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# Nebraska Section Society for Range Management Newsletter



**Message from the President** by Brad Schick

Greetings!

Welcome to 2022! Everyone I talk to feels like 2021 went by like a whirlwind and I certainly agree.

I would like to thank all of you involved with the Nebraska Section of SRM for all that you do and your support. Without our editors, committee members, volunteers, and council members, nothing we do would be possible. It feels like there have been a lot of changes since I joined SRM in 2014. As some members have passed on to greener pastures and others have retired from roles that were integral in SRM, I believe our section is in need of some resurgence. To be completely honest, I don't know what that looks like going forward, nor do I think that one person has the

experience or wisdom to take on that task. However, what I would like to do is find a way to stay better connected during this continued frustrating time in our world where face-to-face interactions are difficult to come by. I believe the foundation for SRM is relationships where we learn from one another and investigate and challenge the science, practices, and pseudo-science. Ultimately, we want what's best for rangelands and grasslands, livestock, the people that are caretakers, and the ecosystem that is formed as a result.

As most know, the 75th Annual SRM Meeting takes place in Albuquerque, NM in person February 6-10. There will be a Virtual-Only option February 21-25, 2022.

This year's theme is "Sustainability Through Culture and Innovation". I encourage everyone to attend at least the virtual option later in February.

In closing, I would like everyone to know that the continuing education committee approved our Nebraska Section, 2021 Annual Meeting, for 4 CEUs (includes 1 for an SRM sponsored event) if you attended the presentations. If you need those credits, please submit them as you have done so in the past. Congratulations to those who received awards and to those elected this past fall from our Section. Thank you all for your support of our section!

Thank you,

**Brad**

**Historian's Report** by Jeff Nichols

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

**Five Years Ago (2017)**

The Nebraska Section officers were: Jeff Nichols, President; Karla Jenkins, Past President; Anthony Perlinski, President Elect; Angie Petersen, Secretary-Treasurer; Laura Rubeck, Newsletter Editor; Mitch Stephenson and Lance Schutte were Council members.

The 70<sup>th</sup> annual International meeting for the Society for Range

Management were held at St. George, Utah. The Nebraska Section was well represented, and several members were recognized with awards. Jerry Volesky, Extension Range Specialist with the University of Nebraska West Central Research and Extension Center at North Platte was presented with the prestigious SRM Fellow Award. Jerry was the tenth member to receive that award over the history of the NE Section. Nadine Bishop, NRCS State Range Management Specialist (retired), of Imperial was presented the "NRCS Rangeland Conservation-

ist of the Year" award. Anthony Perlinski, Range instructor from Chadron State College was elected the Chair-elect of the Advisory Council for SRM. Cade Francis of Imperial won fifth place in the High School Youth Forum presentations. Kacey VanWinkle of Palmer was elected the HSYF president for the 2017-18 year.

**Ten Years Ago (2012)**

The Nebraska Section officers were: Curtis Talbot, President; Michael Croxson, Past President;

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## PHOTO FOCUS Dung Beetles: A Measure of Range Health

article from "Nebraska Grass Whisper Newsletter" contributed by Bob Broweleit, author unknown



Dung beetle

As a measure of soil health, the dung beetle has a very "crappy" and important job on the range. Manure breakdown aids in the resumption of vegetative growth under which the pat landed. Manure decomposition also destroys the environment where pests lay their eggs, and ultimately puts money back in the producer's pocket.

Older research states that a healthy dung beetle population can also reduce populations of horn flies by 95% and that internal parasites can be reduced by as much as 9%. Data from the mid-2000s suggest that dung beetles saved U.S. farmers and ranchers \$380 million dollars annually. We can all vogue that these cost savings have further increased with the increased pesticide and fertilizer costs over the years.

Dung beetles are also environmental stewards of the land. Breakdown and burial of the manure pat aids in the recycling of nitrogen back into the soil rather than letting it escape into the atmosphere. This natural fertilizer application and burying of the dung also aerates the soil.

