



Volume 3 **International Mountain Section Newsletter** September 2005

To Foster Advancement in the Science and Art of Rangeland Management

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President's Message
Donna Lawrence

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I want to thank you all for supporting me during my year as President; your dedication and enthusiasm were my motivators. I'd especially like to thank Lou Hagener, Barry Irving, Brett Olson and Barry Adams for all of their guidance, encouragement and assistance. I'd like to thank Maynard and his hard-working crew again for hosting a terrific summer tour that attracted such a great crowd. From that crowd we were able to get at least two nominations for each of the executive and director positions for this fall's election. Kudos to the members that let their names stand for nominations; our section will be in good hands. I have certainly benefited from my time on the executive and I know you will too.

I hope everyone can attend the fall meeting in Pincher Creek on October 14 and 15. Not only will it be a great opportunity to meet and connect with folks from the Pacific Northwest Section, but the program promises to quite interesting as well. The program will focus on the preservation of the native grasslands in the Foothills Parkland Natural Subregion of southwestern Alberta; a very hot topic these days given the amount of industrial activity in the area. Local ranchers are working together to lobby the government for change – change that will allow industrial development to continue only if the inherent values and ecological capabilities of native grasslands are maintained!

Again, I must apologize for not being able to attend the fall meeting myself (we are expecting our first baby to arrive around that time). I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who have organized and implemented the fall meeting in my absence – Mike Alexander, Barry Adams, Brenda Chmielewski, and Maynard Smith.

Thanks again for another great year; enjoy the fall meeting!

**Joint Fall Meeting for the International Mountain and Pacific Northwest Sections
of the Society for Range Management**

October 14 - 15, 2005

Heritage Inn - Pincher Creek, Alberta

October 14	1:00 – 5:00pm	PNW Section Meetings - open to anyone interested (Room A) - PNW Advisory Council Meeting (1:00 – 2:00pm) - PNW Board of Directors (2:00 – 3:00 pm) - Vancouver 2006 Organizing Committee Meeting (3:00 – 5:00 pm)
	7:00 – 9:00 pm	Registration and Social (Room A)
October 15	8:30 am	Registration (Room A&B)
	9:00 am – 3:30 pm	<i>“Preserving Native Rangelands: Planning to Live within Ecological Boundaries”</i>
	3:30 – 5:00 pm	IMS Section Meeting – open to anyone interested (Room B)
	3:30 – 5:00 pm	PNW Section Meeting – open to anyone interested (Room A)
	6:00 pm	Banquet (Room A&B)

- Registration before September 30, 2005 = \$55.00 CDN or \$45.00 US.
- Registration after September 30, 2005 = \$60.00 CDN or \$50.00 US.
- Registration Fee includes: Friday and Saturday program, Saturday lunch buffet and banquet. (Breakfasts on your own).
- Saturday Program Only (includes Saturday lunch buffet) or Banquet Only = \$25.00 CDN or \$20.00 US

Please make cheques payable to IMS-SRM and mail registrations to:

SRM Fall Meeting
c/o Brenda Chmielewski
Agriculture Centre
#100, 5401 - 1st Ave.
Lethbridge, AB CANADA
T1J 4V6

*For more information call:
Brenda @ 403-381-5486*

The Heritage Inn will hold 39 rooms at the group rate of \$77.00/night until September 30, 2005.
Call 1-888-888-4374 or 403-627-5000 and tell them you are with the “Society for Range Management”.
Other hotels in Pincher Creek include:
Super 8 403-627-5671
Foothills Motel 403-627-3341
Parkway Motel and Hostel 403-627-3344

Pincher Creek is conveniently located in south-western Alberta, 2 hours south west of Calgary or 1 hour west of Lethbridge. U.S. citizens are advised to bring a passport for stress free border crossing.

	Full Registration	Sat Program only	Banquet Only
Name: _____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Total Registration Fees Included (\$): _____

Minutes – SRM IMS Section Meeting – Dillon, Montana – July 23, 2005

Donna Lawrence called the meeting to order at 9:00 am..

