

SECOND EDITION 2003 – 2004

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Contributions

Thanks very much to Allen Patkau (Chair, Saskatchewan Prairie Conservation Action Plan), Karyn Scalise (Manager, SK-PCAP), and Dale Weisbrot for contributing materials for this edition of the WHC Newsletter.

Thanks also to Wendell Gilgert, for his latest "Notes from the chair" installment. I would like to encourage all WHC members to consider developing articles of 500 to 700 words for publication in our newsletter. Longer articles will also be considered since they are much easier to handle now that we have switched to electronic format. Articles may include your thoughts on a topical issue important to the WHC, or your editorial comments on previous articles. I still have article slots that need to be filled before the Salt Lake meeting. Send any materials to me at:

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Chad

Saskatchewan Prairie Conservation Action Plan (SK-PCAP)

Allen Patkau and Karyn Scalise

The 2003 –2008 Saskatchewan Prairie Conservation Action Plan (PCAP) has been launched! Approximately 130 people attended a signing ceremony that was held at the Royal Saskatchewan Museum in Regina on June 17th. The 18 month renewal process involved 19 of our 25 diverse Partner Groups that share the Vi-

sion that "the native prairie be sustained in a healthy state in which natural and human values are respected". The renewed Plan contains 25 Objectives and 72 Action items that are tied to our five Goals:

- Goal 1: To sustain a healthy native prairie grazing resource**
- Goal 2: To conserve the remaining native prairie resource**
- Goal 3: To maintain native prairie biological diversity**
- Goal 4: To promote complementary sustainable uses of native prairie**
- Goal 5: To increase awareness and understanding of native prairie and its values**

The SK-PCAP is chaired by the Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association

(SSGA) and is managed through a consensual and cooperative approach. Our 25 Partner groups provide representation from industry, federal and provincial government agencies, various NGOs and Saskatchewan's two Universities.

Canada's first prairie-wide PCAP was initiated by World Wildlife Fund Canada (WWFC) in 1989 and Partners consisted primarily of conservation agencies and organizations and academic institutions. Although well written and visionary, this Plan failed to accomplish many of its objectives. Saskatchewan

launched its first five year PCAP in 1998. This Plan was successful in advancing progress on many of its actions. These successes were attributed to inclusion of the livestock sector in the development and delivery of the Plan, targeted resources for Plan implementation, an implementation strategy complete with assigned responsibilities and timelines, annual evaluations to identify progress and shortfalls, and special initiatives to raise awareness of native prairie such as Native Prairie Appreciation Week (NPAW).



Saskatchewan Prairie Conservation Action Plan (SK-PCAP) *continued...*

The Society for Range Management's (SRMs) *Discovering the Big Muddy Badlands Workshop and Field Tour* was a huge success this year, attracting over 100 participants. The event featured a workshop on the Big Muddy and range management as well as ranch tours. The SRM workshop and tour was held during Saskatchewan's 5th annual NPAW that runs during the 3rd week of June. The purpose of NPAW is to bring together ranchers, naturalists, native plant enthusiasts, resource agency specialists and others in celebrating the diverse values of native prairie.

We are gearing up for another busy and exciting year of stewardship education programs for elementary school students featuring PCAPs Cows, Fish, Cattle Dogs and a Kids Game Show on riparian stewardship and the Saskatchewan Burrowing Owl Interpretive Center's (SBOICs) Owls On Tour Program. Stay tuned for more information on these highly acclaimed, interactive programs in future updates from the SK-PCAP.

We will continue to deliver presentations on the PCAP at several venues this year, including a Grassland Symposium in Colorado in September. Our role will be to promote the SK PCAP as a model for

prairie conservation across the Great Plains and to increase understanding of the vital role played by the livestock industry in the conservation and management of prairie landscapes.

Please contact us for more information and to receive a copy of our 2003-2008 Plan.

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"Our 25 Partner groups provide representation from industry, federal and provincial government agencies, various NGOs and Saskatchewan's two Universities."

SRM Board Discusses BSE & Impacts on Canadian Rangeland

Dale Weisbrot

The SRM Board of Directors looked at the Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) and its Impact on Canadian Rangeland at their October meeting in Washington DC. Dale Weisbrot brought the issue to the Board's attention. Executive vice-president Sam Albrecht thought they could look at the BSE issue from the rangeland

resource angle.

