

THE PLAINSMAN

SOCIETY FOR RANGE MANAGEMENT
NORTHERN GREAT PLAINS SECTION

JANUARY 2007



President's Message

Lance Vermeire, NGP-SRM President

A lot has happened since the last newsletter, including a section meeting, increases in membership and changes in officers and committee leadership.

We had a great section meeting in October, with about 45 people attending and more than \$1,000 added to savings and the endowment fund. Based on feedback I received, the meeting was fun and informative. I appreciate all who attended and wish we could have seen those who were unable to join us.

Section membership went from 218 in May, to 228 in November. I welcome the new members and look forward to their involvement with the section. **Keith Bartholomay** will begin his term as president-elect at the conclusion of the Reno meeting. **Bill Houston** and **Janice Bruynooghe** were also elected this fall and will be serving as directors for the section during 2007 and 2008. Ross MacDonald notified us, with regret, that he would be unable to serve his term as section president in 2007. Therefore, **Dale Weisbrot** was selected by the Board to serve as section president during Ross' elected term. For those who do not know Dale, a brief bio is included in this issue of the newsletter. After serving long and well as Membership Committee chair, Bernadette Braun has decided to pass the reins. **Rachel Endecott** has taken responsibility as Membership Committee Chair and will be assisted by Marshall Haferkamp. Rachel is the new MSU Extension Beef Cattle Specialist based at Fort Keogh. Congratulations to our new leadership.

Section Meeting in Reno

Our next **section meeting** is scheduled to coincide with the annual meeting in Reno. We will meet in the lobby of the Nugget Hotel at 11:00 am, **Wednesday, February 14, 2007** and depart for the business meeting location, which is yet to be determined. We have section members receiving awards from the parent society and the section, so please join us at the section meeting and awards ceremony to honor the recipients' accomplishments. A preliminary agenda is included in this issue. Please let me know of any items you would like to add.

One item on the agenda has been discussed in the past, but I believe it needs to be revisited. It is my opinion that the members of the Northern Great Plains section would benefit from increased interaction, as discussed in previous issues of the newsletter. Our newsletter and annual meetings are excellent avenues for increasing communication and offering training at section meetings facilitates involvement from state and federal agency personnel, as observed at the Miles City meeting. However, I am concerned about one factor that I believe continues to discourage interaction as a section. The roles of chapters within the section need to be re-examined. While I appreciate local efforts, functioning as a cohesive unit is unnecessarily complicated when a small group within a large geographic area is split into two or three independently operating subsets. I offer three examples. 1) we have had difficulty finding people willing to serve as section officers because they are already serving at the chapter level or have done so recently; 2) to ensure equal representation across chapters and eastern Montana, filling all offices and committee seats at the section level alone requires 43 people, which has never been accomplished; and 3) chapters and the section compete for time, money, and effort as with the section and North Dakota Chapter meetings being one week apart this year.

Maybe it is just me and I am biased by my recent rereading of *The Federalist Papers*, but I believe we could make some of the good things we have been doing bigger and better by operating primarily as a section rather than a confederation of 56 members from Canada, 75 from North Dakota, and 97 from eastern Montana and other states. At the meeting in Reno, I would like to discuss the role of chapters within our section and hear positive solutions for increased interaction among our members.

I look forward to your counsel and hope to see you all in Reno.

WHAT'S INSIDE?

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Mark your calendars! Upcoming events:

SRM Annual Meeting, Reno, NV, Feb 11—16, 2007

NGP-SRM Section Meeting, Reno, NV, Feb 14, 2007

8th Prairie Conservation and Endangered Species Conference, Regina, Saskatchewan, March 1 -3, 2007

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 **April 1, 2007**. We welcome information on events, current projects, research results, extension activities, and items of general interest to the membership.

