

# Nebraska Section



# Society for Range Management

## Newsletter

**\*\* NATIONAL SRM CONFERENCE - EARLY  
BRID REGISTRATION ENDS FRIDAY  
DECEMBER 12, 2014 \*\***

### **SUNDSTROM RANCH RECEIVES RANGELAND MANAGEMENT AWARD**

The Broken Box Ranch and Russ Sundstrom from southeast Lincoln County were honored at an October 8th Nebraska Section Society for Range Management meeting and awards banquet in North Platte. The Rangeman's Award they received is presented annually to one ranch in Nebraska for excellence in range management. The award was presented by Bob Broweleit, president of the Nebraska Section Society for Range Management.



The Sundstrom family has owned and taken care of land in Lincoln County since the early 1900's,

President - Bob Broweleit  
Incoming President - Karla Jenkins  
Past President - John Soper  
Council Member - Jeff Nichols  
Council Member - Anthony Perlinski  
secretary-Treasurer - Angie Petersen  
Newsletter Editor - Sheila Luoma

when they settled in the loess hills between Brady and Moorefield. Larry Sundstrom married Donna in 1967 and they became the 3rd generation working with the land and livestock. Larry and Donna's sons Rustin (Russ) and Neil are the 4th generation of the family to provide stewardship for their land. The boys credit their Dad and Grandpa Chester for the strong conservation education they received growing up on the land. Russ also continues to learn after college through area tours and workshops.  
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### **THANK YOU FROM UNL RANGE CLUB**

Nebraska Section, Thank you for your support of the UNL Range Management Club at the Annual Crazy Auction that was held during the Nebraska Section Meeting in North Platte. The club greatly appreciates your generosity. The Crazy Auction is the club's largest fundraiser and the donations from the auction help fund the members to attend both the Nebraska Section Meeting and the Annual SRM Meeting in Sacramento. Thanks once again!

UNL Range Management Club



## PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

Thanks to everyone that was able to attend the Section's annual meeting at North Platte in October. The meeting was well attended and quite informative. The 2014 meeting would not have happened without a lot of help from people behind the scenes. I want to send a special thank you to Jeff Nichols, Shelly Kelly, Angie Peterson and everyone else involved for planning, making contacts and handling many of the details for the meeting. Another highlight to the Section Conference was the field tour to the Kelly ranch near Sutherland to see results of their restoration project on the Birdwood Creek. Thanks to Dan and Shelly for hosting us on a beautiful October morning.

Managing Diversity is the theme for the 68<sup>th</sup> Annual SRM Meeting, Technical Training and Trade Show in Sacramento, California from January 31 to February 6, 2015. Registration is now open online at the website, <http://rangelands.org/sacramento2015/index.html>. There are several featured symposia, workshops and field tours planned and plenty of variety sure to peak most everyone's interest. The Nebraska Section is planning an evening meal on Monday, February 2 at Joe's Crab Shack on the Sacramento River water front and just 5 minutes from the Convention Center. I hope you can join us to visit California's diverse rangelands and enjoy reuniting with old acquaintances. Early bird registration closes December 12 so register today.

Again in 2015, the Nebraska Section will be sponsoring students to the High School Youth Forum to make presentations. Congratulations and good luck go to Trent Elsen of Miller with his presentation titled "Controlling and Identifying Noxious Weeds in Nebraska" and Kelsey Phillips of Mullen with her presentation titled "Creating Agritourism Opportunities through Habitat Management". They will represent the Nebraska Section in Sacramento.

I hope to see many of you in California.

Happy Trails!

Bob Broweleit



## NEBRASKA STATE RANGE JUDGING COMMITTEE – 2014

It's a wrap! The 2014 Area and State Range Judging Contests are all in the books. This has been another very successful season of Range Judging, thanks in a large measure to the Agencies that are the primary partners with the Nebraska Section Society for Range Management and the Nebraska State Range Judging Committee. Those being; the Nebraska Natural Resource Districts, the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service and the University of Nebraska at Lincoln Extension Service, all of whom spend a significant amount of time, human resources and frequently money to insure that the contests are well organized and effectively run. This year we also need to add a big thanks to the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture for hosting the registration, scoring and for providing educational programs while the scoring was being completed for the Awards Program. Volunteers from numerous other Agencies and groups provide the many workers that are critical for the success of this type of program, some of whom are members of the NE Section SRM while the majority of these volunteers are not. These volunteers work in the scoring rooms (a huge job!), act as Group Leaders and Station Judges for the Contests, as well as providing the technical expertise to set up and manage all aspects of these contests.

