete mailing address. Those individuals who wish their name and address withheld from public release must state that preference at the beginning of their comments. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed. All comments from organizations and businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be available for public release in their entirety. The public comment period has been extended and will now run **through April 26, 2006**. Information on the Upper Missouri Breaks and the Planning process is available at <http://www.mt.blm.gov/ldo/um/rmpdocs/MonumentRMP.htm>

8th Native Prairie Appreciation Week, June 18 – 24, 2006

Picture this: Thousands of acres of lush native prairie, the gentle summer breeze, the smell of the blooming wolf willow, and the song of a Sprague's Pipit above..... Sounds pretty nice? Add great food, fun and informative tour stops, a little friendly competition, and 2 busses full of people just like you and we have the highlight event of Saskatchewan's Native Prairie Appreciation Week (NPAW).

Saskatchewan will be proclaiming its 8th Native Prairie Appreciation Week (NPAW) from June 18 - 24, 2006. NPAW is an initiative of the Saskatchewan Prairie Conservation Action Plan (PCAP) and the highlight is the annual SRM Workshop and Field Tour which is held in different locations annually. This year 'Discovering the Matador Grasslands' will be based out of Beechy and held on June 21-22. The event consists of a half day indoor workshop and a day and a half field tour. The purpose of the event is to bring together ranchers, naturalists, hunters, resource agency specialists and others to celebrate the diverse values of native prairie grasslands. Participants will once again be divided into teams to participate in range health assessments and to compete for the NPAW cup in the native plant ID challenge. One of the stops on the tour this year will be Castleland Ranch, operated by Ted and Olive Perrin. The Perrin's received the SRM Outstanding Achievement Award this year for their stewardship efforts and also received other provincial and national awards. Registrations for NPAW will be available soon on the PCAP website www.pcap-sk.org

8th Prairie Conservation and Endangered Species Conference

The Saskatchewan PCAP will also host the 8th Prairie Conservation and Endangered Species Conference (PCESC) and workshop in Regina on March 1-3, 2007. Held once every three years in one of the three Prairie Provinces, this prestigious international conference has provided a forum for grassland experts and has fostered awareness, understanding and action on issues related to native prairie conservation since 1986. We expect to attract over 500 delegates that represent government, non-government organizations, academic institutions, business, industry, producers and other land managers to focus on critical issues of prairie sustainability using collaborative, integrated approaches. Information on the conference is available at www.pcesc.ca.

For more information on the above or the Saskatchewan PCAP contact
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NATIVE SPECIES SEEDING PROJECT

Submitted by Angela Bethune

From Redvers to Eastend, producers are trying something new in forage establishment and grazing. A demonstration project highlighting the establishment and use of a seed mixture containing green needle grass, northern wheatgrass, western wheatgrass, little bluestem and alfalfa is well underway. A total of 300 acres of this seed mixture will be up and growing in spring 2006 at different sites across Saskatchewan.

This project will demonstrate the ability of a native grass species mixture to establish on cultivated soils across the province. This mixture will promote biodiversity and potentially improve carbon sequestration potential of each site. Grazing these locations is also expected to demonstrate that improved forage quality throughout the grazing season can mitigate greenhouse gas emission from cattle. Incorporation of the cool season (green needle grass, northern wheatgrass, western wheatgrass) and warm season (little bluestem) grass species will provide digestible forage throughout the grazing season.

Partners in this project include the Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Fund administered by the Canadian Cattlemen's Association, Proven Seed, Dow AgroSciences, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Saskatchewan Watershed Authority, Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada-Semiarid Prairie Agricultural Research Centre and land owners near Eastend, Moose Jaw, Craven, Weyburn and Redvers.

A LETTER FROM THE SRM AWARDS COMMITTEE CHAIR

After a number of people catching me in the hallway in Vancouver, and a number of emails received since then, I will attempt to answer your questions regarding SRM Honor Awards and, in specific, the Fellow Award.

There seems to be some confusion about the first tiebreaker used by the committee – *“In the event of a tie, the first tiebreaker is previous receipt of section awards.”* This rule was put into place after it was felt that too many nominations were received from sections wanting the SRM Awards Committee to recognize section work, thus using section awards as a tiebreaker would encourage sections to recognize their own, and the SRM Awards Committee would then, correctly, only be considering nominations based upon Society level work and contributions.

The committee does recognize that not all sections have an active awards program to recognize their members; however it is not the SRM Awards Committee role to recognize section work. Thus, this category is only used IF there is a tie vote (actually, a tie vote doesn't happen very often). Since this tiebreaker was put in place, there seems to be a misunderstanding upon the part of sections – not having received a section award **does not** mean you cannot nominate someone for an SRM award. Remember, it is only a tiebreaker not a disqualifier. There are a number of SRM members who are very active at the Society level, but may not be as active at the section level. ***If this is your situation, I encourage you to submit a nomination packet for this person.***

There has been some concern that no Fellow award has been given for two years. *“The title of Fellow is conferred upon members of the Society for Range Management in recognition of exceptional service to the Society and its programs in advancing the science and art of range-related resource management. This high honor is granted in the belief that special recognition should be given for exceptional and dedicated service to the Society.”* The Fellow Award is limited to a maximum of 0.1% of the membership annually.