**Preliminary Agenda for Annual Business Meeting
11:00 am, February 14, 2007
Lobby of the Nugget Hotel**

Walk to meeting location
Welcome and call to order
Minutes of Miles City meeting (Jen Muscha)
Treasurer's report (Jen Muscha)
Committee reports
 Student Activities: Bret Olson
 Newsletter Editor: Elaine Grings
 Membership: Rachel Endecott
 Historian: Don Kirby
 Awards: Chuck McGlothlin
 Nominations: John Hendrickson
Discussion of chapters in the section
Other business
Section Awards
Adjourn



PHOTOS FROM THE NGP-SRM SECTION MEETING, OCTOBER 2006 AT THE FORT KEOGH LIVESTOCK AND RANGE RESEARCH LABORATORY, MILES CITY, MT
Upper Left and Lower Right: Jen Muscha discusses fire research
Upper Right and Lower Left, Rod Heitschmidt discusses drought research

**Northern Great Plains Section Meeting, Business Meeting Minutes
October 11, 2006
Airport Inn, Miles City, MT**

6:30 pm President Lance Vermeire called the meeting to order.

Old Business

Bob Patton moved to accept the business meeting minutes from Vancouver meeting, Kurt Hanson 2nd.

New Business

Dale Weisbrot moved to accepted treasurer's report, Bob Patton 2nd.

Newsletter

Elaine Grings thanked everyone for their contributions to the newsletter and reminded everyone to keep submitting articles.

Committee Reports

Membership

Jeff Printz (in absence of Bernadette Braun) – the section currently has 222 members. The parent society has initiated a “new membership campaign”. The 1st annual new member “Round up” was discussed. The section that recruits the most new members between Oct 1st and December 31, 2006, by at least 5 %, will receive \$1,000. The second place section will receive a check for \$500. Bernadette will be stepping down as membership chair.

Nominations

John Hendrickson, current member of the nominations committee was present. The new officers for 2007 are:

President Elect – Keith Bartholomay

Directors for 2007-2008 from Prairie Parkland Chapter - Bill Houston, Janice Bruynooghe

Awards

Chuck McGlothlin – Two nominations from the section were submitted to the National Awards Committee. The section has until 30 days from the annual meeting to submit section awards.

Chapter Reports

Prairie Parkland – Michel Tremblay

Native prairie appreciation week was held June 21-22, 2006 at the Matador Grasslands, SK. The chapter helped sponsor a High School Youth Forum candidate to the SRM meetings in Vancouver in Feb, 2006. The 8th Prairie Conservation and Endangered Species Conference and Workshop will be held March 1-3, 2007 at the Delta Regina Hotel, Regina, SK. The chapter will be submitting a poster at the annual meeting in Reno, NV, about a private landowner who received a chapter award.

North Dakota-Jeff Printz

The chapter meeting in Aberdeen, SD in Oct, 2006 was well attended. The Burleigh County Conservation District received the outstanding achievement award from the chapter.

Dennis Phillipi, First Vice President and Ann Hild, National Director, discussed a few items

1-Annual Meeting Proposal – Certain sections can not accommodate all of the people who attend the National Meeting. It has been proposed that the national meeting would rotate between a few cities and have different sections host the meetings (more info in the December Rangeland News)

2- Membership – In 3-6 years, 50% of the SRM membership will retire. Dennis discussed the new Membership Taskforce Committee formed to think of ideas to bring in new members.

3-Accreditation- There is a new booklet available for review on the web.

4-New International Membership Outlook Program – International members have a hard time affording membership. It has been discussed to reduce International member dues.

A motion was made to adjourn by Jeff Printz, John Hendrickson seconded the motion.