There were 1,275 participants in the 6 Area Range Judging Contests held across the state, with 403 participants at the 2014 Nebraska State Range Judging Contest held in the Curtis, NE area. This participation would not be possible without the support of the Agricultural Education instructors and FFA programs across the state. These individuals not only encourage their students to a level of interest in Range Judging and Range Management Education but also work with their school's administration to keep their range programs funded, including travel



and lodging. In short, without the Middle School and High School student's level of participation in the various contests it would be almost impossible to continue the program. These Educators deserve our thanks as well.

The 2015 Area and State Range Judging Contests are already in the planning stages. The 6 Area Contests will be held the second and third week of September, while the State Contest will be scheduled for the last week in September tentatively in Scotts Bluff County. If possible set aside these dates on your calendars. As noted, we need plenty of volunteers with a variety of past experience with the Range Judging process to make these contests work. Please help out if you can.

Finally, thanks to everyone who pitched in to make the 2014 Range Judging Program such a success! This is clearly a team effort and any and all contributions, at whatever level, are greatly appreciated by the local contest committees and the students and adults who participate in these programs. Thank you!

Daryl A. Cisney

2013 - 2014 Chair – Nebraska State Range Judging Committee

## **SHELLY KELLY (TAYLOR) RECEIVES RANGE SERVICE AWARD**

Shelly Kelly (Taylor) started her service in the range profession at an early age. She was raised on the family ranch near Taylor and attended high school at Burwell. She was active in FFA and participated in range judging in high school. In 2003 she attended the Range Youth camp at Halsey where she began to develop her desire to work in the range profession.

Following graduation from high school, Shelly started working for the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) as a range technician

doing rangeland analysis for the National Resource Inventory (NRI). She attended college at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln (UNL) for a year then transferred up to South Dakota State University (SDSU) to finish her range management degree. Shelly worked as a student intern for the NRCS at various locations in Nebraska through college, and full time as a Range Management Specialist at the North Platte Field Office from 2009 to 2014. She is currently the coordinator for the Sandhills Task Force and ranches with her husband Dan Kelly north of Sutherland.

Shelly has been very active in the Nebraska Section and at the parent Society level as a student and young professional. She was involved in the Range Clubs at UNL and SDSU and was an officer for the National Student Conclave.

She has served the Nebraska Section quite significantly in the area of youth education. Shelly was initially as a week- long crew boss at the Youth Range Camp for five years. She currently serves as the director of the Range Camp and has since 2010. She has served on the State Range Judging Committee since 2010 and currently is the Secretary. On the International level, Shelly has been the Chair for the Student Activities Committee. She assists in conducting the Society's High School Youth Forum. Her positive influence on young people interested in range management has been tremendous over the years.

Shelly is well respected by her peers and landowners for her knowledge of range management. She has worked with producers on many projects over the past several years including; livestock water developments, fencing, trees for windbreaks, grass seeding, cedar control and prescribed burning. She has been a strong advocate for the proper implementation of conservation practices on rangeland and prescribed grazing strategies.



Congratulations to Shelly and thank you for service she has provided. She has served the Section and contributed to the Profession significantly.

## **DO YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENED IN THE NEBRASKA SECTION.....**

### **Five Years Ago (Early 2009)**

The Nebraska Section officers were: Mary Reece, President; Dana Larsen, Past President; Doug Whisenhunt, President Elect; Leslie Stewart-Phelps, Secretary/Treasurer; Jamie Hornickel, Newsletter Editor; Michael Croxen and Curtis Talbot were Council Members.

The 46<sup>th</sup> annual Nebraska Range Youth Camp was held at the 4-H camp near Halsey, NE June 8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>. Co-Directors of the Camp were Shelly (Taylor) Kelly, Daryl Cisney and Cindy Tusler. There were 32 campers for the week. The Top Camper was Kent Frickel of Atkinson, with Jonny Ference of Ord as the runner-up. The Top Crew, sponsored by KM Grain and Livestock from Sidney, was led by Brad Carlson.

