

IDAHO Section

Society for Range Management



Spring 2009



Newsletter

Number 2-09

President's Message

Brendan Brazee

Howdy Everyone,

I hope everyone wintered well and is ready for field season; my favorite time of year. Now it is time to get out and put the boots on the ground. There are a few things to follow up on such as Bear Valley, Summer Tour, and budgets.

We received an encouraging request from the Forest Service on the status of monitoring in Bear Valley. Many of the study sites have been sampled and are now in the process of being analyzed. Tim Burton has asked the Section for some assistance in entering data into the analysis model. He is estimating that about 80 hours may be needed. For those that were very interested in this project (you know who you are) please contact Tim or Warren Ririe (208-373-4151 or wririe@fs.fed.us) and give them a hand.

The wonderful world of Ecological Site Descriptions will be the main discussion of the summer tour. Mark your calendars for July 16th and 17th, 2009. We will be at the Lee Sharp Experimental Area at Point Springs. The focus will be taking the newly completed ESD's and putting them on ground. Watch your email and the web page for additional info... might want to shake out the sleeping bag.

While the initial development of the budget committee is still coming together I would to encourage all who will be requesting funds from the section to submit budget proposals detailing a rough idea of expenses and income. This will help us get a solid grasp of our finances as a section and allow us to continue planning future workshops, section activities, and maybe identify new opportunities in the future.

Well it is time to head outside, don't forget to sharpen your clippers and shake the dust off the old plant keybrendan

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Mark Your Calendar
Summer Tour
July 16-17



Idaho SRM Treasurer's Report Spring 2008

Cindy Salo

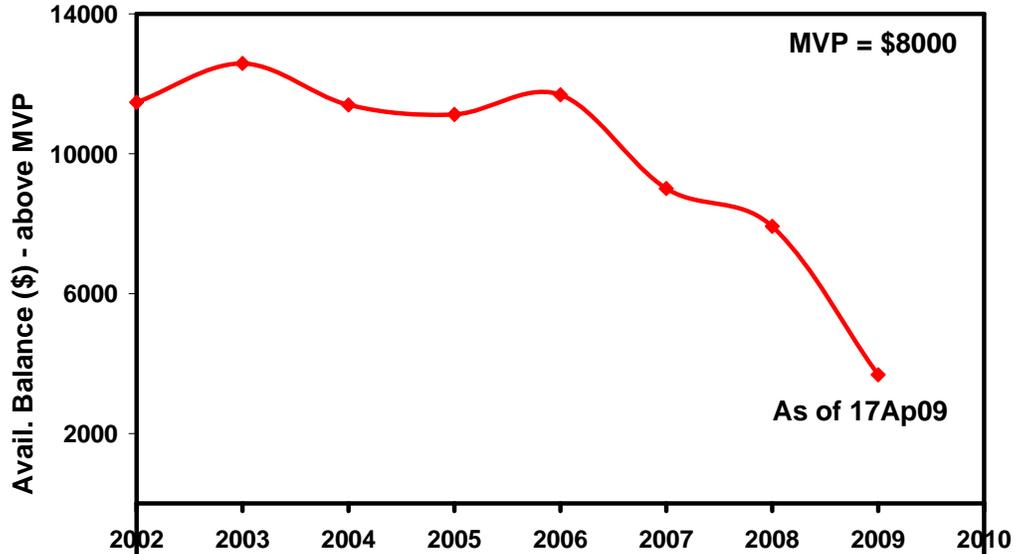
"How're we doin' & where'd it go?"

Your treasurer is just fine, thank you for asking.

"How're we doin'?"