**NORTHERN GREAT PLAINS SECTION
Society for Range Management
1-31-06 to 9/30/06**

Current Balances:

CD	\$11,700.24
Checking	\$ 83.58
Savings	\$ 3635.26
Money Market	\$ 4353.52
Total	\$19,772.60

ENDOWMENT FUND BALANCE	
12/30/05	\$2,049.58
12/30/05	\$2,065.62

1/31/06	Balance	\$19,204.40
	Scholarship	\$ 0.00
	CD	\$11,312.88
	Working Balance	\$ 7,891.52
Income		
	Savings and Money Market Interest (1/31/06-9/29/06)	\$ 120.90
	Dues Rebate	\$ 395.00
	CD interest (to scholarship)	\$ 238.03
TOTAL INCOME		\$ 753.93
Expenses		
	Incorporation Fee	\$ 15.00
	Newsletter	\$ 46.25
	MT Range Days	\$ 225.00
	Scholarships (MSU, NDSU)	\$ 400.00
	ND chapter dues rebate	\$ 72.00
	PP chapter dues rebate	\$ 49.00
	NGP Section Meeting	\$ 32.00
TOTAL EXPENSES		\$ 839.25
9/30/06		
Total Balance		\$19,772.60
	Scholarship	\$ 0.00
	CD	\$11,700.24
	Working Balance	\$ 8,072.36



MEET THE INCOMING PRESIDENT:

Dale Weisbrot, PAg, CPRM Dale is a Certified Professional in Rangeland Management (CPRM) through the SRM, Professional Agrologist (PAg) through the Saskatchewan Institute of Agrologists and the University of Saskatchewan and holds a Biology degree from the University of Regina. He brings over 26 years of professional agriculture experience. He has worked as Regional Rangeland and Forage Specialist, South Region Saskatchewan Pastures Program Manager, Land Agrologist and a pesticide regulatory specialist all with the Saskatchewan government. Prior to this he worked in the private industry representing a pesticide company about 5 years. Residing in Regina Saskatchewan, Dale and his wife Brenda raised two children; Roberta and Ryan. They are all graduates of the University of Regina.

SRM Activities

Candidate for the SRM Board of Directors (placing 3rd in the 2005 election)

Represented SRM (together with SRM's Executive VP and then Second VP Mort Kothmann) at the 2002 *Cultivating Leadership for a Changing Agriculture: Shared Leadership Workshop* developed by the Council of Agriculture, Science and Technology (CAST) and the Institute for Conservation Leadership (ICL)

Wildlife Habitat Committee Member from 1998 to the present serving as, Chair-elect 2001, Chair 2002 and Past-chair 2003

Rangeland Invasive Species Committee Member

Member since 1987 and attended the Northern Great Plains Section meeting that founded the Prairie Parkland Chapter

Prairie Parkland Chapter Executive six years 1991 and 1992, President 1993 and 1994 and Past-President 1995 and 1996 – drafting and implementing a new Chapter constitution and established a fund specific for youth activities

Active participant at Prairie Parkland Chapter, Northern Great Plains Section and Society Annual General Meetings and events

UPCOMING EVENTS—SUMMER TOUR

Please mark June 19, 20 and 21, 2007 on your calendars for the summer tour/meeting in the Cypress Hills Saskatchewan. Note the web site <http://www.cypresshills.com/>. This popular summer event is held in conjunction with the Native Prairie Appreciation Week and in partnership with a number of organizations. Watch for more details coming soon. If you would like further information you may contact one of the local organizers Trevor Lennox at 1 306 778-8294 or tlennox@agr.gov.sk.ca

MEMBER NEWS

Dr. Rod Heitschmidt, Research Leader of the Fort Keogh Livestock and Range Research Laboratory, Miles City, Montana, is retiring December 31, 2006, after 16+ years with ARS. Rod accepted the position of Research Leader and Superintendent at Miles City in 1990.

Rod's research focus throughout his career has been on the development of effective grazing and drought management strategies and tactics for rangeland ecosystems and on bridging the chasm that often exists between ecology/ecologists and rangeland managers/agriculturalists. During his career, he has published over 250 scientific articles, book chapters, and proceedings plus a full array of user-friendly, technology transfer publications.