Aeration of the soil reduces the amount of runoff from the soil allowing rangelands to use rain more efficiently and thus increase forage production.

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## Nebraska will be well represented at the 2022 High School Youth Forum

Mary Reece, Co-Director of the SRM High School Youth Forum

3 high school students from across Nebraska will join 15 other youth from 8 other Sections in Albuquerque, New Mexico February 6 - 10, 2022. Chancey Hoblyn-Bittner will return as the High School Youth Forum President. She was selected to return as President when attending the Denver SRM Conference in 2020. She is a senior at Ansley Public Schools, she will have a great opportunity to lead and moderate the Forum activities.

The two new Nebraska delegates are Seth McMillan and Rebecca Reece. Both students will give range related presentations on Tuesday in the Cimmaron Room in the Albuquerque Convention Cen-

ter. Please come support our excellent high school students from Nebraska. Lisa McMillan will chaperone the Nebraska students. We have an anonymous donor helping with travel costs for the Forum and are very grateful. We will have a follow up article regarding the 2022 Forum in the next newsletter.

Thank you Nebraska Section for continuing to have range youth education as a priority.

*Mary Reece*



## THANK YOU

Hello, my name is Sam McMillan from Milburn, I am excited to represent our section at the national High School Youth Forum (HSYF) meeting in Albuquerque NM.

I have 2 older siblings a brother and a sister, I was raised on our ranch that has been in our family since 1880. I like to participate in FFA, 4-H, and high school sports including football and wrestling. I am a junior at Anselmo-Merna High School, there are 14 kids in my class.

I was chosen to participate in the 55th annual HSYF as one of two delegates by giving my presentation titled "Blowouts, Friend or Foe?". In our section, I have participated in Youth Range

Camp for 2 years and have competed in multiple district and state range judging contests.

After I graduate high school, I plan to join the Army National Guard followed by college, and my main goal is to return to our family ranch.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity, and I look forward to meeting new people from all around the country at the meeting, I am interested in seeing and learning about the livestock production, and especially the plants including the types of cacti that grow on the rangelands in New Mexico.

*Sam McMillan*

## Milby Recognized as Outstanding Young Range Professional by Laura Rubeck

Jess Milby, of North Platte, Nebraska was recently awarded the 2021 *Outstanding Young Range Professional Award* at the Society for Range Management's (SRM) Nebraska State Section Meeting. This award recognizes contributions of younger range professionals in the advancement of the art and science of rangeland management.

Milby began her career in Rangeland Management in 2004 as a high school student competing in land and range judging at Range Camp, where she was recognized as a top student. She went on to graduate from Fullerton High School and begin her undergraduate career in 2005 at the University of Nebraska - Lincoln. As an undergrad, she was an active member of the Range Management Club, serving as president, vice-president, and treasurer; having taken home several awards, including a combination award for plant identification and range management exam. An honor only she has achieved. Milby graduated with a MS degree in 2012, her thesis titled "Ecophysiological Responses of Herbaceous Plants to the Presence or Absence of *Amorpha canescens* in a Nebraska Sandhills grassland." She began her work at the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in

North Platte, assisting producers manage their farms and ranches and instilling new conservation methods. During this time she began working with Range Camp and State Rangeland Judging, where she played an instrumental role serving contests and activities for youth across Nebraska. Milby currently participates in the Society of Range Management, serving and volunteering on committees and attending both state and national meetings.

Milby is currently a Research Technologist within the University of Nebraska - Lincoln at the West Central Research and Extension Center, in North Platte, where she has aided numerous research projects aimed in the management of rangeland resources. She recently assisted publication of a new plant identification book, "*Legumes of the Great Plains*," alongside other publications including: *Common Grasses*, *Common Forbs*, and *Shrubs of Nebraska*. Alongside this, she regularly assists in the delivery of the Nebraska Range Short Course, several tours, extension workshops, and presentations throughout the year. Milby's efforts, both in her career and through her volunteer work, has demonstrated a long-term commitment to both the Nebraska Section and National SRM society.



