



Nebraska Section SRM Council Meeting March 20, 2025

Kyle Schumacher called the meeting to order at 1:04 pm via Zoom video conference. Present members include Cheryl Dunn, Kyle Schumacher, Laura Rubeck, Mitch Stephenson, Shelly Kelly, Jacob Harvey, Bob Broweleit, Emma Barnett, Ben Beckman, Lisa McMillan, Wyatt Kirwan and Walt Schacht.

Minutes were sent prior to the meeting via email for review by Angie Petersen. Motion to approve the minutes from the October council meeting was made by Lisa McMillan and seconded by Jacob Harvey. Motion approved.

Committee Reports:

a. Treasurer's Report:

A report was sent prior to the meeting via email for review by Angie Petersen. The balances of the two checking accounts and four CDs as of March 20th, 2025 were as follows: \$4740.57 for the SRM account, \$19004.63 for the Range Judging account, \$7503/85 for the Nebraska Section CD, \$31201 for the William Wester HSYF fund, \$6926.75 for the NE State Range Judging CD, and the \$9714.24 for the other Range Judging CD.

- Angie needs to contact the bank regarding our Nebraska Section CD. She did not realize they had rolled the CD over at the low rate and apologizes for this oversight and will contact them to research our options and report back.
- The William Wester HSYF Fund CD came due 11/15/24, and we were able to increase the interest rate from the previous 1.84%, it will come due 6/18/25.
- The NE State Range Judging and Range Judging CDs came due in 2/15/25. We were able to increase the interest rates on those as well from the previous 1.84% interest rate. They were 24-month CDs so this is a shorter period of time, they will come due 9/21/25.
- Since the meeting in October all of the received checks from range judging contests have been deposited, which is reflected in the increase in the balance.
- Thank you to our anonymous donor who helps cover HSYF expenses.
- We did also receive \$1000.00 donation from the anonymous donor for the scholarship fund, but we have not paid out the scholarship.
- Overall, we took a loss of \$509.25 from the annual meeting.
- We have paid total expenses of \$3404.00 including registration, airline tickets, and the scholarships for the students' expenses for HSYF. We have not received the \$2000.00 from the previously discussed Range Camp committed funds.
- Our federal and state taxes have been filed as well as the required 2025-2026 Nonprofit Corporation Biennial Report that was due this year.

- Our insurance is normally paid in May, so that is an upcoming expense. Last year the total was \$1240.00, which is split between the Section and Range Judging as it covers all of our activities.
- In December we also paid Dorrene BrownButterfield, \$367.10 for our online web expenses. We pay approximately \$600.00 to \$650.00 a year in online web expenses. It is charged by services provided for some things so it is not an exact amount every year. We greatly appreciate her services!

If you have any questions, please let me know.

Motion to approve the treasurer's report was made by Larua Rubeck and seconded by Cheryl Dunn. Motion approved.

b. Annual Meeting Committee:

Cheryl reported regarding the annual meeting. Currently the announcement/save-the-date went out and we are doing a joint conference with the Game and Parks Legacy Group that have a meeting at the same time. It is scheduled for Oct. 7-9th. It will be half a day on the 7th, and half a day on the 9th, seeing a grazing project on the 9th looking at the Salt Creek Tiger Beetles on the Saline Wetlands. She did secure funds for students on campus to attend. She would like to get as many funds as possible for students to be able to attend. There are still many things in the works and being planned, but it will be on East Campus and hopefully be available for students to be able to attend as much as possible and network. Walt Schacht will be the keynote speaker and all of his experience and history will be a great resource to share. Fundraising, grant writing, and sponsorship is continuing to be worked on.

c. Awards: No report.

d. Fundraising: Vacant position. No report

e. Historian: No report. Jeff Nichols is still currently in this position. Ben Beckman has discussed taking over this position. Cheryl Dunn also has some material to pass on regarding the Nebraska Section history and information.

f. Information and Education: Laura Rubeck provided a report. Laura is working on a write-up for Lisa McMillan's award at the National meeting and she will submit it to the local newspaper as well as Emma Barnett for the newsletter.

g. Investments: Kyle Schumacher provided a report. Investments are continuing to grow. The Academic Scholarship Fund and the Academic Scholarship Fund have both seen growth. We need an update on the scholarship fund and money from the UNL Range Club donation. A CD will also need to be added to the funds.

h. Membership: No report.

i. Nominations: Vacant position. No report.

j. Producer Affairs: No report, but past reminders of upcoming events:

- June 12: NGLC Grazing tour at Anselmo. Tour on George and Barb Cooksley Ranch, and the McGinn Ranch
- June 18 – 21: in Burwell Grazing School for young adults

