

**Nebraska Section SRM Council Meeting**  
**October 4, 2011**  
**South Platte NRD Office, Sidney, NE**

Michael Croxen called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm MT at South Platte NRD Office in Sidney, NE. Those present were Nadine Bishop, Michael Croxen, Casey Lancaster, Kristin Miller, Mary Reece, Curtis Talbot, Shelly Taylor, Cindy Tusler, Chuck Butterfield, Justin Lemmer, Daryl Cisney, Jeff Nichols, Doug Whisenhunt, and Angie Petersen. Keith Klement attended from SRM headquarters. An excellent meal was served by Courtney and Kristin Miller.

**Minutes:** Motion to approve the minutes from June was made by Kristen Miller, seconded by Curtis Talbot. The minutes from June were approved.

**Treasurer's Report:** As reported in the previously distributed report prepared by Leslie Stewart-Phelps; the balances of the two checking accounts and three CDs as of August 31<sup>st</sup> were as follows: \$11,636.63 for the SRM account, \$3020.79 for the Range Judging account, \$6795.63 for the Nebraska Section CD, \$2551.65 for the HSYF fund, and \$6274.77 for the NE State Range Judging CD. Motion to approve the treasurer's report was made by Mary Reece, seconded by Shelly Taylor. The treasurer's report was approved.

**Committee Reports:**

**2011 Annual Meeting:** Curtis reported that everything was ready to go for the meeting the next day. One speaker, Doug Helms, National Historian with the NRCS had to cancel due to budget issues. However we may keep him in mind as a speaker for a future meeting.

**Nominations:** Dave Cook submitted a report. Mary Reece has been added to the committee this year, along with current members Jeff Nichols and Daryl Cisney. Two excellent candidates agreed to run for the council position. Candidates this year were Bob Broweleit and Jon Soper. Electronic balloting was used again this year. The newly elected council member will be announced tomorrow.

**Awards:** Doug Whisenhunt reported that the Rangeman's Award signs and write-ups were complete. The awards will be presented tomorrow night at the banquet. If Doug can't be present, Michael Croxen will present the awards. Kristin Miller will be recognized that the national meeting in Spokane as recipient of the Young Professional Award

**Range Camp:** Shelly reported that Range Camp was held June 13-17<sup>th</sup> this year with 39 students. Outreach was extensive with letters or emails throughout Nebraska to high schools, NRCS and NRD offices, UNL extension offices, and newspapers. A new Facebook page has been created to promote Range Camp as well. The financial and overall support of sponsoring ranches continues to be essential to the camp's success. One third of the students were returning campers. This year's winning ranch crew was the Kelly Ranch Crew or the Steerhead Crew, with team leader Justin Lemmer. Nine adults spent the entire week at the camp with 13 other professionals supporting Range Camp by leading tours and providing presentations on range-related information. Reed Hamilton Ranch was the site of the Ranch Tour. All students were encouraged to compete for the HSYF. Five students will be presenting tomorrow at the Nebraska Section meeting. Two students were taken last year to the National SRM meeting in Billings. There are enough funds to take 2

students to Spokane from the 2011 Range Camp budget and the NEGLCI has offered to pay the way for a 3<sup>rd</sup> student. Range Camp continues as one of the Nebraska Section's most important activities and its success has been and continues to be dependent upon the involvement of Section members, Nebraska ranches, and other professionals and organizations that support the activity.

**HSYF:** Mary Reece reported that HSYF at the National SRM meeting will change. Spokane has hired security guards for the HSYF this year, but in 2013 we will likely need to have funding to send a parent with their child. Due to liability issues HSYF will not be all day for the entire time as it has been in the past.

**Range Judging:** Daryl Cisney, Range Judging Committee chair presented a report. This is a standing committee of the Nebraska Section and involves many non-members who participate and work to help host these contests. Six area range judging contests were held across Nebraska. The combined area contest participation was reported at 1124 participants, only slightly down from last year. The State Range Judging Contest was held in Sidney earlier that day. It was the 4<sup>th</sup> largest in history with 360 contestants, thanks to Kristin for her great efforts in hosting this event. The Ag Ed instructors were very enthusiastic about the program and continue to support participation. The newspaper representative was amazed by the contest. We have many other partners who help in hosting our contests including the NRDs, NRCS, University of Nebraska Extension, and the landowners, who we want to recognize and thank. Daryl sent thank you letters to all involved in the contests.