SRM 2021 Outstanding Young Range Professional Award recipient, Jess Milby.

## 2021 State Range Judging Contest held in Cherry County by Laura Rubeck

**Teams from West Holt take top honors in the Senior while St. Paul led in the Junior Division**

**Lucas Olson, West Holt and Cody Burson, Garfield County take top individual honors.**

Valentine, Ne., September 28-29, 2021, ~ Two hundred and ninety-seven high school students and teachers from 42 schools from across Nebraska visited Cherry County this fall to test their knowledge of rangeland management during the 66<sup>th</sup> Annual Nebraska State Range Judging Contest.

Each fall, students enrolled in agriculture or natural resources classes compete for top honors in range judging contests. Contestants compete as individuals and as teams in either the Junior or Senior Division. Six area contests are held in mid to late September in

addition to the State contest. The contests are sponsored by the Nebraska Section Society for Range Management. Co-sponsors include Nebraska Extension, Natural Resources Districts (NRD), and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Volunteers from these and other natural resource agencies and groups assist local committees with organizing and conducting the contests. Over the last 10 years, attendance at area contests has averaged 1,100 students.

Range Judging Contests test the participants' skills and knowledge of plant identification, ecological site identification and composition, rangeland conservation and grazing management. While studying for range judging competitions, students learn about one of Nebraska's major land uses. Rangelands cover nearly 50% of Nebraska and approximately 60% of the United States. Even if these young contest participants do not pursue a career in rangeland or natural resource man-

agement, they will gain an understanding of a major natural resource that will be remembered throughout their lifetimes.

The Junior Division included 142 individuals and 38 teams. Cody Burson from Burwell High School took first place individual honors in the Junior Division. Adam Knapp, Ord, placed second; Bobbi Guggenmos, Wheeler Central, placed third; and Cody Kahl, Chadron, placed fourth. Members of the first-place junior team from St. Paul are Sam Wells, Abby Hirschman, Gracie Ackles and Sidney Gawrych. Members of the second-place junior team from Ord are Adam Knapp, Will Skibinski, Riley Ladwig and Ethan Wadas. Members of the third-place junior team from Sargent are Melissa Slagle, Tallin Schauda, Sarah Riddle and Grant Ottun. Members of the fourth-place junior team from Stuart are Gracie Kaup, Addie Ketteler, Hunter Tubbs and Will Paxton.

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## Photo Focus continued from page 2

Certain species of dung beetles prefer certain types of animal manure and are drawn to manure by the odor. The liquid component of the manure is what provides nutrients to the beetle. If a manure pat remains untouched 2-3 days after it was dropped, the dung beetle population in that range environment is struggling. Effectiveness and prevalence of the dung beetle is correlated to stocking density. Overgrazed paddocks see a reduction in dung beetles.

In conclusion, dung beetles are a measure of soil well-being. Careful grazing management promotes dung beetle population growth. A healthy dung beetle population recycles nitrogen back into the soil, aerates the soil, increases forage production, and controls pests. The dung beetle is the quiet hero of the range.

*Editor's Note: If you happen to know the author, please contact Emma at [embarne@nppd.com](mailto:embarne@nppd.com) so they can be recognized in our next newsletter.*

## 2021 State Range Judging Contest continued from page 3

The Senior Division included 127 individuals and 36 teams. Lucas Olson from West Holt High School took first place individual honors in the Senior Division. Luke Kahl, Chadron, placed second; Sadie Jarecke, West Holt, and Ryan Gabriel, Ord, placed third; and Garrett Schneider, Sargent, placed fourth. Members of the first-place senior team from West Holt are Lucas Olson, Sadie Jarecke,

