

RANGEO RIDER

Newsletter of the Colorado Section of the Society for Range Management



Dan Nosal, left of the print, is presented with the Trail Boss Award at the 2021 CSSRM Annual Meeting held in Grand Junction, Colorado.

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2021 CSSRM ANNUAL MEETING RECAP

By Retta Brueger, President and Event Chair

Many of us have experienced the ongoing drought in recent years. But the question is, what are the consequences for rangelands, rangeland dependent businesses, and what are our options for managing well given trends, and restoring degraded landscapes?

These were some of the questions discussed at the recent CSSRM / CO Plateau Science and Management Forum workshop Oct. 6-7, 2021, in Grand Junction.

Here's some of the key take-homes:

» Experts expect increased warming in coming decades. On the western slope, this warming will decrease the ability of grasses to grow and thrive, according to Dr. John Bradford, who uses climate forecasts and vegetation habitat models to forecast changes in CO Plateau vegetation.

» Even with similar 'average' precipitation in the future, profits from ranching income are likely to decline due to predicted increased variability, or swings between high and low precipitation years. Dr. John Ritten shared his research on the topic, which suggests that with variability alone, ranches will likely need more off-ranch income to sustain business.

» In national conversations about sustainability in the livestock industry, rangeland science is under-utilized. Dr. Kim Stackhouse Lawson discussed corporate sustainability actions overall, and how under-engagement with rangeland science could lead to perverse incentives, such as plowing rangeland to then allow carbon to accumulate. This was a call to action for many of us in the room to participate as the national

and corporate conversation shift to corporate sustainability commitments.

» Lighter use overall may be necessary as aridity increases on western rangelands, according to Dr. Eric Thacker. He challenged us to ask, "how much foliage should be left?" instead of "how much can I take?" Dr. Thacker also reminded us that timing of precipitation makes a big difference. He contrasted productivity in Oklahoma and the mountains of Utah, both receiving 24" of rainfall annually, but the Utah one produces 985 lbs./acre/year, where the Oklahoma one produces 1889 lbs./acre/year. The difference? Timing of precipitation. A greater proportion of rain falls during the growing season in Oklahoma.

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Retta Brueger, CSSRM President, presents on the first tour stop.
Photo by Emmett Jordan.

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While the outlook for western rangelands is challenging, part of the workshop centered on possible solutions, proactive actions, and bright spots:

» Dr. Bradford shared a new tool, the landscape exploration tool, which allows quick access to past management actions, and allows you to find past treatments that most closely match your planned treatment areas based on climate and topography, to better plan restoration actions. The tool also estimates soil moisture conditions for 12 months, so users can inform decisions on the probability of seeding success.

- » Dr. Carrie Havrilla shared restoration strategies that may be promising in the future, such as selecting climate-adapted seed mixes, selecting seeds for drought tolerance, and using seed coatings to increase the chance of restoration success. She also highlighted the value of working together across disciplines and management as key to success. Currently, we know from large scale studies that seeding alone on very arid lands has a 2-7% success rate, so improving success on degraded lands is highly desirable
- » Dr. Doreen Martinez discussed Indigenous knowledge, and it's application for land managers, reminding the audience that science for science's sake is not the objective. Rather, speaking of

Indigenous knowledge, she said that “knowledge is in service of people.” Her comment that “you have to get dirty to understand” resonated with many in the audience of why they got into this profession in the first place.

- » Mandi Hirsch and Joy Morris shared information on the Intermountain West Join Venture, and the Water4 initiative. The mission of the Intermountain West Join Venture is to “conserve bird habitats through partnership-drive, science-based projects and programs” and Joy and Mandi shared information on how they've partnered in the past, and plan to support ongoing work of the BLM and others in the local area.

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Tour stop to look at an area reseeded with a pitting machine.
Photo by Emmett Jordan.

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Finally, we got a glimpse into effort to actualize restoration on the ground on the field tour, recognition of the Conservation Excellence winners, and Trail Boss Awards.

- » Nikki Grant-Hoffman and Danielle Bilyeu Johnston led the field tour, where we saw first-hand challenges and opportunities with rangeland restoration.
- » Grant Hoffman discussed climate adapted seed mixes, the challenge of scale that the BLM faces with any treatment, as well as progress in recent years by the BLM to use and acquire native seed. She illustrated the importance of managing for the disturbances we can manage (recreation, grazing) because there are many we cannot (weather, fire, climate).
- » Bilyeu Johnston shared her work, 12 years after implementation, of an innovative technique of using a pitting machine. Bilyeu Johnston found that the pits reduced



Stephanie Pitt (left) presented Pat and Nikki Luark with the 2021 CSSRM Excellence in Rangeland Conservation Award.

overland movement of cheatgrass seed and introduced diversity to the site. She noted that the pitter accelerated recovery, but that years later, some untreated areas looked similar to the treated. Dr. Mark Paschke made a surprise appearance noting that the importance of 'ecological humility.' We toured the site, and got to see the machine and Derek Lovoi, who built it for Colorado Parks and Wildlife.

