



International Mountain Section Society for Range Management

Fall 2023 Newsletter



Greetings from the President

Summer fades and fall is quickly upon us. And with it, the annual Fall Meeting of the International Mountain Section! This year's meeting will be on Saturday, November 11th at the Comfort Inn in Shelby, Montana. Along with the annual Business Meeting, we have an exciting educational program planned. The afternoon will feature two innovative producers from northern Montana and several range researchers discussing their studies being conducted in Montana. See the poster on the next page for more details and [how to register!](#)

But before we move on, let's talk about what happened in the past year. The IMS held a tremendous Winter/Spring webinar series that was very well attended; if you missed any of the 5 webinars, they are available on our website or on YouTube. Members of IMS gathered at Stettler, Alberta for our annual Summer Meeting where members heard about the challenges of grazing management in the central Alberta Parklands.

Also, this summer, Montana rancher, longtime IMS member and Life Member of SRM, Chuck Jarecki and his wife, Penny, made a generous endowment to the Society for Range Management. This allows for the establishment of the Chuck Jarecki Rancher Land Stewardship Award. The award was created to recognize ranch operators who demonstrate outstanding rangeland stewardship and contribute to the ranching profession through local, state, and national service. Thank you, Chuck and Penny!!

Finally, due to the volunteer efforts of many IMS members in helping put on the past SRM Annual Meeting in Boise in February our Section received a check for our services for about \$24,000! This funding will provide our Section a great opportunity to make a difference in our world and on our rangelands!

Please, please, bring your energy and ideas to our Officer team, our Fall meeting at Shelby, or wherever you can to help make our Section be as great as it can be!

~ Rick Caquelin

IMS Executive



Rick Caquelin,
President



Natasha Rinas,
1st Vice President (AB)



Noah Davis,
2nd Vice President (MT)



Jillian Kaufmann,
Alberta Director



Stacey Barta,
Montana Director



Jennifer Caudron,
Past President



SAVE
THE
DATE

Upcoming IMS events

Mark your calendars for this upcoming event!

SRM- IMS FALL MEETING

Please join us in person at the
[Comfort Inn at Shelby, MT](#)

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 11th — 10-3:30 pm, MST

Registration/payment: Cost is \$20 at the door. Cash only.

Agenda

- 10-12: Business meeting & awards
- 12-1:15: Lunch (on your own)
- 1:15-3:30: Presentations
- 3:30 onwards: Social time!

Please RSVP to Stacey (sbarta@mt.gov) by November 1st!

Check us out on Facebook or Twitter



Canescent aster/Hoary aster/Hoary Tansyaster

Dieteria canescens, Asteraceae Family

Canescent aster is a biennial or short-lived perennial that is common to prairie and southern parkland regions of western Canada. In the United States, it inhabits a variety of plant communities including shadscale desert, Wyoming big sagebrush, mountain big sagebrush, aspen, and limber pine. It is commonly found within dry open areas including eroded banks and slopes in badlands. Although this forb does not offer any forage value, it is recognized as a drought-tolerant colonizer of early seral disturbed sites, acting to establish vegetation cover and control erosion within dry environments. Additionally, it is an important host plant for the acastus checkerspot butterfly (*Charidryas acastus*) (Tannas 2004).

The specimen of canescent aster seen in the photo was found within a reclaimed native grassland plant community located in the Dry Mixedgrass Natural Subregion of Alberta. The conditions at this location are particularly harsh, characterized by heavy clay soils impacted by elevated sodicity and salinity, in addition to severe drought compounded over multiple years that has caused the soil surface to form deep, wide cracks. The beauty of canescent aster provides a welcome contrast against the current bleakness of this unforgiving landscape and offers a sign of hope for rejuvenation and recovery.



Hoary Aster. Photo: Stacey Barta.

Montana Working Lands Internship Program

Stacey Barta, State Coordinator for Rangeland Resources Program, Montana DNRC

The Montana Working Lands Internship Program just wrapped up its 6th summer. The Working Lands Internship Program (WLIP) is open to beginning agriculturalists, natural resource and range specialists, biologists, soils majors, or any student interested in natural resources. It provides real-world and hands-on experience implementing the educational tools already gained in academia to a ranching operation. The interns spend 2 weeks at a time at 6 different ranches across Montana. The WLIP is a paid, three-month summer internship where interns work with and learn from mentoring ranchers across Montana. The program's success is largely due to the quality host ranches who continually open their hearts and home to a stranger with the sole purpose of teaching a student what it is like to make a living off the land. To date the program has had 18 students come through with 7 go on to find employment in the conservation field.



For more information on the program and to see a cool video with hosts and interns follow this link <https://dnrc.mt.gov/Conservation/Conservation-Programs/Rangeland-Resources/montana-working-lands-internship-programs>.

