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Nebraska Section Society for Range Management Newsletter

What's Out There: The Rangelands of the Balwin Ranch in Sioux County, NE

By Kyra Baldwin, 2011 HSYF Delegate

After my trip to the Nebraska Range Camp in the summer of 2010, I really started to notice all of the different types of plants that were on my family's ranch. I developed a big interest in taking a walking tour and identifying all of the plants I saw.

We have two dominant land features on our ranch; uplands and draws. The ecological sites are limy upland, choppy sands, and a few areas of shallow. We have many plants on the upland sites, including prairie sandreed, blue grama, Indian ricegrass, western wheatgrass and needleandthread. We also have threadleaf sedge on our ranch. This is a very important part of our cattle's diet during the early spring and fall.

Some of the many forbs we have on our ranch include annual buckwheat, horseweed, broom snakeweed, and plains prickly pear. I have also noticed some trace amounts of annual sunflower, sixweeks fescue, prickly poppy, fringed sagewort, and stickleaves.

In the lower areas on the ranch, I have found sideoats grama. This was a big surprise to find because we didn't think we had any on the ranch, but we found a large amount once we really started looking at our grass. I also found little bluestem and perennial threeawn. Dad and I noticed that one grass, the cattle had really selected during their grazing. I eventually identified this as little bluestem. Our cattle really love little bluestem!

Continued on page 4

President's Message from Michael Croxen

Summer is coming to an end very quickly. Most of the hay is up except where the water table is too high. The sandhills look good except where there was hail. It is starting to dry out around a lot of the state so please be careful where you park your vehicles when out in the grass. There have been lightning fires up in the Chadron area recently.

Hopefully everyone has got their membership renewal notices from the main office. It has been a struggle since it went to Allen Press because people were lost in the process. Please go in and check your information on the website and make sure it is current. They have sent out new cards with your membership number on them. If you do not know how to log into the site

please call them at 800-627-0326 and ask for "SRM".

The state range judging contest is in Sidney on October 4th. The contest will be set up on Monday the 3rd. The council meeting will the evening of October 4th and the section meeting will be October 5th and the tour October 6th. We hope to see everyone in Sidney for some or all of these activities.



The State Range Judging Contest will be held in Sidney NE on October 4. Come help with the contest, and stay for the annual meetings!

Do you have information you want to share with other SRM members? Send an email to kristin.miller@ne.usda.gov and she'll send out a Range Clip.



Once again, the range judging season is upon us. Look for a change in weather!

NE Section Meetings, October 4-6, 2011 Understanding Past Management and What it Means Today Holiday Inn, Sidney, NE

Program at a glance:

History of Conservation on the American Landscape
Doug Helms, National Historian, NRCS

Results and Lessons Learned from the Conservation Effects Assessment Program on Rangelands

Daryl Lund, CEAP Team Leader, Resources Assessment Division, NRCS

The Use of Repeat Photography to Document and Interpret Landscape Change
Keith Klement, Director of Ag and Instructor of Natural Resources and Ranch Land Management, Sheridan College

Preliminary Results of the Rapid Carbon Assessment and How it Might Help Interpret Past Management

Skye Wills, Soil Scientist, National Soil Survey Center, NRCS

Progress and Lessons Learned from Recent Updates of Ecological Site Descriptions in MLRA 75

Stu McFarland, Ecological Site Inventory Specialist, NRCS

The Impacts of the Society for Range Management in the US and Internationally
Hadley Hill, Student, Chadron State College

High School Youth Forum presentations

Undergraduate and Graduate Student papers

Herding "green" into the future by using historic lifestyle economically and environmentally
Kelsey Cole and Sammi Jo McCoid, Students, Miles Community College

Greenhouse gas emissions in brome pastures
Laura Snell, Student, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Tour at the Sidney Municipal Airport

Revegetation techniques at the Sidney Airport
John Gross, Gross Seed Co., Inc.

Revegetation techniques of roadside slopes in Nebraska
Jonathan Soper, Research Technologist, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

For more information, contact Curtis Talbot at 402-437-4176 or by email at curtis.talbot@lin.usda.gov. Registration forms will be sent out soon, be looking for them!