- » Nikki and Pat Luark were recognized for their stewardship as winners of the Excellence in Rangeland Conservation Award, with their efforts to adopt innovative practices, implement conservation practices to improve range health, and try new technologies such as virtual fencing.
- » Dan Nosal, long time range conservationist with the NRCS, was recognized for his lifetime of achievement with the Trail Boss Award. A true friend of CSSRM, and accomplished professional, it was an honor to be able to recognize Dan with this award.

While the workshop highlighted the challenges we face, it's clear that there are exciting opportunities on the horizon. Partnering with the Colorado Plateau Science and Management Forum, CSSRM members made new connections, while spending some much needed in-person time with each other. Thanks to all who attended and made this great event possible. We hope to see many of you again for the Annual Meeting in 2022. 🐾



Bilyeu Johnston (right) explains the use of the pitting machine (left) for seeding. Photo by Emmett Jordan.

PRESIDENT ELECT



Courtney Hurst

Background photo: Needles, near Cathedral Mesa, San Juan County, Utah. Photo by Baili Foster.

Courtney Hurst rejoins the CSSRM Board, this time as president-elect. She is currently working with the Colorado State Land Board as a Resource Specialist in the southwest part of the State.

Since earning her Masters of Natural Resource Stewardship from Colorado State University in 2006, she has pursued a variety of professional opportunities in natural resource and land management. In addition to working with the State Land Board, these opportunities have included a position as the Stewardship Director at the Rio Grande Headwaters Land Trust and working with George Whitten and Julie Sullivan as their New Agrarian Apprentice through the Quivira Coalition.

In her spare time, she can be found with her dogs, Blue and Ranger, managing her 240-acre cattle ranch near Monte Vista, Colorado.

As president elect, Courtney will serve as chair for the 2022 CSSRM Annual Meeting. If you would like to be a part of the team for the event, shoot her a message at courtney.hurst@state.co.us. 🐾

NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Photo by Baili Foster

We are excited to welcome a new Secretary to CSSRM as well as not one, but two past CSSRM Secretaries to the Board of Directors (BOD) this year! Amanda James has accepted the Secretary position and Dixie Crowe and Baili Foster were elected onto the BOD.

Dixie has returned to Colorado after completing two years of soil health research at the University of Wyoming. She recently joined the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) in Canon City as a Rangeland Management Specialist and is eager to share her enthusiasm for rangelands and many talents in range and journalism. Dixie's background is rich

and diverse, having written for the CSU newspaper on livestock topics, participated in soil surveys, served as the CSSRM Secretary from 2017 to 2018, competed on the novice Quarter Horse and Arabian National judging teams, and so much more!

Baili Foster served as Secretary from 2018 until 2021. She joined SRM as a student at Colorado State University and is excited to begin serving the section on the BOD where she looks forward to engaging the board in meaningful activities to better rangelands in Colorado. Baili currently works for the NRCS in Steamboat Springs as a Soil Conservationist where she helps landowners

with conservation planning and is working with the CSSRM Youth Committee and local Ag teachers to kickstart range judging with the local FFA students.

Amanda currently works as a Rangeland Management Specialist for the NRCS in Montrose and has been involved with SRM since her time at CSU where she was the co-president of the range club. She is looking forward in expanding her involvement in SRM where she will bring her love of range and forested lands and her curiosity of using prescribed fire as a management tool, learning about utilizing a variety of grazing animals and improving her plant identification skills. 🐾



Dixie Crowe



Baili Foster



Amanda James

A very special 'than you' to outgoing Board members Sara Koepfel, Julie Larson, and J.T. Tashiro for your service to CSSRM!

TRAIL BOSS

By Ben Berlinger

Dan Nosal received the 2021 CSSRM Trail Boss Award in recognition of his devotion to the profession of rangeland management and his unselfish dedication to the Colorado Section of the Society for Range Management which he has consistently demonstrated throughout his career and to the SRM.

Dan has a strong knowledge of the technical aspects of the science of range management. His technical expertise is evident when working with range management professionals and producers. Dan has a unique ability to communicate with ranchers. He can translate the technical material of range science into concepts that help ranchers better understand how to improve their grazing management.