The State Range Judging Contest was held at Ogallala, NE where there were 350 participants. The Top Individual in the Senior Division was Becky Frerichs of West Holt, and in the Junior Division, Johnny Ference of Ord. Mike Kozeal, Ag Ed Instructor at Ord was the Top Professional. Total participation in Area and Range Judging contests for 2009 was 1,329 participants.

Dana Larsen, State Grazing Lands Specialist for NRCS, moved to Ogden Utah for another position with NRCS. Marcy Hunter took on the position of Coordinator for the Nebraska Grazing Lands Coalition. Technicians for NGLC were Kort Kemp of Hays Center and Justin Frick of Yankton, SD.

### **(Late 2009)**

The Nebraska Section officers were: Doug Whisenhunt, President; Mary Reece, Past President; Michael Croxen, President Elect; Leslie Stewart-Phelps, Secretary/Treasurer; Jamie Hornickel,

Newsletter Editor; Curtis Talbot and Nick Simonson were Council Members.

The Nebraska Section annual meeting was held October 20<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> at Sidney, NE. The theme for the meeting was "The Value of Grassroots Conservation Partnerships – Pards". The meeting was organized by Doug Whisenhunt, Kristin Miller, Leslie Stewart-Phelps and Mary Reece.

The NE Section Range Management Service Award was presented to the Nebraska Grazing Lands Coalition (NGLC). The Nebraska Rangeman's award was presented to the Jim and Becky Carr of the Carr Ranch. The Nebraska Section scholarships were presented to Michelle Miller of Minatare, NE and Daniel Frank of Bassett, NE. Two Special Awards of Merit were presented by the NE Section: Doug Whisenhunt, NRCS, for his efforts in promoting prescribed fire for maintaining and reclaiming Nebraska rangeland, and Kathy Clark, Twin Platte NRD Secretary located in the North Platte NRCS office for many years of service toward the registration and organization of the Nebraska Range Youth Camp.

Courney Doremus of Polk, NE was the top High School Youth Forum presenter for the NE Section with her talk on the "Floods of Nebraska". David Kennedy followed up with his presentation titled "Invasive Species". Both went on to present at the International meetings held in Denver CO.

### **Ten Years Ago (Early 2004)**

The Nebraska Section officers were: Scott Willet, President; Teri Edeal, Past President; Al Steuter, President Elect; Leslie Stewart-Phelps, Secretary/Treasurer; Sherry Connot, Newsletter Editor; Chuck Butterfield and Jerry Volesky were Council members.

The Nebraska Section's summer tour was held at the Nebraska National Forest-Bessey Unit near Halsey. Ponderosa pine thinning and eastern red cedar control efforts were observed along with the results of a prescribed burn conducted that



spring. The highlight of the meeting was the dedication of the Don Cox memorial grass display on the east wall of the 4-H lodge ballroom. A large group was in attendance including many of Don's family.

The Nebraska Grazing Conference was held in Kearney where around 180 people attended.

The Nebraska Section's 41<sup>st</sup> annual Range Youth Camp was held June 14-18 at the NE State 4-H Camp near Halsey. The overall top camper was Nick Horn of Red Cloud. The second place camper and also the top first year camper was Jessica Milby of Fullerton.

#### **(Late 2004)**

The Nebraska Section officers were: Al Steuter, President; Scott Willet, Past President; Chuck Butterfield, President Elect; Leslie Stewart-Phelps, Secretary/Treasurer; Sherry Connot, Newsletter Editor; Jerry Volesky and Dana Larsen were Council members.

The Nebraska Section meeting was held at Ainsworth on October 7 with over 120 people attending the afternoon session. The theme of the meeting focused on the social and technical infrastructure supporting prescribed burning in Nebraska.

The 2004 NE SRM award recipients were Chris Helzer and Terry and Cheri Enfield. Chris was presented the "Rangeman's Award". He is employed by the Nature Conservancy. The Enfield's' who ranch near Arthur, were presented the "Range Service Award"

Two Scholarships were presented to college students. The first went to Jamie Eberly of Nenzel who attended Chadron State College. The second was awarded to Michael Gillilan of Hardy, NE who attended UNL.

