

**Society for Range Management – International Mountain Section**

Fall Annual General Meeting - November 2, 2018

Great Falls, Montana – Crystal Springs Inn

1. **Welcome** – Tracy Kupchenko, Section President(8:15 am)
2. **Bylaw Vote Results**

Thanks to those who mailed in ballots for the bylaw vote. Varge Craig and Jon Siddoway tallied the ballots during the meeting. Results were unanimously in favour of the changes (64 yes, 0 no).

***Motion***: Lisa Raatz made a motion that we destroy the ballots and envelopes.

***Second***: Barry Irving

Motion carried.

1. **Filling Executive Positions**

Tracy reported that members were approached to fill deficiencies in our executive positions and have been filled by appointment, as follows:

Allison Makoutz (Montana) - 1st Vice President

Jennifer Caudron (Alberta) - 2nd Vice President

Jillian Kaufmann (Alberta) - Director

Rick Caquelin (Montana) - Director

1. **Website Hosting**

Our website hosting options have changed and our two options are:

1. The parent society can host it for a fee $5.99 USD/month. We need a person to develop a site, but work closely with the SRM webmaster to do that. Looking for volunteers to work on this. This would still require someone who can maintain the webpage, but with support from SRM webmaster.
2. We can create our own website (free options available or we can pay for website domain) and the SRM parent society would post our link on the main parent website. Again, we need volunteers to develop it internally and those with the capacity to maintain it.

Both options allow us high visibility with the parent society, it’s just a matter of choosing where our template files reside. Right now our page is archived on the parent society. It is there, but we cannot currently make changes to it.

Discussion:

Charles suggests we have a test run of using the fee-for-service site for 1 year ($72). In our communications with Merrita, she is willing to keep volunteering to maintain the website which she is currently doing, but we recognize that there is a need for a second person helping populate the website if one person is unavailable. More than a couple of people with access, however, creates potential for communication breakdown. The people maintaining the website are not in charge of the content, but the format, layout, and getting it into the templates with appropriate links to our internal pages working. This can take quite a lot of time.

How many hours does it entail? Merrita would be the best person to answer that, but Tracy responded that the spring and fall newsletters would need to be posted, notices for upcoming meetings such as our fall and summer section meetings and the winter annual SRM meeting. There is also lots of interest to use webinar meetings. Webpages need to be updated regularly to keep them current. Out-of-date information looks bad, although it’s a common problem across many volunteer run organizations.

***Motion***: Lou Hagener proposes that we align ourselves as closely as possible with the parent society even if we have to pay the fee to do so.

***Second***: Charles Fifield

Motion carried.

ACTION: There is a need for a working group to investigate our options and bring back to the membership.

Website working group consists of:

Barry Adams (on phone) - Alberta

Noah Davis - Montana

Kailee Calnan - Montana

Charles Fifield - Montana

Debbie Webster was nominated (later confirmed with Tracy that she is interested).

1. **Updates to the Handbook**

Lou Hagener led discussion that our handbook is very outdated. Last updated in 1990s. Much of what we have thought should be in our bylaws, can actually go into the handbook. We can create a working group to work on the handbook to iron out some of the issues with day-to-day workings.

Peggy Strankman, Allison Makoutz both suggest that a few people could be responsible for some sections of the book, and Lou suggest having one designated person to collect the responses (email or otherwise) which could be open to comments from the membership. This person could be our Directors or a volunteer member, but have the person in place by the meeting in Minneapolis.

Charles Fifield and Barry Irving both mentioned that long-time member’s memory and input is valuable, but new members with new ideas are also valuable. We aren’t doing meetings the same way we have done them in the past. We need everyone to participate.

ACTION: We have the ability to do these changes now (free conference call line available) and these do not need to be approved by the membership, but needs a deadline. Tracy suggests Fall Meeting 2020. Designated point-person chosen by our mid-February meeting in Minneapolis.

Handbook update working group:

Carly Moore (on phone)

Jill Kaufmann (on phone)

Lou Hagener

Chuck Jarecki

1. **Membership**

Chuck reiterated that our biggest problem is membership; we aren’t seeing the participation we used to see and summer tours are not as well attended. Our biggest potential for new members is the ranching community and they are not represented; We are not getting the outreach and not appealing to them. Allison requested ideas.

Discussion:

Chuck suggests we reach out to ranchers with something appealing to them. For example, we could write letters inviting the Stock Growers. Lou indicated that our membership committee needs to be more active, but that Chuck has lots of contacts with stock growers in Alberta and Montana. Barry added that we all have a sphere of influence and can speak positively about SRM and encourage membership in SRM; those on our committees can’t reach everyone but can tap into their own networks.

Charles remarked that we need to tap into our student members and High School Youth Forum, although travel to and from distance meetings and time off school is an issue for most. Carly indicated that travel and time off is an issue, but having online and mobile options to attend allowed her to be present.

Chuck suggests that we choose range issues that are relevant to ranchers and let ranchers drive what research is being done; ranchers have political clout and can influence funders. We have not had an SRM booth at a Western Stock Growers Association event in a long time.