Call for the minutes to be approved for fall meeting (Oct 30/04) and Ft. Worth meeting (Feb 9/05). Moved: Lou and Second: Bob Ross **PASSED**

Treasurers Report

- Shared an interim financial report showing our current bank balances and funds invested in short term certificates. Overall finances of the section as a whole remain strong.
- Treasurer Barry Adams reported that the planning committee had generated a sizable profit from the tour that will serve to restore the cash balance for the US account.
- Don Bedunah clarified that the honorarium he received to cover his travel costs for speaking at the Fall Meeting in Lethbridge was given to a fund that supports international researchers on his behalf. He thanked IMS for their support.
- Nancy Ross commented on the positive growth in the section finances.

Old Business (Fort Worth Meeting)

- CALPAC Poster project – to provide visual awareness of the SRM and its activities. The motion, to contribute \$100 to help cover the costs of producing the poster, passed at Ft. Worth will not be required.
- Sage-Grouse Project – position paper request for funds from the parent society. The motion, to contribute \$500 to support this paper, passed at Great Falls, will not be required as the parent society had received funds to complete this project.
- Student Award Winner – Canadian Trip – Motion was passed in Fort Worth to support this Canadian effort by contributing \$200.00. This motion is still supported by IMS membership, therefore Donna Lawrence will contact Mae Eslinger about how to complete the transaction.
- Motion passed to withdraw support for the poster (\$100) and sage-grouse projects (500), moved by Lou Hagner; second by Bret Olson. **PASSED**
- The Parent Society has asked sections to contact expired members directly. A special report is available to identify those that have lapsed memberships. Donna Lawrence to forward latest reports from the parent society to directors Steph Sever and Dr. Edward

Bork. They will contact those with lapsed memberships to encourage them to keep their memberships active.

Nominations:

- Brian Thrift for MT director: Moved: Maynard Smith Second: Bob Ross
- Heidi Olberg for MT director: Moved: Maynard Smith Second: Bob Ross
- Kelly Burkhart for Alberta Director – Moved: Maynard Smith Second: Bob Ross
- Kurtis Fuquette for Alberta Director – Moved: Maynard Smith Second: Bob Ross
- George Hirshenberger for Second Vice – Moved: Bob Ross Second: Maynard Smith
- Steph Sever for Second Vice: - Moved: Bob Ross Second: Maynard Smith

- Motion to cease nominations: Moved: Lou Hagener Second: Bob Ross.
- Tracey Brewer reminded members of the need to nominate directors for the parent society board.

Awards

- Alberta committee is Ed Nelson and Art Bailey. Awards for fall meeting should focus on Alberta members/ranchers because the meeting will be held in Pincher Creek.
- Lou offered to get the MT committee working again and review our strategy for making awards with other members.

Public Affairs:

- Bret Olsen. Lou Hagener mentioned that the parent society needs Canadian membership on the Government Policy and Program Committee. There were no volunteers.

Range Youth Committee: Bret Olsen, Holly Smith

- Bret reminded the section that we sponsor a student from Alberta and Montana to high school youth forum in Vancouver . Jeff Mosley suggested Amy Samsel might be considered as a candidate
- should recruit a student from Alberta and Montana.
- Motion: Provide financial support for two students of \$400 each to attend the student high school you forum of the SRM in Vancouver 2005. Moved by Matt Ricketts; seconded Bob Ross. MOTION PASSED.

History Committee: Sherm Ewing's latest update to the section history is pending.

Auditing committee: George Hirschenburger has offered to be the Montana auditor for the 2004-2005 financial report. Donna Lawrence will ask Jack Vanderwalk if he would volunteer to be the Alberta auditor.

Newsletter:

- Barry Irving commented on the cost savings of email and mail combined. The last newsletter cost 1/3 of the normal cost. There does not seem to be a concern among members with the new system. Newsletter is also posted on website. Barry asked for ongoing support from members on input.
- Of the 250 IMS members about 70 members don't have email. This includes 20 bounces. It is important for members to keep their membership dues paid up and their contact information (email) on the website updated because the email distribution list is generated

from the most recent membership report. There is a concern that the parent society are very slow at updating membership reports.