The SRM Board of Directors met in Washington DC on October 22-23; Dale provided background on the BSE impacts in Canada with the hope that it may be conveyed to some of the DC people. Since SRM is the professional scientific society

BSE *continued...*

and conservation organization whose members are concerned with studying, conserving, managing and sustaining the rangeland resources internationally, Dale felt it was important to alert the Board about the situation. As we know, SRM's mission is to promote and enhance the stewardship of rangelands to meet human needs based on science and sound policy.

On May 20, 2003 a single beef cow from Alberta Canada was reported positive to BSE - Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy. The animal was condemned at slaughter thus the carcass was not used for human consumption. Although more than 2,700 animals were destroyed and tested as part of the investigation, no other case was found.

As a standard international response to news of an occurrence of BSE in an exporting country, the United States implemented a temporary closure of its borders to imports of Canadian cattle and beef and other ruminants and their products as a result of the announcement of confirmation of BSE in an Alberta cow. Beef exports to Japan, Korea and Mexico were also halted. The United States is a major importer of Canadian Beef (both slaughtered and live) and these cattle have had to remain in Canada while the border was closed.

An International Evaluation Committee Report on Canada's investigation into the BSE case in the single cow confirms that the beef industry in North America is an integrated industry and decisions made need to reflect that reality. It was hoped that the report would assist the U.S. and

other countries to recognize that all necessary steps have been taken and the science shows that Canadian beef is safe and would once again be available in the global marketplace.



The reduced cow slaughter means the cows are on the land, consuming pasture or other feed resources instead of sitting on a meat tray. Since the border closure began in late May, the impacts to the majority of the cow calf producers were somewhat lessened because their animals were on summer pasture.

Because the previously normal outlet for live cattle was cut off, there are significant numbers of cattle "backed up" in the system. Feed, forage and pasture land will need to be secured for these animals. Unfortunately, most of the western Canadian rangeland managers are (or should be) in drought recovery mode but with the BSE crisis there is extra pressure on the forage resources due to the "forced" retained ownership. Should the limited market situation for the Canadian cattle producers continue, there could be significant degradation of rangeland resources.

There are also negative impacts on US slaughter facilities in the northern states that depended upon Canadian supplies to maintain their capacity and business.

Canadian Cattlemen's Association are actively working with the Canadian Government, Canadian Embassy, and the U.S. National Cattlemen's Beef Association to ensure that full trade with the U.S. in beef and live cattle is normalized as quickly as possible.

"...the beef industry in North America is an integrated industry and decisions made need to reflect that reality."

FERAL HORSE MANAGEMENT: WHAT'S COMES NEXT?

CHAD BOYD

I recently attended a meeting of the Southeastern Oregon Resource Advisory Council where one of the hot topics of discussion was management of Oregon's burgeoning feral (a.k.a. "wild") horse population.

Actually, the federal land management agencies (namely the BLM) have done an admirable job in Oregon of putting together a horse management program that has a reputation of being one of the better efforts in the West.

However, it is not without problems. The most recent estimates put Oregon's feral horse population at just over 3500 animals. This number is at odds with the legally stipulated "Appropriate Management Level" (AML) of between 1340 and 2615 animals.

As best I can tell, one of the biggest problems is money, or lack thereof, for gathering horses. Money shortages are compounded by fact that gathered horses not adopted by the public are put in long-term holding facilities. I don't have the exact figures, but last I heard, the cost associated with these "unadoptable" horses was closing in on half of the overall national program budget.

These problems recently came to a head in Wyoming, where the state filed suit against the BLM in an effort to force the federal government to reduce horse numbers to a level



within the AML range. The result of this legal wrangling is that BLM has agreed to reduce horse numbers to the lower end of the AML within the next two years. To do this will require additional monies for the Wyoming program, which may cause financial difficulties for programs in other states. The current concern is that other states could follow Wyoming's lead (and file suite to gain AML compliance), compounding the financial problems of an already "strapped" national program.

At present we have in place a system of financial crisis management where one state program may literally be robbed to pay the bills of another. This situation rewards state programs with problems and hurts those in relatively better shape, effectively removing performance-based incentives for better management.

