

INTERNATIONAL MOUNTAIN SECTION JANUARY 2021 NEWSLETTER

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Fall Meeting Recap and What's Ahead!

Greeting from Livingston, Montana! I hope everyone finds themselves healthy and thriving during these trying times. I do not even have to alter my opening sentence from last May. Let's keep our fingers crossed by the next newsletter, I am able to rephrase this sentence in a better light!



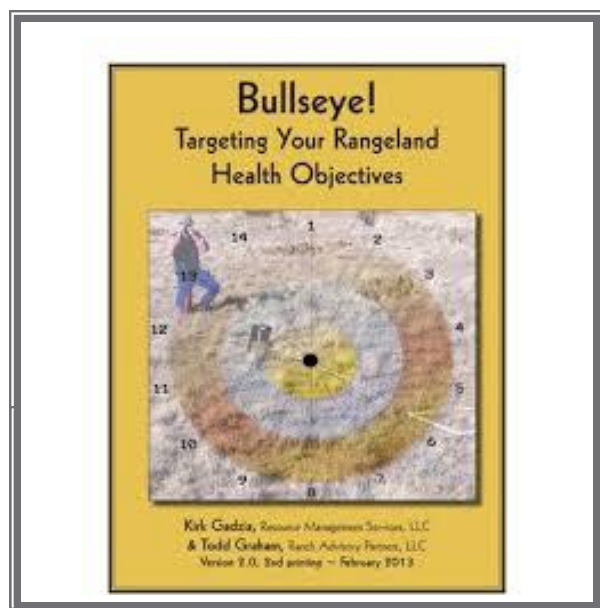
Our 2020 Fall annual meeting over the zoom platform was a success and we all learned a lot, as well. I believe the effort was very worthwhile, albeit the challenges we faced on different levels. In hindsight, like always, now we have another tool in our toolbox to utilize, if you will.

We were able to accomplish our tasks at the business meeting and remain effective through our zoom call. I feel as though our meeting precisely served its purpose; while the biggest hurdle was the lack of discussion there would otherwise be in person due to having the meeting virtually (and due to simply less attendees). Highlights from our business meeting include board member roles/positions remaining the same through the Fall meeting of 2021 (extended one year) due to unforeseen events that we faced in 2020. To reiterate

the IMS board is represented as follows, Allison Martin- President, Jennifer Caudron- 1st Vice President, Rick Caquelin-2nd Vice President, Jillian Kaufman- Alberta Director, Stacey Barta- Montana Director and as always Lisa Raatz, Secretary/Treasurer. Hoping and assuming at this point in time our world resumes to “normal”, the summer tour will be held in Alberta and the fall meeting in Montana this year (2021). The IMS handbook is very close to completion as far as updates and will be posted on the website this Spring for members to review and read, please feel free to submit comments on changes and updates you may see fit. Other items brought to members attention were related to the upcoming February meeting. See the latter part of the newsletter for details to keep in mind regarding the Annual meeting. 🐾

The afternoon workshop portion of our meeting was also a great success and turned out great. There were three speakers focusing on our “Rangeland health across the Range” theme. First, Katie Meiklejohn from Ranch Advisory Partners based out of Southwest Montana presented about their adapted and “branded” rangeland health techniques they use within their consulting business. Katie talked about the “Bullseye Range Health” guide that includes 14 main health indicators. The indicators are grouped into a watershed approach looking at the water cycle, mineral cycle, and energy flow through the system. This range health monitoring aids to facilitate