This year we had a banner with the SRM logo welcoming students to the State Range Judging contest. We need to put the logos of the other three partners to recognize them on the banner. Daryl proposed also having 6 area banners or signs made with the logos to be displayed at all the area contests. These could then be displayed at each area contest so that all partners are recognized. The cost would be just under \$600.00. Daryl proposed that the NE Section could fund half of this cost and the Range Judging Committee would fund the other half. Jeff Nichols moved that the Section provide \$300.00 toward signs for the 6 area contests that include the SRM logo, the NRCS, NRD, and IANR logos. Daryl seconded the motion. Kristen discussed having permission to use the new SRM logo with the NE SRM logo on it. There was also discussion about the posts to display the signs, and PVC tubes for proper storage. Jeff moved to amend the motion to increase the amount to \$350 to add the storage tubes and posts necessary for storage and display. Daryl Cisney seconded the motion. Motion passed.

**Envirothon:** Chuck Butterfield reported that 70 students competed in the state contest near Gering. The site was not very diverse. Superior won the overall contest. Ord won the Range portion. The International competition was in Sackville, New Brunswick, Canada. The team placed 15<sup>th</sup> out of 50. Next year the state contest will be held at either Platte River State Park or Mahoney State Park. The first Saturday in May is usually the date for the contest. Chuck will have more limited participation in the future. He has been involved since 1994. Range scores are some of the lowest scores in the competition as it is a hands-on station and is designed to be completed as a team. They are working on redoing the regional kits, and for more information you can go the NARD website.

**Scholarship:** Casey Lancaster reported that the scholarship committee received 6 applications for the two \$1000.00 scholarships. Thanks to an anonymous donor who helps to provide one of these scholarships. One winner is from Chadron State College, Samantha Evans, and the other winner is from UNL, Caleb Miles. Discussion was held as to the concern of lack of participation and interest in students applying for the scholarship. Discussion included handing out scholarship applications to students at the National SRM meetings and finding new ways to remind students to apply such as through e-mail or new ways such as Facebook and twitter to reach more students.

**Membership:** Kristin reported that we currently have 96 members. She has sent letters to everyone that was previously a member, letting them know they are no longer currently a member. The transition to Allen Press has caused a loss of some members. She had just received the updated report and there are some current and expired members missing. Kristin has the membership numbers if you don't know your membership number. If someone is having problems getting logged onto the website, or is having other issues with the transition please let her know and she will correct it or forward it to Allen Press. Keith Klement also discussed that nationally memberships had dropped to 2500 during the transition to Allen Press, but are now back up to 3005. The goal is to get back up to 3200, which is what it was before the transition.

**Producer Affiliations:** No report

**Historian:** Jeff Nichols submitted a report. He will file a written report for the meeting and continue to collect and file the committee reports. He also continues to submit articles for the newsletter.

**Investments:** No report

**Information and Education:** Nadine Bishop submitted a report. She continues to develop and e-mail listing of the local and regional papers and publications covering Nebraska for use in sending out press releases. However this can be a challenge as many of these contacts are constantly changing. Two press releases about the Annual Meeting were sent out to all of the publications and information was sent to local radio stations for announcement on their community calendars. The welcome banner displayed at the State Range Judging Contest this year was donated to the Section to recognize the Section. She will be working with Daryl to design the new signs previously discussed. She reminds all members that if they have any local tours, workshops, or other range activities that she would be glad to help publicize the event.

**Student Activities:** Chuck Butterfield reported that Chadron State College has a strong group of students participating. There will be 18 or 19 students coming to attend the Annual Meeting tomorrow and they will report their student activities at the meeting.

**Newsletter:** Kristin Miller reported that she has completed and gotten out one newsletter so far. Typically 5 newsletters are released each year. It states in the by-laws that it is actually 4 that need to be released. March, May, August, and November is the timeline for the newsletter. Kristin reported that she would like to have a goal of having things included in the newsletter other than committee reports. She would like to see student projects featured. Other things such as range tours with pictures could also be included. Many sections have let their newsletters drop. We appreciate Shelly for doing this task as interim and for Kristin for taking over this task to keep it going. Shelly also discussed the fact that right now our advertisers don't really get much benefit from being featured on the newsletters, but have continued to support us. It may be good if we could feature our advertisers on the website if we choose to redo the website, which will be discussed later in the meeting. There are also 8-10 members who do not have e-mail addresses on file.

### **Report from the SRM National Board of Directors:**

Keith Klement from the SRM Board of Directors was present to report.

- **Membership:** As of last Monday membership was 3005, up 505 from when Allen Press took over the membership activities and some members were lost. There is a new updated

membership file for promotional activities. The Allen Press database is very detailed and you can get reports very quickly, however our system has many different levels of membership and is much more complex than anything else they have ever dealt with. There was discussion about the possibility or the progress toward automatic membership renewals. This was proposed on the action update special call this summer. This type of renewal would require some software changes to be made, but the benefits would outweigh the trouble and it could help membership retention.