All of the above begs the question: *What comes next?* Put more specifically, can the feral horse program work within the existing legislative mandate, or does that framework need to be modified? I think this is a question that should be of interest to the WHC. While feral horses may or may not be considered a wildlife species, they don't live in an ecological vacuum. Overstocked horse herds can and do affect the ecological integrity of plant communities, wildlife using these communities as habitat, and ultimately, the welfare of the horses themselves.

NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

WENDELL GILGERT

Several weeks ago, the sun moved south of the equator in that celestial event known as the autumnal equinox. Autumn is a time eagerly anticipated by many of us and for a wide variety of reasons. We enthusiastically welcome the beginning of yet another school year, the harvest of crops, the high school, college and professional football seasons, a fresh round of hunting seasons, some of the best trout fishing of the year, less mowing of lawns, and exchanging the short sleeves for long sleeves.

For those that ardently observe the local landscapes, some of the most obvious and beautiful changes are taking place in the natural world. In the high country, the leaves have dropped and in many places in the west, the first snow of the season is on the ground. On lower elevations, the hot summer that al-

ways seems to overstay its welcome has finally been displaced by fall rains and the attendant cooler temperatures that are allowing for at least some local color.

I am taking a closer than unusual look at the seasonal progression this year because I recently changed landscapes; trading the Front Range of Colorado for the Sacramento Valley of Northern California. They are different, but I know that. I was raised here and came home this fall after living and working on the Front Range for the past 6 years. Having spent my first 45 years in northern California, I think that I had become familiar and perhaps a little complacent with the seasonal nuances here. The absence has made for a renewed fondness for home.

Notes From the Chair *continued...*

reason that you have not heard more from me this summer. The process of changing jobs, selling and buying a home, packing and moving from Colorado to California took plenty of time and energy.

At the risk of sounding like one of those award shows, I want to give credit and thanks to several members of the committee who have held the committee together and allowed us to move ahead with plans and projects that were planned in Casper, while I was occupied with duties at home!

A huge thanks goes to our Canadian Colleague and past Chairman, Dale Weisbrot. He has communicated with regular notes to the committee and by writing and mailing the committee meeting minutes from Casper. He worked closely with Dave Wheeler to organize the *Invasives in Riparian Systems* session. He also made sure that I followed through with my responsibilities to the committee, SRM, or helped me to accomplish them. Thanks Dale!

Thanks to Roy Roath for nearly single-handedly putting together the Symposium called *Managing Landscapes to Meet Wildlife Needs*. It promises to be another quality session. Thanks to my NRCS Colleague, Kathryn Boyer (although not a committee member) for helping me organize the Symposium called *Homes on the Range, Aquatic Habitat Conservation on Working Rangelands*. Thanks to Kent McAdoo for his excellent work with writing a synopsis of last years "*Other Grazers*" Symposium. Once the draft has been reviewed, a copy will be mailed to all committee members.

Thanks to Jeremy Maestas for reviewing and commenting on the BLM Draft Sage Grouse plan on behalf of the WHC. Finally, thanks to Chad Boyd for his hard work and patience in writing and editing the Committee newsletter. It is a superior product and eminently readable!

As you can see, the WHC is more than a meeting once a year. I believe that the committee is meeting and perhaps exceeding the expectations of the Leadership and Membership of the Society. Now is the time to make sure that you have your meeting registration and reservations in place for your participation in the 2004 SRM Conference in Salt Lake City.

The Wildlife Habitat Committee meeting is scheduled for Sunday afternoon, January 25, 2004. Please be thinking of issues or items that you want to discuss at that meeting. We are looking forward to your active involvement at the conference and into the next year.