Two students gave presentations for the High School Youth Forum at the meeting in Ainsworth. Jessica Milby of Fullerton and Autumn Kadavy of East

Butler high school went on to represent NE at the international meetings in Ft. Worth, Texas.

The State Range Judging contest was held in Gosper County on September 29. There were 335 participants.

Membership in the Nebraska Section was 136.

#### **Twenty Years Ago (Early 1994)**

The Nebraska Section Officers were: James O'Rourke, President; John Gross, President Elect; Sheila R.V. Luoma, Past President; Catherine Mills, Secretary/Treasurer; Mary Schrader, Newsletter Editor; Bill Carhart and Dave Cook were Council Members.

The Nebraska State Envirothon was held May 7 at the Nebraska National Forest at Halsey. Norris high school was the champion over eleven other teams from across the state. The Nebraska Section has been a contributing sponsor of the envirothon with the leadership of Chuck Butterfield.

The 31<sup>st</sup> Nebraska Range Youth Camp was held at the Halsey 4-H Camp. The top ranch crew was sponsored by the Diamond Bar Ranch Co. It consisted of Crew boss, Russ Engel, campers; Kelly Reineke, Jenny Kaslan, Tami Buchta, Mike Beard, Levi Fisher, Jason Smith, Keith Byerly and Dustin Ladenburger. The top three individuals of the camp were Jaclyn Wilson, Bryce Wadas, and Sara Leistritz.

The National Biological Survey (NBS), a new agency of the U.S. Government was introduced. It is a system for gathering information about the natural world, analyzing and interpreting the information and formulating recommendations for future "wise use" of natural resources. The NBS became a part of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service within the Department of the Interior.

#### **(Late 1994)**

The Nebraska Section Officers were: John Gross, President; Bill Carhart, President Elect; James O'Rourke, Past President; Catherine Mills,



Secretary/Treasurer; Mary Schrader, Newsletter Editor; Dave Cook and Daryl Cisney were Council Members.

The Nebraska Section along with the South Dakota and Wyoming Sections held a joint annual meeting in Hot Springs, SD on September 29-30 and October 1, 1994. The theme for the meeting was "The Future of Great Plains Rangelands – Building on Experience". Over 350 people attended. A tour of the 777 ranch and their bison operation started off the meeting. One of the highlights of the meeting was a presentation by the Poppers on the "Buffalo Commons" concept. The meeting ended with a tour of the Wild Horse Sanctuary of Dayton Hyde southwest of Hot Springs.

The Nebraska Section awarded Bruce and Debra Fischer of the Sunnyslope Ranch southwest of Valentine with the Excellence in Range Management Award. Mary Schrader of Benkelman received the Range Service Award. Jennifer Hoffmann and Brenda Younkin, both of UNL, were awarded \$500 scholarships by the Nebraska Section.

Kimberli Stine was selected as the State Range Management Specialist for the USDA-NRCS in Nebraska.

The state range Judging contest was held October 5, 1994 at Deb and Dave Knight's ranch near Keystone, Nebraska. There were 274 participants that took part that day.

### **Thirty Years Ago (Early 1984)**

The Nebraska Section Officers were: Pat Reece, President; Nadine Bishop, President Elect; Mick Helberg, Past President; Lowell Moser Secretary/Treasurer; Roger Wittie, Newsletter Editor; Gene Lehnert and Brent Lathrop were Council Members.

The 37<sup>th</sup> Annual International meeting of SRM was held in Rapid City, South Dakota, from February 12<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup>. The UNL – Range Plant I.D. Team placed 15<sup>th</sup> out of 22 teams. The team members were: Mary

Raymer (Reece), Kathy Huse, Lin Klein and Andi Mann. Susie Oldfather (Schuckert) was the team coach.

Jack Maddux of Wauneta was selected by the National Cattleman's Association as the "Cattle Businessman of the Year".

Alan Savory held two meetings at North Platte on Holistic Resource Management.