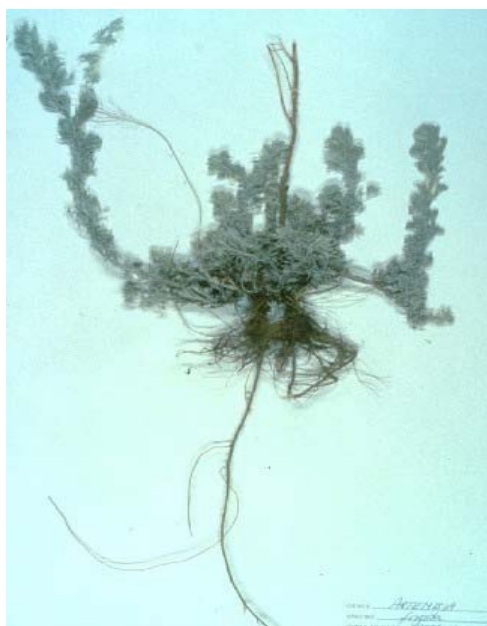
Although Rod and his wife, Sue, intend to return to Texas at some time in the future so as to be nearer their son, two daughter-in-laws, and four grandchildren, present plans are to remain in Montana for a few years. Rod intends to remain professionally active in the rangeland science profession through his work with the Society for Range Management and occasional consulting/advisory opportunities.

Pasture Sage Control in Rangeland and Seeded Forages

Submitted by Michel Tremblay

Pasture sage (*Artemisia frigida*) is a forb native to mixed-grass prairie. It is easily identified by its bluish, pubescent foliage and strong sage odor. It is an increaser species that has poor palatability and is of limited use as forage. It is a prolific seed producer and is drought and grazing tolerant. Pasture sage often increases during or shortly after drought periods, when forage species are weakened and are less competitive. Under these conditions, existing sage plants can expand, as they successfully capture more resources, or new sage plants can recruit due to larger areas of bare ground and reduced competition from existing vegetation. An increase in pasture sage reduces quantity and quality of forage present on rangeland or tame forage stands.

Tame stands badly infested with pasture sage can be broken and reseeded. Because pasture sage is a prolific seed producer, a large bank of seed can exist in the soil. Soil disturbance or exposure to light triggers germination in pasture sage, so seedbed preparation activities when reseeding tame stands can cause a large flush of pasture sage. Consequently, minimizing disturbance when reseeding sites that have had high sage populations, or using techniques that do not disturb the soil are preferable.



As in many weed problems in forage and rangeland, a lack of competition from desirable species is a major cause of excessive pasture sage. Adequate rest periods between defoliation, stocking rates that accurately reflect available forage, and the maintenance of litter all reduce the vigor and recruitment of pasture sage. In one AAFC study, deferment of grazing on a crested wheatgrass pasture infested with pasture sage resulted in a reduction of weed density of 61 plants/sq m to 2 plants /sq m over a five year period. Half of the reduction of sage occurred in the first three years. Although the economics of deferment of grazing for five years is tenuous, the study nevertheless demonstrates the effect of competition on pasture sage populations.

Chemical weed control can be feasible in instances where there are adequate populations of forage plants present. Bear in mind that spraying herbicides will eliminate other potentially desirable broadleaf plants present in the stand. AAFC conducted a study to determine the efficacy of various herbicide treatments on the control of established pasture sage. Results are included in **Table 1**. Reseeding of the field may be necessary if cover of tame species is too sparse.

Figure 1. Mature pasture sage with persistent, woody roots

Table 1. Pasture sage density (sq m) and herbicide treatment

Herbicide	Density		
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
No herbicide	54	37	2
2,4-DE	48	9	2
2,4-DE 2 years	45	2	2
Banvel+2,4-DE	37	3	2

(Continued from page 7)



Figure 2. Tame pasture with heavy infestation of pasture sage.

Tips to control pasture sage in forage stands:

- Determine the severity of the infestation. Some pasture sage is often present, but may not be causing an economic loss.
- Evaluate grazing or cutting management, and adjust to enhance the vigor of the forage species
- In AAFC studies, application of herbicide to control has resulted in yield increases of 20%-29% over three years



Hello Prairie Conservation Friends!

