

MINUTES

Society for Range Management – International Mountain Section

Fall Annual Meeting - November 2, 2017

9:00 am to 12:00 pm

Lethbridge, Alberta – Coast Terrace Inn

In Attendance (41):

Mike Alexander	Dawn Gray	Ruth Mattheis	Lisa Raatz – Treasurer/ secretary
Barry Adams	Jessica Grenke – Speaker	Edwin Mattheis	Karen Raven
Ross Adams	Lou Hagener	Ron McNeil	Kevin Redden
Hilary Baker	Barry Irving - Speaker	Amanda Miller	Darin Sherritt
Tanner Broadbent – Director	Judy Irving	Lee Moltzahn	Chelsea Tomcala
John Carscallen	Kassia James – Speaker	Carly Moore	Peggy Warner
Jennifer Caudron	Chuck Jarecki	Faezeh Najafi – Speaker	Don Watson
Alan Dodd	Bruce Johnson	Robert Oakley	Neal Wilson
Brad Downey	Karin Johnson	Laurry Orr	
Lynn Fitzpatrick	Tracy Kupchenko – President	Wilf Petherbridge	
Graham Gilchrist - Speaker	Brian Laycraft	Lysandra Pyle – Speaker	

1.0 WELCOME

President, Tracy Kupchenko, welcomed everyone to the annual business meeting and workshop and commended everyone for attending, even in the snowy weather.

2.0 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Lisa Raatz, Treasurer/Secretary, presented the 2016/2017 financial report. IMS has two bank accounts: one each in USA and Canada. The financial report was based on cash flow and current bank balances for Oct 1, 2016 to Sept 30, 2017 for CNL account and Feb 28, 2017 to Sept 30, 2017 for US account (Feb 28, 2017 is based on the date Lisa Raatz took on the role of Treasurer).

Primary income is from memberships. As of Oct 1, 2017, the IMS membership was 156 people; 82 Alberta (+2 from SK) and 66 from Montana (+6 in other states). Allen Press reconciled membership underpayment dating back to 2013 and also included the 2016 payments. Finances from Summer 2017 meeting in MT were also shown.

Discussion:

Lou Hagener questioned the total amount for Youth Activity fund (\$1000) and wondered if it should be higher. Need to check previous agreements. Barry Irving reminded that the sections receive \$5/member, which at current membership totals \$780. This does not even cover the current operation costs of the section. Karen Raven stated that Alberta Agriculture is willing to put forward some money for student sponsorship.

Lou Hagener recommended that US funds be kept in the US bank account and CNL funds remain in Canadian bank account. Suggested having a 'trustworthy MT attendee' deposit the US funds and same on AB side for CNL funds. Some concerns that the books had not been audited. Lisa Raatz acknowledged the need to find new auditors now that she is the new Treasurer.

ACTION: Barry Adams and Lou Hagener volunteered to audit books for next financial update.

Lisa Raatz addressed concerns about the Non-profit certificate with MT. It has been maintained and was renewed in 2017. However, there is a need to obtain a valid MT address for this certificate; we are currently using Past President Craig Carr's MSU address, but having someone from MT provide their address and file this report is needed. The Alberta certificate has lapsed long ago.

There was discussion on the need to obtain Corporate Registration with Alberta Societies Act for

- a) A new Certificate #
- b) Apply for "Certificate Resurrection of Standing" with Societies Act for a Non-Profit entity.

ACTION: Barry Adams offered his assistance with this process. There is a \$50 fee in Alberta and tax implications were discussed.

3.0 BYLAW AMENDMENTS/UPDATES

Tracy Kupchenko expressed the need to update our current bylaws, which are 27 years old. Barry Irving solicited and circulated proposed bylaw changes to active SRM – IMS members in January 2017. He received a few responses back, although not many. Our parent society bylaws can be used as an example for updating ours.

Proposed Bylaw changes include:

- Update to current communication methods (such as email and voting via electronic ballots),
- Making membership more meaningful and attractive for new and existing members,
- Flexibility to allow members who are not on the executive to participate in planning/organizing tours and meetings.
- Update wording for personal pronouns (they/he/she).
- Dropping the requirement for 7 executive positions to reflect lack of volunteers, leaving three essential positions: President, Vice President, and Treasurer/Secretary.

Discussion:

Tracy Kupchenko - The bylaws were emailed out January 2017 for comment and suggestions with the intent to vote on those changes at this meeting. Some discussion about the need to follow due process for current bylaws which require the proposed changes be mailed out with postage paid return voting ballots, 60 days prior to the meeting. Several members commented that they would also like to see a change to include modern forms of communication (An email option is currently not in our bylaws).

