**Basic Information**

* **Project No. and Title**: [WERA1008: Rangelands West](https://www.nimss.org/projects/18236)
* **Annual Meeting Dates**: 7 May 2017 to 10 May 2017
* **Period the Report Covers**: 10/2016 to 9/2017
* **Date of Report:** 07/03/2017

**Participants**

Participants in the 2017 annual meeting were: Amber Dalke-AZ; Barb Hutchinson-AZ; Chris Kollen-AZ; Sheila Merrigan-AZ; Sarah Noelle-AZ; Jeanne Pfander-AZ; Cody Sheehy-AZ; Susan Marshall-CA; Tracy Shohr-CA; Retta Bruegger-CO; Mark Thorne-HI; April Hulet-ID; Jeremy Kenyon-ID; Livia Olsen-KS; Nicole Juve-ND; Dana Boden-NE; Brad Schultz-NV; Amy Shannon-NV; Mike Borman-OR; Yvette Gibson-OR; Beth Burritt-UT; Tip Hudson-WA; Lindsay Hatfield–WY; David Keto-WY; David Kruger-WY; Rachel Mealor-WY; Derek Scasta-WY; John Tanaka-WY;

**Brief Summary of Minutes of the Annual Meeting (May 7-10, 2017, Logan, UT):**

A reception was held on Sunday, May 7, at Caine House, a venue at Utah State University, organized by Beth Burritt, meeting organizer.

**Monday, May 8**

The morning agenda included a review of Rangelands West Partnership (RWP) activities in the past year. Each state representative gave an update regarding his/her contributions to advancing rangeland information within their region. In particular, RWP members updated the group on numerous topics, including:

* the advancement of the International Year of Rangelands designation through the United Nations
* changes in coverage and accessibility to the journals *Rangeland Ecology and Management* and *Rangelands* through the web portal
* extensive outreach activities, ranging from grazing after fire to irrigated pasture improvements to issues with wolves to sagebrush/sage-grouse education
* new institutional hires in rangeland-related fields
* emerging invasive species challenges
* changes in institutional spending on extension and/or rangeland departments (both positive and negative)
* review of public lands-related litigation in the Great Basin

Partners from Oklahoma, Oregon, and California introduced numerous examples of online education in rangeland topics. Particularly, Oregon discussed its completely online rangelands degree program including methods of instruction, technology, and classroom management. This coincided with further updates on the output from the Range Science Education Council and its now complete Higher Education Challenge Grant (NIFA Grant: 2010-01828). In particular, attendees sought vignettes/videos/testimonials from range specialists regarding their careers for use in these websites.

The afternoon session covered a series of topics relevant to the work of the RWP, including data management, video production, and communication/marketing. The research data management session featured presentations from colleagues at Montana State University and the University of Arizona and engaged the partnership in discussion of the role of research data curation and accessibility via the RWP’s portal. The University of Wyoming partners actively engaged attendees in producing short videos using technologies identified as part of their “Discovering Our Nation’s Rangelands” project (NIFA Grant: 2014-46401-2259) which focuses on video stories that capture local knowledge from landowners and rangeland resource professionals. The session on communications centered on the outreach efforts around *Beyond the Mirage*, a documentary on water produced by RWP member Cody Sheehy. He detailed the formal and informal elements of conducting a large publicity campaign around a natural resources issue. This session deliberately focused on illustrating the challenges of promoting the International Year of Rangeland idea.

The annual business meeting took place just before the close of the first day. Chair Nicole Juve updated the RWP on the new WERA project and requested individuals sign up on NIMSS if they have not yet done so. She reported RWP Executive Committee changes and future meeting dates. The meeting included requests for a plan for spending the reserve funds and an invitation to join the ILRI Global Rangelands Initiative and the International Land Coalition.

**TUESDAY, May 9**

The morning session consisted primarily of an update on several major activities – the RREA Strategic Plan Project and the Sustatinable Rangelands Roundtable (SSR), followed by a report of the RWP’s various action groups.

Three action groups were formed and reported outcomes of their discussions:

* + *Marketing and Social Media*: Devised an improved marketing strategy with regular shifting responsibilities. Planned to compile a list of contacts and determine local “influencers” on social media. Will develop a checklist of how and what to post. Members divided responsibilities for posting by month, and for each month, a member will post 1-2 items to the RP Facebook page per week, post something that links back to a state page, Rangelands West, and/or Global Rangelands related page (e.g. YouTube channel), and schedule all posts in one sitting via HootSuite for best use of time. Amber (chair), Tracy, Tip, Sarah, Livia, Retta
  + *Content Development/Collection Management*: Will draft a collection/content policy based on a discussion with the EC regarding audience and mission. Review of content was also reported as needed. Nicole (chair), Jeanne, April, Amy, Beth.
  + *Sustainability*: Need to develop a succession plan for key leadership positions. Also need to develop better mechanisms, e.g. templates, for assisting grant-seekers to incorporate the RWP in their grants. Need to expand membership to other relevant stakeholders, e.g. agency officials. Members include: Mark, John, Dave, Jeremy, Barb (chair), Rachel, Derek, Brad.

