



**Nebraska Section SRM Council Meeting
October 18, 2022
Holt County Extension Office**

Brad Schick called the meeting to order at 6:45 PM CST.

Minutes were sent prior to the meeting via email for review. Motion to approve the minutes from the June council meeting was made by Kyle Schumacher and seconded by Lance Schutte. Motion approved. The minutes of the October 2021 Annual Meeting will be reviewed and approved at tomorrow's meeting as well as the treasurer's report.

Treasurer's Report: The balances of the two checking accounts and four CDs as of October 18th, 2022 were as follows: \$8309.19 for the SRM account, \$7801.49 for the Range Judging account, \$7221.29 for the Nebraska Section CD, \$2964.24 for the William Wester HSYF fund, \$6667.80 for the NE State Range Judging CD, and the \$9356.59 for the other Range Judging CD. A few key notes regarding insurance and main costs and incomes were also noted and discussed.

Insurance was paid for the year at a cost of \$1425.00 split between both Range Judging and the Section Account. The SRM Account looked high in June due to the fact that income from Range Camp income had been deposited, but bills had not been paid at that time. We have not had any income other than dues, due to not having an annual meeting. Our checking account has been maintained by Range Camp bringing in slightly more than their expenses, annual dues, and our generous anonymous donor helping to cover HSYF expenses. HSYF also reimbursed some expenses this year, which also helped. Our largest expenses include insurance, web site management, HSYF, and range camp. It is not a good time for interest rates, they are very low. The 18 and 24 month CD maturity dates were in 2022. I call and ask if there are any rate increases available when they come due, and roll them over unless I am notified to change anything. Please let me know if you want me to do anything differently. The other CD does mature in November 2022. The decrease in the NE State Range Judging Account is due to supplies ordered, primarily Range Judging cards, and scholarships but no income deposited yet from Range contests this year. If there are any questions please let me know!

Committee Reports:

Annual Meeting Committee:

Ben Beckman presented the plans for tomorrow's meeting. A big thanks to Kyle for all of the help in planning the meeting. Ben did apply and received a PIE grant for \$2000.00 to help cover costs and improve our income for the annual meeting.

Awards: We will be presenting tomorrow during the meeting.

Envirothon: Nadine Bishop submitted a committee report.

In 2022, the members of the Envirothon Committee were Nadine Bishop, Wyatt Kirwan, and Myra Richardson. This is Nadine's final year as Envirothon Committee Chair. Wyatt is the incoming Chair of the Envirothon Committee.

Nebraska Envirothon is a competition designed for high school students (9-12th grades) to encourage interest in and increase knowledge about the environment. Five-member teams compete at the regional and state level in seven environmental studies areas: soils, aquatic ecology, forestry, policy, wildlife, range, and special topic. Nebraska is one of several states that have added range to the areas of studies. The special topic changes each year and the students address this in an oral presentation. In 2022, the special topic was "Waste to Resources". Seventy-five teams competed in the seven regional contests and 14 teams qualified to participate in the state contest. The 2022 State Envirothon was held on April 27th at Camp Comeca near Cozad. Concordia Lutheran, Omaha placed first, with Norris placing second, and Milford coming in third. The Nebraska Association of Resources District (NARD) awarded cash prizes to the top three teams in the amount of \$1500, \$1000, and \$500. The top teams in each test category were:

- Aquatics: Concordia Lutheran and Dawson County Envirothon Club (tie)
- Forestry: St. Paul Team 1 and Milford (tie)
- Policy: Loup /City Team 2
- Range: Burwell
- Soils: St. Paul Team 1 and Concordia Lutheran (tie)
- Wildlife: Norris
- Oral Presentation: Omaha Zoo Academy AKA Children of the Corn

The Nebraska Section-SRM Envirothon Committee has the responsibility for developing regional and state range contest questions, setting up the hands-on portion of the range portion of the state contest, and serving as the range subject contest official. The Committee is also responsible for developing and maintaining range topic study guides and conducting range topic trainings for Envirothon instructors and team participants.

Each year in January an instructor training is held, and this year a special training for team participants was held as well. This student training was called "Envirothon Field Day" and was held at the UNL East Campus Union in Lincoln, NE on October 11, 2022. The event was sponsored by the Nebraska Association of Resources Districts (NARD) and was partially funded with a grant from the National Conservation Foundation (NCF). The goal was to provide students (and teachers) hands-on training with resource professionals (state and federal) in the areas of Forestry, Range, Soils, and Wildlife before the Envirothon Regional competitions in February. 15 schools and about 115 students from eastern Nebraska participated. In the morning, the students attended 4 training sessions and in the afternoon the teams completed an Envirothon Scrimmage test was, with Norris and Tri-County having the top overall scores. Wyatt Kirwan developed the Range presentation and Myra Richardson came to the field day to help Wyatt deliver the presentation to the students.