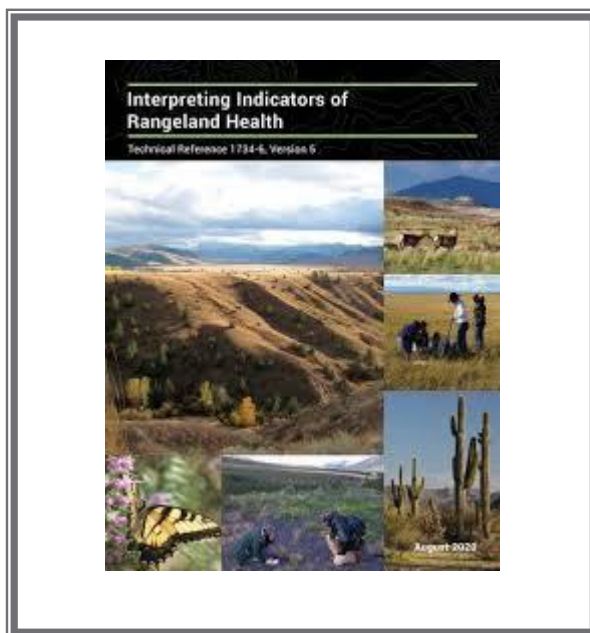
adaptive management processes and drives landowners/managers to ask questions as to why they are seeing things the way they are. Assessing rangelands involves an array of monitoring from evaluating a pasture between grazing events, examining the speed of the mineral cycle, examining soil stability and the effectiveness of the water cycle, tracking species composition changes to evaluating a sites ability to absorb solar energy (a few of many assessments). This



ranch scale rapid assessment is not a static tool, rather an ever-changing one. The assessment allows land managers to establish specialized monitoring programs that include qualitative and quantitative data for a complete picture of rangeland health.

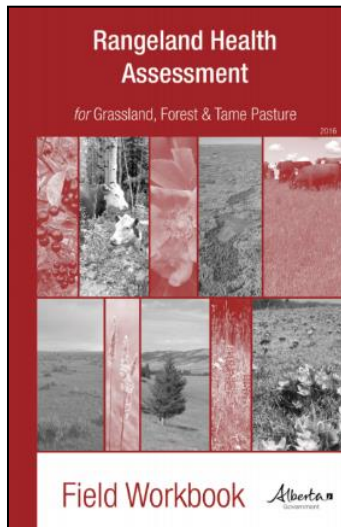
Next Rick Caquelin, area rangeland management specialist with the NRCS in Great Falls presented on range health. The Natural Resources Conservation Service uses the 17 indicators of rangeland health that was initially instituted by the NRC (National Resource Council) and later SRM and Federal agencies (“ad hoc”) to fine tune site specific details in maintenance of soil at the site and again looking at the bigger picture through resource and rangeland inventories when gathering specific site data. “Rangeland health determinations compare the functioning of the ecological processes (water cycle, nutrient cycle and energy flow) to a standard (rangeland ESD’s and range health reference worksheet)”.

The 17 indicators are subcategories of three main attributes, soil/site stability, hydrologic function and biotic community integrity. Five steps are used in



applying this range health technique; including identify the evaluation area, obtain reference worksheet, obtain evaluation matrix, rate the 17 indicators, and rate the 3 rangeland health attributes.

Our final speaker was Ross Adams, area rangeland management specialist with Alberta Environment and parks. Ross enlightened us with the range health assessment field workbook developed by Alberta Environment and parks. This health assessment is a tool for rangeland, tame pasture, and forest land uses. This is also a rapid assessment that supports communication and extension between land managers and a vast array of other stakeholders. The process involves selecting a site, determining site type and reference sites, estimating plant community composition, estimating litter, determining bare ground and erosion features and estimating the abundance of noxious weeds. There are five main indicators that receive scoring in the assessment: plant community composition, plant community structure, hydrologic function, nutrient cycling, site stability and noxious weeds presence. Scoring



of this RHA compromises of 75-100% rated as healthy (no changes needed), 50-74% rated as healthy with problems (warning), and less than 50% rated as unhealthy (changes advised).

We had a great Fall meeting and workshop considering the circumstances this past year has posed. I look forward to getting back to in-person meetings in the future.



– Allison

Lastly, Barry Irving put together a great aggregate of videos he worked on this last summer of alternative stockwater systems. Putting this together and having it “presentation ready” is definitely no easy feat for us range folks. Great addition to the end of our meeting, Barry!