Outside of his normal professional duties, Dan has committed to facilitating the CSSRM operating budget. His quality control skill is valuable to the financial management of the Colorado Section. He has volunteered his organizational skills and services on the 2010 and 2020 international SRM annual meetings held in Denver.

Dan has been very active in the Colorado Section. Serving as president-elect he coordinated an outstanding annual winter meeting in Pueblo. His

service on the CSSRM board of directors as president and immediate past president was exemplary. Dan has also been involved with the Youth Activities Committee within the Colorado Section teaching at Camp Rocky and facilitating FFA range judging and plant identification events held across eastern Colorado. His dedication to our Section's youth outreach efforts is very noteworthy!

What fellow professionals have said about Dan's professional ability:

"Dan is a tremendous asset to the range profession. When he speaks, people listen. And, he has the knowledge, experience, skill, and ability to back the talk. He is well educated and has an attitude that naturally draws folks to him".

"Our section has been blessed throughout our history with many dedicated individuals who have contributed significantly, and Dan has maintained a consistent high level of involvement in the activities of the CSSRM throughout his tenure".

"Dan is the model of Helping People Help the Land".

Congratulations Dan Nosal! 🏆



OUTSTANDING YOUNG PROFESSIONAL AWARD

Background photo by Baili Foster



Julie Larson

Julie Larson received the 2021 Outstanding Young Professional Award from CSSRM. Nominated by Clare Hydock, Julie was recognized for both her academic achievements and contributions to CSSRM and SRM.

Julie has served on the CSSRM Board, membership committee, and Strategic Plan committee. She also joined SRM's Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) committee.

Quoting Julie, "Although I've only been a member of SRM and CSSRM for a short time, I've been humbled by how quickly the community has invited me to be a part of advancing the society's broader mission. In my first year

as a CSSRM member, I was given the opportunity to serve on the Board of Directors and share my perspective as a graduate student, researcher, and mentor of students from diverse backgrounds. I'm incredibly proud of the work our section has done to rethink our strategic plan, offer amazing and educational meetings in the face of a pandemic, and update our scholarship program to support a more diverse group of passionate students and leaders in range."

Julie has moved to Oregon, but is continuing to volunteer with the Colorado Section.

Congratulations Julie! 🐾

CSU RANGE CLUB

By Connor Wilson,
President, CSU Range Club

This fall semester, the CSU range club has been getting involved in making meaningful connections and gaining valuable field experience. On October 6th-7th, two range club members attended the Colorado Section of the Society for Range Management meeting in Grand Junction. Both students were able to meet with local CSSRM members, industry professionals, and many more, and were able to learn about the frontier of rangeland ecosystem research in our local area. On the following Saturday, October 9th, four of us drove south to the town of Kiowa to work on a rangeland monitoring project on land owned by the Malone family foundation. Dan Nosal, a board member of CSSRM, met us there and assisted us with all we were going to need to know. He trained us on how to identify many local species, as well as the specific methods used on this site to properly obtain our data. The work lasted for a good part of the day and gave us valuable insight into some of the work a rangeland professional might conduct in the field. The club continues to meet and discuss further opportunities for our students, and we are excited to continue to get involved in areas that matter. 🐾



A final group photo to end the day! From left to right: Gabriela Szytniec, Beatrice Lincke, Tyler Carlson, and Conner Wilson



YOUTH ACTIVITIES

By: Ben Berlinger

CO Section SRM Youth Activities Chair

High school agriculture students from across eastern and western Colorado competed this fall in four FFA Range Judging and Plant Identification contests. Three regional events were held across Colorado with the eastern Colorado state range judging event held in Seibert. These youth educational events were sponsored by the Colorado Section of the Society for Range Management (CSSRM) as part of our youth activities program. The hosting FFA Chapters were Branson, New Raymer, Southern Routt County, Hi-Plains (Seibert), Stratton, Arickaree (Cope), and Flagler. Other sponsors were several of the conservation districts all across eastern Colorado. The generous support of these sponsors is greatly appreciated!

The Southeast CO Regional was held at the school in Branson on September 22nd. The Branson school administration sent the entire student body

on a field trip for the day leaving the Branson FFA Chapter students to host the range judging event! The Northeast CO Regional was held at the Prairie school near New Raymer on September 29th. The Northwest CO Regional was held at the Southern Routt County school in Oak Creek on October 8th. On October 15th the Eastern CO State range judging event was held at the Community Center in Seibert.

