

## History and Chronology of RSEC (continued)

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### 1991

Qualifications standards for Soil Conservationist and Range Conservationist were discussed by Harlan DeGarmo (National Range Conservationist). Many annual "hires" in the SCS are employed as Soil Conservationists, but only a few meet the standards for the Range Conservationist.

A continuing concern of RSEC has been OPM (Office of Personnel Management) standards for hiring Range Conservationists. The standards that were adopted in 1980 were once again called into question, suggesting that they were too restrictive and "range trained" graduates did not make the best people for Range Conservationist positions with the federal government. TSEC opposed the move within the federal government to ignore OPM standards for the Range Conservationist announcement. RSEC would work with SCS to continue use of the 1980 standards.

Representative Ken Fulgham reported that the range program at Humboldt State University was in jeopardy of being discounted. Ken asked RSEC agreed to write Humboldt University and also develop a procedure for supporting member institutions in jeopardy of losing range degree programs.

A Task Group on Futures in Range Management Education is active and encouraged to continue, ultimately producing a final report following a symposium discussing these reports.

The RSEC/SRM Teaching Award was presented to Dr. Fred Smeins from Texas A&M University.

Dr. Ben Zamora, Washington State University, was elected Secretary.

### 1992

Once again, OPM standards (and requirements) were discussed for entry level employment with a federal agency. RSEC proposed to provide leadership assistance to SRM regarding educational requirements for federal entry level positions in "Range". Range Conservationist title proposed to be changed to Rangeland Management Specialist. RSEC was not particularly concerned that there is a problem with the job description and that entry level requirements will not be changed at this time.

OPM standards for Rangeland Management Specialist was a major topic for consideration by RSEC. Efforts were extended, to no avail, to OPM to assist with review and revision of OPM standards.

The Range degree program at Humboldt State University continues as a result of RSEC's letter of support in 1991.

RSEC hosted a Range Management Futures Workshop at the SRM meeting in Spokane, WA. As a result of the Workshop, invitations were extended to international institutions interested in becoming members of RSEC.

A Tactical Planning Committee was appointed with the charge to develop long term goals and objectives, be proactive, and to assume a leadership role in Range education.

The financial statement for RSEC was approximately \$5,275.

Dr. Lee Eddleman, Oregon State University, was recognized as the Outstanding Teacher for 1991.

### 1993

The major topic of discussion by RSEC members at the Annual Meeting was the educational programs offered by the various universities offering Range Degrees. The hiring trends in SCS were discussed by Keith Wadman (National Range Conservationist). He reported that there had been a 25% decrease in hiring Range Conservationists between 1980 and 1992. Glen Secrist (BLM) reported a 17% decrease in hiring Range Conservationists between 1983 and 1992.

RSEC recommended in 1992 that OPM consider revising the Job Description for a Range Conservationist. This recommendation seemed to be ignored by OPM.

Other discussion included Envirothon, a high school competition program and the new Range-Wildlife Habitat text that was authorized by SRM and shepherded by the SRM Wildlife Habitat Committee.

RSEC was asked to support (and agreed to do so) the Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI).

RSEC began to develop a Tactical Planning Procedure for Range Management Education in 1992 and it continued into 1993.

Dr. John Valentine asked to be replaced as Historian since he no longer was the RSEC Representative from BYU. Dr. Paul Doescher (Oregon State University) was appointed to replace Dr. Valentine. RSEC history is up to date through 1990 and part of 1991. It is on diskette.

Member institutions of RSEC were:

- \*Arizona State University
- Brigham Young University
- \*Chadron State University
- \*Colorado State University
- Humboldt State University
- \*Montana State University
- \*New Mexico State University
- \*North Dakota State University
- \*Oklahoma State University
- \*Oregon State University
- Sul Ross State University
- Tarleton State University
- \*Texas A & I University
- Texas A & M University
- \*Texas Christian University
- Texas Tech University

- \*University of Arizona
- University of California - Berkeley
- \*University of Idaho
- \*University of Nebraska
- \*University of Nevada
- \*University of Wyoming
- \*Utah State University
- \*1994 dues received

Dr. Mitch McClaran (University of Arizona) was elected secretary.

#### 1994

Dr. Mort Kothman discussed the status of the Task Group: Futures in Range Management. The sense was that the range profession is changing and we in the universities should change our curricula to meet the challenges of the future. A result of the Task Group was a Range Education Symposium during the SRM meeting entitled "Strategic Planning for Range Management Education." An inventory of all faculty in Range Education Programs was conducted by Mort Kothman.

