



Who likes change? It seems few people like change, yet change is inevitable. Most of the time change is needed to adjust to structural fluctuations in the market or the environment. The business world is constantly changing. It is no different in extension, teaching, or ranching. Range Camp was started in 1976 by Rod Baumberger and later organized by Jim Johnson to teach range judging and range management concepts to high school students. The SD SRM Section has had a long-standing tradition in youth education (see March 2019 newsletter article) and Range Camp was the perfect summer opportunity to do this.



2013 Range Camp participants

The first several camps were held on private ranches near Rapid City. In the late 1970s, Range Camp was moved to Sturgis and was held at the High School and participants stayed at a local campground. This tradition was continued up until about five years ago. Unfortunately, student numbers declined such that the steering team, Tate Lantz and Dave Ollila, decided a change was needed or else they would have to discontinue offering the camp. There were probably several reasons for this decline, but one thing that Dave, former ag instructor at Newell, noticed was the increasing role high school sports have become during the summer.

Thus, Tate and Dave revamped Range Camp to include an adult section for professionals in ag lending and real estate appraising professions. The additional adults helped boost the numbers and provided a new, badly needed outreach opportunity. This year, Range Camp has morphed into the South Dakota Natural Resource Professionals Rangeland Workshop and is organized by Dr. Krista Ehlert (SDSU Extension), Matt Scott (USFS), Tanse Herrmann (NRCS), and Carmen Drieling (BLM). This year's focus is to educate and enable agencies to work cooperatively with producers and permittees to sustain and regenerate range resources. For more information visit <https://www.sdrangelands.com/south-dakota-range-camp.html>



Mitch Faulkner (NRCS) instructing Range Camp participants on how to use the grazing stick.

Rangeland Days on the other hand has been doing quite well and is the SD Section of SRM's flagship youth program. We usually have over 100 participants in the combined Rangeland and Soils Days. This year marks the 36th annual Rangeland Days and the 15th annual Soils Days. The event occurs two consecutive years in the same location and moves between West River and

East River. We partner with local conservation districts to help manage logistics. This year's Rangeland Days will be in Redfield for the second year. For more information visit <https://www.sdrangelands.com/south-dakota-rangeland-days.html>

The National Land and Range Judging contest in Oklahoma City is the pinnacle of our youth's experience in land, range, or homesite judging. The SD SRM Section's Youth Endowment Committee support is crucial in providing finances for South Dakota 4H and FFA teams. Additional partner support from the SD Grassland Coalition and the SD Soil Health Coalition was welcomed this year. Funding from 4H has diminished over the years and thus a strong partnership between SD SRM, SDGC, and SDSHC is necessary. Ag teachers are critical in addition to SDSU Extension and NRCS personnel in making this competition successful. Dave Ollila will retire next February, so Krista Ehlert, Sandy Smart, and Emily Helms will help make sure it keeps going.