The Range Judging Contest is one of many FFA Career Development Events (CDE's) agriculture students can participate in to test their skills and knowledge learned through their agricultural education classes. Through the Range Judging Contest students are tested on their plant identification skills and reading the landscape to determine the ecological site, condition of the rangeland, amount of usable forage, and number of animals that can be supported on the land.

These four educational events involved a total of 270 agriculture students representing 27 FFA chapters across Colorado. Students were divided into

three groups to identify 30 to 50 range plant species and two ecological sites. During the plant identification portion students had 60 seconds to identify the plant before moving on to the next plant. At the two ecological sites, students had 40 minutes to complete a rangeland inventory to determine the ecological site, condition of the site, and a range management scenario that was provided and required the students to recommend the best range/grazing management practices. Judging the two ecological sites also tested the students plant identification skills.

Thank you to all the FFA Advisors, bus drivers, local Conservation Districts, the Colorado State Land Board and the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service for helping make these events a success for all the participating high school agriculture students. A special thank you goes out to the Will Ward Ranch, Dan Doherty Ranch, Kugler Ranch, Hatfield Ranch, and Colorado state land board for allowing the use of their rangeland for these educational youth events. 🌲

YOUTH ACTIVITIES



Brody Doherty and Emma Amato, both Branson FFA, received CSSRM plaques for high scoring individuals at the Southeast CO Regional range management event in Branson. The sponsoring conservation districts were the Branson-Trinchera, Spanish Peaks-Purgatoire River, and West Otero Timpas. 1st Place Team Branson FFA, 2nd Place Kim FFA, 3rd Place Hoehne FFA. 125 agriculture students participated from 13 FFA Chapters throughout southeastern Colorado.



At right—Kayla Rossi received the high scoring individual honors for both plant id and site judging at the north-west Colorado regional range judging event held at the Southern Routt County school in Oak Creek. Pictured with Kayla is her Agriculture Teacher Reece Melton. The event was sponsored by the Routt County Conservation District. This was a first-time event for northwest Colorado and is sure to be continued based on the interest shown by the sponsor, students and FFA advisors.

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Gracie Clark, Karval FFA, (left photo) and Nic Hermes, Arickaree FFA, (right photo) received CSSRM plaques for high scoring individuals on plant identification and combined plant id and ecological site judging at the Northeast CO Regional event in New Raymer. Bobbie Schreiner, New Raymer FFA Chapter President, assisted with the awards. There were 68 students representing 10 FFA Chapters participating at the event. The West Greeley Conservation District provided the lunch. The Arickaree FFA range judging team received Gold honors, New Raymer (Prairie School) received Silver honors and the Karval FFA range team received the Bronze award.



At the Eastern CO State event Braden Wedel (center) of the Stratton FFA accepts his recognition for highest individual achievement for both plant id and ecological site judging. Pictured from left to right are Dan Nosal and Ben Berlinger CO Section SRM Youth Activities Committee members. The state event was sponsored by the Burlington and Flagler Conservation Districts together with several of the conservation districts throughout eastern Colorado. Participating were 212 students representing 22 FFA districts from all parts of eastern Colorado.

PAST PRESIDENT DONATES BUCKLE

Former CSSRM (1982) and SRM President (1988), and Trail Boss Award recipient, Bill Laycock recently donated his Trail Boss (1985) buckle to the Colorado Section.

Bill spent his childhood on ranches near Cheyenne and in the Sybille area.

After graduating from the University of Wyoming in 1952 with his bachelor's and master's degrees in Range Management, Bill joined the army, serving in Korea.

While home on leave he met his soon-to-be wife Charlotte, an elementary school teacher, while she was attending University of Wyoming summer school. From the *Laramie Boomerang* profile of 2019..."I asked her to dance, and asked her out, and just in a week, we decided to get married," Laycock recalled. "She was a wonderful person and we just happened to find each other."

Upon receiving his doctorate from Rutgers University, the Laycock's returned to the west where Bill conducted range management research for the USDA before returning to Laramie to become Head of the Department of Range Management. He retired in 1996. He also did work on the USDA Central Plains Experimental Range.

Bill and his wife traveled the world, including trips to Kenya, Switzerland, Ireland, England, France, Nova Scotia, Australia and the South Pole. Charlotte passed away in 2017.

Bill was chair of the SRM Rangeland Reference Areas committee from 1972 to 1976. He chaired the Professional Affairs Committee from 1974 to 1975. Also in 1975, he authored the Rangeland Reference Areas article in the Range Science Series published by SRM.

Bill received SRM's Outstanding Achievement Award in 1985 and was a member of the Fellows of the Society for Range Management. He served on the SRM Board from 1978 to 1980.

