

Petition for renewal of WCC-55

Number: WCC-55

Title: Rangeland Resource Economics and Policy

Duration: October 1, 2001 to September 30, 2004

Description and Justification:

Rangelands are the most extensive class of lands in most of the eleven western states (about 70% of the land area) and are also important in many Great Plains states. These lands are important sources of forage and cover for wild and domestic animals. They are also used for recreation and are important watersheds. Rangelands managed by agencies of the federal government are commonly used by livestock operators as a complement to privately owned lands. But this use has come under increasing scrutiny with efforts by some groups to eliminate livestock grazing as a use of the federal lands. Decisions to reduce or eliminate livestock grazing in favor of other uses also affects the use of private lands. These economic impacts are especially important to livestock producers and communities where these lands are located. Information is needed that can be used by producers, land administrators, and government officials concerning the impact of these decisions. In addition, many livestock operators are seeking alternatives that might be used to improve ranch income while using rangelands, including those managed by one of the federal agencies. Many of the alternatives that can be used by ranchers, and the impacts associated with changes in the use of federal lands, are not unique to a particular area. When issues cross state boundaries or when issues arise that affect several states, researchers and policy analysts need to coordinate their activities and approaches to these problems.

Objectives:

1. To coordinate the information that is obtained concerning benefits, costs and tradeoffs that are involved with using federal lands in alternative ways.
2. To coordinate interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary research that addresses issues and alternatives facing livestock producers, land administrators and community leaders concerning the economic, social, cultural and ecological aspects associated with the management of rangelands.
3. To coordinate the evaluation of proposed policies that may affect the use of public and/or private rangelands.
4. To foster and improve communications among those interested in the management and use of rangelands.

Expected Outcomes:

1. Identification of issues involving the use of rangelands that are common to the western and Great Plains regions.

2. Exchange information, research results, extension programs and points of view through seminars, symposia, workshops and electronic media. Some of these will also be sessions of professional meetings (e.g., Society for Range Management, Western Agricultural Economics Association)
3. Publication of coordinated research and/or review articles concerning rangeland associated issues that are important to the western and Great Plains regions.
4. Coordination among researchers and extension specialists in providing information for federal agency personnel and community leaders who are concerned with the use of rangelands.

Educational Plan and Coordination with Other Research Committees and Government Agencies:

1. Presentations by committee members, personnel employed by land management agencies and invited guests will be encouraged. These presentations will inform participants at professional and committee meetings.
2. Publications will be widely distributed.
3. Coordination with other committees (especially WCC-40 and W-192) will be facilitated by the chair of each respective committee. It may be necessary that the chair or other designated members of WCC-55 occasionally meet with these other committees. This will require additional funding. Joint meetings may be held with one or more of these groups. These committees may also jointly sponsor workshops and symposia at professional meetings.
4. Personnel who are employed by governmental agencies have been asked to actively participate in committee meetings. They will also be asked to give presentations concerning policy issues, provide input on needed research and assist in identifying policy and management issues that need to be evaluated.
5. Electronic media (internet and e-mail) have been and will continue to be used by committee members in coordinating activities and programs and for the distribution of WCC-55 papers and publications.

Participants: The following are individuals who have been active participants on the committee. Most participants are from the eleven western states, but representatives from some of the Great Plains states have been active participants.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Institution or organization</u>	<u>area(s) of interest</u>
E. Tom Bartlett	Colorado State University	Range Economics/policy
Martin Beutler	South Dakota State Univ.	Range Economics
J. Richard Conner	Texas A&M	Agricultural Economics
Tim Darden	University of Nevada	Range Economics

Wendy Favinger	Bureau of Land Management	Range Management
E. Bruce Godfrey	Utah State University	Agricultural Economics
Aaron Harp	University of Idaho	Sociology
Tom Harris	University of Nevada	Economics
Lynn Huntsinger	U of California-Berkeley	Agricultural Economics
Michael Langemeier	Kansas State University	Agricultural Economics
Kevin Moore	University of Missouri	Agricultural Economics
Eddie Oaks	USDA-NASS	Agricultural Statistics
George Pfeiffer	University of Nebraska	Agricultural Economics
Neil Rimbey	University of Idaho	Range Economics/policy
David Scarneccia	Washington State Univ.	Range Science
John Tanaka	Oregon State Univ.	Range Economics/management
L. Allen Torell	New Mexico State Univ	Agricultural Economics
Larry VanTassell	University of Idaho	Agricultural Economics