If you will recall the SRM Awards Program, it was indicated that no “suitable” applications were received (it is also indicated in the Awards Citation Booklet). It is not that applications were not received, they were just submitted for the wrong category, and were thus disqualified from consideration for the Fellow Award. Remember, it is service to the Society, not contributions to the profession (which is Outstanding Achievement).

The situation on the Fellow Award was reviewed with the SRM Board of Directors, through our Board contact Kris Havstad. We even asked for advice if we should reopen the nominations process last year to try and get some suitable nominations. The decision was to stick to the original time frame, and if no awards were presented in a given category, so be it.

The Awards Committee works to contact Sections each spring – the Section President and Awards Committee Chair (if known), right after the SRM Annual Meeting, to remind them of the Honor Awards Process and the deadline of April 30th. However, it is ultimately up to the Sections to nominate folks for SRM Awards. (If you are not aware of it, by committee rule, members of the SRM Awards committee cannot nominate folks for an award, nor shall they be eligible for an award while they are a committee member.)

If you have any questions on the Awards Committee process, please don't hesitate to ask.

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BIODIVERSITY AND AGRICULTURE

Series *Submitted by Sue Michalsky*

“Biodiversity is of great importance to farmers and ranchers. Livestock, crops, water systems, soils and natural landscapes all impact each other. If the balance of these factors is maintained they function together to the benefit of agriculture and the ecosystem.”

Nature Saskatchewan is pleased to introduce the Biodiversity & Agriculture series! The series includes ‘The Value of Biodiversity to Farming in Saskatchewan’ and ‘The Value of Biodiversity to Ranching in Saskatchewan’ fact sheets as well as ‘Biodiversity & Agriculture: A Companion Sheet’.

These fact sheets are designed to illustrate how agriculture and biodiversity are intertwined and dependent on one another in today’s world. Producers regularly make decisions that affect their bottom line and biological diversity. These decisions do not have to have opposing outcomes – decisions that are good for business can be good for biodiversity too!

The fact sheets provide an overview of biodiversity on agricultural lands, and how biodiversity and agriculture are mutually beneficial. They include some real life examples of how people working with the environment attain tangible benefits. There are also lists of ranching and farming practices that benefit biodiversity.

We thank the agricultural producers and following agencies who reviewed the fact sheets, resulting in a greatly enhanced final product: Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada – {PFRA}, Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food, Saskatchewan Watershed Authority, Saskatchewan Environment, Ducks Unlimited Canada, and Environment Canada. Funding was provided by the Greencover Canada Program.

For copies of the Biodiversity and Agriculture information sheet series, please contact Nature Saskatchewan at info@naturesask.ca or phone 1-800-667-4668 (SK only) or 780-9273 in Regina. The fact sheets are also available on our website: www.naturesask.ca (Stewardship Programs).

More on Native Species:

Native Seed: A Cash Crop To Consider; Workshop held in Swift Current

Submitted by Julie MacKenzie

Producers are eager to learn about native plants - not only for cattle grazing, but for seed production as a new cash crop.

“It is definitely something to look into doing when some of this seed sells for \$4.00 to \$50.00 a pound depending on the species,” says grain farmer BJ Haubrich of Glen Bain.

A successful workshop was held mid-December in Swift Current with the most knowledgeable professionals in the native seed industry. Most producers came to learn about the native seed production market.

Establishing native plant stands for livestock grazing and forage production is not as difficult as most people envision it to be. Research scientists Alan Iwaasa and Mike Schellenberg from the Semiarid Prairie Agricultural Research Center, presented results from a four-year study on the *Re-establishment of a Mixed Native Grassland in Southwest Saskatchewan*.

Dr. Iwaasa presented research results which showed that different mixtures of native species can be successfully re-established on previously cropped land in the southwest. Certain native grass species, such as green needle grass, actually establish much better

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when seeded in the fall, rather than the spring. Average dry matter forage production availability at the start of late spring/early summer grazing was around 1,021 to 1,284 pounds per acre and average daily gains were between 1.3 to 1.7 pounds per day.

Native seed grower JP Monvoisin shared his experiences of growing native grass seed. “Growing seed can be profitable, but a lot of time and money must be put into keeping the seed fields clean, and it may be two to three years before they can be harvested for seed.” He adds that spraying herbicides two to three times a year and hand picking grassy weeds and larger broadleaf weeds is very time consuming, but pays off in the end.

Garth Wruck, from the Native Plant Society of Saskatchewan, talked about the problems of certification of native grass seed. “It is hard to fit them into the seed certification system used for most of the commodity crops grown for seed.”

