

High School Youth Benefit from Rangeland Management Forum in Billings, MT

By Ben Berlinger, Colorado Section of the Society for Range Management, Youth Activities Chair

The Colorado Section of the Society for Range Management (SRM) was well represented at the 2011 High School Youth Forum (HSYF) held in Billings, MT on February 6-9, 2011. The HSYF is an integral part of the SRM annual meeting. This year there were 31 delegates representing 13 of the SRM Sections. During the Forum, high school youth from all part of the western United States and Canada are invited to participate and interact among the various professionals and college students attending the meeting. Each of SRM's 21 Sections is allowed to send up to three youth delegates to this program that provides a high quality learning experience.

This year the Colorado Section sponsored **three** delegates to Billings. **Jessica Harris** of Manzanola, **Jordan Lestina** of Dove Creek and **Kyle Hartshorn** of Granada were selected to participate in the Forum. All three delegates were chosen based on the high level of achievement in **FFA rangeland judging** as well as exceptional participation at the Colorado Association of Conservation District's (CACD) **Camp Rocky**, Colorado's premier natural resource youth camp.

The goals of the HSYF are to recognize youth for outstanding accomplishments in rangeland activities and to provide young people the opportunity to discuss rangelands, career options, and meet with leaders in the field of range management. One requirement of the HSYF is that each delegate must present an illustrated talk on some aspect of rangeland conservation or management.

Jessica's presentation was titled ***Important: Rangeland Monitoring!*** During her presentation she discussed the different monitoring methods used by ranchers in southeast Colorado and presented the advantages and drawbacks of each. Jessica also highlighted the intensive monitoring methods being successfully used on the Negley Ranch in Kiowa County where she had the opportunity to assist with rangeland monitoring activities this past summer.

Jordan presented his talk on the control of rabbitbrush on the rangelands of southwest Colorado using biological techniques. His talk was titled ***Rubber Rabbitbrush: Controlling a Native Shrub.*** Jordan highlighted the conventional methods of controlling rubber rabbitbrush as contrasted with biological control using the rabbitbrush beetle. He found that biological control of rubber rabbitbrush appeared to be an effective and economical alternative over the conventional treatments of herbicides and prescribed fire when coupled with prescribed grazing management.

Kyle's presentation was about rangeland education and our youth. His title was ***Educating the Next Generation of Range Managers.*** Kyle discussed how he put together a workshop/clinic on his family's ranch this past summer to motivate his FFA Chapter and the other local FFA Chapters to participate in the Rangeland Judging Career Development Exercise (CDE). Kyle concluded that the workshop was successful by encouraging more students to pursue rangeland judging in the future and to hopefully go on to careers in rangeland science.

The **Colorado Section SRM** and **CACD** congratulate Jessica, Jordan and Kyle for their outstanding achievements in rangeland management and wish them the best of luck as they further pursue their ambitions in the field of natural resource management. Contact Ben Berlinger (719-384-5408), or Darlene Jenson (719-686-0020), for more information about the SRM High School Youth Forum and Camp Rocky.