



## NE Section Council

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**Past President:**  
Laura Rubeck

**Council Members:**  
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Wyatt Kirwan

**Secretary-Treasurer:**  
Angie Peterson

**Newsletter Editor:**  
Emma Barnett

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# Nebraska Section Society for Range Management Newsletter



## BIG NEWS! The Nebraska IYRP Committee Gains Support from Nebraska Volleyball Coach John Cook by Bob Broweleit

University of Nebraska Volleyball Coach, John Cook has agreed to appear on film, with his horse, and record promo about the importance of Nebraska's grasslands. This will be on a pro bono basis and will happen next summer.

The IYRP committee is now embarking on a capital campaign to raise the funds needed to spread the word. We already have donors and are starting a \$1,000 seed money donor list for those getting in on the ground floor of our Grassland Advocacy Initiative.

If you know ranches and businesses that would be interested in supporting this effort, a tax-deductible donation can be made to the Nebraska Grazing

Lands Coalition. You can tell your potential supporters that if they donate \$1000, we will leverage it 100-fold with our goal of one million dollars to fund Nebraska IYRP projects including the media blitz featuring Coach Cook.

Contact Bob Broweleit for more information. [bentbarc@gmail.com](mailto:bentbarc@gmail.com), (308)240-0420



## President's Corner by Kyle Schumacher, President

As I begin my term as president, I am taking a moment to consider how our section wants to grow over the next few years and next few decades. My one-year term could seemingly not amount to any drastic changes in pursuit of the section's long term goals. However, it is humbling that this group that has gifted me so many opportunities and friendships has been built upon 69 other people's one-year term... and Bob Broweleit's two-year term (he deserves another thank you for that). It is my greatest desire for my term to continue to nudge and steer our group—with everyone's help—toward "promoting the application, interest and knowledge concerning the management of grazing lands and their inherent resources in the State of Nebraska." (NESRM Constitution).

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## Historian's Report by Jeff Nichols, Section Historian

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

#### Five Years Ago (2019)

The Nebraska Section officers were: Lance Schutte, President; Mitch Stephenson, Past President; Jack Arterburn, President Elect; Angie Peterson, Secretary-Treasurer; Laura Ruback and Amanda Hefner, Co- Newsletter Editors; Brad Schick and Ben Beckman were Council members.

The 64th annual year of range judging in Nebraska wrapped up with 1272 participants at the six area contests and 512 participants at the state contest held in Holt County. The top senior individual and overall grand champion was Sheridan Wilson from Arthur County. The top junior individual was Lucas Olson from West Holt.

The Nebraska Section SRM annual meeting was held October 22nd-24th at the USDA-MARC facility near Clay Center. The Theme for the meeting was "Building Rangeland Resilience in the Rangeland / Farmland Interface". The meeting was organized by Lance Schutte.

The Nebraska Section SRM Range Management Service Award was presented to Dr. Jerry Volesky, Range and Forage Specialist with the University of Nebraska at the West Central Research and Extension Center at North Platte.

The Outstanding Young Range Professional award was presented to Jack Arterburn. At the time Jack was with UNL Beef Systems Extension in northwest Nebraska.

The Nebraska Section SRM Rangeman's Award was presented to the Choquette Family Ranch, James and JT Choquette of Up-land, NE.

Two undergraduate scholarships were award-

ed. Lindsey VanderMay from Chadron State College and Asha Scheideler from the University of Nebraska- Lincoln.

Long time friend of the NE Section, Jack Maddux passed away at the age of 87. Jack was president of the NE Section in 1990, recipient of the Rangeman's award in 1987, faithful and significant contributor to the ranching/beef cattle industry in Nebraska, and third generation rancher, along with his wife Carol, of the Maddux Cattle Company, Wauneta, NE.

#### Ten Years Ago (2014)

The Nebraska Section officers were: Bob Broweleit, President; Jon Soper, Past President; Karla Jenkins, President Elect; Angie Petersen, Secretary-Treasurer; Shelia Luoma, Newsletter Editor; Jeff Nichols and Anthony Perlinski were Council members.

The Nebraska Section annual meeting was held October 7th-9th at North Platte, NE. The meeting was organized by Bob Broweleit.

The Nebraska Section Range Management Service Award was presented to Shelly Kelly (Taylor). The Rangeman's Award was presented to the Sundstrom family of the Broken Box Ranch north of Moorefield, NE. The Section scholarship was presented to Lacey Clarke of Berwyn, NE.

There were 1,275 participants in the six Area Range Judging contests held across NE, with 403 participants at the State Contest held near Curtis, NE.

