

Youth Present Papers at Range Society Annual Meeting

Colorado high school students **Jedediah Ballard, Chrisily Furia, and Elaine Shannon** were selected by the Colorado Section of the Society for Range Management (SRM) to participate in the High School Youth Forum (HSYF), an SRM sponsored youth activity held jointly during the 76th SRM annual meeting held in Boise, Idaho on February 12-16, 2023.

Jedediah is currently a sophomore at **Fowler high school**; Chrisily is a junior at **Hoehne high school**; and Elaine is a junior attending **Kim high school**. All three students were selected to represent the CO Section SRM based on their outstanding achievements last year in the *Colorado FFA range judging and plant identification* events. Elaine is a two-year graduate in the range management curriculum at *Camp Rocky*. Fowler Agriculture teacher/FFA Advisor Brenten Ormiston along with John Shannon, Elaine's dad, and Chris Furia, Chrisily's dad, attended the Forum with the students to broaden their knowledge of range management and the functions of the SRM.

All three of these Ag/FFA students said they enjoyed the Forum and benefitted by interacting with twenty-two fellow students from all over the western United States and Canada who shared a common interest in the stewardship of rangelands. In addition to gaining valuable experience in writing and presenting a formal presentation these high school students gained exposure to the mechanisms of the SRM and the professionals and ranchers who make up its membership.

At the SRM Awards Ceremony the top five presentations are recognized based on the evaluations of five judges. Chrisily was honored with **third-place** for her presentation on cattle-wildlife interactions on the rangelands in southeastern Colorado. Elaine's presentation highlighted the rangeland monitoring techniques and conservation benefits on her families ranch near Kim. Jedediah presented his paper on the benefits and disadvantages of prairie dogs on our rangelands. All three students made visits, or did interviews, with local ranchers to gain information about their topics and learn about the range management practices being applied.

Visit the Colorado Section SRM's website at www.cssrm.org to read all three papers presented by these outstanding high school youth. The images below highlight the event.



Colorado High School Youth Forum delegates Jedediah Ballard, Elaine Shannon, and Chrisily Furia.



Delegates learn about the local rangelands and water issues during the ecological field tour on the Snake River.



Students interact with public land ranchers during the ecological field trip.