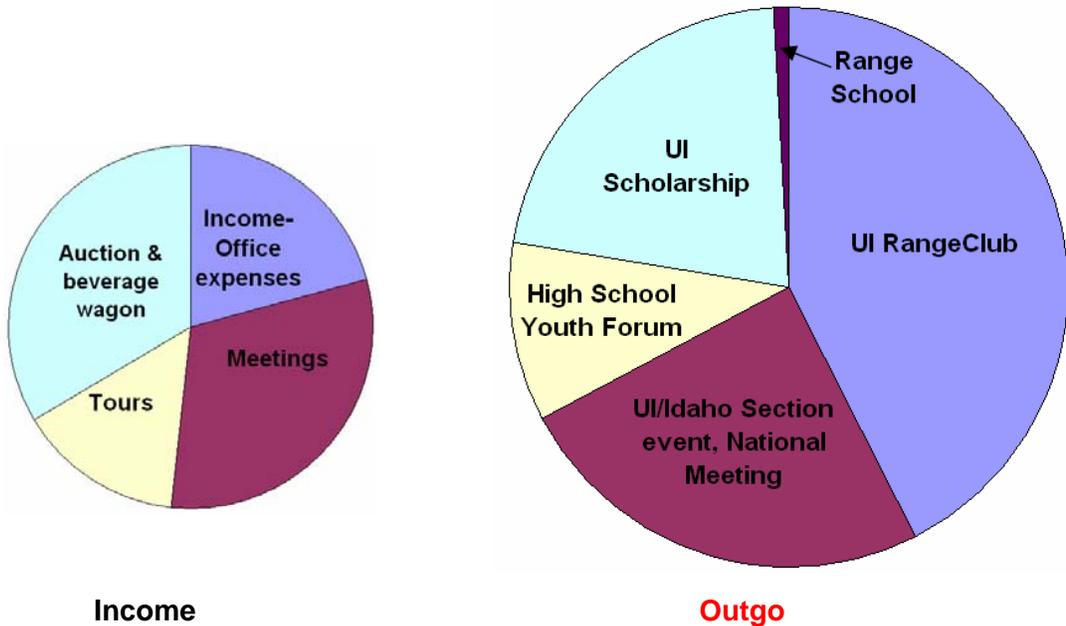
Although the stock markets are up again, the Idaho section bank balance continues to go down. The graph shows our available balance (the amount above our Minimum Viable Population [MVP]), from 2002 to present. Local expert knowledge indicates that our MVP is \$8,000 - the amount we need on hand to stay in business.

SRM Available Balance - above MVP



"Where'd it go?"

The pie charts show our income and outgo from 2002 to present. The relative size of the pies indicates the relative size of income and outgo. Before moving to an electronic newsletter our income from membership dues was about the same as our office expenses (PO box, newsletter, stamps, and member awards). Going electronic is saving us enough that membership dues are now a source of income ("Income - Office expenses" on right-hand Income pie chart). We also make money from meetings, tours, and the silent auction and beverage wagon at meetings and tours, respectively.



U of I Range Club Report

At our last meeting we discussed club member plans for the summer and how we all would take plant presses to our summer jobs and collect specimens of weeds for our scanned plant mounts to be mounted and scanned next semester.

Tess Jones

We have also been working on our greeting cards. Some new pictures have been added to the collection which includes 3 different images of sheep on the range! Our fundraisers are available on-line at www.uidaho.edu/range/rangeclub/fundraisers. Thanks to Idaho SRM members for all your support!

Our end of the year celebration is scheduled for April 30 at Mountain View Park in Moscow. Alumni and SRM members are welcome to attend. Contact tpierce@vandals.uidaho.edu for more information.

New Fire Management Guide for Quantifying Fuels

Lovina Roselle

A new fuels guide has been developed by Andrea Stebleton and Steve Bunting of the University of Idaho. The '**Guide for Quantifying Fuels in the Sagebrush Steppe and Juniper Woodlands of the Great Basin**' provides fire managers and fuel specialists with a tool to estimate fuel loading and assess effectiveness of prescribed burning and chemical or mechanical treatments.

Weed invasion and woodland encroachment have drastically altered Great Basin plant communities over the past century, adding to the challenges fire managers face in predicting fire behavior, recommending fuel treatments, or restoring areas to their natural fire regimes. This guide assimilates two years of fuels data from the Sagebrush Steppe Treatment and Evaluation Project (SageSTEP) sampled across six Great Basin states. The SageSTEP project is a collaborative project made up of scientists from five western universities, six federal agencies, and one non-profit organization.

The guide is designed similarly to the Natural Fuels Photo Series (USDA) and provides users easy access to information that is often time consuming and costly to collect. By using photographs and tables with a range of values for different vegetation types, fire managers can quickly appraise their site based on fuel stratum. Fuels information available in this guide can also be used as input in fire behavior and fire effects models.