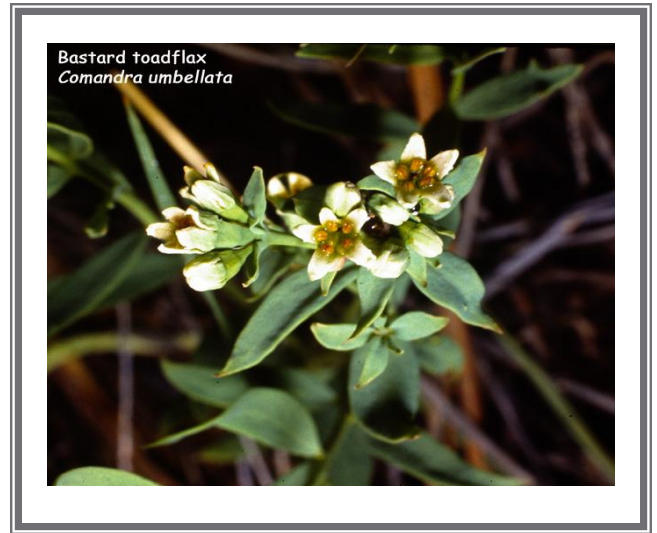
On a side note, how have I never heard of a beefalo before? I saw an ad on craigslist for someone selling a couple beefalo and it was the first I’ve heard of such a thing. Interesting...



PLANT PROFILE

Bastard toadflax (*Comandra umbellata*)

Bastard toadflax is a native perennial forb in the *Santalaceae* family. Stems are erect and usually clustered, leaves are lanceolate, sessile and glaucous. The inflorescence is a terminal hemispheric cyme. The fruit is a drupe. This forb grows on rangelands, particularly sagebrush steppe and plains. Although this is a photosynthetic plant that manufactures its own food, it can be parasitic gathering food from tree and shrub roots. Rather interesting tid bit that I am learning; the generic name is derived from the Greek, come (hair) and andros (a male) referring to the hairy attachment of the anthers to the sepals.



Allison

Plowing towards off-site water solutions in the Boreal Mixedwood rangelands of northcentral Alberta

Jennifer Caudron, 1ST Vice President, IMS

Bringing water to cows as an alternative to cows finding water in wetlands and streams is intuitive and logical when considering the principles of range management and balancing the checkbook. Changing weather patterns, logistical challenges and financial constraints are all important factors to consider when developing an off-site watering system that provides clean water to livestock. If developing water systems were easy water bodies within our rangelands would be pristine and our calves would be fat and pricey at market time. Agricultural producers are the best stewards of their land with each operation unique with adaptable management objectives. When combined with adequate rest, distribution and timing an off-site watering system can be beneficial to both the producer and the surrounding lands.

In the Boreal Mixedwood area west of Edmonton Alberta some agricultural producers have found a straight-forward solution to the challenge of water management in their cattle operations. With involvement and support of the Alternative Land Use Systems (ALUS) program, producers are assisted with mechanisms for the production of ecosystem goods and services on their land, such as off-site watering systems, while at the same time gaining financial assistance for their operation. In many cases producers are being compensated for land management decisions that they have already been making for generations. Clean water on the landscape is a win-win for agricultural producers and for the local surrounding communities and downstream users.

Many will already be familiar with the ALUS program which has been in Alberta since 2010. For those readers who are wondering who this ALUS (pronounced Alice) person/thing is, here is a brief summary taken directly from alus.ca. “ALUS’ mission is to provide direct support to a network of farmers and ranchers delivering ecosystem services in their communities including cleaner air, cleaner water, carbon sequestration, erosion control, flood mitigation, pollinator support and wildlife habitat.” The beauty of the ALUS program is that it is 100 % voluntary, community developed and farmer delivered. Agricultural producers who are interested in becoming involved in the ALUS program are eligible for financial support for infrastructure such as off-site watering systems or fencing where appropriate, in addition to an annual payment for ecosystem services being produced on their land.

Barry and Judy Irving, owners and operators of Pasture Pipeline in Alberta have been working with agricultural producers (some involved in the ALUS program and some not) to bring clean water to cattle while deferring the negative impacts of livestock within wetland and riparian areas. A variety of wetland classifications are scattered across the Boreal Mixedwood ecoregions, sometimes wet, sometimes dry, big, small and everything in between. Sometimes fencing a wetland makes sense but often is just not feasible or attainable

over large and moisture diverse tracts of land. With a reliable water source, energy to move water (gravity, line power, solar, etc.), meticulously chosen fittings, connectors and valves, combined with hard work and expertise, a pasture pipeline watering system may be the final piece of the puzzle on well managed rangeland.