#### Twenty Years Ago (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 mem-

bers.

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.

#### Thirty Years Ago (1994)

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

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## President's Corner Continued...

I proposed three ways I'd like to see our section develop when I submitted my bio prior to my election:

1. Increase fundraising efforts and partner sponsorship for the Nebraska Section and the annual meeting.
2. Increase young professional membership and young producer involvement in NESRM.
3. Expand our list of policy and position statements to increase state level influence in policy decisions and legislation that locally affect our rangelands.

Item number one was partially accomplished this year with Nebraska Game & Parks Commission contributing a \$500 sponsorship toward the morning and afternoon refreshments at this year's meeting. It was a relatively simple process to make happen, and there is great potential to expand these efforts with tentative plans for next year's meeting. Exploring sponsorships at the state level will have some great lessons learned as we look toward planning for the 2027 parent society meeting. With some additional ideas from this, I think we can use this as a tool to boost membership and reach some of our goals for financial stability by the 2027 parent society meeting.

For item number two, Ryan Benjamin and Jacob Harvey are the two names at the top of my list to assist with these efforts. While I have been out of the loop a bit with the Young Professionals Conclave at the parent society level, I know they have great opportunities for travel scholarships and have had a big initiative to have liaisons to the section levels.

For item number three, I think the first and obvious task is to work with our IYRP committee to draft statements related to IYRP. Our section's last position statement issued was in 1997. Our rangelands and our knowledge of rangelands have certainly changed since then. However, our mission to recognize their value and advocate for them remains.

Next, a couple of action items...

Committee assignments: I want to accomplish two tasks with our committees. First, it is the assigned duties of the section president to appoint positions and committee chairs annually although chairs are generally not constrained to terms. With that, the only change currently is the appointment of Ben Beckman to the Nominations Committee and the appointment of myself and Ben to initiate the 2027 Planning Committee for now.

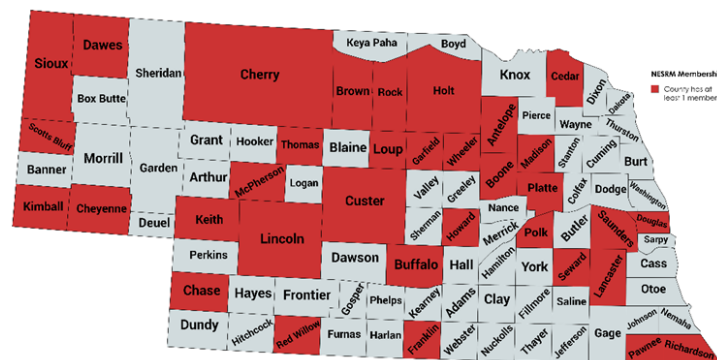
Secretary-Treasurer: Angie Petersen	Nominations Committee: Ben Beckman
Newsletter Editor: Emma Barnett	Producer Affairs Committee: Shelia Luoma
Annual Meeting Committee: Cheryl Dunn	Public Affairs Committee: <b>Vacant</b>
Awards Committee: Laura Rubeck	Range Judging Committee: Kristy King
Fund Raising Committee: <b>Vacant</b>	Range Research Committee: Mitch Stephenson
History Committee: Ben Beckman	Range Tour Committee: Mitch Stephenson
Information & Education Committee: Laura Rubeck	Range Youth Camp Committee: Shelly Kelly
Investments Committee: Kyle Schumacher	Scholarship Committee: Jess Milby
IYRP Committee: Bob Broweleit	Student Affairs Committee: Lisa McMillan and Mary Reece
Membership Committee: Lance Schutte	2027 Parent Society Meeting Planning Committee: Ben Beckman & Kyle Schumacher

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## President's Corner Continued...

Secondly, committee implies that more than one person is assisting in the committee duties. I feel it is appropriate to review with committee chairs their responsibilities in the by-laws and to explore participation from other members of our section so I will be reaching out to each one over the next few weeks. Our committees have been working well, so I see this more as a chance to see what each committee needs in order to continue to function.

We also have great professionals across our state who should be members of SRM. Even an addition of ten members to our section is significant. So here is my membership challenge: We have members representing 34 of Nebraska's counties. Can we recruit 10 new members AND fill in 6 more counties from this map? I'm looking forward to another great year of rangelands in Nebraska, and thank you for trusting me to lead this great section for the next year!



## Nebraska SRM Fall Meeting Review “Relying on Rangelands”

By: Kyle Schumacher, President

As usual, the Advisory Council convened the evening before the main meeting to go over the business meeting agenda, hear detailed updates and discussion points from committee chairs, and address potential business items to bring to the broader membership.

