

Montana Stock Growers Assoc. - SRM column - November 2019

Society for Range Management: what is it?

By Chuck Jarecki

If you are like most Montana ranchers, you are a livestock manager plus a steward of the land. I believe each is of equal importance. During my career as a cattle rancher in the Polson area, it was my basic tenet that I was a steward of the land to provide a good home for my livestock so that they could produce to their fullest genetic potential. MSGA President Fred Wacker shares a similar view, as stated below on his web site

"I believe that the rancher is the first and the best environmentalist and caretaker of the land. We will never do anything to harm our livestock or to harm our land because if we do, we're only harming ourselves."

I would like to introduce you to the Society for Range Management (SRM). Established in 1948, its mission is to provide leadership for the stewardship of rangelands based on sound ecological principles. I have been a Society member for over fifty years and have served on the SRM's Board of Directors as well as continuing to serve on the SRM Endowment Fund Development Committee since its creation thirty-eight years ago. SRM's membership includes producers, researchers, Federal and State land managers, University faculty and range management students. So, there is ample opportunity to learn from fellow SRM members.

The SRM is divided into Sections. If you go to: **www.rangelands.org** and click on 'Sections' you can see the entire listing. In Montana you would normally belong to the International Mountain Section (generally the western half of Montana and Alberta) or the Northern Great Plains Section (eastern Montana, North Dakota and adjoining Canadian provinces). But you can belong to any Section you desire. One thing I have enjoyed over the years is attending summer range tours in areas that I would never have gotten to see otherwise, plus all the friends I have made within the organization. Traveling to tours in many parts of Alberta was an added bonus.

Membership in SRM has many benefits. Here are just a few:

- 1) If you lease land (State or Federal), your SRM membership shows to the public that you, as a land manager, desire to do the best management possible using the latest science.
- 2) If SRM rancher members get together they will have the opportunity to promote the kind in research that will help their bottom line. They could get SRM to support their needs in research and work to get the funding.

- 3) Rancher participation in SRM activities brings about new friends in the field of range management, like-minded folks in research, teaching, extension, youth activities, etc.
- 4) SRM provides ways to expand learning opportunities so you can continue to care for Montana's greatest renewable resource.
- 5) SRM range tours are educational and one learns of other rangeland ecosystems and the management challenges involved.
- 6) SRM has a presence in Washington, D.C. that works to ensure that legislation affecting rangelands is based on proven science, not on some whim.

SRM has two publications available to members. The first is "Rangeland Ecology and Management". It is basically used to publish range related research papers. The second is "Rangelands" and it is more for practical articles. I have had two manuscripts published in "Rangelands".

SRM holds a national meeting once a year, usually in February. At this meeting are held numerous sessions that cover topics of interest to the rancher. In 2020 the meeting will be in Denver, CO, February 16-20 and in 2021 the gathering will be held in Boise, ID.

I would encourage you to join SRM and encourage other fellow ranchers to do the same. Simply go to the SRM web site: **www.rangelands.org**. From my standpoint, it has been a very rewarding experience, from the educational aspect and the great people you meet. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have. I can be contacted at: skywagon@centurytel.net.

Note:

The author has served as President of the Western Montana Stockmen's Assoc, MSGA BOD, Montana Beef Council (12 years), chaired two successful Montana campaigns for the passage of the National Beef Check-off, represented Montana on the former National Livestock and Meat Board (10 years) and served four years on a National Academy of Sciences Committee studying methods of classifying rangeland health.