If you would like to view the study guides, visit <https://www.nrdnet.org/nebraska-envirothon>.

Fundraising: Vacant position.

Historian: Jeff Nichols presented. The timing and publication of the SRM Newsletter was discussed regarding when important information could be included. We also need to get some updates to Dorrene Brown Butterfield for publication on the website.

Information and Education: Laura Rubeck presented discussion regarding holding a possible joint field day with the Soil Water Conservation Society. There are many knowledgeable entities and individuals in many different groups that could work together to create a field day. This would include local producers and professionals, encourage enrollment in both groups, and possibly provide a small fund-raising opportunity. She would like to work toward getting people together to form a committee to plan this possible venture separate from the annual meeting, possibly in the summer. This is still open to discussion and the season would dictate the topic as well as other events taking place during the summer. It would be targeted toward adults, but could also include local FFA to get more local producers involved and increase public participation and membership. Timing, location, sponsorship, and possible topics were discussed. NGLC used to partner a summer tour with SRM. This will be presented and further discussed at the meeting tomorrow.

The SRM booth was discussed in regards to its availability and the need for updating the information. It will be set up tomorrow as well and further discussed.

Investments: Kyle Schumacher has been working with Walt Schacht to help manage the investments accounts. The interest rates are low, but these funds are designed to fund our scholarships. These funds are not sustainable, and he has been talking to a financial advisor to look into opportunities to better invest our funds. We have been offering two \$750.00 scholarships, but would like to work back up to two \$1000.00 scholarships. Kyle will continue to discuss and look at possible improved investment opportunities that are low risk. The investment accounts will remain separate from the CDs that are not investment CDs and the checking accounts.

Membership: Lance Schutte provided a report. Twenty-one members are currently lapsed, which puts our membership down seven members from last year. Allen Press provides the membership reports. Members are encouraged to update your email address if it has changed. If the member signs up for a new membership after Oct. 1st, such as after an annual meeting, can that membership be applied to the following year? At the National level they are working on partnering up with other organizations to become members of both entities at a discounted rate to try to increase membership.

Nominations: Bob Broweleit presented the report. Cheryl Dunn was nominated, and is the only current nomination.

Producer Affairs: Sheila Luoma submitted a report. The Nebraska Grazing Land Coordinator, Ron Bolze has resigned. Work is ongoing to replace him with a full-time coordinator. NGLC, Nebraska Extension, and WWF hosted a joint grazing tour in June. The tour included Three Bar Cattle Co (John Ravenscroft) and Spikebox Ranch (McMurtrey Unit, Turner Enterprises.) The tour focused on their livestock operations, and grazing management practices on Sandhills Uplands and wet meadows.

NGLC continues to focus on Generational Transition. Past workshops have been held in Valentine, Ainsworth, and Whitman. This past month a grant for funding to help in continuing these was received from Bass Pro Shops and Cabela's Outdoor Fund.

Work continues to assist with the control of Eastern Red Cedar with Prescribed Fire.

The drought continued in 2022 and appearing to be continuing into 2023. We are hoping and praying that moisture will return in 2023.

Public Affairs: Vacant position.

Range Judging: Kristi King and Ben Beckman are co-chairs. Kristi submitted a report that was presented by Ben Beckman. It was the 67th year of range judging in Nebraska. This year, 1386 participated through area contests, which was a new record high for the area contests. At the State Contest that was held in Dawes County there were 401 participants. The top senior individual and overall grand champion was Sidney Burkinshaw from West Holt, and there was a time for top junior individual, Jack Thede from St. Paul and Cale Buss from Burwell. The top senior team and overall champion was from West Holt, and had members Sidney Burkinshaw, Addie Karo, Isaac Pistulka, and EmiLee Walnofer. The top junior team was from West Holt and had members Nick Hansen, Makenna Schaaf, Drake Nemetz, and Lily Vogel

Scholarships will once again be offered to the top 4 teams from the state contest. This scholarship is to be used for travel and registration for the National Contest held in Oklahoma City in May. The top 4 teams in 2022 were senior teams from the following schools: West Holt, Burwell, St. Paul, and Ord. This year was Nebraska's turn to host the Old West Regional contest, however after reviewing that Nebraska was the last state to host the OWR back in 2017 and only Nebraska schools attended the NE-SRJC voted to not host the contest in 2022.

The formal invitations to host a contest in 2023 will be sent out by the end of the calendar year. The proposals for 2024 will also be sent out to potential local committee members. We will hope to have contest dates firmed up by March so schools can get this on their activity calendars.

We continue to award medals to the champion individuals and champion teams for all the contests. The larger medal is for state champions and the smaller pin is for area champions. NARD again provided plaques for all of the division winners at state.

