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### President's Message

Volume 2, Spring/Summer 2007

#### Wyoming's State Grass

We now have an official Wyoming State Grass. I know that most of you, myself included, thought we already had a State Grass. Well, we did have a "self-proclaimed" State Grass, it just wasn't official, as the State Legislature had never designated a State Grass. It was widely accepted throughout the rangeland management community, that Pascopyrum smithii (or for us old timers Agropyron smithii), western wheatgrass, was our state grass and with the passage of Senate File 106, it is now official.

In January, Phil Gonzales brought it to my attention that our state grass might be changed by the Wyoming Legislature. After investigating Senate File 106, sponsored by Senator Gerald Geis of Worland (Senate District 20), I discovered that Bouteloua gracilis, blue grama was being proposed as Wyoming's state grass. How could this happen? We thought we already had a state grass. As it turns out, a fourth grade class from Worland this year took on the project to sponsor a bill to name Wyoming's state grass. Senator Geis graciously agreed to sponsor the bill on behalf of the class in a noble attempt to introduce the students to the legislative process. So here I come

in beating up on some defenseless fourth grade class's bill. Let it be known, however, that it is also important for fourth graders to know how introduced bills are amended and I simply provided a "teachable moment". They can thank me later!

After learning of SRM's concern with the bill, Senate Ag. Committee Chairman Geis invited me to address the committee. I presented to them scientific information differentiating blue grama and western wheatgrass along with background information including the fact that professionals in the range management community acknowledged western wheatgrass as the State Grass. The bill, as amended to recognize Western wheatgrass as the State Grass in lieu of Blue grama passed the Senate Ag Committee and went to the floor of the Senate where it passed and then eventually to the House of Representatives, where it also passed. The Governor has signed the bill into law.

I would like to give thanks to:

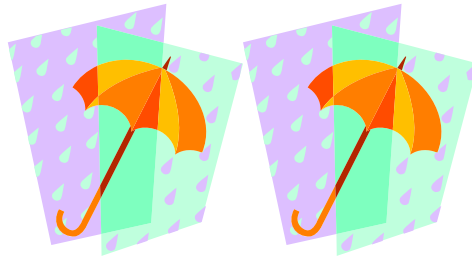
**Senator Gerald Geis**, for working closely with me on this matter.

**Phil Gonzales**, NRCS District Conservationist in Buffalo, for bringing this to my attention.

**Bobbie Frank** with the Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts, for helping me around the capital and making sure that I knew the format and the do's and don'ts that would be expected of me while speaking.

I would have to say that it was a great opportunity for me to be a part of this.

Monte



*Wishful thinking*

## **Livestock: A Powerful Wildlife Management Tool**

by Karen Launchbaugh

submitted by Matt Hoobler, Wyoming Department of Agriculture

“Habitat” is an area that provides forage, water, cover, and space; it is basically the “home” of a species. The question at hand is: Can livestock and wildlife share the same home without conflict? Many would say “no” viewing livestock as greedy creatures that steal resource needed by defenseless wildlife. However, rangeland scientists and managers realize that there are many instances when livestock can graze an area without detrimental and sometimes even positive effects on wildlife.

### **Livestock as Habitat Management Tools**

There is no doubt that the mismanagement of livestock can degrade rangeland habitat for wildlife and livestock. However, livestock may also be powerful management tools if used properly. Dr. Fred Guthery, of the Ceasar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute, went so far as to say that “No habitat management tool is more powerful than the cow. Give her a little salt, supplement and water, and she manages millions of acres of (bobwhite) cover. Like any powerful tool, she can be harmful or helpful depending on how she’s applied.” A large body of scientific literature now supports this contention.

There are many ways that an individual cow, sheep, or goat can improve habitat value for wildlife. Species such as deer, sharptail grouse, pronghorn, and elk prefer habitats with considerable diversity. This diversity can be created by livestock grazing. Of particular importance is the creation of feeding, nesting, and hiding sites created in short proximity of one another. Cattle and horses can be expertly used to open dense vegetation and remove rank grass. This creates travel corridors from small wildlife, like turkeys, and encourages high quality regrowth of grasses to improve forage quality for deer.