- Moved that we allow electronic and mail balloting for the fall election. Moved by Matt Ricketts; seconded by George Hirschenberger. MOTION PASSED. Discussion that Barry Irving should consult the by-laws to see if there is anything preventing us from doing this. This approach would likely provide more votes cast and ease of administration. Barry to set up system for electronic voting by email or website.

Parent Society BOD Update, Jeff Mosley:

- Next meeting will be in the new building in Denver
- SRM is about to hire a new executive vice president.
- BOD – new EVP may be located some where other than Denver. Pete Jackson operated this way for many years. A number of finalist may not be able to move to Denver.
- Jeff suggested that members consider getting a passport prior to Vancouver meeting to reduce problems at the border. Regulations governing travel appear to be getting more restrictive. There is a concern that the Vancouver 2006 meeting may be smaller than other meetings because travel to Canada not supported by US Agencies. The parent society counts on the profits from these Annual Meetings for program and operational funding.
- Steph Sever reported that she working with other SRM members to start a “Young Professionals Conclave” to help support new range management professionals (ie. less than 10 years experience) adjust to their new careers.
- Nancy Ross asked Jeff Mosley to investigate the possibility of having a Memorial Wall at the SRM headquarters so that awards of deceased members such as Ed McKinnon can have a permanent home.

Presidents Report Donna Lawrence

- Fall meeting will be in Pincher Creek
- Meeting will be joint with PNW, date is splitting the difference on normal dates (October 14 and 15)
- Donna will not be able to attend the fall meeting but will organize the event with her southern Alberta colleague and IMS member, Mike Alexander.

Motion to thank the organizers of the 2005 Summer Tour in Dillon. Moved by Bob Ross; seconded by Matt Ricketts. Bob congratulated the team on attracting so many members to the meeting with an excellent program.

Meeting Adjourned at 10:30 am.

Standing Nominated for the Position of 2nd Vice President

George Hirschenberger

George has worked for the U. S. Bureau of Land Management for the past 31 years as a Project Leader, Forest Manager and Range Conservationist. His current duties for BLM's Missoula Field Office include leading an inter-disciplinary team that plans and implements upland, riparian and aquatic resource management projects and oversight of wildfire management.

Beginning in 1990, he spent three years on assignment to the Montana Nature Conservancy working with the Blackfoot Challenge –a watershed group -and with private landowners on habitat conservation projects. Prior to that, he spent fourteen years with BLM in Butte, Montana and had overall responsibility for grazing management on 325,000 acres of public rangeland.

George graduated from the University of Montana in 1973 earning a BS in Forestry with an emphasis in Range Management. He and his wife, Nancy, have two children, Morgan and Phillip.

His spare time is often spent canoeing, sailing, cross country skiing and fishing or preparing for the above.

If elected, George plans to work with the Section's Committees to encourage participation in fall and summer meetings and to help focus attention on emerging issues affecting rangelands in western Montana and Alberta.

Stephanie Sever

Hello, my name is Stephanie Sever, I am originally from Waverly, Colorado, but have been living in Montana for the past six years. I received my bachelor's degree in Range Science from Montana State University in 2004. I was a student trainee and Soil Conservationist with the Natural Resources Conservation Service from 2001-2004. In addition to being a graduate from MSU, I currently work on the Undaunted Stewardship Program for MSU Extensions, in Bozeman. I became a member of the Society for Range Management in 2001 and have served as the Montana Director for the International Mountain Section for the past two years. Currently, I am working with a group of individuals to develop a Young Professionals Conclave within the SRM, which will hopefully help with the membership retention issue we are facing.

Standing Nominated for the Position of Director, Alberta

Kelly Burkhardt

I grew up on the family farm near Wetaskiwin, Alberta. After graduating high school in 1998, I attended Olds College where I became a member of the Society of Range Management and received a diploma in Sustainable Range and Forage Production. Wanting to further my education, I went on to Montana State University and majored in Range Management. While at MSU, I was involved with the MSU Range Club. In June 2004, my wife and I returned to manage our family farm which consists of a cow/calf herd and mixed crop. My goal is to improve the range of the farm and use our rangeland as an example to help other cattle producers in my community improve and sustain their own rangeland.