Several others have been invited to participate. Some of those listed below have attended meetings in the past and/or have given presentations. The administrative advisor has invited other western states to designate a representative to participate.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Institution or organization</u>	<u>area(s) of interest or position</u>
Walter Armbruster	Farm Foundation	Managing director
Bruce Beattie	University of Arizona	Agricultural Economics
Dan Bernardo	Kansas State University	Agricultural Economics
John Fowler	New Mexico State Univ.	Range Economics
Ray Huffaker	Washington State University	Agricultural Economics
Jim Jacobs	University of Wyoming	Agricultural Economics
Pat Johnson	South Dakota State Univ.	Animal Science
John Keith	Utah State University	Agric. Economics/ Range Mgt
Larry Leistritz	North Dakota State Univ.	Agricultural Economics
John Loomis	Colorado State University	Resource Economics
Richard Loper	Prairie Winds Consulting	Range Management
Gary May	Kansas State University	Agricultural Economics
Daniel W. McCollum	USDA-Forest Service	Economics
John McLain	Resource Concepts	Range Management
Jim Thompson	University of Wyoming	Rural Sociology
Russ Tronstad	University of Arizona	Agricultural Economics

Operational Structure

Chair, a two-year term of office, responsible for calling the meeting, developing the agenda and conducting the meeting. He/she is also primarily responsible for coordinating with other regional committees.

Vice Chair, two-year term of office, responsible for meeting program and conducting the meeting in absence of the chair.

Secretary, two-year term of office, responsible for keeping minutes of meetings, maintaining mailing lists, handling registration fees and distributing minutes of meetings to members of the committee and other interested parties.

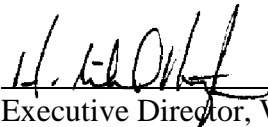
Signatures

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Donald L. Snyder", written over a horizontal line.

Donald L Snyder, Administrative Advisor

May 13, 2001

Date

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "H. L. O'Neil", written over a horizontal line.

Executive Director, Western Directors Association

July 18, 2001

Date

Attachments:

Accomplishments:

During the current term of WCC-55 (October 1, 1998 to present), the following activities have occurred.

Annual Meetings:

September 28-29, 1998 in Ft. Collins, Colorado. These meetings were held jointly with WCC-40. The first day was spent on a field tour of the USDA, ARS, Central Plains Experimental Range northeast of Ft. Collins. Personnel from the station discussed the history of the site and research that has been performed there over the years. The group then examined ongoing research projects that included studies on water infiltration and runoff, range condition under varying management and the impact of increased atmospheric CO₂ on range growth and productivity. The second day included a general session with papers presented by members of WCC-55 in preparation for a symposia to be delivered at the upcoming Society of Range Management/American Forage and Grassland Council Meetings. Eleven presentations were given in a symposium format. These papers were presented by L. Van Tassell (U of Wyoming), J. Tanaka (Oregon State U), K. Moore (U of Missouri), R. Huffaker (Washington State U), L. A. Torell (New Mexico State U), Gary May (U of Wyoming), N. Rimbey (U of Idaho), T. Darden (U of Nevada), A. Harp (U of Idaho), and J. Ortmann (U of Nebraska). A business meeting of WCC-55 was held in the afternoon.

September 27-28, 1999 in Caldwell, Idaho. The meeting began with a series of presentations describing the Owyhee County Study and setting the stage for the field tour on the second day. Nine talks were given on the first morning. These were presented by N. Rimbey (U of Idaho), T. Darden (U of Nevada), A. Harp (U of Idaho), G. Taylor (U of Idaho), F. Grant (Owyhee County Planning), C. Gibson (former extension educator), J. Martin (Idaho BLM State Economist), C. Brandau (rancher representing Owyhee County Cattlemen's Assn.), and M. Soulen Hinson (Idaho Rangeland Resource Commission). In the afternoon the group held a business meeting for WCC-55. On the second day of the meeting the participants enjoyed an informative and interesting tour of Owyhee County, Idaho and Jordan Valley, Oregon. The tour began with a visit to the Owyhee County Courthouse in Murphy, Idaho. Dick Bass with the Owyhee County Commission and Ernie Bahem, Owyhee County Assessor discussed issues facing the county in terms of funding, public services, public land management, etc. The group then visited with Paul Nettleton and stopped at his ranch to discuss issues of importance to local ranchers, then drove to Silver City, Idaho. The participants toured the town and learned of issues relating to recreation on public lands, impact on ranches and ranchers, summer home demand and impact on ranch values, etc. Then the tour stopped at the Mike Hanley ranch near Jordan Valley, Oregon and had an interesting discussion with Mike Hanley, Tim Lowry and Bob Skinner on the history of the Jordan Valley, the Vale Project, and issues facing the livestock industry in the region.