We concluded the day by working through content development problems for the websites and databases we support. These included creating images and features for state websites, reviewing the “topics” pages, essentially a handbook of rangeland ecology topics, and refreshing the attendees’ memories on how to add records to the database.

The meeting concluded with several decisions. First, the following annual meeting will try to open the format up a little to invite presentations/activities from attendees. Second, the Executive Committee will review the mission and vision of the RWP this year, with a by-laws review to happen in the future. Third, the members present voted in favor of participating in the Global Rangelands Initiative, but not with the International Lands Coalition. Mark Thorne and Barb Hutchinson will work with their representatives to begin our participation.

**Arizona State Report**

The “Global Rangelands Knowledge System” is developed and managed by The Rangelands Partnership. The purpose is to provide open access to research and education resources, practical tools, and multimedia programming on all aspects of sustainable rangeland management through the Global Rangelands portal and database [http://globalrangelands.org]. This includes the integration of the Rangelands West portal with its customized sections on trending topics specific to the Western U.S. [http://rangelandswest.org], as well as 19 linked state-affiliated Rangelands sites, see http://globalrangelands.org/Arizona for example. Ten of these state sites are hosted by the Arizona Rangelands technical team. Also incorporated are topical fact sheets and frequently asked questions previously made for the eXtension Rangelands website [http://www.extension.org/rangelands].

During 2016, a comprehensive redesign of the websites and expansion of database content was completed based on user input gained through focus group sessions and surveys. Although work continues on loading new content into the database, current collections total 24,308 resources which is an addition of 6,278 from last year (2015). This includes new editions of Society for Range Management (SRM) journals Rangelands and Rangeland Ecology and Management (REM), abstracts for papers and posters presented at SRM conferences, as well as new materials, particularly multimedia, added to the general Global Rangelands and Rangelands West collections. In addition, a set of articles were added to the database from The Rangelands Journal, provided by CSIRO Publishing on behalf of the Australian Rangeland Society. Also, a new web page was created to host all the resources emanating from the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP) initiative.

During this reporting period, the Rangelands Partnership continued to expand its social media presence, and to tie them to each other and the websites. Social media outlets include: Rangelands Partnership Facebook with 816 page likes as of 12/2016 (up from 549 at the end of 2015); the Global Rangelands YouTube channel featuring 200 videos in 19 playlists (an addition of 73 videos); the Rangelands Partnership Twitter page which has 299 followers (up from 249); a Rangeland Partnership Pinterest page is still in a nascent phase continuing with 5 boards but an addition of 37 pins to total 161; a small Instagram account that currently has 35 followers (up from 22); and a LinkedIn group that is starting to draw interest among Partnership members. Global Rangelands website usage increased from 35,965 users in 2015 to 41,480 in 2016; page views increased from 91,407 to 211,492 at the end of 2016 with 51,364 sessions documented. Forty-four percent of users are from the United States (from every state) while the other 56% of users come from 187 different counties.

The Partnership continues to develop customized topic pages with accompanying video clips and presentations. New topics added in 2016 included: The Controversy over Aspen; Sage Grouse; and Human and Economic Dimensions. Examples of new video productions include: The Generational Succession of Ranches and a series of local knowledge videos with ranchers and a former USFS specialist.

**Grants Update:**

* Completed NIFA-RREA “eXtension-Rangelands West Optimization” project (2016)
* Will complete NIFA-RREA “Discovering Our Nations Rangelands” project (2017)
* Funded: Updating the RREA Strategic Plan 2018-21 project (2016-18)
* Funded: Global Rangelands-Rangelands West portion of five year RREA project for Arizona (2016-2021)
* Funded: WSARE Professional Development Project (UA-Altar Valley Conservation Alliance-RP; 2017-2019)

**Member Site Update**: <http://uwyoextension.org/rwpmembers/>

The Arizona RP team gives special thanks to Ann Tanaka for all of her work on keeping the Member site updated (see list below). In particular, check out all Annual Year sections now going back to our first meeting in 2002! Also, here is where you will find marketing material (logos, bookmarks, etc.) and technical information and tools/videos on how to maintain websites and create metadata records (DLIOs) for the database. In addition, the new, comprehensive PowerPoint slideshow about the RP and put together by Amber Dalke is available on the Member Site - http://uwyoextension.org/rwpmembers/tools/marketing-materials/ and the “Introduction to the Rangelands Partnership” videos from the Executive Committee - <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL9bs98fSwEjQp_h5JZVF3wUutBZUe3O1q>.