- June 25 – 27: Spring Lake Ranch Gordan NGLC and Ne Extension - Summer grazing school

k. Public Affairs: Vacant position. No report.

l. Range Judging: Ben Beckman reported. Area hosts for the upcoming year have been contacted. A number of NRDs have chosen not to participate. Things are being lined up for the upcoming year. Last year the switch was made to all online registration, which worked well and will be done again this upcoming year. They are trying to figure things out with the NRDs and changing the scoring mechanism without compromising the integrity of the contest.

m. Range Research: Mitch Stephenson reported. They are continuing to do patch-burn grazing research at the Barta Brothers Ranch as well as other side projects such as students looking at how hand-held apps at how well they can measure total plant production during different times during the growing season as well as fecal DNA and micro histology to look at how differences in pasture and time affect dietary intake of different species. There is also research at GSL and BBR looking at greenhouse gas emissions working with several departments or groups looking at greenhouse gas emissions under different scenarios with cattle grazing. Other research regarding woody encroachment, leafy spurge, management of annual invasive grasses, and virtual fences were also mentioned. Jacob Harvey and some other students did present some of this research at the National Meeting. It would be great to have some of those talks at our own Section meeting as well in October if possible.

n. Range Tour: Mitch provided a report. They are looking to host an event at BBR in late July or early August. There will also be a patch-burn grazing working group event July 23-24 that is hosted by the Nature Conservancy in the Platte River Prairie by Wood River. So this year instead of the grazing tour that Grazing Lands Coalition typically does they are co-hosting with UNL and others, the American Grassland Conference with the Wildlife Society in Kearney, June 23-25th. Nebraska Grazing Conference will be Aug 5th and 6th this year. SRM hasn't had a summer grazing tour with so many other things going on, but we may consider co-hosting or co-sponsoring an event. We have typically tied a tour into our meeting in October.

o. Range Camp/HSYF: Shelly Kelly reported. Range Camp is planned June 9-12th at Chadron State College again. They then hope to start a rotation. Tevyn Pieper and KyLee Kime are stepping in to leadership roles to help with planning. Fundraising letters just went out to ranchers across the state to help support Range Camp. If you know any other contacts for sponsorship support please let Shelly know.

p. Scholarship: Cheryl Dunn reported as Jess Milby was unavailable. There are issues regarding a lack of students submitting quality applications. Our advertising may also need to be increased to see better applications. We may also need to adjust the timing for students.

q. Student Affairs: Lisa McMillan reported. She and Mary Reece accompanied three high school students to Spokane. Leah Christen was the 2024 HSYF President from Steinauer, NE, Eli Rogers from Dunning, and Aidan Choat from St. Edward. They went on Saturday, at the orientation on Sunday they give a short slideshow about themselves and the range resources they work with. They did a tour at the Turnbull Wildlife Refuge. They attended the trade show and attended speakers. They enjoyed the information about the college and universities at the trade

show and looking at their information and programs. If Chadron or UNL ever wants to put up a booth it would be well received. They had a professional interaction night, including Kyle and his educational path and experience that led him to his current position. The professionals rotate around and talk to students one-on-one and students are able to ask a lot of questions and introduce themselves to a lot of professionals. Eli Rogers was elected as the new HSYF president so he will be attending next year's meeting.

r. IYRP Committee – Bob Broweleit and Walt Schacht provided a report. They have been moving ahead with a project with John Cook, and the Platte Basin Time Lapse Group for production. There are several other projects in the works and will be spin-off of IYRP. Recently Grassland Visioning Group with the Grazing Lands Coalition are working with branding and getting a simplified message regarding grassland value. IYRP has short term objectives regarding celebrating rangelands and the people who live on and manage them, but also using IYRP for longer term goals regarding developing programs to educate and expose Nebraskans about rangelands. They have struggled to come up with identifying and implementing specific programs with the current group to plan and develop. They are developing how to work with and fit into other groups working toward the same goals and being a part of other groups to help promote IYRP and rangelands. There is a lot of potential programs, marketing opportunities, cooperating entities, campaigns, and contest development that can all be used to improve involvement and education surrounding rangelands. Right now, John Cooks messaging for us and the resulting media blitz needs funding. Cheryl made a motion to commit \$5000.00 toward IYRP. Lisa seconding the motion. Motion passed.