Our section faces the challenge in that there is no incoming President and no 2nd Vice President; there are lots of vacancies in our current board and we do not have anyone planning our next meeting(s). We are having issues attracting new members as well as those willing to serve on the executive. Lou Hagener suggests the President should appoint an *ad hoc* committee which can be active even in the absence of a president and Graham Gilchrist also remarked that the president can remain until a new president is in place or can appoint someone to replace them.

Motion: Lou Hagener proposes that the President create an *ad hoc* committee to take comments from this meeting and rewrite a draft revision of the bylaws to be made available at the summer meeting and any suggested changes would be voted on prior to the next fall meeting. We would follow the current process outlined in the bylaws and allow for votes to be mailed back and tallied.

Second: Chuck Jarecki

Motion carried.

Volunteers to be on the *ad hoc* bylaw committee:

Lou Hagener

Graham Gilchrist

Chuck Jarecki

Barry Irving

ACTION: Members are encouraged to provide the *ad hoc* bylaw committee with suggested bylaw changes or feedback. Lou Hagener commented that as a group, they will build on Barry Irving's additions and compile comments/ suggestions from this meeting. Lou will email an updated draft to our members before Reno (or by the summer meeting) so members can vote on proposed bylaw changes at or after the summer meeting.

Discussion about proposed changes to our SRM-IMS bylaws:

1. Number of positions on executive

Concerns were expressed that if we drop down from having 7 Directors to 3 making the decisions, that may be too few. Some sections allow their past president to vote as well as ex-officio (secretary/treasurer) which allows for more than 3 official executives. Mike Alexander among others commented that many organizations are moving away from having directors. We are a society of volunteers and while there is value in coming together to network, we are having trouble filling Director roles. We need to focus on ways to enable our section to survive and make changes to our bylaws to allow for that to happen. Making our structure overly bureaucratic will keep people from taking on an executive role. Carly Moore also suggested that we indicate a minimum of three Directors, but include flexibility to allow more people to serve if there is interest.

The specific role of President and Vice President was also discussed. The President puts on the meeting and the Vice President helps out, but with so few people assisting, it is difficult to put these events on. Many suggested that the President should be able to delegate tasks, including meeting organization to groups of members and that the bulk of this work should not rest with the executive only. Those doing the organization and day-to-day planning do not have to be in a 'Director' role to be involved. The President can help make key decisions, but informal groups can help pitch in to put meetings together. Our section already has a history of informal groups helping to organize meetings.

We have already loosened how we organize our meetings. Historically, we had a set time that was predictable for all members which takes away some of the necessary decision-making and planning (for example: The Fall meeting took place the first weekend in November in set places such as Lethbridge or Great Falls). Is this something worth pursuing again? However, many commented that the more we make dates and locations fixed, the harder it will be to get people out to our tours and meetings. Fixed dates won't ensure people will make it out anyway and we need to make it most attractive for people to volunteer.

2. Method of communication:

There were many comments about allowing executive more flexibility on how future meetings are advertised and run. Because there are fewer people to help organize meetings, allow those doing the work many options and more flexibility. Some suggestions include: in addition to in-person meetings, allow for phone/video/online conference meetings.

Include reasonable methods of communication to notify members about upcoming bylaw changes, discussion, voting on bylaw changes, or to notify members about upcoming meetings. For example it's convenient to have information posted on our website that can be downloaded, which is something our parent society is already

doing. Many recommend that communication take place by one or more methods: printed materials (newsletters) that are mailed to members, phone, email, website, and/or social media. Include an email or online option for members to vote.

3. Inclusion of indemnity clause

Graham Gilchrist suggested an indemnity clause in the bylaws to protect the executive. The parent society covers that for their executive, but if we include it then we will need to carry liability insurance for our executive. Brian Laycraft remarked that this will need to be different between US and Canada because of different requirements.

4. Process for making bylaw changes/updates

Tracy Kupchenko indicated that it had been her intention for a vote to happen at this meeting in order to make some much-needed changes to our 1990 bylaws, however, the current bylaws require mail out notification of proposed changes and mail-in ballots. Some noted that in our bylaws ARTICLE V and Section 7 there is wording indicating “notice or waiver of notice” that if we have quorum at a meeting and want to make some bylaw changes, then members can proceed with a “waiver of notice”. Graham Gilchrist suggested that he has seen more modern versions of the clause: A resolution can be made at a meeting where members put forward a motion to address a problem or required change and waive the need for advanced notice at the meeting and proceed with a vote. Right now, we are bound by the wording in our bylaws for mail in ballots, but many remarked that our form of communicating changes and voting needs to be updated to include email and website/online options.

Many commented on whether to have a formal business meeting at the summer tour to make changes to our bylaws. Typically there has been no summer business meeting, but in order to vote we may want to consider it. Our bylaws indicate that this option is available and at the discretion of the President.

