

WERA-21
Revegetation and Stabilization of Deteriorated and Altered Lands
Annual Meeting Minutes
February 13, 2007
at the
SRM Meeting, Reno Nevada

Members in attendance:

Jim Dobrowolski, National Program Leader (USDA-CSREES Washington DC)
Gene Schupp, Chair (Utah State University)
Peter Stahl, Vice Chair (University of Wyoming)
George Vance, Secretary (University of Wyoming)
Jeanne Chambers (University of Nevada/Rocky Mountain Research Station)
David Pyke (USGS-Corvallis)
Steve Whisenant (Texas A&M University)
Mark Paschke (Colorado State University)
Bruce Roundy (Brigham Young University)
Tamzen Stringham (Oregon State University)
Fred Pierson (USDA-ARS)
Ryan Leary (Oregon State University)

Meeting Called to order by Gene Schupp at 5 pm on 2/13.

An agenda was distributed by Gene.

Members of the committee in attendance introduced themselves and provided a brief overview of their research activities.

There was a brief discussion on the direction of the committee and it was pointed out that there is another WERA-40 committee that addresses rangeland monitoring and restoration.

Jim Dobrowolski, CSREES National Program Leader, discussed his new role as the CSREES representative to the WERA-21 committee. He pointed out that he has an open door policy in Washington DC and invited everyone to stop by and see him when in the DC area. He also spent time discussing the following items.

Website development – The University of Tennessee continues to develop and refine a forest and rangeland learning center on the web funded by RREA that the committee should know about. The website is located at www.forestandrange.org.

Handouts – The 2008 President's budget was distributed and briefly discussed. While the overall budget indicates a decrease in funding, the National Research Initiative Competitive Grants program is budgeted at \$256,500,000, which is an increase from \$189,000,000 in the 2007 estimated budget.

Hatch funding – Hatch funding increased by about 180 million dollars in 2007.

Earmarks – there will be no special or federal administration grants funded by CSREES in 2007.

2007 Funding – waiting for Congress to pass and the President to sign the 2007 continuing resolution. AES Directors will have control over redirected funds that are going to be sent as Hatch funds to the land grant universities.

Mergers – The 2007 Farm Bill Proposal indicates that there may be a restructuring of the USDA REE mission area by combining CSREES and ARS.

CSREES Strategic Plan – the plan is now on the CSREES website.

NIMS activities – Double check your roster of members and update accordingly. WCC021 and WERA021 are on the NIMMS list together—ask Harriet Sykes to update.

Multistate activities – the new CSREES directive will include more multistate activity requirements. Outcomes will be important in the future, particularly impact statements. Multistate regional groups will need to work together. Coordination of activities will include anything that is done among group members. These activities should be used as accomplishments by the committee.

Rangeland and Grassland Ecosystems – Jim will be requesting input from committee members to assist him with strategic directions for research as part of his national program.

The committee held an election for a new secretary. Mark Paschke was elected to this position.

Gene pointed out that the Annual Report was due February 25 and he needed everyone's reports before hand.

The committee discussed plans for next year's meeting. David Pyke volunteered to host the meeting in eastern Washington. The location of the field trip includes a site just north of the Hanford Nuclear Reservation. David's group is investigating the effect of fuel reduction techniques on native plant recovery and trying to determine the thresholds of native and invasive plants that tip the balance toward or away from invasive, mainly cheatgrass, dominance. The fuel treatments are prescribed fire, tebuthiuron application and mechanical mowing of sagebrush plus a no treatment control. He is investigating responses of vegetation, soil nutrients, and insects. This study is also being done east of Wenatchee WA. Other studies may also be on-going on the Hanford reservation regarding rehabilitation projects, but David needs to do some checking. There was also some discussion of other studies in the area.

There was discussion about having the 2009 meeting in Colorado.

The Committee discussed the WERA-21 website. All committee members present agreed that the website needed to be updated including the membership list. An update was also needed for individual committee member research interests. Gene agreed to check on linking our website to other sites. There were some concerns related to updating the website and the need to identify a webmaster. Jeanne Chambers agreed to contact Roy Jemison to discuss the website. Peter Stahl will check on funding for assisting the committee in additional website development.

The Committee discussed the WERA 21 poster. It was unknown as to where the latest version was located. Updating the poster was recommended.

It was agreed that a WERA-21 membership list serve should be developed.

The next topic of discussion was the WERA-21 Photo Database. It was pointed out that Society for Ecological Restoration is developing a website with pictures. The committee felt it would be best to work with SER instead of investing the time in developing the WERA-21 Photo Data Base. A suggestion was to possibly donate our slides with the understanding the committee would have access to the SER Photo Database.

The business meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.