Dr. Harold Heady indicated that his new textbook on Rangeland Ecology and Management would be available in June, 1994. The Grazing Land Conservation Initiative was discussed, especially as it would affect employment for range graduates.

No teaching award was given in 1994. The Financial Statement indicated that RSEC had \$10,232.00 in checking and savings deposits.

Dr. Roger Wittie (Tarleton State University, Texas) was elected Vice-President to fill Dr. Mitch McClaran's unexpired term and Dr. Val Anderson (Brigham Young University) was elected secretary.

#### 1995

A major topic of discussion was SRM Accreditation Standards for Universities offering Range degrees. An RSEC Committee was appointed to study Accreditation Standards. This committee was asked to work with SRM to review accreditation criteria. The question was raised and discussed as to whether the Universities are meeting the current needs of Rangeland management.

OPM Standards were once again addressed and a committee within RSEC was appointed to review OPM standards and OPM approaches to hiring range-trained graduates in federal positions.

Although RSEC is an autonomous group and not a part of SRM, SRM has supported its efforts and continues to do so. RSEC agreed to request that SRM establish a Board of Directors liaison with RSEC in the same manner that the SRM-BOD has liaison with each of the SRM Committees. (Subsequently, the SRM-BOD established - in 1996 - the member of the BOD responsible for Communications Cluster to serve as the liaison with RSEC).

RSEC initiated self introspection and established a committee (as per RSEC minuets) to 1) evaluate current goals of RSEC, and 2) develop additional goals to be presented at the 1996 RSEC meetings.

RSEC requested that SRM appoint a member of the Board of Directors (SRM) to meet with RSEC and to serve as a liaison between RSEC and SRM.

No teaching award was presented in 1995 because the files had been misplaced.

Historian Paul Doescher asked to be released from the duties of Historian. He was replaced with Ron Sosebee.

No financial statement was included in the minutes.

Dr. Jeff Moseley, University of Idaho (and subsequently, Montana State University) was elected Secretary.

### 1996

RSEC Historian files were transferred from Dr. John Valentine, but were misplaced. Therefore, recent history files have been reconstructed as best as possible from RSEC minutes and personal notes.

Accreditation of university range science programs was discussed. A recommendation was forwarded to SRM that accreditation be based on quality of range program and remove all FTE requirements (because some smaller programs couldn't be accredited since they didn't meet the minimum requirement of 3.0 FTE paid from resident instruction, regardless of the quality of their programs).

Note was made that SRM was engaged in preliminary discussions of a certification program for range professionals (separate from the Certified Range Management Consultant program).

Ms. Barbara Smith with the USDA-NRCS Special Examining Unit attended the RSEC meeting and shared the basic requirements for the Rangeland Management Specialist Announcement (formerly Range Conservationist) (Exhibit 6). She announced that the Federal Register was open for the first time in several years. For the first time ever, OPM standards for the Rangeland Management Specialist (formerly Range Conservationists) was made public by OPM.

The number of faculty FTE's in range science academic programs decreased by 2% between 1992 and 1996.

RSEC elected to change titles of Chair and Vice-Chair to President and President-Elect, respectively, to avoid the misconception that RSEC is a committee within SRM. RSEC remains an autonomous body. A RSEC e-mail list and space on the Texas A & M list server was pursued.

The financial report for 1996 indicated that RSEC had about \$12,598 in checking and savings accounts. Membership is based on annual fees of \$50.00/institution. The RSEC/SRM Outstanding Teacher Award was presented to Dr. Paul Doescher, Oregon State University.

Wayne Leininger was elected secretary.

### 1997

A proposal certification for a Grazing Land Practitioner was considered by SRM during 1996. RSEC, along with all committees within SRM were asked to provide a recommendation to the BID at the meeting in Rapid City, S.D. RSEC recommended that a certification program for a Grazing Land Practitioner not be adopted, but that Dr.

Anderson and Dr. Mosley prepare a letter to OPM in support of the current Standards for Rangeland Management Specialist and that they coordinate their letter on behalf of RSEC with the officers of SRM who were also invited to write NRCS and OPM in support of the current standards for Rangeland Management Specialist.

RSEC's executive committee would work with Fee Busby (assigned to the National NRCS office) in writing the NRCS in support of the current (1980) OPM Standards for a Rangeland Management Specialist.

RSEC decided to use some of its money as a stipend to the recipient of the RSEC/SRM Outstanding Teaching Award. The amount of the stipend would be \$1,000 and the recipient is to be encouraged to use these funds for enhancement toward their teaching program.

The financial balance for 1996 was approximately \$14,214.

A proposal was submitted to RSEC to become a standing committee within SRM. Consensus of RSEC was to remain autonomous and not request to become a standing committee within SRM.

