

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 2024 – June 2025

Date of This Report: July 9, 2025

Annual Meeting Dates: May 12-15, 2025

Participants:

In-Person: Arispe, Sergio (Sergio.arispe@oregonstate.edu) Oregon State University; Audoin, Flavie (faudoin@arizona.edu) University of Arizona; Bruegger, Retta (retta.bruegger@colostate.edu) Colorado State University; Dalke, Amber (adalke@arizona.edu) University of Arizona; Gardner, Bonnie (bgardner@tamu.edu) Texas A&M University; Goodman, Laura (laura.goodman@okstate.edu) Oklahoma State University; Hall, Ashley (ashleys3@arizona.edu) University of Arizona; Hubbard, David (hubbardd@library.tamu.edu) Texas A&M University; Johnson, Dustin (dustin.johnson@oregonstate.edu) Oregon State University; Juve, Nicole (nicole.km.juve@ndsu.edu) North Dakota State University; Kenyon, Jeremy (jkenyon@uidaho.edu) University of Idaho; Kruger, David (tseliot@uwyo.edu) University of Wyoming; Kuden, Jodee (jlkuden@alaska.edu) University of Alaska; Merrigan, Sheila (merrigan@arizona.edu) University of Arizona; Noelle, Sarah (smnoelle@arizona.edu) University of Arizona; Olsen, Livia (livia@ksu.edu) Kansas State University; Petty, Barbara (bpetty@uidaho.edu) University of Idaho; Pfander, Jeanne (jpfander@arizona.edu) University of Arizona; Rahr, Matt (rahr@ag.arizona.edu) University of Arizona; Spackman, Casey (spackman@nmsu.edu) New Mexico State University; Thorne, Mark (thornem@hawaii.edu) University of Hawaii; Tolleson, Doug (douglas.tolleson@ag.tamu.edu) Texas A&M University; Windh, Jessica (jwindh@uidaho.edu) University of Idaho; Winford, Eric (ewinford@uidaho.edu) University of Idaho.

Virtual: Ehlert, Krista (krista.ehlert@sdsu.edu) South Dakota State University; Roche, Leslie (lmroche@ucdavis.edu) University of California, Davis.

Annual Meeting Summary: The Rangelands Partnership (RP) annual meeting was held May 12-15, 2025 with the theme *Knowledge Sharing for a Sustainable Future*. Twenty-four participants attended the meeting at the Y.O. Ranch Hotel and Conference Center in Kerrville, Texas and two participants joined virtually. Jeanne Pfander, RP Chair, and Barbara Petty, WERA Administrator, welcomed attendees. The keynote was presented by Dandy Kothmann, Resource Team Leader with USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. She spoke about her 24 years of experience working on the Edwards Plateau and the many changes to the region and land management, including new landowners using AI tools for answers when that information without local interpretation is not accurate. An icebreaker activity gave participants an informal way to get to know each other. The RP state lightning talks provided updates about rangeland science and librarian state activities, such as Extension programming, information challenges for librarians and research, impact of the federal funding changes occurring this spring of 2025,

completed projects, and more. A very interactive and informative session ended the first day about progress RP members made toward the 2021-2026 WERA objectives.

Jeanne Pfander started day 2 with the RP business meeting where she reported that two projects finished with their funding, RangeDocs and the online communications professional development series. The ongoing projects include the technology toolbox, Art of Range podcasts, the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP) documentary, and outreach for the IYRP North America support group. The RP discussed and approved adding Brigham Young University (BYU) as a Utah member. Barbara Petty provided details on some of the changes that have occurred within the USDA, NIFA, and its impact on Ag Innovation – West. Secretary, Jodee Kuden mentioned the monthly meetings and reviewing the lists of emails for the newsletter and listserv. She also reported on the Rangelands Gateway (RG) search interface that affects all the web pages and library records within RG. Eric Winford was elected as Secretary. Sergio Arispe moves to the role of Chair and Jodee Kuden moves to Vice Chair for the coming year. The next RP annual meeting will be hosted by the University of Wyoming in Laramie with a tentative first day of May 18, 2026.

Additional presentations updated and expanded the knowledge of RP members. First was *Latest in AI* by Livia Olsen, explaining four different products and their pros/cons for academic uses. Marcy Epperson, a local rancher and Past President of the Regional Prescribed Fire Association, covered the need for education about the benefits of controlled burns for the land and forage. Flavie Audion, with Lauren Svejcar and Engin Yilmaz, provided an update on the current and upcoming activities of IYRP and IYRP North America. Laura Goodman demonstrated ways to create brief and interesting social media posts, suggested software to create infographics, and offered ways to re-use or update existing work to save time.

The final work session focused on brainstorming for the next set of WERA objectives, which will cover five years – October 1, 2026 through September 30, 2031. Six volunteers (Mark Thorne, Jessica Windh, Flavie Audoin, Ashley Hall, Casey Spackman, and Livia Olsen) offered to draft WERA components this summer and fall to meet the January 15, 2026 submission deadline.