5. Planning summer tours:

Pacific Northwest was mentioned as an example worth emulating for organizing summer meetings. They rotate between areas so that one group only organizes/hosts a tour once every 3 years. The President and Vice President do not plan the meetings, but it’s up to membership to do that. The executive can be a point of contact for some key decisions, but volunteer members organize the tour even in partnership with other outside organizations (e.g. Foothills Restoration Forum, Rangeland Research Institute etc.). This allows for collaboration, access to more resources and provides added momentum because many groups participate in showing what they are doing. Right now, we seem to be competing for resources including people to attend our meetings. Karen Raven also mentioned that PNW members brainstorm ideas at their fall business meeting and members informally take charge of planning. They also include something fun in their summer tours (for example having singers/poets/artists). Strategically located members allow members to camp in their yards to keep costs down for those attending the summer tours.

Discussion about declining membership:

How can we address declining membership? What can/does SRM provide to members? Some ideas include:

Provides a sense of community and feeling part of a Range Family. This is important and needs to be maintained and built upon. Provides opportunities for networking and learning about the diverse aspects of Rangeland Management and how others are employed in the industry. Maintain community and come together to learn; if we provide value in our gatherings then our membership problem will sort itself out. But we need to give flexibility for those providing leadership.

Provides much needed opportunities for continuing Professional Development. Also, it is important to be supported by employers either financially or with time off. Communicating the benefit of SRM meetings to employers can be as simple as providing an agenda that shows what will be addressed at the meeting and providing the agenda in a timely fashion so there is time to get necessary travel permissions.

Recruitment efforts need to be made. Declining membership is part of why there are fewer people to help plan and organize. Recommended that a membership board be formed to make direct contact with lapsed members to encourage renewals and recruit new members. Some discussion involved previous efforts made to recruit. In past 4 years, we contacted expired members via personalized email to remind them to renew with a disappointing 0.2% response rate. Also, some of our members already do recruitment when they carry out their extension activities by using the brochure developed by the parent society for various audiences. Ideally, the person recruiting ranchers should be a rancher. Chuck Jarecki volunteered to be on that group to contact stock growers in MT. Jennifer Caudron and Tracy Kupchenko agreed that having farmer/rancher liaisons on the board is good, but also having them in the community spreading the word that SRM is valuable to neighbours, at auctions, or their local coffee shop is positive information that spreads fast.

Some organizations offer discounted rates to attend an event if you have SRM membership. This can encourage people to become members and also attract SRM members to attend meetings/tours.

Address issues at our meetings and tours that are relevant to ranchers and we will see them attend meetings and potentially join (e.g. managing invasive species). To get people to participate, we have to meet an unmet need and address issues. Generate interest by addressing a controversial or political issue and SRM can take a position.

4.0 UPCOMING MEETINGS

2018 Summer Tour in Alberta Discussion:

Two ideas were proposed and discussed:

1. Barry Irving - We could center our summer tour on Free Ranging or Feral Horses, without necessarily taking a political stance. We can still be an advocate for wise resource management.
2. Tracy Kupchenko – Fire recovery issue is very pertinent right now. There are groups working on this issue that we could collaborate with in southwest. Darin Sherritt suggested partnering with FRF with range health.

Motion: Barry Irving proposed that 2018 Summer Tour be located West Central, AB (specific location to be determined) to be held on July 20 – 21, 2018 to discuss and see Feral Horses in Alberta.

Seconded: Darin Sherritt

Motion carried.

Potential Speakers and Helpers:

Amanda Miller

Mark Lyseng (name put forward as a speaker, in his absence)

Barry Irving

Carly Moore

Hilary Baker

2018 SRM Annual Meeting in Sparks (Reno), Nevada:

Tracy Kupchenko requested those going to the Annual meeting in Reno, please consider organizing a supper one evening for our section as she is unable to attend this year. We need some participants for the Advisory Council meeting and we can have up to 3 proxies to vote. This occurs the full day on Sunday, Jan 28. Please also give consideration to the 2018 Fall meeting in Montana.

Those who will be attending the Reno meeting that volunteered to be proxies:

Lou Hagener

Jennifer Caudron (Has since communicated that she is unable to attend as of November 14, 2017)

Allison Martin (Has since tentatively agreed to be a proxy)

5.0 MEETING ADJOUNED & CLOSING REMARKS

Tracy Kupchenko expressed special thanks to Lisa Raatz for organizing the meeting venue and registration; Carly Moore, Kassia James, and Lysandra Pyle for helping with the registration table; Amanda Miller for supplying technical equipment; and Tanner Broadbent for assisting with venue logistics and selection. Thanks also to Kassia James who has done a fantastic job communicating via social media.

Motion: Carly Moore motioned to adjourn the meeting.

Seconded: Brian Laycraft

Motion carried.