**International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP) Initiative**

See also webpage on Global Rangelands: <https://globalrangelands.org/international-yearrangelands-and-pastoralists-initiative>

Beginning in early 2016, many organizations began working together to gain support for a United Nations designated International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP). This has involved discussions with people around the world via email and face-to-face meetings. In January 2017, a Steering Committee was formed with representatives from 15 international organizations, including the Rangelands Partnership. The process for gaining a designation for an IYRP has been challenging as there are several avenues for bringing such requests to the UN General Assembly (UNGA) for a vote, and each country has different policies and structures related to international years. To this end, the Steering Committee has worked to gain countryled requests for a resolution either sent directly to UNGA or to FAO, the primary UN agency that 3 needs to approve the resolution. Currently, there are several countries close to submitting a request and it is hoped they will agree to forward a request with multiple signatories very soon. They are Ethiopia, Mongolia, Kenya, and possibly Argentina. 2020 is the hoped for year for an IYRP; however, this may change due to other international years in the FAO queue. In the meantime, while waiting for countries to take this critical step in the process, the Steering Committee is pursuing other activities around an IY designation, including plans to host side events and other visibility raising activities at various international meetings as well as participating in a UNEP-funded Gap Analysis assessment that was one of the resolutions gained last year at UNEA-2. There has been talk also about holding a special session in NY to gain support for an IYRP.

**Rangeland Partnership Monthly Newsletter**

* 118 Subscribers (Partners and some Administrators)
* Sent monthly since October 2015
* Average open rate: 34.1%
* Average click rate: 5.1%

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| **Ways to View Newsletter** | **Members** | **Percent** |
| iPhone | 33 | 36.30% |
| Outlook 2013 | 14 | 15.40% |
| Gmail | 11 | 12.10% |
| Chrome Mobile | 10 | 11.00% |
| Outlook 2016 | 9 | 9.90% |
| Apple Mail | 7 | 7.70% |
| Outlook 2010 | 4 | 4.40% |
| Thunderbird | 2 | 2.20% |
| Hotmail | 1 | 1.10% |

**SRM Journal Archive Update**

Since 2000, the University of Arizona Libraries (UAL) has been providing open access to the journal archives for the Society of Range Management (SRM): Rangeland Ecology & Management (REM) (previously Journal of Range Management) and Rangelands. The SRM journal archives contain more than 10,000 articles, representing two of the largest collections offered by the Library’s journal services, available at https://journals.uair.arizona.edu/index.php/jrm and https://journals.uair.arizona.edu/index.php/rangelands. In addition, the SRM titles are the most heavily used titles on the UAL journal services site as evidenced by the high usage statistics in 2016 for these journals: REM/JRM 48,000 page views and Rangelands 25,000 page views. The PDFs of the SRM journal archive articles are searchable and accessible via the Global Rangelands and Rangelands West pages at globalrangelands.org as well as the journals’ website.

In April 2017, we completed loading articles up through 2011 for RE&M (formerly JRM) and up through 2014 for Rangelands. In 2016, as a result of advocacy for increased open access to the SRM journals by Barbara Hutchinson (UA College of Agriculture & Life Sciences/CALS); UA librarians Jeanne Pfander, Yan Han and Dan Lee; as well as many Rangelands Partnership (RP) and SRM members and supporters, the SRM Board voted in August 2016 to reduce the embargo period for both journals: for REM, 5 years (down from 10-year-embargo previously), and Rangelands, 3 years (from the previous 5-year embargo). Consequently, as of April 2017, the UAL Journal Services team has added over 1,000 additional articles for the two journals (provided as PDFs by Elsevier), available freely as open access titles.

The UAL/CALS team at Arizona is working on improving the workflow from Elsevier to the UA Libraries to globalrangelands.org, to facilitate the addition on a yearly basis of new articles from both SRM journals as the embargo “rolling window” moves forward each year. In addition, the UAL team has created our own metadata in OJS because the Elsevier PDFs are coded with the publishers’ metadata. We need to clarify who owns the copyright of the metadata (SRM or Elsevier). It would be ideal if Elsevier PDF metadata can be used seamlessly across the digital object life cycle, but there are two issues to be addressed: 1. Copyright; 2. Technical integration.