A block of rooms is reserved at the Holiday Inn in Sidney. The rate is \$77. Reservations can be made by calling 308-254-2000.

Sandhills Defoliation Response Index

A Tool for Monitoring and Managing Rangelands

By Jeanna Jenkins, 2011 HSYF Delegate

Grasslands are one of our most important natural resources, because the ground is highly erodible and unsuitable for farming, the only thing we can do is graze it. Therefore, by carefully sustaining our grasslands, we can utilize their full potential. The land will remain healthy and retain its value, and it's just part of being a good steward.

SanDRIS is a decision support tool designed to utilize the optimum amount of herbage, before and after grazing, and to minimize the impact of natural disaster such as fire, grasshopper infestations and drought. By using this managerial tool, one can also optimize the amount and rate of vegetation recovery after grazing and or natural disaster. This system was developed by Patrick E. Reece, former professor and Extension Rangeland Ecologist, Walter H. Schacht, Professor of Range Science at UNL, and Jerry D. Volesky, Professor and Extension Range and Forage Specialist at UNL. This system was designed at the Gudmunsen Sandhills Research Laboratory, and works especially well in the Sandhills area. However, it can very easily be modified to apply in other areas. SanDRIS works by using a system of numbers, or grading scores, to calculate range condition. These numbers are based on the season of defoliation, or grazing period, the end of season residual herbage, and the amount of precipitation received during the season.

Season of Defoliation Index

March–April: sedges green up and grow	+2
May: cool-season grasses green up	+1
June: early growth of warm season tall grasses	-1
July: rapid growth warm-season grasses	-2
Multiple events during June-August	-3
August: warm-season tall grasses have flowered	0
September: nearly full growing season deferment	+2
October-February: dormant season	+4

End-of-Season Residual Herbage Index

Excellent: residual herbage of palatable species is common, standing herbage (>1500#/ac) and litter are abundant throughout	+2
Adequate: standing herbage (700-900#/ac) and litter are uniformly distributed	0
Poor: standing herbage absent, litter uncommon, characteristic of fire or severe overgrazing	-2

Precipitation Index

Well above average: 5-6 feet of moist soil by April 30 and abundant precipitation during May-July	+2
Near average: 3-4 feet of moist soil by April 30 and abundant precipitation during May-July	0
Drought: Little or no dormant-season precipitation during June-July	-2

The scores from each regime are then added together to determine a final score for the pasture. The following is an example of summing the scores.

Pasture	Season	Precip	Hydro	Score
SE School	-2	2	0	0
NE Seymore	0	2	1	3
Middle Home	2	2	0	4
SW Seymore	4	2	2	8

I have talked with several ranchers that use SanDRIS as a guideline and managerial tool. In their experience, it has helped them improve the plant diversity of their pastures, minimized the impacts of drought, create more awareness or pasture health, and increased overall values of their land.

Grasslands are an important and valuable natural resource that must not be abused and the SanDRIS system is a way to monitor range condition.

Editor's note: Jeanna Jenkins was a High School Youth Forum delegate to Casper in 2011. She is the daughter of JR and Karla Jenkins of Scottsbluff, NE. Jeanna graduated from Mitchell High School in May and plans to attend the University of Nebraska. Her HSYF paper has been edited for space.

What's Out There (continued from page 1)

While looking at the plants on our ranch, I noticed areas that seemed to have poorer range condition had more annual plants, and the areas that were in better range condition had more perennial grasses.

After looking closer at all the plants on our ranch, I was amazed to see that there are more plants than I ever thought we had. I have a different view of my ranch now. I have educated my parents about the plants. I also got to talk to them about the different forage values of the vegetation and which plants are preferred by cattle. I now have a more personal interest in what is done on the ranch and the grazing rotation. This experience has also helped me in deciding to pursue a career in Range Science.

Editor's note: Kyra Baldwin was a High School Youth Forum delegate to Casper in 2011. She is the daughter of Bill and Queeda Balwin of Mitchell, NE. Kyra graduated from Scottsbluff High School in May and plans to attend the University of Nebraska. Her HSYF paper has been edited for space.

