



The SD Section of the Society for Range Management has had a very active year in 2019, and How can the Society for Range Management help you?

I've encouraged many folks to join the Society for Range Management (SRM). When doing so a common and logical question I often get: What will I gain or how will joining help me?

I should have an answer to this question, especially since I'm currently serving as the President of the SD Section of SRM. I personally feel that I've gotten a great deal out of membership but how do I put this all into words and express it? Well, I'll give it a try.

The foundation for the Society for Range Management is built on science. There are many opportunities to learn from the science through scientific journals and other publications; workshops to attend (International, National, Regional, or local); networking opportunities; youth activities including learning opportunities, contests, and scholarships; recognition of outstanding range managers (our local farmers and ranchers) at the section and/or International level; as well as other opportunities that I'm certainly forgetting. So, there are some talking points but maybe sharing my personal story will be something you can relate to.

How has SRM, specifically the SD Section, helped or had an impact on me? I grew up on a ranch in the center of SD. One year the Hand County Conservation District hosted Rangeland Days, which is put on by SD SRM. I was able to attend and I remember thinking it was cool to have this learning opportunity right in our back yard. I don't know that I did exceptionally well in the contest, but I learned some things about range and participated in the speaking contest.

This one opportunity sparked an interest in me and a few years later when I was in high school, I went to Range Camp held in Sturgis. There I learned more and got to spend more time learning about range as well as meeting some new friends, some of which are now my colleagues.

During college I eventually found my way to being a Range major and was a member of SDSU Range Club. I attended the International meeting in Kansas City, which was a memorable event in my college career. As well as attending SD Section meetings.

Now as a professional, and some might say I'm using that term loosely, I've been active in SD Section activities and helped several times with the youth events that inspired me as a youth. These opportunities to give back have been special to me. A few years ago, I took my son to Rangeland Days in Wall. He loved it and the following week he asked if we were going back to



Matt Odden, SD Section of SRM President. (Photo courtesy of Matt Odden).

Wall again, he was pretty bummed when I told him that was just a few day event and he'd have to wait until the next year.

Everyone gains different things from being active in different aspects of SRM Section activities. I've also found the networking to be extremely beneficial to me both personally and professionally. Getting to know other professionals and experts in the field provide great resources.

Whether you are a farmer or rancher, serving farmers and ranchers as a professional, a researcher, or simply a range enthusiast there is a place for you in the SD Section of SRM. So, give it some thought and join! Or give me a call to talk about it.