Society for Range Management 2021 Virtual Annual Meeting: New Frontiers – Feb 15-18, 2021



The Planning Committee is putting the final touches on the Virtual 2021 Annual Meeting which will be both engaging and interactive and accessed from the comfort of your own home; there will be something for everyone. For those of us in chilly Alberta and Montana, have a hot beverage on hand and enjoy learning something new!

Each day, there will be a live-streamed **Plenary Session** to focus our learning:

Feb 15 - Valuing Ranching and Conservation (Drs. Lynn Huntsinger, Carter Kruse, Sasha Gennet)

Feb 16 – Adapt (or Succumb) to Climate Change (Dr. Cliff Mass, Angus Emmott)

Feb 17 – Wicked Problems in Wildland Fire (Drs. Nathan Sayre, Jon Keeley, Navashni Govender)

Live-streamed Symposia – each day, choose from six concurrent Symposia to focus on Fire, Grazing & Livestock, Ecosystems, and Technologies.

Global Rangelands Tours will be presented daily and provide an opportunity to learn more about rangelands in other parts of the world.

Concurrent Technical Sessions - There are over 200 presentations (pre-recorded talks, field videos, and posters) by researchers, ranchers, land and resource managers, conservation organizations, and many others that will run like our in-person concurrent sessions with an opportunity to interact with speakers in live Q&A Zoom meetings.

Exhibit Hall - At any time during the conference, browse the virtual exhibit hall and interact with exhibitors bringing us new ideas and technologies.

Workshops – Feb 18 will be filled with 14 additional live-streamed workshops to choose from and opportunities for Professional Development.

So much more...Student activities (with an opportunity for *anyone* to test their plant knowledge on the Plant ID exam!), Section and University socials, A Virtual Art Gallery featuring artwork by our members, A Rangeland Film Festival, Wild Women of Range, and our Awards Ceremonies and recognition of excellence are all going forward with enthusiasm!

For more information and to register: [SRM 2021 Annual Meeting](#)

Cost for SRM members: \$100 USD.

**Upcoming Webinar Series Hosted by SK PCAP (Saskatchewan Prairie
Conservation Action Plan) – Prairie’s Got the Goods Week – March 15-19, 2021
(12:00 noon MST)**

Every year, SK PCAP hosts a series of webinars about the ecological goods and services provided to us by the native prairie ecosystem. The ranching industry isn't just about cattle, but prairie rangelands are also for prairie wildlife! Presentation topics include flood control, pollination, carbon sequestration and climate change.

Saskatchewan Prairie Conservation Action Plan (SK PCAP) – Prairie’s Got the Goods Week – March 15 – 19, 2021 (12:00 noon MST)

<https://www.pcap-sk.org/upcoming-events/prairies-got-the-goods-week>

Monday, March 15 - Ecosystem services derived from prairie-pothole wetlands (Dave Mushet, U.S. Geological Survey)

Tues, March 16 - Canadian Grasslands Protocol (Sayeed Mahadi, Viresco Solutions)

Wed, March 17 - Linking rotational grazing with greenhouse gas dynamics in grassland soils (Dr. Edward Bork and Dr. Bharat Shrestha, University of Alberta)

Thurs, March 18 - Pollination as an Ecological Service (Dr. Samuel Robinson, University of Calgary)

Fri, March 19 - Agricultural Greenhouse Gas Program (Dr. Timm Döbert, University of Alberta)



Thanks Lisa Raatz for this information!