The seed’s bulky awns and hulls make harvesting and processing seed more difficult. This means a seed producer must transport the bulk seed to a cleaning facility, which can be costly. Once the seed is cleaned, marketing then becomes a challenge. Before getting into native seed production, producers are advised to do their own market research in order to determine the demand for each species.

“Producing native seeds may be an option for some producers, however they must do their homework and make sure they have a market for the seed,” says Trevor Lennox of Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food. “Rather than planting a quarter-section of land to native grass, I would much rather see people start with five to 20 acres and get comfortable producing and marketing one or two particular species. Native grass seed markets are small and overproduction can occur very quickly.”



Native Seed Harvest Equipment Photos.
Photo Credit: Dean Nernberg, Canadian Wildlife Service

- Advantages of native species:**
- Generally long-lived
 - Contribute to a sustainable agricultural system
 - Help extend the grazing season
 - Provide environmental benefits

Over 5,500 acres of cropland in Saskatchewan has been seeded back to native grasses through the Greencover Canada program since it began in 2001. The program is a federal government initiative which helps producers improve their grassland-management practices. The strong oil and gas industry also requires reclamation seed, making native seed in demand for years to come.

The workshop also discussed the costs of native seed mixes, as well as cleaning and marketing. Seeding native grass species has become significantly less cost prohibitive over the past years, and good native seed mixes can now be made for \$30 to \$50 an acre.

IT’S NOT JUST WHAT YOU SAY, IT’S HOW YOU SAY IT!!”

“It’s not just what you say, it’s how you say it” participants of *Engaging Rural Clients II* held March 1st and 2nd in Regina and Saskatoon, Saskatchewan learned. A large portion of a Range Management Professional’s career is spent communicating with people. Whether it is over coffee at a rancher’s table, a display at a local town hall meeting, or a formal presentation at a conference, good communication is key to a successful career in extension. The days included information on successful presentations, working effectively with First Nations, and tips and tricks for interactive instruction styles. The workshop stressed the importance of effective communication and keeping an interested, active audience throughout a presentation. Knowing the scientific information is not enough if cannot be effectively relayed, conveyed or communicated to those who actively manage native range resources. *Engaging Rural Clients II* was funded through the Greencover Technical Assistance program.



Prairie Winds:

(Section members may submit to this column, publication of materials is subject to review for grammar, length, appropriateness, etc.)

Adaptation – By Elaine Grings, Newsletter Editor

The speaker had us envisioning a future when we would be growing citrus fruit in British Columbia and suggested we prepare for the inevitable coming change in climate. He prefaced this idea with a presentation on the continuum of change our western rangelands have witnessed as time moved from the ice age on into the future.

Each annual meeting of the Society for Range Management seems to follow some theme for me. The overall title of this year’s meeting was “Rangelands to Rainforests”, indicating the diversity of vegetation types in which our membership holds interest. Perhaps another appropriate title would have been “Adaptation”. Several sessions held discussions of landscapes on a geologic scale, delving into the impacts of climate and geologic processes on the ecology of rangelands.

During a session on the formation of Pacific Northwest landscapes, in which the animated speaker was gearing up for new agricultural businesses, an audience member asked whether human beings have become less adaptable over time. The affirmative reply involved an example of adapting to a changing environment as evidenced by a whole culture developing around the use of western cedar after it became a prominent part of the vegetation of the Pacific Northwest.

I tend to think of myself as adaptable, but some of the ideas put forth had me questioning the truth of that. A dinner companion provided some disconcerting thoughts when he suggested that working toward sustainability may be an inappropriately rigid belief as it is an attempt to maintain a norm rather than adapt to future change. Not only was it suggested that I was more rigid than I thought, but my ideologies about sustainability were being questioned.

As the meetings progressed with this theme, ideas were sparked and new views shared. Why not try to use cheatgrass as a biofuel? Some who consider cheatgrass to be a permanent part of the environment feel that if we have to live with it, we should find a use for it. While the practicality of the idea may be limited, the comment was an indication that some individuals are accepting of change and look for ways to embrace it.

I returned from the SRM meetings with a new understanding of the broad ability of people to adapt. We should all take a moment to listen to new ideas. As we learn to think of land management in the perspective of multispatial scales, we may also need to evaluate other new ideas in the same way. Is an idea as radical if we consider it on a geologic time scale rather than the length of a human lifespan? What about evaluating on ecological scales? Are you ready to harvest that cheatgrass?



Photo by Jack Dykinga

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:

Krista Brag, Kindred ND
Dath Mith, Wahpeton, ND
Renea Rush, Grand Forks, ND

Did you miss out on the Lt Governor’s Speech at the Plenary Session of the SRM meetings? Find it at http://www.ltgov.bc.ca/whatsnew/sp/sp_feb13_1_2006.htm