The 33<sup>rd</sup> annual International Land, Pasture and Range Judging contest was held near Oklahoma City, OK on May 2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup>.

The Nebraska section had 140 members, including 97 Regular, 30 Student, 1 Regular Sustaining, 3 Emeritus, 6 Life, and 3 Life Sustaining. Jim Stubbendieck recruited 8 new members including 5 ranches. The Nebraska Section Newsletter was mailed to 448 people.

The Nebraska Range Short course sponsored by the Nebraska Section and UNL was held at Chadron State College during June 18-22<sup>nd</sup>. There were 46 adult students with 15 of them being from the SCS.

The 21<sup>st</sup> annual Range Youth Camp was held at the Halsey 4-H Camp during June 11<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> with 54 youth in attendance. Kelly Reichman, Chappell, NE was the first place returning camper, Christine Doolittle, Amelia, NE and Jim Liermann, Amelia, NE were the top first year campers. The registration fee was \$40.

The Nebraska Section Summer meeting was held at the Gudmundsen Sandhills Research Center on August 16<sup>th</sup>. Jim Nichols was the meeting Chairman.

The Nebraska Range Management Cooperative Committee Joint Statement of Intent was signed by Governor Bob Kerry, Senior Administrators, Executive Secretaries, and Presidents of twelve agencies, organizations, and institutions.

### **(Late 1984)**

The Nebraska Section Officers were: Nadine Bishop, President; Steve Waller, President Elect; Pat



Reece, Past President; Daryl Cisney Secretary/Treasurer; Roger Wittie, Newsletter Editor; Gene Lehnert and Brent Lathrop were Council Members.

The Nebraska Section annual meeting was held in Kearney on November 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>. There were 107 people in attendance. Wayne and Byron Eatinger of Eatinger Cattle Company (Diamond Bar E Ranch) in Cherry County were presented the Nebraska Range Manager of the Year Award. Kimberli Stine of Burwell and Timothy Murphy of Franklin were awarded the \$250 Nebraska Section Scholarships.

There were 879 youth and adults participating in the Area and State Range Judging Contest. The State Contest was held on Saturday, September 29.

#### **Forty Years Ago (1974)**

The Nebraska Section Officers were: Gary Greder, President; Elmer Schrag, President Elect; Phil Rickey, Past President; Leonard Thye, Secretary/Treasurer, Larry Peterson, Newsletter Editor; Dean Higgans, Historian; Reed Hamilton and Peter Jensen were Council Members.

The 27<sup>th</sup> annual International meeting of SRM was held in Tucson, Arizona on February 3<sup>rd</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>. Don Clanton and Paul Guyer presented papers. James B. Runner of Ashby and John Buss of Brule participated in the Youth Forum.

Francis Colbert, Executive Secretary of the International SRM Office in Denver, died on April 11<sup>th</sup> of a heart attack. David A. Smith was hired as his replacement.

#### **Fifty Years Ago (1964)**

Dr. E. J. Dyksterhus retired following 30 years of dedicated service to SCS and the Forest Service. He was employed by the SCS as the Midwest Regional Range Conservationist. He was an early pioneer in the range site and range condition concept, and the use and management of natural grasslands. He was also instrumental in forming the Nebraska Section in 1953. Following his retirement he accepted a

professorship at Texas A&M.

**Historian Article Submitted By: Jeff Nichols**

#### **SUNDSTROM RANCH (CONTINUED)**

Today the Sundstrom Ranch continues as a cow-calf operation where they raise their own replacement heifers. The pastures, subdivided in recent years, each have their own fresh water source thanks to an extensive pipeline system more than 30,000 feet in length. The Sundstrom Family also has several pastures with stock dams to provide a backup source of water. Just by implementing a rotational grazing strategy, it is estimated that they have gained over 15% more carrying capacity. Significantly more grazing land has been opened up on their ranch through cedar tree removal projects.