NE Section Scholarship Information

Submitted by Nick Simonson, Scholarship Committee Chairman

It is hard to believe that it is almost time to start school again and the summer is going to be gone before we know it. Of course, during these last few weeks of temperatures in the 100s and the humidity close to the same, I can't say I haven't prayed for the summer to be over. Fortunately, we have had some timely rains to keep the grass green and keep us from slipping into a drought like they are experiencing in Texas and Oklahoma.

Just like with a lack of moisture, I often experienced a financial drought when I was in college. But unlike trying to reason with Mother Nature to keep the grass green, there are ways that you can help secure yourself against financial drought. You can work two or three jobs, beg your parents, sell any excess stuff you have, or just pray for some money. But one way that is pretty simple and won't cost you more than a couple hours of your time is scholarships. They are one of the simplest ways to keep you from experiencing a financial drought.

The Nebraska Section is once again offering two \$1,000 scholarships to qualified candidates. If you are interested you can access the requirements at the following link, <http://www.dkbb.org/NESRM/scholarship01.htm>. You can also request information from faculty members in your Range/Ag department. You can also contact me directly through the information on the website if something is not working. The deadline to turn in your application packets is 9/9/2011. Applications will be accepted at any time prior to the deadline. The winners will be recognized at the 2011 NE Section meeting. If you are selected as a winner of the scholarship, you will be expected to attend the annual meeting which will be held on October 5-6, 2011 in Sidney, NE.

If you want to receive an email confirmation that I have received your application, send an email to nsimonson10@hotmail.com and put "SRM Scholarship Application" in the subject line. Once I receive the application, I send you an email confirming I have received it. I will also let you know if your references have sent their letters. Keep some green in your bank account by applying for the scholarship today!



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Member's Corner

The Society is still trying to complete the transition from managing all membership information and completing renewals in-house to Allen Press managing this service. Most will admit that this transition has not been the smoothest, and the SRM Board of Directors has been very concerned about this transition.

All sections have been asked to work on following up with all expired members to encourage them to renew. In some cases, many members did not know that their membership had expired. Nebraska has been working on contacting all current and past members to encourage them to stay active within the Society.

If you have questions or concerns regarding your membership, please contact Allen Press at 800-627-0326 and ask for SRM. Or you can visit the website at www.rangelands.org. If you would prefer to have a "local" person assist you, or you have concerns you want elevated to the Board, please contact one of the council members or Kristin Miller, the membership chair.

Nebraska Youth Range Camp

Submitted by Shelly Taylor, Director

The Nebraska SRM Section's 48th Annual Youth Range Camp was held June 13 – 17, 2011 at the Nebraska State 4-H Camp, located in the Nebraska National Forest near Halsey. Range Camp is designed to be a blend of educational, team-building, and recreational activities, with the primary emphasis being on range, livestock, and ranch management. Each camper received a notebook of reference materials as well as priceless experience coming from both the classroom and the field. Thirty-nine high school students from across Nebraska and eastern Colorado participated in this weeklong educational activity. This premier Section Activity is successful because of the long-term support we have from a wide array of professionals involved in rangeland management.

(Twin Platte NRD Range Technician); Jess Milby (UNL Graduate Student); Casey Lancaster, Lisa McMillan, Jeff Nichols, and Shelly Taylor (all of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)). Shelly served as Director for the Camp.

The financial support of sponsoring ranches is an essential part of Range Camp's success. Many of these ranches have been supporting this program through ranch crew sponsorship for more than 35 years. The 2011 sponsoring ranches included Adkinson Inc - Boyd and Shirley Adkinson of Benkelman; Diamond Bar Ranch Co - Virginia, Robert, and Suzanne Jones and family of Stapleton; Enfield Ranch - Terry Enfield Family of Arthur; Kelly Ranch LLC - Mike and Cynthia Kelly and Family of Suth-

Ranch - Gary Greder of North Platte; and the Neal Hansen Ranch of Sutherland.