**Colorado Rangelands State Report**

* Working on creating a new, updated CO Rangelands website that is combined with the Colorado State University Range Extension website
  + An undergraduate CSU student helped with initial redesign stages in the fall
    - Conducted interviews with potential stakeholders
    - Reviewed literature on information needs of ranchers and examined existing resources
  + Information gathered by the student will inform website content and design
  + Hope to have the new site up and running by early fall, then will retire current site
* Made minimal changes to the current website
  + Fixed broken links
  + Deleted outdated resources
* Current website statistics for 1/1/16 – 12/31/16: o Use statistics
  + Number of users: 363
  + Number of sessions – 453
  + Number of page views – 884
    - Nearly 19% of sessions were on a mobile device or tablet
    - Approximately 24% of sessions were initiated from outside the U.S.
    - Methods used to reach the website
      * ~48% of sessions reached site via search engine
      * ~30% came directly to the website (i.e. typed the URL into the browser)
      * ~22% came from another website that linked to Colorado Rangelands

**10/2016 - 09/2017 Accomplishments**

* Successful annual meeting of the Rangelands West Partnership (May 2017, Logan, UT). Attendees (24 on-site; 4 virtual). Positive financial return for the RWP.
* Progress on several grants received by different RWP partners for rangelands information projects (noted above in Arizona state report).
* Progress on the International Year of Rangelands initiative.
* Distributed survey results to partners, with a focus on three areas prioritized by the RP Executive Committee and Arizona technical team:
  + Sustainability/Long-Term Funding
  + Services and Collections
  + Marketing and Outreach
* Focused the annual meetings action groups on these three items
* Continued distributing RWP information and updates via social media and the RWP Newsletter

**Challenges of the Past Year:**

* Continuing to build and expand unique state rangelands websites with locally-specific content – and adding metadata records for that content to the Global Rangelands database with limited time and resources.
* Expanding network of contributors around the world to build a global repository of full-text rangeland science and management resources.
* Streamlining and engaging task forces to ensure ongoing productivity.
* Plan to request membership dues from agricultural experiment station directors and library deans, was viewed as implausible
* Change in executive committee membership midway through the year

**In Process / Next Step Activities:**

* Continue to develop collaborative grant proposals that specifically identify connection to the RWP
* Refine elements of new website redesign as per user feedback.
* Continue to pursue harvesting rangelands records from institutional repositories; and create a tool kit for members to use for setting up harvesting protocols
* Review the mission and vision of the RWP
* Create a list of “influencers” in local regions that can help distribute information
* Develop templates to assist RWP members in including the RWP in grant proposals
* Develop a succession plan for key positions
* Develop a Marketing Plan that includes guidelines or checklist for members to contribute to social media outlets; Rotate Social Media Director monthly. This person will be responsible for pushing out existing content on a monthly basis; developing a video for marketing Global Rangelands and Rangelands West websites; conducting public awareness events by members in their institutions; and other efforts (International Year of Rangelands, consistent hashtag).

**Impact Statement:**

The Rangelands West Partnership (RWP) seeks to provide quality web-based information, resources and tools to improve land management and ensure sustainability of rangelands. Our expected and ongoing outcomes and impacts include:

* Increased quality of rangeland information and resources to meet the needs of a broad range of users and audiences from around the world.
* Improved navigation and accessibility of desired information through the redesigned Rangelands West/Global Rangelands Website.
* Creation of user-oriented services based on direct input from diverse audiences through formal needs assessments.
* Strengthened relationships among rangeland professionals, librarians, and information specialists in each Western state through improved communications resulting in greater sharing of information and content development.
* Development of standardized methods for metadata, incorporating input from the Rangelands West Partners, FAO, and other interested stakeholders. The metadata for significant rangelands resources are then input into Global Rangelands database.
* Identification of Rangelands West Partnership institutional repositories with relevant rangeland resources and a successful pilot project to harvest those resources and make them available through Global Rangelands.
* Global Rangelands website usage increased from 35,965 users in 2015 to 41,480 in 2016; page views increased from 91,407 to 211,492 at the end of 2016 with 51,364 sessions documented. Forty-four percent of users are from the United States (from every state) while the other 56% of users come from 187 different counties.
* Social media outlets include: Rangelands Partnership Facebook with 816 page likes as of 12/2016 (up from 549 at the end of 2015); the Global Rangelands YouTube channel featuring 200 videos in 19 playlists (an addition of 73 videos); the Rangelands Partnership Twitter page which has 299 followers (up from 249); a Rangeland Partnership Pinterest page is still in a nascent phase continuing with 5 boards but an addition of 37 pins to total 161; a small Instagram account that currently has 35 followers (up from 22); and a LinkedIn group that is starting to draw interest among Partnership members.
* Expansion of RWP database to a worldwide repository of over 20,000 peer reviewed articles, reports, fact sheets, and user resources.
* Significant steps taken toward the achievement of the primary vision of Rangelands West/Global Rangelands as the premier website for dissemination of scientific information on rangeland ecology and management.