- **Budget:** The budget was balanced this year. The previous changes in positions were needed to achieve this balance. There was \$580,000 in income with approximately \$560,000 in expenses. This is the first time in 7 years we did not have to use money from the interest on the endowment to cover expenses.
- **EVP updates:** The new Director of Finance is Richard Grosvenor. We are now using QuickBooks to do the accounting. We used to have 4 or 5 sets of books before. QuickBooks allow us to function much more like a business and more professionally.
- **Website:** There are changes being made to the website and he would appreciate any comments to take back to the Board of Directors for consideration. It was discussed that some individuals had more trouble getting around on the website and the membership application was difficult to find. Rangeland news also had a new style. Many of the old links did not work and they are in the process of going through all the old links and updating or removing them.
- SRM investment portfolio is being examined. The Finance and Endowment Committees will be involved in interviewing and selecting an investment firm to manage these investments.
- Chuck Butterfield is the Chair of the 2013 Nominations Committee. There were 32 applicants for awards, but no applicants for the Chaplin Stewardship award.
- The SRM building in Denver is in need of repairs and no longer up to code. SRM is looking at the possibility of a new building or other options for housing the current staff. There is currently a Task Force looking at options.
- An ESD workshop has been scheduled with the Annual SRM Meeting in an attempt to get NRCS, BLM, and USFS employees to attend the Annual Meeting. NRCS is hosting monthly ESD Webinars. The Soil Survey Division hosts webinars monthly and the average attendance is usually 50 to 60 individuals. The ESD webinars overwhelmed the system when approximately 200 people tried to call in. As budgets are cut, webinars will need to be used more often to get information out to individuals.
- Things are going well regarding planning the Annual 2011 Meeting.
- Rangeland News publication has been losing money. Comments have indicated that many people find the articles to be too technical and not producer friendly. They are trying to update and revamp this publication to make it more attractive for members to buy. We are obligated to Allen Press to print 1000 copies for \$15,000/year. We need to look at the Rangelands publication and provide feedback as to what they can do to make improvements and send comments to the Board of Directors.

### **Old Business:**

The Producer Affiliations is vacant. Discussion involved the possibility of one of the GLCI Range Techs being willing to possibly be Chair for this Committee. Tom Hoff would be an excellent person to fulfill this role, but is not currently a member. The possibility of having this individual function as a liaison between producer groups and SRM was discussed. Chuck Butterfield offered to sponsor Tom's membership for the first year to bring him on board. Chuck will contact Tom and approach him about the position.

### **New Business:**

Kristen and Mary have developed an idea to raise funds for the Red Fund to get producers to the Annual Meeting. The idea is to sell clothing with the NE SRM logo. Options may include polos, long-sleeved button down shirts, pullover windbreakers, vests, soft shell jackets, and hats. The larger quantity that can be purchased the larger the discount taken. The suggested mark-ups for the fund have not been discussed. Curtis moved that Kristin and Mary proceed with this idea, seconded by Chuck. The hope is to have this set up soon so that purchases can be made before the Annual Meeting.

Cindy Tusler discussed the proposal put forth by Ron Bolz that SRM may partner with GLCI to sponsor a summer ranch tour. The tour would visit Lynn Meyer, Ted Turner Ranch, and Rex Ranch. The impact on the SRM's meeting was raised as an issue; we do not want to conflict dates of the tour with either the Ranch Camp or Summer Short Course. We need to make sure that any tours that we sponsor are to operations that represent good stewardship. This would provide an opportunity to look at different styles of management. Cindy will continue to look into and be the contact for this activity.

Nick Simonson has submitted a letter of resignation as president elect. We will need to fill this vacancy tomorrow at the NE Section meeting. There was discussion regarding how to handle filling the vacancy and possible candidates to fill the position.

Shelly brought up the need to redesign the NE SRM Website. She showed several examples of other websites that were much more user friendly and visually appealing than our current design. Shelly has visited with Dorrene BrownButterfield about the possibility of expanding the website. The cost of this would be approximately \$500 to \$1000, depending upon what changes we decide to make to the site. Dorrene has been great with her service to NE SRM regarding her work with our website in the past. Shelly would like to continue working with Dorrene to come up with a couple of design options and quotes. Kristin moved to have Shelly continue working with Dorrene to update the website and possible expense quotes. Cindy seconded. Motion passed.

Shelly also brought up some potential updates that may be needed to update our by-laws. The by-laws state that paper ballots need to be sent out for voting purposes. There was discussion as to whether the e-mail is an acceptable form of voting. It was decided that we are within the scope of the by-laws to continue voting in this manner.

The next Council meeting will be in Ogallala on Jan 19<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

Meeting adjourned at 9:25 pm.

Respectively submitted,

Angie Petersen and Nadine Bishop, filling in for Leslie Stewart-Phelps