The Sundstroms use their limited 61 acres of cropland to grow supplemental forage sorghum and alfalfa to diversify their forage base. They also utilize neighbor's corn stalks in the fall and winter. Several years ago, they acquired 90 formerly dryland acres that was seeded back to grass without going through any program. They have continued to keep it in grass and incorporate it into their grazing rotation, which elk also use. In the few areas where old roads or other open soil still exists, the Sundstroms like to feed hay there to get them stable and covered more quickly. In doing so on those steep hills, they observe their pastures catch more rainfall and have less runoff, especially as they leave more plant litter and grass height after grazing each pasture. They also realize that the grass plants have a healthier root system for enduring drought when cattle are not allowed to graze too much before being moved to another pasture. Naturally, the stronger roots better utilize soil moisture and provide more vigor in the grass plants.

The Sundstroms are good at finding ways to manage their livestock and grazing resources in an efficient and profitable manner. To feed less hay, they are phasing in more dormant season grazing, which works well the majority of winters. They also utilize the facilitating practices of wells, pipelines,



tanks, and cross fence to set up a grazing strategy that has improved their grasslands significantly in recent years. They also manage the timing of grazing, intensity, and periods of rest in their pastures to shift the plant species composition to a greater prominence of more productive grasses, such as big bluestem and sideoats grama. This has been accomplished in part by the installation of more than 6 miles of electric fence, much of which is high tensile. The Sundstroms have cleared the invasive eastern red cedar trees from all accessible grassland areas to increase the acres available for grazing, while at the same time improving wildlife habitat for mule deer, turkey, at least five coveys of quail and non-game grassland birds as well.

The Sundstroms strive to maximize pounds of beef per acre while improving forage harvest efficiency through their rotational grazing strategy, and by selecting genetics for their cow herd that are well suited to the rough hills of southeast Lincoln County. They have adjusted their calving dates to May-June to take advantage of green grass, reduce hay feeding expense, and minimize labor requirements during calving. The cows are viewed as income producers for the calves they produce, but also as tools to improve the soil, water, plant, and wildlife resources on the ranch. All resources are effectively considered in a systems approach to manage as efficiently as possible the grasslands, labor, livestock, and economics of the operation.

Russ and Neil Sundstrom own and operate a land clearing service in addition to ranching. They specialize in mechanical removal of invasive cedar trees from the uplands in southeast Lincoln County. In addition to delivering good results to their clients, they also learn new ideas from producers they work with in the land clearing business. The Sundstroms have implemented some of those ideas on their ranch. They often find there is an optimum that works better than the maximum. For example, they do not always remove cedar trees in the steepest draws and they recognize that male cedar trees can

be left behind for wind protection with no risk of spreading small trees. Russ and Neil therefore emphasize tree clearing on the most productive grazing acres.

The Sundstrom's stewardship goes beyond the normal contracted service of land clearing. They share with clients their experience in grazing management, noxious weed control, long term planning for future infestations, erosion prevention and protection, various economic considerations, and prescribed burning preparation. Russ has served as a burn boss for local burns, including on his own home pastures. Another burn is planned soon on his Mom's pasture. They have conducted patch burns for wildlife which has provided multiple benefits, as well as burns for cedar control, pile disposal, and to have an impact on reducing cool season invaders such as smooth brome. The Sundstrom's have effectively worked with, and promoted, state / federal programs to assist landowners with cedar encroachment issues, cross fencing and water placement.

Further evidence of the Sundstrom's commitment to resource management within their community is that Russ serves as a tireless ambassador for the benefits of rangeland management to other landowners who may question or are unsure of adopting new grazing philosophies and cedar tree management. It is not uncommon for Russ to load up another landowner on a Sunday afternoon and take them on a tour of recent prescribed burns or cedar tree removal efforts to explain the benefits in a way that only a trusted landowner can. He serves as a valuable liaison between conservation agencies and the people on the land.

In 2009 the Sundstrom Family hosted a large tour on their ranch that highlighted the grazing management and cedar control work they have accomplished with help from cooperating agencies. Many people attended the tour, including fellow members of the Loess Canyon Rangeland Alliance, a



landowner driven conservation group in Lincoln County. These examples of leadership, stewardship, and invasive species management are reasons why the Broken Box Ranch and the Russ Sundstrom Family are presented the Nebraska Section Society for Range Management Rangeman's Award.

**2015 RANGE YOUTH CAMP  
IS SCHEDULED FOR  
JUNE 8-12, 2015**



DECEMBER 11, 2014