Kurtis Fouquette

Hi, my name is Kurtis Fouquette and I'm running for Director. I have been a member of the Society for Range management and this section since 2000. I'm a recent graduate of the University of Alberta's BSc program, with a range and pasture management major of course. I also have a diploma in agricultural production from Olds College majoring in sustainable range and forage management. I was a member of the range team at the U of A for 2 years, competing in the URME and plant ID student competitions at both Salt Lake City, UT and Fort Worth, TX. At Salt Lake City I took home the 3rd place award in the combined category as well as the U of A's John Cross Memorial Award for finishing top of the team. I was also an active aggie, and was treasurer for the World Association of Agricultural Conferences hosted in Edmonton, AB in 2003, working with a \$40,000 budget and helping to fundraise about \$30,000 of that. Currently I'm working for a consulting firm, doing range related work in Alberta's prairies

Standing Nominated for the Position of Director, Montana

Heidi A. Olbert

I was born and raised in Colorado, and although I was not raised on a ranch I enjoyed visiting my cousin's ranch quite often growing up. This interest led me to choose a Range Science major at Montana State University. After graduating in the fall of 2001, I worked for the Natural Resources Conservation Service in northeastern Montana in the Poplar and Culbertson Field Offices for three years. This spring I began working on MSU's Undaunted Stewardship Program[®] under the direction of Dr. Jeff Mosley. I really enjoy studying and continually learning more about rangeland management and agriculture, and look forward to being more actively involved in the International Mountain Section of SRM. My previous leadership roles in the MSU Range club combined with my work experiences make me an excellent candidate for the IM Section executive director's position. I look forward to seeing you at our meeting this October.

Brian Thrift

Brian Thrift is a Virginia-native and former U.S. Marine who received his B.S. in Range-Livestock Management, with minors in Rangeland Ecology & Management and Agribusiness, from the University of Idaho in 2002. In 2005, he completed his M.S. in Animal & Range Sciences from Montana State University, where his thesis research investigated using domestic sheep to graze spotted knapweed-infested foothill rangelands.

In addition to working for a livestock auction and several small ranches in eastern Washington, Brian has worked for Environmental Careers Organization, Inc. of Seattle, Washington as a Range Technician assigned to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), in Burley, Idaho. He has also worked as a Range Technician for the BLM in Dillon, Montana, and for Natural Resource Options, Inc. of Bozeman, Montana. He is currently employed as a Rangeland Management Specialist with the BLM in Dillon, Montana.

Brian has been a member of the SRM since March 2001 and presented research at the 2004 and 2005 SRM Annual Meetings. At present, he is a member of both the International Mountain (IM) and Idaho Sections. Brian hopes that serving as the Montana Director for the IM Section will not only benefit the section, but will serve as a stepping stone toward greater involvement with the SRM.

2005 Executive

President:

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1st Vice President

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2nd Vice President

Angela Berkinshaw

Secretary-Treasurer

Barry Adams

2005 Executive, Directors

2nd Year

Montana
Stephanie Seaver

2nd Year

Alberta
Christoph Weder

1st Year

Montana
Matt Ricketts

1st Year

Alberta
Edward Bork

Can cattle, sheep and goats be used to manage spotted knapweed?

Seein's Believin'

About 45 landowners and land managers took a close look at a spotted knapweed grazing trial on August 10. They saw for themselves the result of using a combination of cattle, sheep and goats to graze spotted knapweed as a control measure.

Beginning in 2000 the Mannix Brothers Ranch near Helmville began grazing trials to see if goats would graze enough spotted knapweed to contain the spread of knapweed and improve grass production. After three seasons the goats were no longer available and sheep were used instead for the next three years.

Well?

Mannix' cattle readily eat the basal leaves of the bitter but surprisingly nutritious spotted knapweed in the spring and early summer. Once the plant 'bolts', or elevates a seed stalk, cattle use becomes less predicable. In some locations cattle will carefully nip off the young flower buds and eat some of the seed stalk, in others they may ignore the plant entirely. But, both sheep and goats will seek out knapweed flowers in the bud and early flowering stages - before the seed is mature. Sheep, and to a lesser extent goats, also used the knapweed seed stalks after cattle use dropped off.