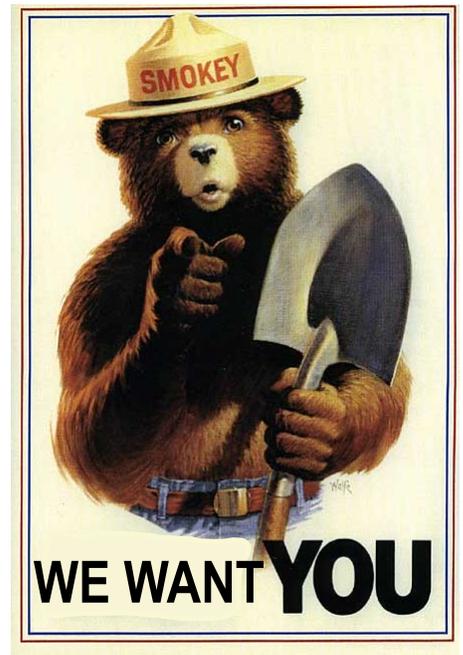
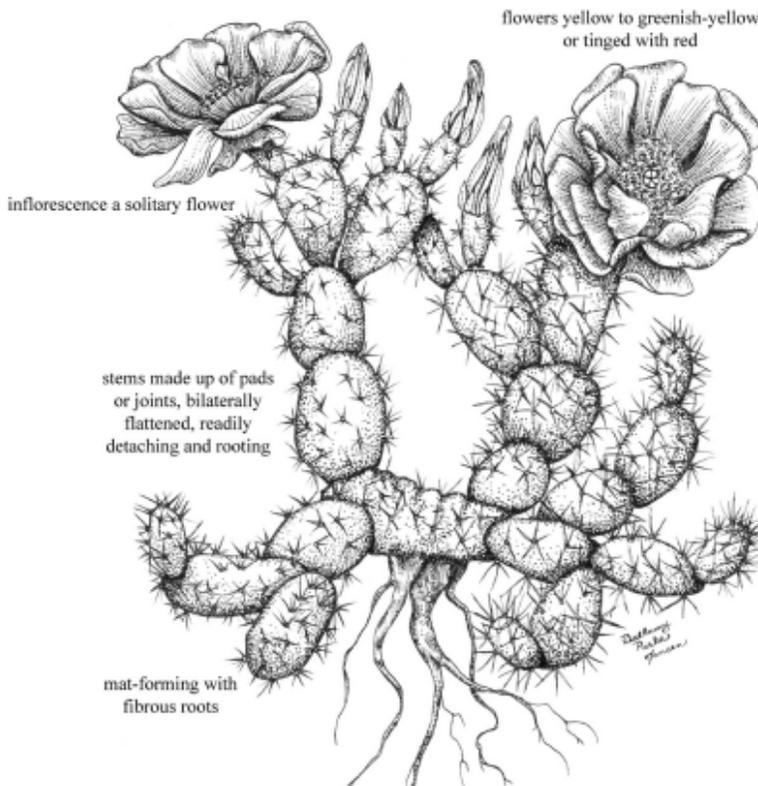
Isaac Pistulka and EmiLee Walnofer. Members of the second place Ord team are Ryan Gabriel, Ryder Reineke, Ashton Key and Makayla Wray. The third place Burwell team includes Cooper Philips, Ethan Joy, Devin Konicek and Hayes Jensen. Members of the fourth-place senior team from St. Paul are Nick Busse, Kaleb Baker, Madison Hirschman and Ben Feeken.

Twenty-eight adults also participated in the contest. Dennis Mottl, Ag-Ed instructor from Palmer High School placed first in the adult competition. Additional contest information is available on the Nebraska Section, SRM website:

<http://www.nesrm.org/RangeJudging.html>.

## Range Plant ID Pop Quiz

Can you identify this Nebraska range plant? Bonus points for scientific name, life span, origin, and growth form! **Answers on page 5.**



## On the Nebraska Section SRM Council Board!

If you are interested in joining the Nebraska SRM Section Council Board, contact Committee Chairman, Bob Browleit, at (308) 240-0420 or [bentbarc@gmail.com](mailto:bentbarc@gmail.com).

## Historian's Report continued from page 1

Jon Soper, President Elect; Leslie Stewart-Phelps transitioning to Angie Petersen, Secretary/Treasurer; Kristin Miller, Newsletter Editor; Cindy Tusler and Bob Browleit were Council Members.