The guide is comprised of four sub-guides – one sagebrush and three woodland guides – based on regional differences in site physiognomy and ecology: sagebrush steppe, pinyon-juniper, Utah juniper, and western juniper. The guide increases efficiencies in fuels assessment by providing photos depicting the range of canopy cover by life-form coupled with tabulated data.

The fuels guide is part of the SageSTEP project (www.sagestep.org) funded by the Joint Fire Science Program (www.firescience.gov) and is available online at www.cnr.uidaho.edu/GBFuelsGuide. Printed copies will be available from the BLM in June and can be requested for free by sending an e-mail with your mailing address (no P.O. Boxes), phone number and desired number of copies to BLM_NOC_PMDS@blm.gov.

Events Around the West

June 11 – 13, Nevada Section Tour at Upper Clover Ranch More information at:

www.ag.unr.edu/nsrm/Newsletter/April%202009%20newsletter.pdf

June 25 – 27, PNW Section Tour in John Day, OR More information at <http://pnw.rangelands.org>

July 16 – 17, ID Section Tour in Malta Details coming soon!

Sept 16 – 18, PNW Annual Meeting (Clarkston, WA) -- See Page 7 for details!

January 2010 — New & Improved Joint meeting of the Idaho Section SRM and Intermountain Rangeland Livestock Symposium in Boise, ID.

Targeted Grazing with Goats Can Control Yellow Starthistle

Brianna Goehring

Yellow starthistle, one of the most problematic and widespread weeds in the U.S., infests over one million hectares in Idaho. Idaho suffers many economic losses relating to yellow starthistle's negative impacts on forage value for livestock, agricultural crops, watershed quality, and wildlife habitat. A variety of control measures (mainly herbicide) have successfully controlled small infestations. However, yellow starthistle presently infests vast areas of rugged canyon rangelands where feasibility of some control methods are limited by the accessibility of the terrain involved. Research by the University of Idaho examined how targeted grazing by domestic goats might be used for managing yellow starthistle at landscape scales.

A grazing project was conducted from 2006 to 2008 on lower Bentz Ridge, northeast of White Bird, Idaho on the Salmon River Ranger District of the Nez Perce National Forest. For this study, Boer-cross goats supplied and managed by Prescriptive Grazing Services (Ray Holes, White Bird, Idaho) were used to target graze yellow starthistle when the plant was in full spine. Goats readily and thoroughly grazed yellow starthistle as indicated by the prominent lack of seedheads or foliage throughout most of the grazed areas of Bentz Ridge. Furthermore, we observed reduced starthistle plant density in grazed sites before grazing was applied in 2007 and 2008. Seedheads removed by goats in our study apparently reduced seed abundance to a level that resulted in reduced seedling establishment the subsequent year. Goat grazing had few effects on canopy cover of either grasses or non-target forbs in our study.

Timing of grazing is critical for affecting yellow starthistle, and the late-season grazing in our study prevented the re-growth that is frequently observed when grazing occurs earlier in the growing season. Late-season grazing inevitably results in ingestion of viable starthistle seeds. However, in a supplementary study conducted at the University of Idaho Sheep Research and Teaching Center, less than 3% of yellow starthistle seeds fed to goats were recovered following digestion, and of those recovered seeds, less than 3% were viable. All viable seeds were passed within four days.

Low-value canyon rangelands infested with yellow starthistle pose a special challenge for management. Targeted grazing by goats offers two distinctive advantages for managing such infested areas: 1) goats can easily navigate the rugged terrain of these canyonlands, and 2) goats will graze yellow starthistle throughout most of its life cycle. Our research clearly shows that goats will even graze starthistle when the plant is in full spine. Multiple grazing treatments or a single late-season grazing treatment can control yellow starthistle populations. This creates a large window of opportunity for grazing treatment and flexibility for land and livestock managers.

This study was made possible by the support of the U.S. Forest Service, the University of Idaho, the David Little Endowment, the American Sheep Industry Association, and the Idaho County Weed Board. For more information about this research, email range@uidaho.edu.

Local Kids Do Well!



Idaho's Bud Purdy received the Chapline Stewardship Award at the International meeting. Allen Rasmussen presented the award and Neil Rimbey prepared the nomination.