If stands of high quality browse are desired for cover and forage, livestock can do that too. The removal of grass by grazing of cattle and sheep encourages the establishment and growth of shrubs. At higher stocking rates, livestock may browse existing shrubs which encourages lateral sprouting causing the growth of tender, nutritious shoots and creating more dense “bushier” shrubs for excellent hiding cover.

Finally, the close grazing of specific areas can create small open weedy patches. These succulent weeds are high quality forage for deer and upland game birds. Livestock can also be used to create bare areas around water sources and wells that are necessary for feeding, dusting and courtship displays by upland game birds and song birds.

### **Grazing Management for Habitat Improvement**

With careful management, the beneficial effects of livestock grazing can be arranged into planned grazing systems to benefit wildlife. Strategic grazing can be used to meet specific wildlife habitat management goals such as creating areas for wildlife cover and other areas of high quality forage.

The potential of a planned grazing system to improve wildlife habitat is great. However, successful systems require a thorough understanding of how livestock grazing changes plant communities and an intimate knowledge of the habitat requirements of specific wildlife species. A manager must carefully select a wildlife species to direct management objectives because various wildlife species can differ greatly in their habitat needs. In other words, managing land for sage grouse may not be good for prairie dogs.

Strategic grazing = use of livestock as manipulative tools in wildlife habitat management to create specific habitat conditions.

### **Conclusion**

Can livestock and wildlife share the same home without conflict? Some competition between livestock and wildlife for natural resources is inevitable. However, much of this competition can be mitigated with careful livestock and rangeland management. Thus, the answer to the question depends on skill of the manager.



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***Society for Range Management  
Wyoming Section  
And  
The Wildlife Society  
Wyoming Chapter***

**Invite you to attend  
A Joint Annual Convention**

**November 27-28, 2007  
Lander, WY**

**Information and Education Committee  
By Patty Slack**

Information and Education Committees' activities are varied. A news release on the up coming Range Management Schools and their schedule was sent to "Wyoming Livestock Roundup" February 13 to get the information out to the general public. The Range Schools began March 13 with Range 101 at Kaycee on March 13, followed by Ft. Washakie on April 4, Cheyenne, April 10 and Southern Wyoming in April or May. Range 301 schools began in Southwest Wyoming in April or May followed by June 5 – 7 in Kaycee. Range 501 has its week long training session in Casper June 25 – 29. For additional information on any of the schools contact Joe Hicks at [jhicks01@fs.fed.us](mailto:jhicks01@fs.fed.us) or (307) 527-6921.

Sponsoring an SRM members summer field day has been suggested. One thought was to have it in connection with the WyRED days at Medicine Bow June 17 – 22 since the summer council meeting is scheduled for Thursday the 21<sup>st</sup> during the camp. Combining the two activities would reduce travel time and expense while giving members the opportunity to observe and/or assist with WyRED then participate in the society's activities. Drawback is some of the SRM members would be busy helping the campers and running the camp and would not have a chance to take part in the SRM agenda. Suggestions from SRM members on when and where to have a summer field tour are most welcome. Contact Patty at [pslack@wyoming.com](mailto:pslack@wyoming.com) or 307-856-6151.

Andi Meyer will take the SRM's booth to the summer Wyoming Stock Growers meeting May 31 – June 2nd or 3<sup>rd</sup> at Riverton. Other sites for setting up the SRM booth are the September 18 – 20 Wildlife Expo, Casper, Wyoming State Fair August 12 – 18 in Douglas, and WACD meeting in October. Volunteers are needed to man the booth at these functions. If you can help, please let Patty know of your interest at [pslack@wyoming.com](mailto:pslack@wyoming.com) or 307-856-6151.

The council held their winter meeting via teleconference February 8 with most of the council present. The financial report indicated the society has a positive balance in the bank account. Return from the state meeting was \$6,700 income and \$500 of expenses with balance of \$6200. Of the total income, the horse auction brought in \$750 for educational purposes and the crazy auction \$916 for the range club. The Sheridan meeting attendance was great. The state grass bill progressed through the legislature and at the teleconference, western wheat was the chosen species. The quilt raffle tickets are dragging. It was decided not to draw for the quilt until the \$2000 goal is met. If you have tickets in your possession, Please get them sold!! There are many tickets out. If you haven't time to sell them, send immediately to Phil Gonzales. Brenden reported on WyRED. To date, the group hasn't received a commissioner's hunting license to sell. Without the license, their budget will be short as there will be no funds from NRCS this year. There was extensive discussion concerning the Range Club's request for travel funds. It was decided to have the club justify their need before appropriating the funds. Summer Schultz gave a report on the Young Professionals Club. Their membership is currently 130. They are working on a mentoring program under the guidance of the parent society with Kyle Schmitt as the mentor status contact.

