



RECRUITING DIVERSE RANGE STUDENTS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Susan Edinger Marshall and Lisa Perry
Humboldt State University, SRM Annual Meetings, Billings, MT 2011

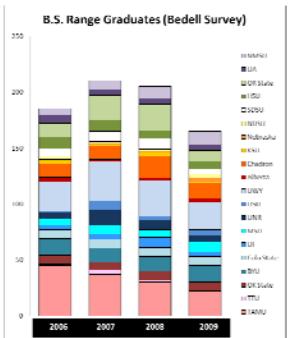
Outline

Main focus—How to recruit more students to range

- What's the problem?
- Why do an undergraduate survey?
- How was survey done?
- Survey Results
- Recommendations based on survey
- Possible Action Steps

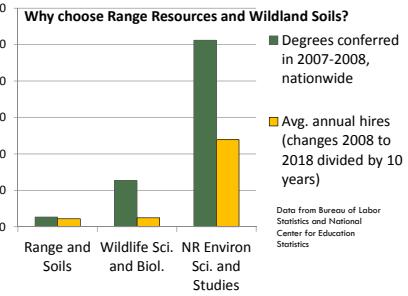
What's the problem?

Tom Bedell's survey of universities last year reveals trends in B.S. Range Graduates. 150 to 200 Range graduated per year (2006 to 2009)



What's the problem?

Bedell's data showed very close agreement with data reported by NCES. The odds of getting a job in range and/or soils are much higher than wildlife or environ. sci.



Field	Degrees conferred in 2007-2008, nationwide	Avg. annual hires (changes 2008 to 2018 divided by 10 years)
Range and Soils	~200	~200
Wildlife Sci. and Biol.	~1000	~100
NR Environ Sci. and Studies	~5000	~2500

Data: from Bureau of Labor Statistics and National Center for Education Statistics

Why do an undergraduate survey?

- Range profession will never be broadly understood by the mass media and general public.
- We must **focus** our recruiting efforts.
- What does our **target** audience think?



How was the survey done?

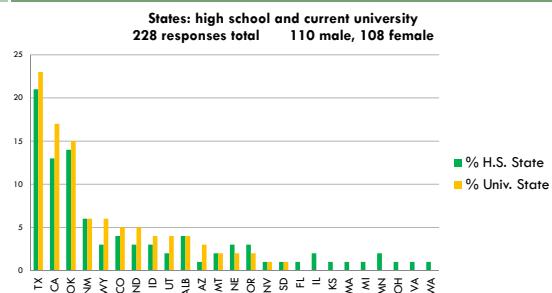
- Survey questions created at Humboldt State University (HSU)
- Pilot tested and edited by Range Science Education Council members (Fall 2010)
- Approved for Human Subjects (IRB) at HSU and NMSU
- On-line Zoomerang Survey launched by e-mail to RSEC contacts October 28, 2010
- Follow-up e-mails and phone calls to states who hadn't responded through December, 2010.

How was the survey done?

- Responses tracked and analyzed by Alissa Johnson at the California Center for Rural Policy (HSU)
- Comparisons between different geographic regions – no big differences
- Comparisons between “range” and “non-range” students

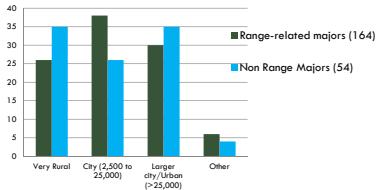


Survey Results - Demographics



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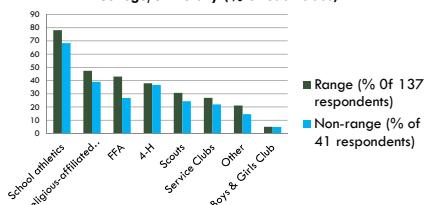
Community Size Where Range and Non-Range Majors Grew Up (percentage)



- About 80% (both groups) went straight to college from high school.
- Of the remaining 20%, about 55% worked and about 25% did military service.
- For their current college/university, about 60% entered as freshmen and 40% as transfers.

Survey Results – Demographics

Youth Activities Before Attending College/University (% of each class)



Range-specific Responses



- Start in Range?
43% yes, 57% no
- Changed major before (66%) or after (34%) taking a range class.
- Why did you change to range?
(could pick more than one reason)

Career opportunities 72%
Unique major 50%
Location of work 46%
Friend's influence 26%
Professor's influence 24%
Family influence 20%
Other, variable reasons 39%

Range-specific Responses

How did range majors' perceptions change after they became range majors?

Changed for the better 70%

Didn't change 28%

Changed for the worse 2%

"I realized that range is an important factor in the world. It's not just about grazing animals. It's about understanding your landscape, plant species, soils, and wildlife, too. I feel that I have many job options when I graduate."

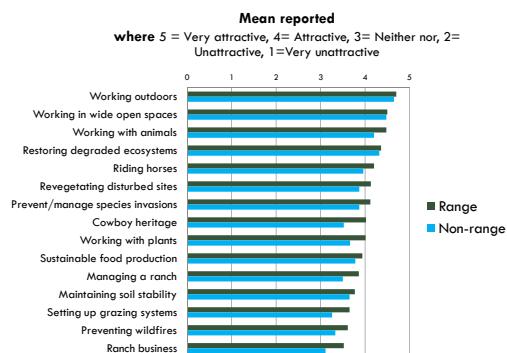
Range-specific Responses

How can colleges/universities increase enrollments in range-related majors, based on your experience?

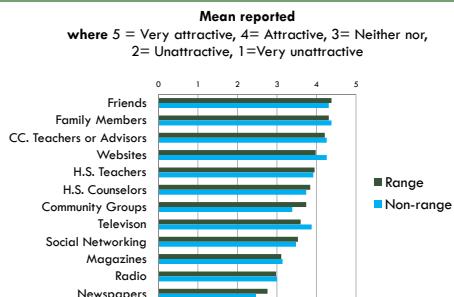
86 individual responses

- 67 mentioned different kinds of outreach to communities, schools, students.
- 25 mentioned the need for programmatic/curricular changes
- 22 mentioned employment opportunities

Attractiveness of work



How do students learn about majors and careers?



Recruitment strategies

- Emphasize careers, outdoor work, vignettes of problems we solve.
- Continue outreach with friends, family, FFA.
- Continue to articulate and host community colleges.
- Use images of animals (e.g. horses and wildlife).
- Recruit heavily on campus.
- 15 second message, not 15 minute lecture**

What we do now, what we could...

- Keep doing outreach
- Convert range courses to GE if possible
- Advertise on campus, enlist current range students
- Hold a “fun” social event to recruit on-campus
- Common range profession portal (website) that clearly points to individual programs
- See <http://www.imanagronomist.net>/created by Iowa State.

What can RSEC do?

- Make RSEC web page into a recruitment/information site on behalf of the range ecology and management profession
- Maintain organizational links for us to look at