Additionally, 13 professionals supported Range Camp by leading tours and providing presentations on range related information. The professionals included the Reed Hamilton Ranch (Dave and Loretta, ranchers from Thedford); Dr. Chuck Butterfield (Chadron State College); David Gibbens (West Holt High School); Jeanna Jenkins (Mitchell High School); Dr. Jerry Volesky (University of Nebraska - Lincoln (UNL)); Dr. John Guretzky (UNL); Jordan Johnson (UNL); Kyra Baldwin (Scottsbluff High School); Leah Carson (NRCS); Dr. Matt Stockton (UNL); Michael Croxen (Forest Service); Robert Valvala (UNL); and Terry Baker (Forest Service).



It's never too early to get someone interested in grass management!

SRM Action Update Call

This is your chance to hear what the Board of Directors and various committees' have been working on. This conference call is open to anyone.

Day: 2nd Thursday of each month

Time: 11:00 mountain time

Call in info: 213-416-6650, enter code: 012010



Campers visit with Dave Hamilton during the ranch tour.

Nine adults contributed a week of their time to be crew leaders and Camp support. Crew Bosses included: Ben Beckman (UNL Graduate); Daryl Cisney (Board of Educational Lands and Funds); Karla Jenkins (UNL Assistant Professor and Specialist); Justin Lemmer

erland; KM Grain and Livestock - Kent Miller Family of Sidney; Reed Hamilton Ranch Inc - Hamilton Family of Thedford; Maddux Cattle Company - Jack & Carol Maddux of Wauneta; Salzman Cattle Company - Sid Salzman and Family of Ainsworth; the Lazy L B

We provide the top ranch crew or team awards annually. This year's winning ranch crew was the Steerhead Crew - Kelly Ranch LLC. The Crew Boss or team leader was Justin Lemmer.

The top individuals are scored



We'd love to share your great pictures with others! Send them to Kristin Miller and they'll be included in a future newsletter.

Nebraska Youth Range Camp (continued from page 4)

on plant identification, range site identification, ranch planning, a comprehensive range exam, notebooks and attitudes. These Campers are offered the opportunity to represent Nebraska at the International SRM Meeting by competing in a range related presentation contest at our Annual Nebraska Section SRM Meeting.

Our Overall Top Camper was Johnny Ference from Ord. Johnny will be a senior at Ord High School. Our Top First year Camper, who placed fourth overall, was Reid Stagemeyer from Cambridge. Our Runner up First Year Camper was Kassidy Linaberry from Valentine. The top two first year campers received belt buckles. The top returning Camper received a plaque that includes the ranch sponsors brands and the SRM medallion.



2011 Top Returning Campers

Other top individuals are listed below (listed in order of individual placing): Taylor Hornickel, Ord (returner); Dusty Staab, Ord (returner); Dylan Miller, Ord (returner); Teyvn Baldwin, Mitchell (returner); Ryan Gardner, Arapahoe (rookie); Laura Gorecki, Farwell (rookie); Jayson Rezek (rookie); Blair Hartman, Champion (rookie); Katey Myers, Minatare (rookie); Cody McBride, Burwell (rookie); Evey Choat, St. Edward (rookie); Caitlyn Kramer, Wray, CO (rookie). First Year Campers received the Weeds of the Great Plains book. Returning campers received the Weeds of the West.

Other individual awards included Jayson Rezek and Johnny Ference in Plant Identification. Reid Stagemeyer and Teyvn Baldwin won the Range Site Identification award. Laura Gorecki and Taylor Hornickel were awarded books for their efforts in the comprehensive exam that covers all the information that was presented throughout the week.

The Sandhills Task Force and the Nebraska Grazing Lands Coalition continue to be invaluable sponsors and supporters of our Camp.

The staff or Crew Bosses unanimously decided to offer the opportunity to represent the Nebraska SRM Section at the International SRM Meetings in Spokane, WA to all Campers. We had another year of outstanding young people; our future in natural resources continues to be bright!

The Nebraska Youth Range Camp has a new Facebook page where you can view photos from this year's Camp, find information about upcoming Range Camps and other associated events, and network with past Campers and supporters. Please "Like" us so you can receive our updates!