Bill, a life-long rodeo fan, was also a rodeo advisor at the colleges where he worked and as their children grew, he would often announce at youth rodeos.

Dr. Alan Beetle, Bill's former academic advisor, started the



William and Charlotte Laycock scholarship in their honor.

Former CSSRM President Joshua "JT" Tashiro made the trip to Laramie to visit with Bill and receive the buckle on behalf of the Colorado Section.

Now age 91, Bill has certainly shown what it truly means to be a hero and a "Trail Boss". 🐾

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Maybell, Colorado. Photo by Baili Foster

By Kathleen Delzell, Membership Chair

A HUGE THANK YOU to all of you within CSSRM who have made this past year such a change from 2020. For me, personally, getting to the 3R Ranch tour, and helping Ben Berlinger with the Ignacio Field Day/Teacher training workshop were highlights of this year.

This is the first time I've been asked to give you a membership report this time of year, so I thought I would focus on timing of when we pay our SRM memberships. Here are the side-by-sides for three months. Pretty close, aren't they? I've labeled these Renewals, but they could also be new members, or past SRM members who are rejoining us.

2020 - Renewal Month + # of renewals	2021 - Renewal Month + # of renewals
September – 3	September – 2
October – 2	October – 3
November – 2	As of November 25 – 1

Each year, SRM/Allen Press sends Renewal Reminders in the fall to current members – I've received three - October 20th, November 10th, November 17th. Have I renewed? Nope. I am usually traveling in these months.

Now if Allen Press is following past procedure, you and I plus lapsed members from the past four years will soon receive a snail mail Renewal Reminder.

I don't know what that costs our organization, but perhaps I should ask.

Maybe I should just begin to renew my membership in the fall? Does a paper mailing catch your attention more than the email reminders? Any thoughts on the matter? Let me know.

Will I renew this week or next? Probably not, I'm leaving on another trip in two days and when I return to Colorado I'll be on the downhill side of Thanksgiving, heading to Christmas.

I usually renew when I register for an Annual Meeting, and often that's on New Year's Eve which for me is a time to catch my breathe at the end of one year, and take a look at what I see myself doing the next year.

Going back to our Colorado Section pattern of renewing/joining SRM: The first real wave of renewals/new members occurs in December - 45 in 2020; 45 renewals/new members in February; 58 renewals/new members in March.

How To Keep Your SRM Profile Up-To-Date:

For the 25 of you who are Life Members and Life Member spouses: Allen Press will automatically renew your membership on January 1st. But changes in your profile (email address, USPS address, phone numbers) if any have occurred this past year, need to be made by you, either by going to this link, or by



Kathleen Delzell (center) pictured with Chris Lapine (left) and Liza Woolard at Allen Press.

calling Chris Lapine [(785) 865-9210] at Allen Press. He is also reachable at clapine@allenpress.com. Liza Woolard is his back-up person.

For the rest of us, if you have changes in your profile information, you can use that same link.

If you have difficulties, you can let me know, or call Chris directly. Here's the photo of Chris and Liza from May 2019 when I was able to stop in Lawrence, Kansas, and meet them outside the rush of an Annual Meeting. 🏠

BEYOND THE GATE

“It Turns on Affection,” Wendell Berry’s

2012 Jefferson Lecture in the Humanities, puts a fence around a broad-ranging ethic that, at least in part, speaks to what holds CSSRM together. It starts with a common concern for rangelands, and manifests itself in a group of volunteers helping steward a community.

All of us have had our challenges, great and small, the last couple of years, but the pages of this newsletter, and the previous newsletters, show that during this time of pandemic the Section managed to put on some excellent events and tours; recognize outstanding professional and on-the-ground achievement; encourage a new generation of practitioners through scholarships and grants; and support youth engagement with rangelands through collaboration with FFA instructors and Colorado Conservation Districts.

Part way through his essay, Mr. Berry quotes Keith Critchlow (1933-2020), “The human mind takes apart with its analytic habits of reasoning but the human heart puts things together because it loves them.” Is that not the science and art of range management? The greatest of achievements of science, the finest of ranches, are built on passions.

I would encourage you to pay your SRM dues on time, but why not also ask a colleague, client or friend to be a part of the community? When the call goes out for Board elections this coming summer, why not jump in? It’s not that big a lift and you can make a difference. The team is awesome.

As I move toward closing out my time on the Board, I’d like to thank all of you for allowing a person with no more credentials than some livestock and some crazy ideas to be a part of the community.

Best wishes,

Emmett Jordan, Newsletter Chair, jordancattleco@gmail.com

Photo by Emmett Jordan