Apparently no action was taken by SRM in 1996 to remove the 3.0 FTE requirement for accreditation. Therefore, RSEC supported keeping the 3.0 FTE requirement, but allowing the SRM Accreditation team some flexibility in their recommendation to SRM for universities interested in accreditation.

**RSEC requested that SRM "house" an official copy of the History of RSEC. SRM agreed RSEC's request.**

Revised (1997) RSEC Constitution and By-Laws are included as Exhibit 7.

RSEC agreed to award \$1,000 honorarium to the annual recipient of the outstanding teacher.

RSEC agreed to not become a member of SRM, but rather remain as an autonomous body.

RSEC elected to leave incorporation in N.D. and not to move it to Colorado as was passed.

Exhibit 8 includes a list of member institutions for 1996.

Dr. Jeff Mosley, Montana State University, received the Outstanding Teacher Award.

Dr. Mike McGinnis, Oregon State University, was elected secretary for 1997.

## 1998

The 1997 meeting of RSEC was held in Rapid City, S.D., February 8, 1997.

Once again, OPM Standards were a topic of discussion. Conclusion was that the Standards (as presented to RSEC February 13, 1996) are sufficient and should be followed by OPM in hiring Rangeland Management Specialists. The RSEC Executive Committee was commissioned to coordinate with Dr. F. E. Busby and write NRCS and OPM in support of the current standards.

SRM Board of Directors agreed to "house" the historical records of RSEC so they would be accessible to the entire membership (either RSEC or SRM). The problem of being lost via transferring between officers will also be eliminated.

RSEC established a \$1,000.00 stipend from its treasury to be awarded (beginning at the Rapid City meeting in 1997) to the recipient of the RSEC/SRM

Outstanding Teaching Award. Recipient of the Award in 1997 was Dr. Jeff Moseley from Montana State University.

RSEC elected to not become a committee within SRM, but to remain autonomous.

#### 1999

Historian Sosebee was not at the RSEC meeting due to a conflict with SRM-BOD activities. Hence, a paucity of information for 1999. The RSEC Strategic Plan initiated a few years earlier was proposed for consideration at the RSEC meeting in 2000.

Certified Professionals in Rangeland Management was adopted by SRM. RSEC asked to assist with implementation and ultimately in designing an exam for the certification process (delayed until 2000).

Undergraduate Teaching Award recipients from 1986-1999 included in Exhibit 9. RSEC member institutions in 1999 are included in Exhibit 10.

#### 2000

The annual meeting of RSEC was held on February 13, 2000 in Boise, Idaho (Exhibit 1). At the meeting, RSEC adopted a revised Constitution and By-Laws (Exhibit 11) and adopted a Strategic Plan (Exhibit 12).

The differences between the Constitution revised in 1997 and 1999 include the following changes:

1. Article II. Section 1. Location of incorporation.

The only difference in the By-Laws is removal of sentence fragments (duplication of verbage) in Article I, Section 3, of the By-Laws.

The Certified Professional in Rangeland Management program was initiated in the fall of 1999 and gained momentum and acceptance throughout 2000. RSEC volunteered in 1999 to assist in composing an exam for CPRM. However, in interest of time and in an effort to rapidly move CPRM forward, an initial exam was contracted by SRM. Opportunities still exist, however, for RSEC to be involved since the exam is in its initial validation phase and a bank of questions need to be developed from which different exams can be written annually. The CPRM program got off to a slow start, but had received in excess of 550 applications by February 1, 2001.

There is always an interest in development of educational requirements to meet OPM Standards and to identify a range-trained person. New standards are listed in Exhibit 6, but Exhibits 13 and 14 present a historical perspective of the standards as they were originally adopted and changed in time.

The Undergraduate Teaching Award was presented to Bruce Roundy, Brigham Young University, and Dave Engle, Oklahoma State University, at the annual meeting in Boise. The list of recipients is included in Exhibit 9.

#### 2001

Numbers of "range" majors and/or graduates were lower at most, if not all, institutions. RSEC discussed ways to counter the low numbers of majors. A proposal was made to begin planning how range management/science/ecology curricula should

be tailored in the future. One suggestion was that the range curricula should include distance education classes. Another suggestion was to tailor curricula to the needs of employers and potential employers.

Once again OPM standards (400 Series) was discussed. It was suggested that OPM standards (exhibit 6) would not change, but that grading standards would be "changed". Consequently, it was recommended that SRM & RSEC begin considering changes that we (SRM & RSEC) note that should be changed.