Range Camp is one of the Nebraska Section's most important annual activities. Continued success is dependent upon the support, dedication, and active involvement of Section Members. The support of Nebraska ranchers, professionals, and other sponsoring organizations is also essential for a successful Camp. The 2012 Nebraska Youth Range Camp is scheduled for June 11-15, 2012. This will be our



2011 Top First-Year Campers

49th Range Camp. Additional information on Range Camp is available by contacting current Director, Shelly Taylor, by visiting the Nebraska SRM website at www.nesrm.org, or by "Liking" the Nebraska Youth Range Camp page on Facebook.

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2011 Range Judging Schedule

Area I	Sioux County	September 20
Area II	McPherson County	September 29
Area III	Red Willow County	September 21
Area IV	Howard County	September 20
Area V	Holt County	September 14
Area VI	Hamilton County	September 15
State	Cheyenne County	October 3 & 4

Do You Know What Happened in Nebraska... by Jeff Nichols, Historian

Five Years Ago (2006)

The Nebraska Section Officers were: Chuck Butterfield, President; Al Steuter, Past President; Jerry Volesky, President Elect; Leslie Stewart-Phelps, Secretary/Treasurer; John Ortmann, Newsletter Editor; Dana Larsen and Mary Reece were Council Members.

Wildfires near Valentine, Sioux County and south of Chadron burned thousands of acres in late July 2006. These fires were destructive to several non-fire wise structures and forage resources, while at the same time one of the natural factors that helps shape and balance these ecosystems.

Membership chair, Mary Schrader, reported that that Nebraska Section had 117 members in June of 2006.

The Central Nebraska Prescribed Burn Association was launched by a group of approximately 40 landowners at St. Paul, NE. Their area of coverage includes Greeley, Howard, Sherman and Nance counties.

Ten Years Ago (2001)

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

The leafy spurge task force annual tour and conference was held August 1st and 2nd at Ainsworth and the Nebraska Grazing Conference was held in Kearney August 13th and 14th.

The U.S. Postal Service released the "Great Plains Prairie" stamp as part of the "Nature of America" stamp series. The stamp depicts 25 animal and plant species native

to the mixed-grass prairie of the American Great Plains.

The 38th annual Range Youth Camp was held June 25-29 at the Nebraska State 4-H Camp near Halsey, NE. The overall top camper and top first year camper was Tim Roggasch from Rose, NE. The top returning camper was Janette Davidson from Lamar.

Twenty Years Ago (1991)

The Nebraska Section officers were: Cort Dewing, President; Jack Maddux, Past President; Catherine Mills, President Elect; Daryl Cisney, Secretary - Treasurer; Mary Schrader, Newsletter Editor; James O'Rourke and Sheila Valasek (Luoma) were council members.

The 1991 SRM summer meeting was held July 12-16 at North Platte. The meeting was very successful, both in terms of attendance and profit for SRM. There were 256 people in attendance. The only other time a summer meeting was held in Nebraska was 1963.

The 28th annual Range Youth Camp was held near Halsey, where 32 campers participated. Jeff Bruns of Crawford was the top returning camper, Adam Olson of Sargent was the top first year camper, and Adam Smith of Sargent was the runner-up first year camper.

Producers from all over southwest Nebraska attended the Rangeland's Holiday at Larges G4 Ranch south of Hayes Center on July 26th. There were 48 people in attendance to learn about range management principles

Thirty Years Ago (1981)

The Nebraska Section Officers were: Jim Emal, President; James T. Nichols, Past President; James Stubbendieck, President Elect;

Lowell Moser, Secretary/Treasurer; Steve Waller, Newsletter Editor; Dan Bose and Irene Graves were Council Members.

Dr. Terry Klopfenstein and Dr. James T. Nichols received Livestock Service Awards from Walnut Grove Products of Atlantic, Iowa.

The University Of Nebraska Board Of Regents accepted the gift of a 12,817- acre ranch near Whitman, NE from Mr. and Mrs. Elmer "Pete" Gudmundsen. The dedication was held June 26, 1981 and the ranch will be known as the "Gudmundsen Sandhills Research Center".