2026 International Year of Rangelands & Pastoralists (IYRP) – A brief update

While it may seem to be in the distant future, IYRP 2026 requires intentional planning and collaborative effort from many partner organizations, including the Society for Range Management. The timeline also provides an opportunity to spread the word about rangelands even in the years leading up to 2026. Dr. Barry Irving, IMS member and past SRM president, is the Canadian co-chair for the North American Support Group. He and several IMS and Prairie Parkland Chapter (Saskatchewan) members have been working together to think about how we can engage our stakeholders.

IYRP partners are encouraged to focus on delivering key range-focused stories in 2026 to send a unified and consistent message to media agencies and the public, and raise the profile of rangelands and those who depend upon them. Several IMS members are involved in IYRP planning activities and met at the SRM annual meeting in Boise, Idaho in February 2023 and in subsequent meetings along with other Mexican, Canadian and American organizations. While many of the planned extension and communication efforts will focus on the challenges that pastoralists encounter in developing nations, the North American Support Group



is more focused on the land itself and will endeavour to engage with Indigenous groups and individuals, the ranching community, the rangeland conservation community, and the general public to learn about and highlight successes and challenges.

~ Lisa Raatz

IYRP NORTH AMERICA
INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF RANGELANDS AND PASTORALISTS



IMS Summer Tour in central Alberta covers range management in the Aspen Parkland



Mandy Couve (centre) talks about ACA land management at the Buffalo Lake Moraine Conservation Area. Photo: Lisa Raatz.

The International Mountain Section members and friends gathered for our first post-pandemic tour on July 15, 2023, at the Rochon Sands Provincial Park near Stettler, Alberta. Several speakers were invited to cover aspects of our tour theme: *Rangeland Management in the central Alberta Aspen Parkland* and was a well-organized event thanks to our section vice president, Natasha Rinas and Alberta Director, Jillian Kaufmann!

We started the day led by Mandy Couve, a senior biologist with Alberta Conservation Association (ACA), who gave us some history of ACA and the scale and diversity of land bases they manage. We visited the 1120-acre Buffalo Lake Moraine Conservation area to talk about ACA's objectives of using grazing to conserve wildlife habitat and balance the interests of local ranchers, hunters,

and those interested in using the land for recreation. There was lots of positive discussion and ideas exchanged about managing aspen encroachment and grazing frequency at the site.

We discussed the important role of grazing in the Aspen Parkland region led by Ross Adams, Range Management Specialist with the Government of Alberta. Ross talked about assessing Rangeland Health and thinking about management goals and outcomes, especially during drought such as what much of Alberta

has been experiencing. Ross mentioned that as a kid, he "cut his teeth attending IMS tours with family", which has instilled his passion for and



Felix Gebbink (left) provided historical aerial maps and photos to illustrate how aspen has increased over time. Photo: Lisa Raatz.

career choice in range management; A notable point for the parents attending the tour with their children!

We walked through a nearby grazing lease where Felix Gebbink, Rangeland Agrologist with Public Lands, talked about aspen control using mechanical and herbicide methods. The current grazing lessee was planning to mechanically remove some aspen to increase grass production in a several areas of the lease. We looked at some historical aerial maps to see how much aspen had increased since the 1950's and discussed how the government gives permission to make changes and the challenge of balancing recreation access with cattle grazing.



Renny Grilz (left) talks about using prescribed fire to manage grasslands. Photo: Lisa Raatz.

On the same site in an area that had burned in the recent past, Renny Grilz, Resource Management Officer with Meewasin Valley Authority in Saskatchewan, talked about grassland conservation using prescribed fire. Renny discussed some of the considerations around conducting prescribed burns in the western prairie provinces, including changing public perceptions of fire. While the air was smokey from fires burning in NW Alberta and BC, Renny did not have to convince IMS attendees that fire is an important brush and aspen management tool and that decades of fire suppression have contributed to the current fuel load.

The tour concluded with a plant identification quiz at the Buffalo Moraine Conservation area, bringing back a long-standing plant quiz tradition at IMS tours. The competition was fierce since many (if not most) of our tour attendees are former University of Alberta and Montana State University Range Team alumni. Participants enjoyed the challenge and we reconnected with and made new IMS friends over burgers back at the campground, a fitting end.

~ Lisa Raatz



The plant quiz was highly competitive! Photo: Lisa Raatz.



Jillian Kaufmann and Barry Irving enjoy a laugh at the BBQ. Photo: Lisa Raatz.

MEETING AGENDA

Society for Range Management,
International Mountain Section

Draft Agenda for Fall Annual Meeting, Nov 11, 2023

SRM IMS Fall Business Meeting & Awards

10:00 am to noon

All are welcome (attendance is optional)

Lunch on your own

noon to 1:15 pm

Workshops

1:15- 2:15 – MSU Graduate and Under-Graduate Student Research

2:15-2:50 – Natalie Berkman

2:50-3:30 – Aaron Paulson “Rancher Experiences in Grazing Management”

3:30... – Social!

Check us out on Facebook or Twitter





Front and back cover photos: Noah Davis.

Special thanks to our funders:
Alberta Environment and Parks.



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Please email: srm.ims11@gmail.com