We have picked up a couple of new State Committee members. We welcomed Devin Heusinkvelt (NRCS – Weeping Water), Jack Gibbens (NRCS – Elwood), Kelly Guggenmos (AgEd Instructor – Wheeler-Central) and Boyd Bowder (AgEd Instructor – St. Paul).

It continues to be a great time for educating youth in Nebraska about the rangeland resource! Thank you to all that have assisted in one way or another with a contest or contests or helping schools to prepare for contests.

Range Research: Mitch Stephenson not present

Range Tour: Mitch Stephenson not present

Range Camp/HSYF: A report was submitted by Blair Hartman, Co-Director. The Nebraska Youth Range Camp wrapped up the 58th year of hosting camp. It returned to the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture in Curtis, NE on June 6-9, 2022. Camp was led by Co-Directors Sara Wahl, Blair Harman, and Shelly Kelly. Forty-two students from all across Nebraska took part in the four-day long camp. The students learned about ecological sites, stocking rates, prescribed fire, wildlife, ranch economics, similarity index, ruminant nutrition, and so much more.

All activities that the campers participate in count towards points to earn the top “Crew” award and top individual for the week. The top crew for the week was 7-V led by Travis Millikan. His crew was made up of Joe Barenberg, William Skibinski, Isaac Goosey, Adian Choat, and Josette McConnel.

The overall top new camper went to Braelynn Schlenger of Erickson and the top returning camper went to Gracie Ackles of St. Paul. The top newcomer exam award went to Zoe Fornander of Sidney. Range Camp had nineteen ranch sponsors this year, along with a generous donation from Farm Credit Services of America in North Platte, Adam's Land and Cattle in Broken Bow, and the World Wildlife Fund. This helped us continue to offer an affordable registration fee to campers. We want to give a very special thanks to all of those who helped make camp possible, especially our Crew Bosses who helped us throughout the entire week. This year our crew bosses included: Isabel Gains, Travis Millikan, Alissa Millikan, Amanda Hefner, Matt Zvolanek, Sheridan Wilson, and Kate Nootenboom. Shelly Kelly served as both a co-director and a crew boss this year. Also serving as co-directors for camp were Sara Wahl and myself, Blair Hartman. Next year is also planned to occur in Curtis, NE.

There was discussion regarding a rotation for camp being held between locations such as Curtis, Halsey, and Chadron. There was also discussion regarding financial reporting and the funds that are used to fund camper fees, but also plan for funds to support HSYF.

Student Affairs: A report was presented by Mary Reece and Lisa McMillan. Nebraska was very well represented last year 3 high school students that participated in the 2022 HSYF at the National Meeting: Chancey Hoblyn-Bittner as returning President, Sam McMillan and Rebecca Reece were new SRM delegates for the recent meeting in Albuquerque. Sam placed first and Rebecca placed second in Albuquerque, they represented our Nebraska Section very well. The Section had an anonymous donor donate \$1000.00 to help cover HSYF costs. Thank you very much to this annual donor! Mary assisted the Section with getting the Forum costs reimbursed for Chancey as the HSYF President. Lisa McMillan was the adult who traveled with the students from Nebraska to New Mexico which is very much appreciated.

Sam McMillan will return to present his winning presentation to the Society and assist the HSYF President in conducting the Forum. The Nebraska Section can ask for reimbursement of Sam's costs following the meeting. Mary and Lisa also continue to be involved at the National level. Overall they are seeing challenges such as higher costs and rules regarding supervision of the students attending. Tomorrow there are 3 students presenting to the meeting.

Scholarship: Scholarships are tentatively due Nov. 21st. Information will be available on the website. Please promote this opportunity to students attending the meeting tomorrow

Old Business:

Nadine is writing up the structure, duties, and responsibilities for the Envirothon Committee to be added to our by-laws and constitution.

New Business:

Jim O'Rourke presented that the United Nations General Assembly in New York unanimously declared 2026 the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP). Jim presented the background information regarding the work put forth by many entities and organizations to support this designation. It has taken 14 years to designate this year. There will be a display tomorrow for what a Rangelands and Pastoralists represent. The North American Regional Group will work to produce materials that cover all of North America. The International Affairs for SRM has taken on the North American role and they would like each section to think about how they will address it, and what audience they would like to address. Do we want to focus on Rangeland Management educated individuals, landowners, producers, or get the message out to the general public including the urban audience? There will be twelve monthly themes for each

month of the year so that is a structure to follow. We need to start thinking outside of traditional audience, include them but also expand and have a different message to the general public.

Motion to adjourn made by Ben Beckman, and seconded by Lance Shutte.

Respectively submitted,

Angie Petersen