October 1-3, 2000 in Rapid City, South Dakota. These meetings were held jointly with the members of WCC-40. On Sunday afternoon the meetings began with a business meeting for WCC-55. There was discussion on the Policy Analysis Center for Western Public Lands, which some WCC-55 members are involved in as well. The policy for our presentations at the Society for Range Management meetings to be held in February in Kona, HI was discussed. All presentations will be given with slides and Allen Torell at New Mexico State University will take care of compiling the regional publication of the papers. On Monday the participants toured the USFS Buffalo Gap National Grasslands east of Rapid City. The Forest Service personnel in Wall, SD gave a presentation on the Great Plains Grassland Plan. After lunch the group visited an allotment being managed for its riparian areas and then drove through the Badlands to look at a Black Footed Ferret reintroduction site. The site was infested with a Prairie Dog Town which is what the Ferret's feed on. On Tuesday there was a joint meeting with members of WCC-40. Discussions included the USFS project, Criteria and Indicators of Sustainable Rangeland Management, which deals with the seven criteria, set by the Montreal Process. WCC-40 members discussed the Transition Plan the Society for Range Management was putting together to deliver to Senate and House Staffers in Congress and Cabinet Members of the new Presidential Administration. This transition plan would put forward three concerns or problem areas the SRM membership would like to see addressed in the next administration. The joint meeting was adjourned and in the afternoon, a trial run of some presentations for the Kona SRM meetings was held. Those presenting papers at this meeting included: T. Bartlett, J. Conner, B. Godfrey, G. May, N. Rimbey, J. Tanaka, L. VanTassell, and L. Torell.

Additional accomplishments

Grant proposals.

The Value of Forest Service Grazing and Range Use. Four WCC-55 participants are involved with a project to review forage valuation techniques for use by the USDA Forest Service. The work not only extensively reviews past research but recommends methods to value public land forage and identify needed research. This project was made possible by the interaction and past research of the four WCC-55 scientists; the coordinating committee was the mechanism to bring the appropriate people together. Those members involved with this project include T. Bartlett, N. Rimbey, L. Torell, and L. VanTassell.

W-192 Regional Research Project. Conceptualization and implementation of the Western Regional Project, "Rural Communities and Public Lands in the West: Impacts and Alternatives" (W-192), resulted from the efforts of WCC-55 members.

Fund for Rural America Project, Regional Evaluation of Social and Economic Impacts of Public Land Policy. A multi-state regional research project involving New Mexico, Idaho, Nevada, Wyoming, Utah, and Oregon, funded by a \$220,000 USDA-CSREES Fund for Rural America Grant was implemented in 1998 and will terminate in 2001. Under the project, public land grazing users were surveyed, economic impacts of public

policy changes evaluated and the expected direction of future policies defined. All project participants are WCC-55 members. WCC-55 annual meetings were used to facilitate and coordinate the research efforts.

SRM meetings. The papers presented at the meetings in Ft. Collins, Colorado in 1998 were also given as part of an organized symposia at the annual meetings of the Society of Range Management held jointly with the American Forage and Grassland Council in February, 1999 in Omaha, Nebraska. The joint meetings of WCC-55 and WCC-40 in 1998 provided a forum for feedback for presenters on methods, conclusions and presentations. These symposia papers were published as a Western Regional Research Publication, out of Colorado State University, as well as in abstract proceedings from the conference. Also in 2000, the meetings of WCC-55 held jointly with WCC-40 provided a forum for feedback on papers to be delivered at the 2001 annual meetings of the Society of Range Management in Kona, Hawaii.