APPENDIX D

**SAES-422**

**Multistate Research Activity Accomplishments Report**

**Project/Activity Number:** WERA 1008

**Project/Activity Title:** The Rangelands Partnership as a Community of Practice

**Period Covered:** April 2023 – April 2024

**Date of This Report:** April 29, 2024

**Annual Meeting Date(s):** March 17-20, 2024

**Participants:**

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**Annual Meeting Summary**: The Rangelands Partnership (RP) annual meeting was held on March 17-20, 2024. Twenty-six participants attended the meeting on-site at the University of Hawaii, Hale Ōlelo campus in Hilo, HI and 8 participants joined virtually. Ashley Hall, RP Chair, and Barbara Petty, Dean & Director of Extension—University of Idaho—welcomed attendees. The keynote was presented by Ka’iu Kimura, Executive Director, ‘Imiloa Astronomy Center of Hawai’i and Director of the College of Hawaiian Languages. In her presentation, Ka’iu Kimura described how the College of Hawaiian Language is dedicated to appreciating the power of culture and language of indigenous people groups. Next were the popular RP state lightning talk sessions where participants received updates from their RP range science and librarian colleagues about state activities, such as Extension programming, grant-funded projects etc. Other presentations included an interactive session about the RP looking forward and an update on the activities of the IYRP North American Regional Support Team.

At the business meeting, Ashley Hall (Chair) reviewed the past year’s activities & accomplishments; Barbara Petty (Administrative Update) shared the Multistate Committee Update on behalf of Bret Hess, Executive Director of the Western Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors—to become agInnovation-West. She also provided background on the Rangelands Partnership (WERA 1008) Community of Practice (2021-2026). Annual meetings must be authorized by submitting the agenda and reports are due within 60 days of the meeting. There will be a mid-term review conducted this year—in May. The organization has 41 members from 19 states. Sergio Arispe (Secretary) reported on the monthly EC+ meetings by highlighting the IYRP donation for $1,000, finalizing the by-laws; Jeremy Kenyon (Treasurer) gave an update on the healthy state of RP finances with a balance at the end of the fiscal year. Barb Hutchinson noted that the balance was the highest she has seen and asked if members could recommend how to use the balance. Other business: Barb Hutchinson encouraged RP states to get a proclamation from their governors recognizing the IYRP. Barbara Petty recommended working with the state government liaison at the respective universities. Retta Bruegger recommended speaking with broad public agencies managing rangelands to make them aware of any possible proclamation. Jodee Kuden asked to have a presence at the International Rangeland Congress with a booth and/or joint proposal—June 2025. Jodee (Alaska) was selected as incoming RP EC Secretary for 2024-25. Sergio Arispe (Oregon) is moving into the Vice Chair position, and Jeanne Pfander (Arizona) will lead the EC as Chair. Jeanne presented the Trail Blazer Award to Jodee. It was confirmed that the next RP Annual Meeting will be held in Kerrville, TX and hosted by Doug Tolleson (TX) in spring 2025.

Keynote speaker was Lani Petri, of Kapāpala Ranch, who touched on the history of Hawaiian ranching. Sergio Arispe presented innovative learning opportunities in extension and highlighted three different working models to undertake extension curriculum development. Levy Randolph then presented about virtual reality applications to communicate extension programming content. After the presentations, both Arispe and Randolph led hands-on training to use both virtual field tours/augmented reality as well as handle the virtual reality cameras. Wednesday continued with professional development from Jason Karl presenting on the reasons and logistics of flying drones. Tip Hudson then presented on podcasting on his hit podcast, “The Art of Range.” The afternoon presentation was how Kansas State University Libraries embraces artificial intelligence.

Following a combined discussion by all attendees both on-site and online, the RP outlined goals for the coming year. Barbara Petty pointed out that efforts should be consistent with the Rangeland Partnership Objectives.

Link to agenda: <https://arizona.box.com/s/kgi202cehz86iwwpiio3sulf2a0qezz8>

**Accomplishments:** Accomplishments, outcomes, and outputs based on WERA objectives:

*Objective 1: Strengthen the RP as a Community of Practice providing opportunities for professional development, networking, and collaborative projects and initiatives.*

* In August 2023 a Zoom-based RP Roundup was offered on ecotherapy to bring a focused awareness through sensory mindfulness activities in nature that improves physical and mental health. Thirteen participants from seven universities attended.
* Rangeland professionals from Arizona, Texas, and New Mexico were recruited to join the Partnership.
* The RP had a successful annual meeting in March 2024, with 34 attendees (26 in-person and 8 virtual).

*Objective 2: Promote the Rangelands Gateway (RG) and publicize through all communications outlets.*

* RP members have publicized the RG website to their stakeholders through presentations (contributed papers or posters) and social media posts.
* The RP has created online communication plans to promote different aspects of the website in the coming year. (See also Objective 5.)

*Objective 3: Expand the number of resources and collections in the RG database.*

* Per the Memorandum of Agreement with SRM on adding volumes on a rolling window basis, we have loaded up through V.71 (2018) for Rangeland Ecology & Management (REM) and V. 43 (2021) for Rangelands into the UAL repository. These volumes will be added to the RG database allowing free access to the articles.
* The total number of resources in the RG Library database is currently 25,861.
* RP members continue to increase and improve access to the collections in the RG by adding new records, revising or creating new website pages, improving search functionality, and fixing broken links.
* Members of the RP have continued to develop RangeDocs by adding and annotating locally relevant rangeland Extension publication with funding from an RREA NFF grant. The project team obtained new funding to improve the search functionality and AI/machine learning capabilities.