## **Mitigating the Jonah Field** by Matt Hoobler

The Jonah Interagency Mitigation and Reclamation Office (JIO) received fourteen new project applications for review in its second round of off-site mitigation project proposals. Off-site mitigation projects are intended to enhance landscape areas impacted by Jonah Infill development. In addition, two projects were deferred from the first cycle for consideration, bringing the total number of projects being evaluated to sixteen with a potential expenditure of greater than \$5 million. Project evaluation and selection should be completed in May, 2007.

### **About the JIO**

The JIO was created by the Jonah Project Record of Decision (ROD) to provide overall management of field monitoring and mitigation activities, both on- and off-site. To perform these functions, the JIO manages a \$24.5 million monitoring and mitigation fund donated by EnCana Oil & Gas (USA), Inc.

The JIO is staffed with a full-time person from each of the following agencies; Wyoming Department of Agriculture, Wyoming Game & Fish Department, Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality and the Department of the Interior/Bureau of Land Management. The BLM staff person manages the office and serves as JIO Project Coordinator.

EnCana's commitment of \$24.5 million to a compensatory mitigation fund is divided into \$16.5 million for off-site mitigation of wildlife impacts and \$8 million for other positive environmental impacts. First year costs of the JIO, including overhead and salaries, will be approximately \$600,000 for all agencies, while subsequent years should require less overhead. All JIO funds are held by the Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust, established by the State of Wyoming to protect wildlife habitat and other natural resources. No more than 20 percent of the total, or \$4.8 million, may be spent each year.

The JIO solicits project proposals from interested parties (individuals, agencies or organizations) on a semi-annual basis. Generally, these projects must meet the spirit of the JIDP EIS - namely mitigating resource impacts associated with the Jonah Field development. In addition to managing the Jonah Field on- and off-site monitoring and mitigation, the JIO provides adaptive management recommendations to the BLM regarding overall field development. Recommendations will be based on ongoing evaluations of current mitigation effectiveness. Extensive public outreach will be employed to ensure JIO activities are open and available to interested organizations, groups and/or individuals. For more information on the JIO, visit: [http://www.wy.blm.gov/jonah\\_office/](http://www.wy.blm.gov/jonah_office/).

# Wyoming Resource Educational Days' (WyRED)/Range Camp Fund Raiser

Are you doing range inventories this summer and in need of range hoops? Well, we have them! As a fund raiser for the Annual WyRED Range Camp, we are now selling range inventory hoops! We currently offer three sizes of hoops: 9.6, 4.8 and 1.92. The cost of each hoop is \$15.00 or a set of all three for \$40.00. All proceeds will go towards funding WyRED. For more information, or to place an order, please contact Brendan Brazee at [oryzopsis@gmail.com](mailto:oryzopsis@gmail.com) or Ben Bonella at [sorghastrum@yahoo.com](mailto:sorghastrum@yahoo.com).

**Just as a friendly reminder, the annual WyRED Range Camp will be held at the Elk Mountain Ranger Station June 17-22, with the State Range Judging Contest on the 6/22** For more information on the camp, visit the following link found on the Wyoming Section SRM home page:

<http://uwacadweb.uwyo.edu/wysrm/WyRED%202007.pdf>



## *Wyoming Section Society for Range Management*

### **Council Meeting Conference Call 02/08/07**

Those on the conference call were Monte Bush, Matt Hoobler, Andi Myer, Bob Sprentall, Summer Shultz, Phil Gonzales Patti Slack, Kay Medders, Janelle Gonzales, Branden Brazee, Marji Patz, and Misty Hays.

The minutes were read from the Annual Meeting and the Council meeting that followed the next day. Andi moved and Matt second to approve the minutes. Approved. Since this was not the end of a quarter there was no Treasure Report. Bob will send out the final 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2006 report and the Year End Report.