The 8th Prairie Conservation and Endangered Species Conference (PCESC) will be held in Regina, Saskatchewan on March 1 -3, 2007. Please check out the conference website www.pcesc.ca for more information and to register on-line. We would especially like to draw your attention to the following information:

Registration – Be sure to register before January 1st to take advantage of our early bird rates! Students – check out the student rate – hope to see many of you at the conference!

News – On March 1, we are holding an optional pre-conference workshop on building an effective grassland partnership, based on the Saskatchewan Prairie Conservation Action Plan (PCAP) model and experience.

Program – Our program consists of plenary sessions and two sets of three concurrent workshops. We are confirming speakers for the plenary sessions and workshops – please check this link periodically for updated information on them.

Sponsors – Please check out the link for information on our gold, silver, platinum and bronze sponsors and friends. We greatly appreciate all contributions and are still looking for sponsors - please see the information on sponsorship opportunities.

Rooms—A block of rooms has been set aside at the Delta under the PCAP at a special rate of \$115 (plus taxes) until January 29th. The toll free number is 1-877-814-7706.



Prairie Winds:

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

Threats to the Mission – By Elaine Grings, Newsletter Editor

As the plane approached Lambert Airport in Saint Louis, I could see the remnants of the previous week's snowstorm that had left thousands without power. Plowed fields stood in winter emptiness, snow lying in furrows contrasting with cleared dark ridges of soil. It was early December and the vast acreages of farm ground stood ready to wait out the winter.

I was in Saint Louis to attend the Third National Grazing Lands Conference. After the morning coffee break, the line-up for Monday's plenary session included agency heads or their representatives. Joel Holtrop, speaking for the Forest Service, discussed the mission of the agency: *..”to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations”*. He then went on to discuss what he felt to be four threats to accomplishment of that mission:

1. fire and fuel buildup
2. invasive species
3. unmanaged recreation
4. loss of open space

With each of these came comments about the information needed to overcome these threats. In addressing the first threat, Mr. Holtrop suggested that we improve our understanding of the role of fire in forest health along with the role of herbivory in management of fuels. He then questioned our understanding of the role of herbivores in maintaining healthy ecosystems that are able to resist invasion. While he suggested that recreation is a very important aspect of the Forest Service mission, especially in providing a connection to the land for those who might otherwise not have access, he had concern regarding the management of that recreation in a manner consistent with the maintenance of the health and productivity of forests and grasslands. His last comments were about open space and the need to find economic incentives to help maintain open spaces as these lead to clean water and air and provide wildlife and fisheries habitat.

As he made his comments about open space, I reflected back to a guest editorial I had read on the Opinion page in The Billings Gazette in October. A pair of guest opinions appeared in anticipation of the United States population hitting the 300 million mark. The opinion pieces dealt with the subject of population growth and my comments may fall a little out of context, but I remember being struck by one paragraph by Daniel Griswold: *“... We remain a vast country with lots (and lots) of open space. One need only gaze out the window at 30,000 feet while flying cross-country to appreciate how much of America remains rural or unpopulated. We could give every American household an acre of land and still fit all 300 million of us in the states of Illinois, Iowa, and Missouri –with the rest of the country set aside as one giant national park.”* Now, obviously we can't take this too literally, but somehow it struck me that he was ignoring all the services provided by that open space he was viewing from 30,000 feet. The Billings Gazette website is included so you may read and form your own opinions about Griswold's conception of open space, along with the accompanying guest opinion.

The common thread I find in both Mr. Holtrop's plenary speech and the opinion expressed in the newspaper editorial is a need for education of the general public about the value of open space. As members of the Society of Range Management, we should all have some understanding of the services provided by our forests and grasslands and be able to clarify these issues for those who may only see land as a space on which to house another human.

Billings Gazette Guest opinions are available at:

<http://www.billingsgazette.net/articles/2006/10/15/opinion/guest/25-population.prt>

<http://www.billingsgazette.net/articles/2006/10/15/opinion/guest/30-population.prt>