The Thursday morning business meeting highlighted all of our section's activities that have kept our membership busy. The International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists in 2026 and our section hosting the 2027 parent society meeting alone fill the section's plate. Add to that the youth activities, research, communications, finance management, and all of the other traditional committee activities, our section is very active.

Upon conclusion of our business meeting, we welcomed Eli Rogers as the single HSYF presenter for this year. He did a great job answering the judges' questions, and we look forward to having him represent our section at Spokane in February.

### “Relying on Rangelands”

While Norfolk, Nebraska is not considered a mecca for modern rangelands, it serves as a great focal point for two main threats to our state's rangeland resources: conversion to production agriculture and loss of ecosystem function due to changes in disturbance regimes. The second factor is more specifically the result of a lack of fires, woody encroachment, and invasion of non-native, cool-season grasses. These are not new threats to the livestock, wildlife, plants, people, and communities in our state that are “relying on rangelands”, but these two threats to our rangelands continue to be amplified and were the topics of this year's technical sessions.

Our morning session was a technical training put on by Ann Dvorak and Sarah Olimb from World Wildlife Fund. The training focused on WWF's 2024 Plowprint Report. After a review of the data and processes that go into developing the annual update, Ann and Sarah then broke our attendees up into mixed small groups of students, agency professionals, producers, researchers, and other members. The groups then worked through a “targeted” exercise to identify regional drivers of grassland conversion as well as regional drivers of grassland protection.

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## Nebraska SRM Fall Meeting Review “Relying on Rangelands” Continued...

Each small group also explored local norms and traditions that influence conversion of rangelands to alternate uses. Individuals in each group then shared ways they might be helping grasslands stay intact and ways they might be driving conversion. The training resulted in a broader understanding of the drivers of grassland conversion at multiple social levels, and it served as an example for the participants to recognize diverse views and the value of collaboration in protecting our grasslands.

The afternoon session was also a small group exercise lead by Jenny Prenosil (Ag Program Manager with Nebraska Game & Parks Commission), Ritch Nelson (Nebraska State Wildlife Biologist and Forester with USDA-NRCS), Gerry Steinauer (botanist with Nebraska Game & Parks Commission), Jacob Harvey (Barta Brothers Ranch Research Project Coordinator with University of Nebraska-Lincoln), and Ryan Benjamin (Beef Systems Extension Educator with University of Nebraska-Lincoln). The session’s focus was on identifying ways to improve resiliency of our grasslands for their diverse needs.

Jenny Prenosil kicked off the session by providing examples of why wildlife need heterogeneity in plant composition and structure at broad scales in our grassland landscapes to function. She challenged small groups to think about what wildlife might be positively or negatively impacted by the grazing methods they are using. Ritch Nelson then addressed paradigms in grazing management across the state. He proposed a more robust consideration of the NRCS’s prescribed grazing practice standard. He then asked small groups what biases they might have of “good” and “bad” grazing systems as well as types of grazing infrastructure. Gerry Steinauer continued the session by identifying successes he has seen in outcome-driven grazing plans. He proposed that many common grazing and haying methods on our state’s rangelands promote non-native plants and reduce native plant community resiliency long-term. He then provided examples from both small and large operations across the region where dormant season and spring/fall cattle grazing were used. These practices influenced wildlife use of the properties, reduced exotic species composition, and put cows on non-native, cool-season grasses when that forage had the highest crude protein content.

Jacob Harvey then introduced the idea that heterogeneity precedes habitat when considering wildlife use of rangelands. He showed some of the applications and challenges of managing with heterogeneity via the “Collaborative Adaptive Management” research study at UNL’s Barta Brothers Ranch. He presented data on both cattle and wildlife responses to their modified patch-burn grazing. He emphasized the importance of temporal shifts in conditions across spatial scales then asked groups what benefits might there be to maintaining a certain component of rangelands considered “poor condition” within entire operations. Ryan Benjamin then coupled Jacob’s points with exploring the costs associated with improving harvest use efficiency through fence and water development, costs associated with pasture preparation for prescribed fire, and the cost of trying to winter graze rangelands compared to other feeding options. He navigated through the long-term finances of making improvements to pasture and concluded the session by asking the small groups, “How much is your time worth?” and “At what scale do you have to operate to make different practices profitable?”

After a great no-host social and crazy auction by the UNL and CSC student chapters, the Nebraska Section took the opportunity to honor Miles Anderson and this year’s Outstanding Young Range Professional.