2002

Numbers of range majors were reported to once again be low. Several Universities have initiated a "natural resource" degree by this name or some other similar name that is more attractive to undergraduate students than the traditional "range" degree. However, most often the "natural resource" curricula don't provide the courses necessary to meet OPM Standards for Rangeland Management Specialist. A discrepancy was apparent between information of RSEC educators and the federal employment representative (Ms. Sandy Brooks, BLM, Montana) at the RSEC meeting. Reportedly, the federal agencies will have a large percentage ( $\geq 40\%$ ) of its employees "retirement eligible" within the next five years, but no one trained to take their place. Therefore, they (the federal agencies) are interested in hiring "range-trained" individuals who meet the OPM standards for Rangeland Management Specialist. It also was revealed that the federal agencies do not have to hire from the Federal Register.

In addition to the lengthy discussion of range science education at the RSEC meeting, RSEC sponsored a special forum at the SRM meeting entitled "The Range Major and Career Opportunities," Saturday, February 16, 2002. The speakers were Don Kirby, NDSU; Walter Schacht, UN-L; John Mitchell, USDA-FS; Larry Bryant, USDA-FS; William Fox, TAMU; Wayne Leininger, CSU; Larry White, TAMU; John Malechek, USU; Teal Purrington, USDI-BLM; and Mort Kothmann, TAMU.

The Outstanding Teaching Award was presented to Dr. Don Kirby, North Dakota State University.

2003

SRM's Denver Office agreed to house a copy of RSEC's Historian's Report. The Denver Office will serve as a central location for this report. Wayne Leininger, Colorado State University, agreed to replace Ron Sosebee as RSEC Historian. Ron served in this capacity since 1995.

RSEC co-sponsored with SRM a symposium entitled "The Future of the Range Department". Concern by Leonard Jolley and other SRM members over the consolidation of range departments with other natural resource and agricultural programs (e.g. Colorado State University merging with Forestry and Watershed) prompted this symposium. The driving force for mergers with other academic programs appears to be from low enrollment in many range programs and financial cutbacks to universities/colleges. It was pointed out in the symposium that sometimes mergers can be beneficial if they create a large enough critical mass to allow range positions to be filled. Don Kirby presented data from North Dakota State University on how creating a natural resource major within their department allowed them to increase their enrollment considerably. One of the drawbacks from consolidation pointed out in the symposium was the visibility of the range program within and outside the university.

The Outstanding Teaching Award was presented to Dr. Val Jo Anderson, Brigham Young University.



2004

Seventeen RSEC members from various universities attended the meeting. A major portion of the meeting was devoted to issues involving OPM standards and the range curricula offered by member schools. In particular, OPM is not always recognizing courses towards the 18 credits of "range" if the prefixes of the courses are not RS (or something similar). In addition, it was pointed out that federal agencies may not be using the same qualifications in hiring range students that universities have "built into" their curricula as requirements. Also, OPM may be moving to a computerized rating system and it was felt that this would exacerbate this situation. It was suggested that RSEC maintain a closer relationship with OPM and a subcommittee was formed to do this.

RSEC was encouraged to develop a brochure to explain the benefits to universities and students to being a member of RSEC. It was believed that this would help encourage membership in RSEC. It was suggested that the brochure be done as a PDF file to be put on the SRM web site. Walter Schacht attended National Association of State Universities and Land Grant College's Board on Natural Resource, and noted that SRM does not have formal status on it. However, foresters on the Board have expressed an interest in working with range professionals, especially in the area of fire.

The Outstanding Teaching Award was presented to Dr. Carlton Britton, Texas Tech University.

2005

Twenty university faculty representing 18 schools attended the 2005 RSEC meeting in Ft. Worth, Texas. Treasurer Don Kirby reported that RSEC had 27 dues paying member schools in 2004, which is a new record. Geoff Carter, representing the Student Conservation Association, discussed opportunities for range students with SCA. He pointed out that SCA places about 3000 students each year in a wide range of natural resource areas.

A lengthy discussion centered around the manner in which OPM standards are adhered to in rating students for Civil Service positions. A major problem appears to be which courses actually are counted towards meeting OPM standards. Additionally, there was concern whether courses count towards the standards that don't carry an RS type prefix. Dennis Thompson, NRCS National Office, expressed concern over the growing need for range graduates within the federal agencies and the relatively low number of students in range programs in the U.S. One suggestion was that more universities should offer online courses. It was believed that this mode of delivery could help efficiently train more students. The Accreditation Standards are being revisited by SRM again. A draft of the new standards is to be circulated in late fall 2005.

The Outstanding Teaching Award was presented to Dr. Dan Rodgers, University of Wyoming.