The Great Plains Prairie stamp depicts 25 animal and plant species native to the mixed grass prairie of the Great Plains.

The 18th annual Range Youth Camp was held June 8-12 with 38 campers in attendance. The top campers were Mick Groskopf of Mitchell, Mary Raymer (Reece) of Stuart, and Valerie Starr of Mullen.

The Nebraska Section sponsored a tour of the General Agricultural Services, LTD lands in Nuckolls County. There were 45 people in attendance. John Long

and Don Cacek hosted the tour and showed range management improvements made on the Scully lands.

The first annual Nebraska Prairie Appreciation Week was observed in September with Ruth Thone, the Governors wife, serving as the Honorary Chair.

Forty Years Ago (1971)

The Nebraska Section officers were: Bob Hill, President; Harlan DeGarmo, Past President; Ray Sall, President-Elect; Ken Noonan, Secretary Treasurer; James T. Nichols and Don Cox, Newsletter Editors; and Ken Weyers and Bob Bobek were councilmen.

Fifty Years Ago (1961)

Kermit Paxton of Stapleton reported on sandy upland prairie meadows. He put up only eight bales of hay per acre when mowed every year as opposed to 20 bales per acre when cut every other year.

A Range and Livestock Day and Tour was held at Mullen on June 9th. The morning program consisted of talks by Don Burzlaff, UNL Range Specialist, and Bud Hunt, Denver Livestock Exchange. There was a tour of two ranches to observe range interseedings in the afternoon.



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Nebraska State Range Judging Committee Meeting, South Platte NRD, Sidney, NE; October 3, 2011

Nebraska State Range Judging Contest, Sidney, NE; October 4, 2011

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

Nebraska Section Meetings, Holiday Inn, Sidney, NE; October 4-6, 2011

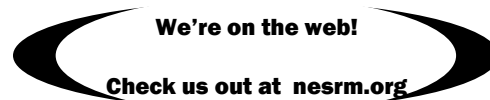
SRM Annual Meetings, Spokane, WA; January 29-February 3, 2012

SRM Annual Meetings, Oklahoma City, OK; February 2-6, 2013

SRM Annual Meetings, Orlando, FL; February 7-15, 2014

SRM Annual Meetings, Sacramento, CA; January 30-February 7, 2015

SRM Annual Meetings, Corpus Christi, TX; January 29-February 6, 2012



Range Judging Update by Daryl Cisney, Committee Chairman



Yes, it's getting to be that time of year again. The Area and State Range Judging Contests are just around the corner (I know - hard to believe August is almost over)! The Nebraska State Range Judging Committee is considering a Committee of the Nebraska Section - SRM, but it is also a stand alone Committee that has one goal; providing the participants with the best Range Judging opportunity that is reasonably possible. The Nebraska State Range Judging Committee has members from many Agencies and disciplines, many of which who are also members of the Nebraska Section - SRM. All the Committee participants are a necessary part of the Range Judging process. Many of the NE Section members are relied on to provide the technical expertise to put a quality contest together.

And, as important as that is, other committee members "specialize" in the scoring process, which is often under-appreciated by the contestants, the Agricultural Education Instructors and the technical people until someone feels that there was a mistake in the final scores. The Range Judging process relies on many people who are **all volunteers** to make the Contest's a meaningful experience for the participant - whether it is their first contest or their fifth contest. In short, we try to reach the "future" of Range Management by providing the best contest possible.

This is my first year as the Nebraska State Range Judging Committee Chair. My true hope is not to screw up a Committee that has worked so well in the past. My goal is to improve my efforts for the future. Please help us with our outreach to the youth who have an interest in Range Management. Volunteer to assist with a contest in your area, if it works into your schedule. And don't forget that the 2011 State Range Judging Contest will be held in the Sidney area the day before the NE Section Meeting this October. Please try to at least stop by and see that Contest. But, I have to warn you, Range Judging can be habit forming. Get caught up in the excitement. At the very least, you will not believe how quiet 400+ kids can be for 2 ½ hours until you see it (or don't hear it) in person.