WHC Symposia

As Wendell noted the WHC is sponsoring or co-sponsoring a whole herd of symposia at this years SRM meeting in Salt Lake City. Below are excerpts from the programs:

Homes on the Range: Aquatic Habitat Conservation on Working Rangelands **GRAND AMERICA Grand Salon –** **Wednesday January 28, 8:00 AM-Noon**

Moderator: Wendell Gilgert

8:00 am **Symposium Overview** - Kathryn Boyer, NRCS-Wildlife Habitat Management Institute, Oregon State University

8:15 am **A Rancher's Perspective of Watershed Stewardship** – Bob Budd, Wyoming Director of Science Stewardship and Planning, The Nature Conservancy, Lander, Wyoming

8:45 am **Fish Assemblages on Rangelands: A Synthesis of Current Research Findings** - Kurt Fausch, Dept of Fishery & Wildlife Biology, Colorado State University

9:15 am **Riparian and Stream Interactions –Temperature Considerations for Range Managers: An Oregon Case Study Part 1** - John Buckhouse, Department of Rangeland Resources, Oregon State University

9:45 am **Break**

10:00 am **Riparian and Stream Interactions – Temperature Considerations for Aquatic Species: An Oregon Case Study Part 2** - Stan Gregory, Dept of Fishery and Wildlife Biology, Oregon State University

10:30 am **Riparian and Stream Interactions – Alternative Management Objectives for Diversification of Rangeland Stream Resources: A Sonoran Case Study** - Wayne Elmore, BLM -retired

11:00 am **Fish and Cows: Co-habitation of an Odd Couple** - Holly George, University of California Cooperative Extension, Quincy, California

11:30 am **Symposium Wrap-up** - Wendell Gilgert, USDA-NRCS, Davis, California

Symposia *continued...*

Invasive Species in Riparian Ecosystems GRAND AMERICA Imperial Ballroom D - Thursday January 29, 1:00-5:00PM

Moderator: David Wheeler

1:00 pm **Scope of Issue** - Roger Sheley, Agricultural Research Service, Burns, OR

1:25 pm **Ecological Interactions: Riparian Recovery Processes and Weed Management** - Wayne Elmore, Riparianologist, retired, Prineville, OR

1:50 pm **Tamarisk** - Ken Lair, Bureau of Reclamation, Denver, CO

2:15 pm **Perennial Pepperweed** - Michael Carpinelli, Agricultural Research Service, Burns, OR

2:40 pm **Break: “Stop Exotics: Clean Your Boat!” Video**

2:55 pm **Aquatic Vegetation: Hydrilla, Eurasian Water Milfoil, Giant Salvinia** - Joe DiTomaso, UC Davis, Davis, CA

3:20 pm **Non-Native Trout** - Jeff Kershner, USDA Forest Service Research, Logan, UT

3:45 pm **Bullfrog** - TBA

4:10 pm **Inventory & Mapping** - Doug Johnson, Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR.

4:35 pm **Considerations for Fish and Wildlife Resources in Invasive Species Management and Habitat Restoration** - Lucy Jordan, USFWS, Salt Lake City, UT.

Managing Landscapes to Meet Wildlife Needs

GRAND AMERICA Grand Salon - Tuesday January 27, 1:00-5:00 PM

Moderator: Roy Roath

1:00 pm **Managing Ecological Processes in Landscapes to Meet Wildlife Needs** – Roy Roath, Forest Range and Water-

shed Stewardship Dept, Larry Rittenhouse, Forest Range and Watershed Stewardship Dept

1:25 pm **Avian Response to Community and Landscape Dynamics in Time and Space** - Rick F Miller, Oregon State University

1:50 pm **Wildlife Habitats Component for Arizona Range Sites** - Tice Supplee, Arizona Game and Fish

2:15 pm **Grazing Sagebrush Steppe for Sustainable Livestock and Wildlife Production** - Rick Danvir, Deseret Land and Livestock, John Haskell, Deseret Land and Livestock, Bill Hopkin, Deseret Land and Livestock, Steve Kearl, Deseret Land and Livestock

2:35 pm **Multi-ungulate Systems Across Heterogeneous Landscapes** - Martin Vavra, Oregon State University

3:00 pm **Break**

3:15 pm **Managing Landscapes with an Open Mind** - Don Luse, Wagonhound Land & Livestock

3:35 pm **Building Consensus Approaches to Deal with Excess Elk Numbers in Western Landscapes** - Robbie Baird LeValley, Colorado State University Extension, Roy Roath, Forest Range and Watershed Stewardship Dept

4:25 pm **Interaction Between Grazing Animal Populations, Forage Supplies and Animal Performance in a Managed Landscape** - Ty Ryland, Forbes-Trinchera Ranch

5:00 pm **Summary and Discussion** – Wendall Gilgert