Jon Siddoway indicated that Invasive Annual Weed issue was chosen as a theme for this meeting for that exact reason. Was advertising and communication effective? Robert (rancher) mentioned that he saw this meeting on Facebook and not going to our website. Thanks to Carly and Kassia who have been posting event notices and sharing articles on Facebook and Twitter for IMS!

Stacy Barda, involved in Rangelands program, indicated that she could have spread the word to her contacts as well and offered help with future planning; Some opportunities to partner with her organization to conduct tours.

Lou Hagener proposes that we have a joint mixer to improve our networking between our section members and students at U of A, MSU, U of Montana similar to last year. Bret Olson (MSU) organized it last year and it sounds like they will do something similar where a few U of A people donated money to have our students join and Alberta members paid an entrance fee to cover costs.

1. **Financial Report**

Lisa Raatz (IMS Treasurer) reported our current financial position for both our Montana and Alberta accounts. We are keeping the accounts in the black and have made money on our Fall 2017 meeting, Summer 2018 tour in Sundre and a special one-off cooperative set of summer tours between Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Rangeland Research Institute and SRM this year.

As of June 2018, we had 178 members which generated $890 USD for our section or $5 per person is collected by the parent society and given back to the sections. This was divided between our Montana and Alberta accounts depending on the number of members in each region. However, this amount does not cover costs for our yearly contributions to youth Range Days awards, nor to send a High School Youth Forum student to our annual meeting to attend the speaking competition at a cost of ~$700-800 USD/year.

***Motion***: Tracy Kupchenko made a motion to accept the financial report.

***Second***: Lou Hagener.

Motion carried.

Discussion:

We should consider sending students alternating between Alberta and Montana, although Allison indicated that there is not a qualified student to send this year from either country.

Barry Irving clarified that the section can decide to raise the dues and that the $5 per member amount has not changed in 30 years. This increase would have to be agreed upon by other sections across SRM in order to have a fee increase.

Other fundraising ideas? Charles suggested Silent Auctions. Judy Irving stated that we are the only section that does not have silent auctions at our meetings, where most of the money is set aside for youth activities; she is willing to contribute items for auction in future. Tracy added that we already find other sponsorship to help with sending students and we need to collaborate with other groups.

***Motion:*** Lou Hagener made a motion to have the section membership endorse an increase in our dues from $5 USD to $10 USD back from parent society and to bring this forward to the Advisory Council meeting in Minneapolis.

***Second***: Chuck Jarecki

Motion carried.

1. **Parent Society Report**

Barry Irving, SRM President, reported that membership across all of SRM is up by 16% which is a significant increase; people coming to the annual meeting are often become members in order to take advantage of the reduced fee for members. SRM granted these people memberships last year as SRM aligned the renewals for everyone to be in January. Membership is not up in all categories (for example, ranchers), but the parent society increased communications to remind lapsed members to renew with good success.

Some of the changes we’re making:

1. The Advisory Council meeting will have an option for people to attend online this year to make it more accessible for all sections to have someone from executive attending.
2. Young professionals in the US Certified stream (creating an Associate Professional Range Management stream); making the ability to get accredited designation simpler for these folks. This is linked to US Farm Bill and there are more professionals working in Range management. The Certified Prof Range Management will still sign off on work but can have some of it done by APRM and supervise their work. This fills a need for college graduates who find value in this professional designation. Robert asked what was involved in getting accredited. Barry responded that there is a standardized entry level exam and that years of experience and education are counted.

Jon Siddoway added that there is a credits sign up sheet at the back and that this meeting is approved for 5 credits (every 2 years you need 32 credits).

1. The Parent SRM society is set up for legacy giving in any amount and means. For example, there was a land gift in the magnitude of $100K relatively recently.
2. The parent society put out a call to all of the sections asking for one item that the parent society could do for the sections (besides giving money) what would that be? Many requested a conference line to have ability to conduct online/phone meetings. The parent society saw value in this request and is providing this to the sections. Our section was the first to take advantage and we’ve already used it twice!
3. At our meeting in Minneapolis, ways the sections can make money. There is opportunity for someone to volunteer to facilitate a technical section. They are looking for people. This next meetings will be:

Minneapolis, MN – 2019

Denver, CO – 2020

Boise, ID – 2021

And very probably somewhere in New Mexico – 2022

1. **Awards**

Jon Siddoway presented the 2018 Excellence in Rangeland Management award to Todd Graham of U-Cross Ranch. Unfortunately, Todd was unable to attend to accept the award, but his plaque will be given to him next week. Thank you to those who took time to nominate!

1. **Meeting Wrap-up**

A very big **Thank You** to Tracy Kupchenko who has been filling the role of Section President for a few years now, which is a much longer term than she signed up for or expected. She has spent a lot of time and effort populating the board and working to move our section forward with changes to our bylaws and have successful meetings and tours. Much appreciated by all those on the executive and our core participating members!

***Motion***: Barry Irving moved to Adjourn the meeting (9:40 am)

***Second:*** Lisa Raatz

Motion carried.