Our own Neil Rimbey received the Outstanding Achievement Award—Research/Academia. Allen Rasmussen presented the award.

Wilderness Field Ecology Course Offered by UI

Lovina Roselle

If flying in the Idaho backcountry to experience four days of hiking and learning about the ecology of plants and wildlife in the heart of the 2.4 million acre the Frank Church River-of-No-Return Wilderness sounds appealing to you, consider enrolling in the University of Idaho College of Natural Resources wilderness field ecology enrichment course offered May 24 to 29.

Class participants will arrive at a remote airstrip and hike 10 miles into the University of Idaho's Taylor Ranch wilderness field station. During the week, Jim Kingery, professor in the Department of Rangeland Ecology and Management, will lead participants on several day excursions that will introduce students to the ecology of plant communities and associated wildlife along the Big Creek drainage. Wild herbivores including bighorn sheep, wapiti and mule deer are often seen foraging on the steep mountains above the drainage and their ecology, population dynamics, and relationships to the predator complex in the region will be discussed.

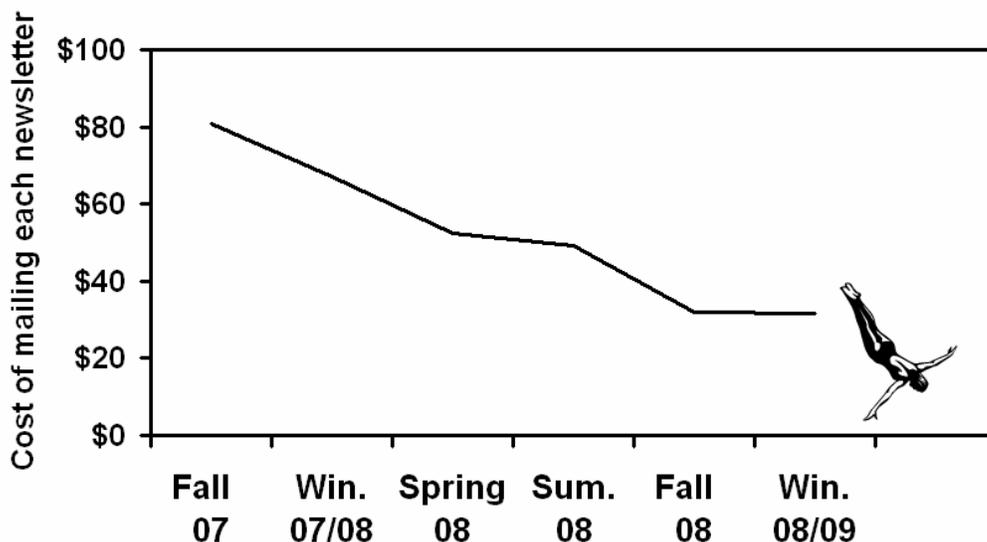
In the summer of 2000, the drainage was swept by a wildfire. Steve Bunting, professor in the Department of Rangeland Ecology and Management, will discuss the fire ecology and students will witness the post-burn vegetation impacts and discover how wildlife use these burned areas. A hike up Cliff Creek to the ridgetop affords opportunities to examine different vegetation zones, the effects of wildfire on dry forest, bighorn lambing cliffs, and the Bighorn Craggs. Other shorter hikes to specific plant communities and discussions of predators and predation in the Big Creek by Jim and Holly Akenson will round out the instruction.

One credit of directed study is available. A course fee of \$550 covers airfare and lodging. For more information, visit www.uidaho.edu/range/wilderness or contact Lovina Roselle at lovina@uidaho.edu.

The e-Newsletter Needs You!

We've reached a plateau...take the plunge!

Sign up for email delivery of the SRM ID newsletter



Annual Meeting January 2010

Society for Range Management ~ Idaho Section Annual Meeting and The Intermountain Rangeland Livestock Symposium January, 2010 ~ Boise, ID

Degrees of Separation vs Degrees of Compatibility: The Future of Managing Wildlife / Livestock Interactions on Federal Lands

Program focus

In recent years, controversy has heightened again over the overlap in grazing areas for bighorn and domestic sheep on federal grazing lands because of the potential for disease transfer among the two species. In Idaho, on the Payette National Forest, the conflict has culminated in a likely policy decision in early 2010 that may eliminate livestock permits in the overlap areas with significant effects to several producers' operations that would also translate to landscape-, community- and industry-level effects. A continuum of stakeholder response and reaction continues to fester in a pattern of litigation and conflict rather than collaboration to settle the disputes over livestock – wildlife management interactions.