*Objective 4: Continue to build and expand the 19-member state rangelands websites with locally specific content in updated formats, providing additional access through the RG database.*

* Online work sessions are scheduled twice a month to provide support for RP members working on adding content to their state sites.

*Objective 5: Develop marketing and new technology capacity to meet the needs and priorities of an increasingly diverse audience.*

* A 3-part online communication webinar series and communication guide are available on RG (<https://rangelandsgateway.org/communication>). The results of this project are expected to, over time, increase the visibility and accessibility of science-based rangelands information to producers, leading ultimately to an increase in economic well-being for producers, improved resource stewardship, and quality of life for producers and ranching communities.
* A series of outreach materials including a user guide and short videos promoting the RangeDocs resource have been created and are available in the Support section on the RangeDocs site (https://docs.rangelandsgateway.org/)
* A two-day professional development workshop focused on moving beyond face-to-face outreach was presented at the RP annual meeting designed to help rangeland professionals develop and implement innovative technologies and program delivery approaches that will enhance their ability to share sustainable rangeland information with livestock producers.

*Objective 6: Refine the “topic” sections to incorporate new knowledge.*

* Several topic/sub-topic pages were revised, reviewed, and published.
* A new, multi-state and agency page on Virtual Fencing was created on Rangelands Gateway (<https://rangelandsgateway.org/virtual-fence>). This page serves as a user guide for ranchers and land managers to better understand the challenges and opportunities related to VF technology as a method to influence livestock movement. It includes factsheets on the foundations of VF, data resources, optimization tools, workshop materials, and outside resources.

*Objective 7: Contribute to the North American IYRP Support Group and its efforts to develop and facilitate outreach and educational activities.*

* Several RP members continue to be involved in IYRP planning at the North American (N.A,) regional level
* Plans for N.A. IYRP Communication Team-Led Initiatives include: feature-length documentary film (<https://www.iyrp.info/north-america/film-projects>); film festival (3–6-minute videos); identifying and/or submitting short videos for the IYRP website; educational materials (inc. K-12) (https://www.iyrp.info/outreach-materials/322) (logos, extension materials, wallpaper, etc.); conference events & presentations; social media campaign.

*Objective 8: Continue collaboration with The Society for Range Management (SRM) to increase visibility and awareness of both SRM and the RG, a mutually beneficial objective*.

* Members of the RP continue to serve as Co-Chairs, participants, and SRM board liaison for SRM’s Outreach, Communication, and Website committee.
* The RP collaborates with SRM through a Memorandum of Agreement to make Rangeland Ecology & Management (REM) and Rangelands journal content openly available on a rolling window basis.
* At the 2024 SRM annual conference the RP had a trade show booth where information was provided about the Rangelands Partnership, the Rangelands Gateway, RangeDocs, The Art of Range Podcast, IYRP. The booth reached several hundred conference attendees from a wide range of U.S states and international attendees, in particular from Canada.

**Activities:**

Grants: RP members continue to participate in many collaborations on grants and targeted projects.

* WSARE Professional Development Program project “Increasing the Online Communication Toolbox for Sustainable Rangeland Management: A Train-the-Trainer Program” (July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2024; WSARE Project #WPDP21-026).
* RREA National Focus Funds project “Expanding Extension Capacity Through RangeDocs: Searchable Rangeland Science” (September 1, 2021 – August 30, 2024; USDA NIFA NFF 2021-46401-34740).
* WSARE Professional Development Program project “Strengthening the Technology Toolbox for Sustainable Rangeland Management” (July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2025; WSARE Project #WPDP23-007)
* USDA NRCS project “Enhancing RangeDocs: Expanding NRCS Content, Website Maintenance, Improve Search, and AI Tagging Assessment” (October 1, 2023-September 30, 2024; Award ID NR233A750008C005)
* WSARE Professional Development Program project “Collaborative Training for Virtual Fencing Implementation for Sustainable Rangeland Management under Environmental Uncertainty” (October 1, 2022-September 30, 2024; WSARE Project #WPDP22-016).

Communication: The RP continues to use multiple communication channels to disseminate rangeland knowledge to local, national, and global stakeholders.

* Increased the newsletter subscription and engagement. The electronic newsletter is sent monthly to 248 individuals. The newsletter focuses on RP related updates and articles written by RP members. Fifty-two percent of recipients are highly or moderately engaged and open and click Partnership newsletter articles.
* The Rangelands Partnership listserv continues to use a listserv for broadcast messages to partners and friends and has 102 members.

**Next Step Activities:**

* Continue to work with technology experts to identify and improve Rangelands Gateway as well as refine the database search interface.
* Keep RP members engaged in improving the RG and the Partnership through work sessions, RP Roundups and encouraging Action Group lead contacts to participate in monthly RP Executive Committee meetings.
* Strengthen the communication and technology skills of RP members through professional development opportunities.
* Seek out opportunities to collaborate on grant proposals that will incorporate and/or leverage a connection to the RP.
* Recruit members for state representation as needed.
* Promote and increase the visibility of the RP in publications, presentations social media and marketing.

**Publications:**

Monthly newsletter: <https://us12.campaign-archive.com/home/?u=1e07e5b3765520a0c1bbf6590&id=5c12e84cd8>

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