A rule of thumb from this trial is that a sheep will use knapweed roughly in proportion to the amount that is available to them *up to about 50% of their total diet*. If knapweed accounts for 30% of a pasture's production, that's about the amount that will be taken free choice in their diet. So, herding sheep into areas where knapweed is concentrated will increase the overall consumption of the plants? Not so fast! The sheep in this trial did not respond well to being "pushed" onto knapweed patches. Herders found that a light touch in moving the sheep was more effective than concentrating the sheep on knapweed patches.

Why not just use herbicides?

While herbicides are effective in controlling knapweed, the most effective ones typically give control for two to three years. After that, knapweed begins to re-establish and five years after herbicide application, the landowner is often back to square one. So, while aggressive herbicide use can make economic and ecologic sense for controlling weeds that are not widespread and well established, a better long-term strategy would be a big benefit for managing large infested areas (see sidebar quoting Jerry Marks).

In the words of David Mannix "Spotted Knapweed isn't noxious in the environment it evolved in. It is just another forb. Why? Because there is balance with its competitors and enemies. It seems to be in our best interest to enhance the natural progression in our environment to a balance point where, here too, knapweed is just another plant in the community. Adding grazing pressure to knapweed without unduly stressing the grass community should reduce its ability to out compete native species while complementing the effects of biological control. It all boils down to finding long term economic/ecologic sustainable practices."

But, is it practical?

While the Mannix' multi-species grazing trial has demonstrated that knapweed can provide good forage for livestock and that well timed grazing by different kinds of livestock can greatly reduce knapweed's seed production, some important questions remain.

Can sheep or goats be fitted into what is now primarily a cattle enterprise and show a profit on the ranch's books? Or is it better to hire custom grazers for weed management? Maybe forming a local co-operative that owns and manages the sheep would be the best. Can sheep or goat grazing be used at a large enough scale to make a real difference in western Montana's knapweed infestations?

And, what about the interaction with wildlife? Sheep and goats attract bears, wolves and other predators. Will multi-species grazing just lead to more conflicts between domestic and wild animals or can predation be limited by guard dogs and herding?

Many of these questions were tackled after the field tour at an evening panel session. Here local cattlemen had a chance to talk with researchers and practitioners with specialized knowledge in managing sheep and goats. Several suggestions were made on how the trials might be changed and improved in coming years. The upshot of all this? It looks like the Mannix Brothers Ranch and their advisory group have more work to do before the jury is in on this grazing trial.

Jerry Marks, Missoula County Extension Agent, estimates that Missoula County has over 600,000 acres of noxious weeds. "It would take \$12 to \$14 million a year for the next 15 years using herbicides to eradicate these weeds in Missoula County alone," commented Marks. "And, even then we would still have noxious weeds. A simple economics analysis dictates that we have to implement long-term and sustainable solutions if we are going to solve the noxious weed problem".

The Mannix Ranch and many others in the Blackfoot Valley are using several other tools to squelch spotted knapweed, leafy spurge and other noxious invaders. These tools include herbicides, early detection and eradication of new invaders and biological control agents such as the knapweed seed head fly (*Urophora affinis* and *U. quadrifasciata*), the lesser knapweed flower weevil (*Larinus minutus*), the knapweed root weevil (*Cyphocleonus acbates*) and the *yellow winged knapweed root weevil* (*Agapoda zoegana*). Revegetation of farmed fields with weed resistant grasses and inter-seeding weedy areas are also being used to lessen the problem with invasive weeds.

And another potential source of up to date information is the Manitoba Grazing School 2005 which will be held on Wednesday, December 7th and Thursday, December 8th at the Keystone Centre in Brandon, Manitoba. This year's theme will be "Rejuvenating your Pasture Profitability". For more information phone 204-482-6315 or e-mail mfc@mbforagecouncil.mb.ca.

Ballot, International Mountain Section, SRM: October Elections, 2005

Choose one for the Office of 2nd Vice President

George Hirschenberger

Stephanie Sever

Choose one for the Office of Director, Alberta

Kelly Burkhardt

Kurtis Fouquette

Choose one for the Office of Director, Montana

Heidi A. Olbert

Brian Thrift

Mail the completed ballot to:

Barry Adams

Alberta Sustainable Resource Development

Agriculture Centre

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