In this context, the 2010 Idaho Section of the Society for Range Management and the Intermountain Rangeland Livestock Symposium plan to co-host a 2-day conference devoted to addressing the decision-making process related to livestock – wildlife interactions on federal grazing lands. The case of the Bighorn / Domestic sheep conflict on the Payette Forest is a case for discussion, especially as a potential precedent for federal land & resource management, but not the exclusive focus of the conference.

Some of the proposed questions the program may address include:

- Given the emerging policy:
 - What future direction/s for research should continue to address the options?
 - Who should decide and fund that research?
- Do policy decisions such as these need to prioritize one or more areas within the mixture of ecological, economic, *and* social effects, or are federal land management agencies required to “balance” these?
 - Will this be standardized within agencies for different regions?
 - Will this be standardized across agencies for managing other species interactions?
- Is a degree of separation (among the sheep) for the short term possible in order to achieve a more compatible long-term management plan?
- What are the long-term ecological impacts to rangelands if we eliminate the domestic sheep grazing permits and the bighorn sheep still die?

Name That Idaho Drainage

Meribeth Lomkin



Congratulations to Anna Owsiak! She had the correct answer of Deadwood Creek in Owyhee County for the winter "Name that Drainage" contest! Anna received a "spud fudge spud" for her award!



Name that Idaho Drainage:

Submit your guess with the name of this Idaho waterway to: mlomkin@idl.idaho.gov

This photo courtesy of Justin Westrum.

PNW Section SRM Annual Meeting September 16-18

Courtney Smith

Rangelands of the 51st State

In anticipation of an early winter, the Pacific Northwest Section will hold its fall/winter meeting September 16-18 in Clarkston, Washington. Featured topics include a visit to the Nez Perce Tribal Biocontrol facility in Lapwai, perspectives on ethnographic and current resource management by the Nez Perce at the National Park Service visitor's center at Spaulding, ID, and dryland pasture management in the post-Conservation Reserve Program era. A field tour hosted by the Asotin County Conservation District will highlight water quality and riparian area management and conclude with a visit to the Smoothing Iron Pilot Grazing Project, developed by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife for grazing on big game range in the foothills of the Blue Mountains. Social events include local musical talent, endemic wines and microbrews, good food and fine fall scenery.

The meeting will also kick off planning for the 2012 Society meeting in Spokane, WA. A working lunch will be held to discuss collaboration with the Idaho Section. Additional details and registration will follow as these are confirmed.

Students of Idaho history will recall that in fall of 1864, a meeting of the territorial legislature held spuriously before the official term for that governing body voted to move the capital to Boise (what we feel is the likely source of the name "Bogus Basin"). After the territorial seal and other official documents were stolen the following spring by cowardly miscreants, North Idahoans voted to form a separate political entity centered at the true capital in Lewiston. And followers of Washington state politics will remember that as recently as 2005, disaffected eastsiders introduced legislation to secede from the domineering population centers of the Pacific coast where people seemingly spawn among the damp underbrush. So mark your calendars and plan to break the Boise habit and join us September 16-18 as we plan to celebrate the rangeland resources of the 51st state; "Lincoln" or "Columbia" or "East Washington" or "Spokaloo" or whatever we are now calling it.

(Editors' note: Contact Courtney if you feel a need to complain. Better yet, contribute a story to their newsletter!)

Next Newsletter Deadline is
July 15, 2009



Send your articles and pictures (.jpg format) to:
Juley Hankins
juley_hankins@blm.gov
or Roger Blew
rblew@stoller.com

**SOCIETY FOR RANGE MANAGEMENT
IDAHO SECTION OFFICERS**

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**Newsletters on the Web
[www.stoller-eser.com
/idahosrm/](http://www.stoller-eser.com/idahosrm/)**

There are lots of opportunities for you to become involved in the section's activities. Give Brendan Brazee, J. D. Wulfhorst, a Director, or a committee chair a call and find out how you can get involved.

**Idaho Section
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