Monte wanted to personally thank Rick Dunn for all of his efforts on putting together the Annual meeting. There was discussion about the meeting but the comments were very positive about the format of the meeting and having it jointly with the Soil and Water Conservation Association. The Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts has approached Monte in having a joint meeting.

Monte worked with Bobby Frank on how to properly lobby being from a government agency but yet representing the Society for Range Management on the proposal by the Wyoming Legislature in having Blue gramma as the State grass. Monte worked with Bobby in preparing the amendment to have western

wheatgrass as the State grass and had the Wyoming Section SRM as co-sponsors of the amendment. The work that Bobby did in preparing Monte was very valuable.

Who has the Bronze? Phil wanted to take the lead in working with the Range Club Students in selling the bronze. It was decided that Phil was to prepare a business plan that would provided incentives for the students to hold a raffle in selling the bronze. The raffle ticket funds raised in selling the bronze would be put in a line item for the Range Club on our budget sheet. Phil also stated he would also work with the students in selling tickets for the quilt raffle and set a date for the drawing.


WYRED is June 17 through 22. It is going to be in the vicinity of Medicine Bow. The Council meeting will be on Thursday, June 21. There was discussion about having a field trip during WYRED that ties in with the Council meeting. It was also discussed on having a field trip during the Annual meeting.

Summer Shultz was on the call to represent the Young Professional Conclave group. This group could help with Rangeland Cup, URME and maybe even WYRED. Summer gave a briefing on the purpose of the Young Professional Conclave group.

Misty gave an update on the next Annual meeting. It will be a joint meeting with the Wyoming Wildlife Society. The meeting will take place in mid to late November with a location probably in Lander, WY.

In review and discussion of the Budget, the only question raised concerned the request from the Range Club. We have the funds to support the Range Club, however there needs to be a justification by the Range Club on the amount of request as to who is participating in what activities. Misty brought up the idea of having a set amount to allocate to the Range Club so they know how much to budget for attending the International meeting. Andi suggested on paying for the registration amount for those individual attending. This would give the Range club a fixed amount and they could budget for that amount. WYRED may not get funding from GLCI and the Commissioners License. There needs to be some serious thought given to and trying to locate alternative funding for WYRED. Misty moved to approve the budget and get with the Range club on their request and what future action is being proposed for a fixed amount. Patti second. Motion approved.

Bob Sprentall  
Secretary/Treasure



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# Wyoming's New Seed Law

By Richard Dunne

Significant changes in our seed law were passed by the legislature this year (HB123), which address weeds, the seed lab and regulatory process.

Recognizing the need for a more dynamic and species-flexible law, the Society of Range Management, Wyoming Crop Improvement Association, Weed and Pest Council and Department of Agriculture undertook a revision of existing law.

Before the new law, all noxious weeds were set by statute into three categories: "prohibited noxious" (zero tolerance), "restricted noxious" (45 seeds per pound) and "other weeds" (2%). Technically, each species included had to be voted onto the weed list by the legislature though the Department of Agriculture had found a round-about way to add weeds. Now, new weeds will be added to the list through a review process utilizing the Dept. of Ag, the State Seed Analyst and the Seed Lab Advisory Group through regulation rather than statute.

Arising out of the desire to control the unintentional planting of cheat grass, (*Bromus tectorum*), we have added a new category: "Regulated Weeds". Before this law, cheat grass was allowed at 2%, which roughly factors to 4800 seeds per pound as a contaminant in all seed sold in Wyoming. Recognizing that existing categories were either too lenient to slow the spread of cheat grass or too strict beyond the capability of the seed industry, the legislature created a fourth category labeled as "Regulated Weeds" in which specific tolerance can be set for individual problem species. The current consensus is that all the weedy annual bromes will be listed as "Regulated Weeds" and capped at 1200 seeds per pound (0.5%), which is a fourfold improvement over the previous law. As

seed production technology advances we hope to lower this limit.