The International meetings for the Society for Range Management was held at Spokane, WA on January 29 through February 1, 2012. The meeting theme was "Lessons from the Past - Strategies for the Future". Nebraska had a good showing at the meeting despite travel budget limitations.

The High School Youth Forum representatives from the NE Section placed very well. Laura Gorecki from Farwell placed 4<sup>th</sup> with her presentation "Hay, It's What's for Dinner" and Cassidy Linabery from Valentine placed 5<sup>th</sup> with her presentation titled "Diversity of Cherry County". Teyvyn Baldwin from Mitchell also presented on "Sainfoin- A New Solution".

At the SRM meeting in Spokane, Curtis Talbot was elected as the Chair - Elect of the Advisory Council for a two-year term. Kristin (Miller) Dickinson was presented the Outstanding Young Range Professional Award at the Societies Honor Awards Ceremony. UNL student Jeanna (Jenkins) Boland, was elected the 2012/13 Reporter and Katie Whalen was elected as Secretary for the Student Conclave. There were five graduate students from UNL who made presentations on their graduate research projects.

### Twenty Years Ago (2002)

The Nebraska Section officers were: Walt Schacht, President; Lora O'Rourke, Past President; Teri Edeal, President Elect; Bob Sprentall, Secretary/Treasurer; Sherry Connot, Newsletter Editor; Scott Willet and Al Steuter were Council members.

The 55<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Society for Range Management was held in Kansas City from February 14<sup>th</sup> through the 19<sup>th</sup>. The Nebraska Section was well represented with 75 people attending the Section dinner.

The High School Youth Forum participants

that represented the Nebraska Section were Farris Williams and James Winchester. Joye Kreycik, who won the speaking contest in Hawaii the previous year, returned to present in Kansas City at the Membership Awards Ceremony.

Students from Chadron State College participated in the public speaking, undergraduate Range Management Exam (URME) and Plant ID contest. In the speaking contest, Kelli Carr of Burwell placed second and Miranda Kujath of Fairbury placed seventh. Chadron placed third in the College Display Contest.

Seven students from UNL also attended the meetings and participated in the undergraduate contests. Kristin Nollette of Nenzel placed 14<sup>th</sup> in the URME contest and the team placed tenth.

### Thirty Years Ago (1992)

The Nebraska Section Officers were: Catherine Mills, President; Sheila (Valasek) Luoma, President Elect; Cort Dewing, Past President; Daryl Cisney, Secretary Treasurer; Mary Schrader, Newsletter Editor; and James O'Rourke and John Gross were Council Members.

Chadron State College signed a cooperative agreement with the University of Nebraska - Lincoln where a student could obtain a degree in range management from Chadron by attending two or three years at Chadron State and one or two years at UNL.

### Forty Years Ago (1982)

The Nebraska Section officers were: Jim Stubbendieck, President; Jim Emal, Past President; Mick Helberg, President Elect; Lowell Moser, Secretary- Treasurer; Steve Waller, Newsletter Editor; George Chavez and Irene Graves were Council members.

The international SRM meeting was held in Calgary Canada, with 18 from Nebraska in attendance. The UNL Plant ID team placed 10<sup>th</sup> in the contest.

Jim Stubbendieck referred to Treasurer Lowell Moser's economic policies for the section as "Mosernomics." The long-term ramifications of the plan have not been well documented, but there must be some.

### Seventy Years Ago (1952)

The Nebraska Section of the American Society of Range Management organizational meeting was held at Fort Robinson. The membership fee was set at one dollar as stated in a motion by Sid Salzman.

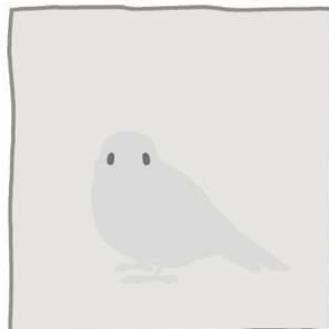
Snow Bunting



Rain Bunting



Fog Bunting



Wind Bunting