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.

- Rangeland professionals from Idaho and Utah were recruited to join the Partnership.
- Rangeland professionals from eleven land-grant universities contributed letters of support for a successful grant proposal that will focus on communication professional development and networking, which will start in fall 2025.
- Nine RP members (6 rangeland professionals, 2 librarians, 1 technology expert) collaborated to submit a publication to the journal *Rangelands*.
- The RP had a successful annual meeting in May 2025, with 26 attendees (24 in-person and 2 virtual).

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

- RP members have publicized the RG website to their stakeholders through presentations (contributed papers or posters), social media posts, and a series of factsheets highlighting new virtual fence resources available on RG.
- RP members received professional development at the RP annual meeting on creating one-page infographics on published work to broader audiences.

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

- Per the Memorandum of Agreement with the Society for Range Management (SRM), which enables the RP to add volumes of SRM journals to RG on a rolling window, we have loaded up through V.72 (2019) for *Rangeland Ecology & Management* (REM) and V. 44 (2022) for *Rangelands* into the University of Arizona Campus Repository. These volumes were added to the RG database allowing free access.
- The total number of resources in the RG Library database is currently 27,204.
- 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.

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 variety of technology resources including infographics on innovative learning, podcasting, drones, and virtual tours as well as resources to explore other technologies are available on RG (<https://rangelandsgateway.org/technology>). The results of this project are expected to enhance outreach through innovative technologies designed to engage with stakeholders.
- 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, webinar, 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/>).

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

- The Virtual Fence User Guide (<https://rangelandsgateway.org/virtual-fence>) was developed as a “topic” and has been promoted at local, national, and international meetings. This section continues to be refined as new information is developed and added to the webpage.
- The technology toolbox webpage (<https://rangelandsgateway.org/technology>) was created to provide information presented at the two-day professional development workshop, which focused on moving beyond face-to-face outreach. It is 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 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 and international level. Efforts include a feature-length documentary film, social media campaign linked to the 2026 World Cup, arts-based education project, film festivals, and more.

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 and participants of SRM’s Outreach, Communication, and Website committee as well as SRM’s Board of Directors.
- The RP collaborates with SRM through a Memorandum of Agreement to make *REM* and *Rangelands* journal content openly available on a rolling window basis.
- At the 2025 SRM annual conference the RP had a trade show booth where information was provided about the RP, RG, RangeDocs, The Art of Range Podcast, IYRP, technology toolbox, and Virtual Fence User Guide. The booth reached several hundred conference attendees from a wide range of U.S states as well as Canada and Mexico.

Activities:

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

- USDA NRCS project “Enhancing RangeDocs: Expanding NRCS Content, Website Maintenance, Improve Search, and AI Tagging Assessment” (October 1, 2023-September 30, 2025; 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, 2025; WSARE Project #WPDP22-016).
- WSARE Professional Development Program project “Strengthening the Technology

Toolbox for Sustainable Rangeland Management” (July 1, 2023-June 30, 2026; WSARE Project #WPDP23-007).

- WSARE Professional Development Program project “Empowering Voices for Sustainable Rangelands: Expanding communication resources for sustainable rangeland management” (June 1, 2025-May 31, 2027; WSARE Project #WPDP25-017).

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

- Increased the newsletter subscription and engagement. The electronic newsletter is sent monthly to 252 individuals. The newsletter focuses on RP related updates and articles written by RP members. Fifty percent of recipients are highly or moderately engaged.
- The RP listserv, managed by the University of Arizona, continues to broadcast messages to 103 partners and supporters.

Next Step Activities:

- Migrate Rangelands Gateway to Pantheon, which is better equipped to handle a busy website rather than within the University of Arizona’s AWS hosting environment.
- Continue professional development on communication and technology for improved rangeland management and knowledge sharing.
- Finalize 2021-2026 WERA objectives and complete final reporting.
- Draft and submit the 2026-2031 WERA.

Publications:

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

Dalke, Amber, Flavie Audoin, Sarah Noelle, Aaron Lien. Digital Virtual Fence User Guide for Rangeland Management. In: XII International Rangelands Congress Conference Proceedings; 2025.

Kuden, Jodee, Jeanne Pfander. Readily Available: Rangelands Information and Learning Tools. In: XII International Rangelands Congress Conference Proceedings; 2025.

Dalke, Amber, Flavie Audoin, Krista Ehlert, Laura Goodman, Aaron Lien, Tegan May, Sarah Noelle. Virtual Fence User Guide: Practical Insights for Prospective Users. *Rangelands*. In preparation.

Dalke, Amber, Jason W. Karl, Jeremy Kenyon, Jeanne Pfander, Sheila Merrigan, Sean Di Stefano, Matthew King, Eric Winford, and Karen Launchbaugh. RangeDocs: searchable science for rangeland management. *Rangelands*. In review.

Authorization: Submission by an AES or CES director or administrative advisor through NIMSS constitutes signature authority for this information.