Other changes that may affect land managers are the increase of secondary noxious weed caps from 45 to 50 seeds per pound. This was done because just one seed found in a lab sample could quarantine a seed lot, where now it will take at least two seeds in a sample. Additionally, the use of a tetrazolium test (TZ) is now legally used in species for which no germination rules have been established by the Association of Seed Analysts. TZs for species in which rules of germination have been established may be still be used with consent between buyer and seller. TZs will remain common in Wyoming were time does not allow for a slow germination test but this law now recognizes for the first time the legitimate use of TZs.

As with all good laws, the devil is in the details and regulatory rules are now being drawn for the Department of Agriculture to administer. So far the process has been professional and comprehensive. Expect a large number of new weeds to show up as Prohibited Noxious Weeds in the near future. Our philosophy is to head off problems by aggressively listing weeds that have proven themselves very troublesome in surrounding states. Criteria for designation will include such qualities as competitiveness against natives, economic loss to crops or livestock, difficulty of control, allelopathic or competitive attributes and others. We must be very careful to establish reasonable and compelling criteria for inclusion of weeds onto these lists lest they become a political football. A full copy of the new law may be viewed at the website of the Wyoming State Legislature: <http://legisweb.state.wy.us/2007/bills.htm>



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## “Wyoming Rangeland Management Schools”

### Presented by Wyoming Section of the Society for Range Management

Wyoming is the second state to develop a series of Rangeland Management Schools for people interested in or making a living on western rangelands. Putting on a range school had been discussed by Wyoming Section members prior to the 2004 Annual SRM Meeting in Salt Lake City. At this meeting, Colorado's Range Management Schools staff gave a presentation on their successes in training ranchers and the public in using and preserving rangelands. Wyoming's schools came to fruition shortly after the presentation. A team of SRM Section members from the University of Wyoming, UW Cooperative Extension, Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service organized and the Wyoming Rangeland Management Schools were born.

*The team developed a curriculum outline for a series of three rangeland management schools. Range 101 is a one-day introduction to the art and science of range management and includes presentations on how plants grow, the time and timing of grazing, animal behavior, and simple, yet effective monitoring methodologies that can be used on both private and federally owned rangelands. Some schools have also featured presentations from ranchers describing their self-monitoring programs, methods used and the benefits they feel they have received from monitoring range conditions and livestock grazing. Wyoming's first Range 101 School was presented in Sheridan in June 2005 followed by additional schools in Rawlins, Cokeville, Cody, Upton and Lander in the following year (2006). Comments from the more than 225 people from private ranches, interest groups and federal agencies attending these six schools indicated the schools were well received and increased the attendee's understanding of rangelands management techniques.*

The first Range 301 School was held in Sheridan in June 2006. This school is a half-day review and additional discussion of the topics covered during Range 101 followed by a full day in the field for plant identification and a demonstration of and “hands on” practice of the monitoring methodologies introduced in Range 101. To aid in handling the livestock being grazed on the rangeland, a half-day of low stress livestock handling techniques was presented. Twenty-four students from both side of the Bighorn Mountains attended this session.

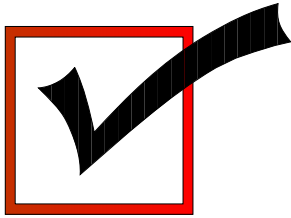
Attending a Range 101 school is encouraged prior to attending Range 301 but it is not a mandatory requirement. The curriculum for the weeklong 501 class includes prescribed fire, livestock/wildlife and watershed management, rangeland inventory, managing invasive species, range improvements, developing a grazing management plan and a hands on low stress livestock handling session.

The Range Schools schedule for 2007:

June 5-7 – WYRMS 301, Kaycee

June 25-29 – WYRMS 501, Casper

For more information on the Wyoming Rangeland Management Schools contact Joe Hicks at (307) 527-6921 or [jhicks01@fs.fed.us](mailto:jhicks01@fs.fed.us).



## ***What's In This Issue Wyoming Section SRM Newsletter***

- ⌘ Message From President Monte Bush
- ⌘ Livestock: A Powerful Wildlife Management Tool
- ⌘ Wyoming's New Seed Law
- ⌘ Invitation for Annual Meeting, November 27-28, Lander, WY
- ⌘ And Much More.....

*Deadline for the next Newsletter Articles: August 15, 2007*

**Wyoming Section Newsletter**  
**Society for Range Management**  
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