



News from the SD Section of the Society for Range Management

By: Pete Bauman

In the January issue of Grassroots, we used this space to re-introduce the Society for Range Management. In this issue, we will highlight our programs to assist in you better understanding the small, but critical role that SRM plays in advancing South Dakota's rangelands. Look for future articles in this space by various SRM members who volunteer their time to bring these programs to youth and adults in South Dakota.

Some highlights over the years include:

SD official state grass: The SD section successfully lobbied for western wheatgrass to become South Dakota's official state grass.

Range Camp: Established in 1975 for high school students to improve rangeland skills. Range camp has now expanded its focus to include adults who work in all aspects of rangelands with specific emphasis on educating those in ranch support roles, especially financial officers, bankers, etc.

Rangeland Days: Established in 1983, Rangeland Days is held in cooperation with Conservation Districts and other agencies across South Dakota and is designed for youth and adults to further their rangeland ID and judging skills from beginners to experts.

Ranch Management Awards: Starting in 1964, the SD section began recognizing ranchers for sound stewardship through the Rangeman of the Year Award. This award, now known as the Excellence in Range Management Award, continues today and is awarded annually to landowners showing exemplary innovation and practices in rangeland health and management. Over 100 individuals and families have received these awards.

Leopold Conservation Award: SD SRM officers and directors are committed to annually nominating a deserving ranch family for this most prestigious award.

Youth Education Endowment: In 1980, forward-thinking members of SD SRM worked with the state of SD to establish an endowment for youth rangeland education activities. These funds help ensure youth activities, travel, and scholarship support will continue well into the future.

Annual meeting and Crazy Auction: Every year, our membership gathers for a meeting and banquet that includes officer elections, awards, and the much anticipated Crazy Auction fundraiser with proceeds going toward youth education. Our recent meeting yielded over \$2,000 for additional youth education support.

Why join and support SRM? For ranchers in SD, it may be hard to understand why SRM is important. The \$100 membership includes membership for the SD Section, and at the Section level, membership and participation really do matter for our youth. South Dakota's youth are well respected; recently our teams won the National Range Judging competition. By keeping

range and ranching at the forefront, we hope to encourage these bright kids to make a home and a living in South Dakota as our next generation of ranch stewards!

How To Join: Visit sdrangelands.com and click Membership or go to rangelands.org and click the JOIN or RENEW tab.