s. Newsletter: Emma Barnett provided a report. She has not sent out a request regarding the winter/spring addition of the newsletter. She expressed her concerns regarding the possible drop in our membership regarding issues that have affected and impacted federal agencies as well as gearing the message in our newsletter regarding these issues. She is looking for feedback regarding these issues as well as how our newsletters want to look in the future. Kyle noted that regarding membership lists from the advisory council to the board of directors at the parent society level, is that until a privacy policy and data sharing agreement has been established there will be no releasing of membership lists. At the parent level our past president did release a statement regarding how federal issues have affected the agencies and membership. We will further discuss this in New Business. Lisa McMillan brought up a few issues regarding our website that may need to be addressed. Thank you to Emma for all of the work she puts into the newsletter.

t. Envirothon: Wyatt Kirwan provided a report. They have submitted the state exam for approval, but he is not currently approved to travel for work to attend. He will try to go on leave, it is scheduled for April 30th. It is currently running as normal and several volunteers from NRCS are available in the area that are willing to help.

Old Business:

Newsletter: There was discussion regarding getting the newsletter to all current members. Possibly getting it out to members that don't have email or lapsed members was also discussed. Getting it on the website was also discussed to make it available to all.

Parent Section Annual Meeting:

Kyle gave an update from the parent meeting annual meeting. We had tentatively planned for Nebraska to host the National Annual meeting in 2027, but lack of facilities to host was an issue. CHI center in Omaha is the only venue that meets the requirements for hosting, which is unavailable for 2027. Due to this, the recommendation was for the 2027 meeting to be held in Wichita, Kansas, and for Kansas, Nebraska, and Oklahoma to co-host. Kansas has sent some information to Kyle from previous meetings to outline what planning looks like. In the next year our sections need to provide a logo and a theme. The parent society does a lot of the planning and programming. Financially it would be a large benefit, even split between all three sections. In 2031 Omaha may be considered again.

SRM Section apparel for our membership and possibly some give-away items for our information booth have been brought up in the past and may be up for future discussion at our summer meeting.

New Business:**a. Advisory Council Meeting Update -**

Each section has three delegates on the Advisory Council for the parent society. This includes the current president, past-president and president elect. The action items included recommending the following future meeting hosts sites and dates: Wichita, Kansas in 2027, Texas in 2028, Nevada in 2029, Wyoming in 2030, and Nebraska in 2031. They recommended the Board of Directors to establish a plan for regional level advocacy for federal employees attendance as SRM. They also recommended that a strategic plan be built to increase recruitment into committees at the parent society level. They also recommended to the Board of Directors to continue to include oral presentations as part of the HSYF. They recommended a privacy policy and data sharing policy be established for SRM before any further membership information is shared with the sections. The last action item was for the advisory council was to recommend that SRM adopt a letter of support from the Nevada Section for John Ruhs to be appointed the Director of BLM.

b. Website Updates -

There has been extensive discussion at the advisory council regarding updates to the website. Updates should be easier and more across the board. It is in the final building stages and once that goes live we may look to move our section website nested into that website. SRM parent society would maintain that for us and may help support us in our membership.

c. Newsletter –

Regarding the impacts to our members regarding federal changes to the federal workforce, we discussed how to express our support to those affected by these issues. Students have lost their pathway programs and loss of upcoming job opportunities. There are many concerns to a large number of people regarding support of research of rangelands and the work force supporting our rangelands. Kyle may draft a letter of support to be included in the newsletter with council review.

d. Award Nominations –

We have many great people that are deserving of many possible awards at the national meeting. We could honor some great people. Get any names send to Laura and they can start working on letters of support and formal nomination letters. This can include state and national awards. National awards are normally due around June 1st and may be extended. Our state awards can be used as a step toward the national awards. We did not award a Rangeman's Award this year, and we would really like to see that awarded this year, which can also lead to an award at the national level. Shelly also brought up the discussion adapting award nominations to the Leopold Award applications.

e. Other Discussion -

Fundraising for the annual meeting was also brought up. Some years have not been profitable and it is tough each year being in a different place with different expenses. Sponsorship would make this easier.

Membership increases and in particular increasing young professional membership would be beneficial. The new website may be helpful. The current federal issues may be affecting membership. There are many agencies, careers and pathways where young professionals go, but getting them to stay involved in YPC at the parent level or developing a way to keep people involved in YPC may help keep them involved in SRM.

There was discussion regarding bringing more producer input into the annual section meeting and increasing producer involvement.

By-laws review was also discussed. It has been 5 years since our by-laws were reviewed. We also discussed the timing of our annual meeting in conjunction with that.

Tentatively a summer meeting will be in conjunction with Range Camp. A motion was made to adjourn the meeting, Lisa motioned and Ben seconded.

Respectively submitted,

Angie Petersen