Friday morning’s field tour highlighted two stops. The first stop was on Phil Otten’s rangelands southeast of Stanton. These pastures represent some of the furthest east extensions of the Nebraska Sandhills. While they could easily be considered disjunct, these sand pastures are home to many different species of rare wildlife species and provide critical resources for local producers as well who still rely on pastures for forage in the area. In that light, a handful of greater-prairie chickens took flight seemingly on cue upon us entering the property. The second stop was at Wood Duck WMA managed by the Nebraska Game & Parks Commission. NGPC biologist Russ Hamer led the group on a hike into the 1,800 acre property to showcase how he uses range management tools like fire and grazing with wildlife as the top goal. He offered a unique perspective on managing public rangelands in the eastern third of the state. Thank you to both the Otten’s and NGPC for taking time to showcase their properties.

Thank you to all of our presenters who helped make this year’s meeting interactive and worthwhile for all the attendees!



## Anderson Recognized as Outstanding Young Range Professional

By: Laura Rubeck, Awards Committee Chair

The Nebraska Society for Range Management is proud to announce Miles Anderson as the recipient of the 2024 Outstanding Young Range Professional Award. This honor recognizes individuals under 40 who have made significant contributions to range management in Nebraska. Miles's expertise, leadership, and dedication to sustainable land stewardship exemplify the spirit of this award.

Raised on a diversified farm near Norfolk, Nebraska, Miles developed a deep connection to agriculture.

After earning an Associates Degree in Agriculture from Northeast Community College and a Bachelor's Degree in Grazing Livestock Systems from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Miles began his career at the Twin Platte NRD as a Range Technician with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). He quickly became known for his ability to work with landowners and partners to develop grazing systems, water facilities, and cross-fencing solutions. His efforts helped address complex range resource challenges while balancing forage availability with livestock nutritional needs.

Currently a Resource Conservationist in Pierce, Miles is recognized as the "go-to" expert on grazing issues in northeast Nebraska. He works with landowners on invasive species control, native vegetation restoration, and sustainable grazing practices. His commitment to conservation extends to his role in the NRCS "Cultivating Future Leaders Program," enhancing his ability to influence the future of conservation.

A dedicated member of the Nebraska Section of the Society for Range Management (SRM) since 2016, Miles has been actively involved in range judging, youth education, and leading Area 5 Range Judging contests. He also contributed to the 2018 SRM tour at the Viersen Ranch.

Outside of his NRCS work, Miles continues to manage the grazing program on his family's farm, Anderson Spot Farms, and is committed to maintaining soil and crop health. His steady, approachable demeanor and integrity make him a valued partner and mentor in the range management community.

Miles Anderson's passion for range management, dedication to land conservation, and commitment to educating others make him a deserving recipient of the 2024 Outstanding Young Range Professional Award. Please join us in congratulating Miles on this well-deserved recognition.



Miles Anderson receiving the 2024 Outstanding Young Range Professional award at Divots Conference Center in Norfolk

## International Year of Rangelands Committee Developing Strategic Plan

By: Bob Broweleit, IYRP Committee Chair



Nebraska Section - Society for Range Management's committee to promote the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists, 2026 (IYRP) met recently to strategize our approach for achieving our primary goal.

The primary goal we developed is: **Educate and engage the people of Nebraska concerning the value of rangelands as an economic and natural resource base of Nebraska and the world, ultimately creating an informed population that is involved in policy decision-making.**

We are focused on using creative forms of outreach to connect with target audiences. Recently, we have initiated a working relationship with Vivayic, a marketing and learning solutions provider. On Nov 12 and 13, Vivayic facilitated strategic planning sessions with the

committee to map a framework of actionable strategy to meet our goal. The committee submitted many great ideas to reach our primary audiences. Vivayic will be providing a summary of the strategic ideas that will form an action plan to guide our efforts.

The committee is seeking additional members with a grassland passion that would share their expertise to help us reach our goal. Please contact Bob Broweleit at [bentbarc@gmail.com](mailto:bentbarc@gmail.com) with your ideas.

## Historian's Report Continued...

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.

### Forty Years Ago (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 1st-2nd. There were 107 people in attendance. Wayne and Byron Etinger of Etinger 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.

### Fifty Years Ago (1974)

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

The 27th annual international meeting of SRM was held in Tucson, Arizona on February 3rd - 8th. 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

11th of a heart attack. David A. Smith was hired as his replacement.

### Sixty Years Ago (1964)

Dr. E. J. Dyksterhius 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.



**Note from the Editor:** After 36 years of dedicated service to the NRCS, Jeff Nichols is retiring. He has served in the role as Section Historian since 1998. His commitment to the position and our section has been very much appreciated. Enjoy retirement, Jeff!