May at the Mattheis Research Ranch,
University of Alberta

Mixedgrass Prairie

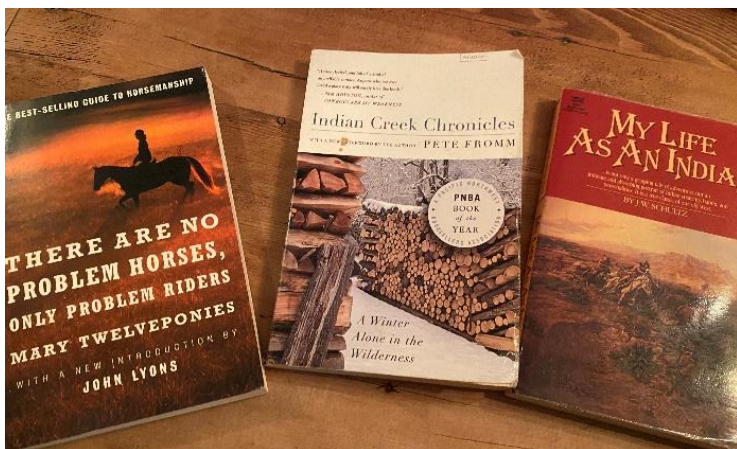
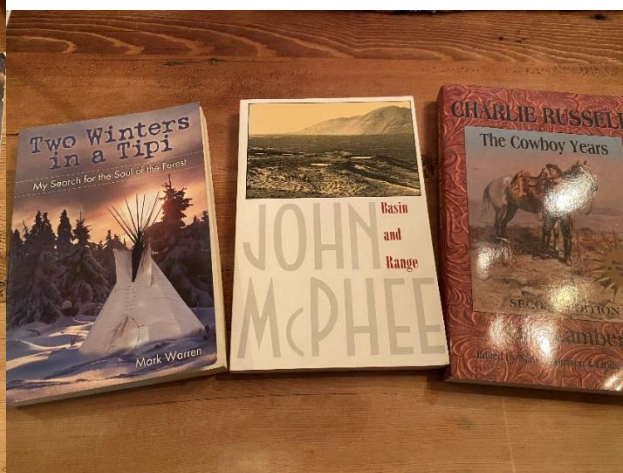
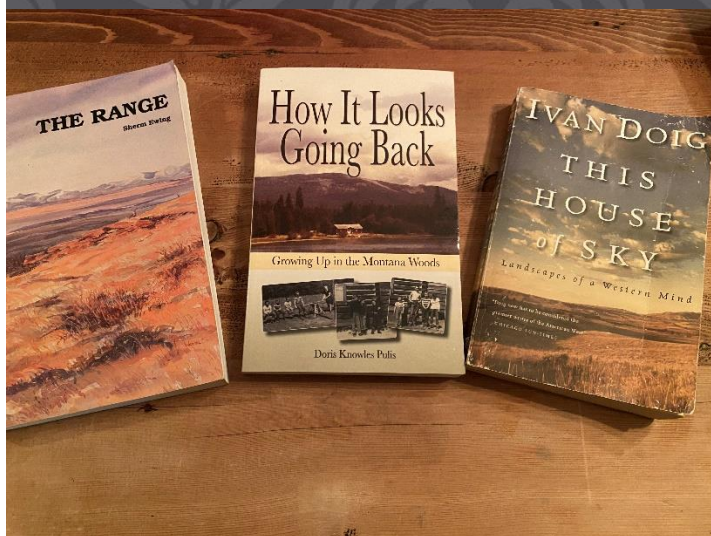
Save the Date: Virtual IMS Social- Tuesday February 16th, 4:30 pm MST via Cadence platform (similar to zoom). Bring your own Wine and Cheese Please? I know I will be ☺ More details to come. Please RSVP to me if this suits your fancy and you will be participating.

amakoutz@yahoo.com

Bring your game face, winner gets a prize!

CALLING ALL BOOK CLUBBERS

I've succumbed to yet another winter doldrum. Doldrum may not be the most accurate term, it is actually quite the opposite as I find myself busier than I would like to be, but as I digress, heck with it I like the phrase. Who wants to join IMS Book club?> Is anyone getting lost in a book on these long winter nights?> Does anyone need more motivation to lose the phone/tv during this winter season?> Who wants to read a -book- a- month with me until Spring? Suggestions where to begin? (Go look in your bookshelf!)



Here are a few books I pulled out of my abundant bookshelf. I am not implying anything by these pictures...! I have yet to read all these books, I just started This House of Sky. I would relish in some IMS book buddies.