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- News from the SD Section of the Society for Range Management 2024 SD SRM Meeting by Sandy Smart

The SD Section of SRM held its annual meeting on Wednesday October 23, 2024 in Faith, SD. The day started off with a tour of last year's Excellence in Range Management Award winner Brett and Shannon Carmichael's Wedge Tent Ranch. Over 50 people were in attendance for the tour. Bart shared his management philosophy and showcased improvements he has made to his pastures, including seeing increases in plant diversity. Brett highlighted winterfat (*Krascheninnikovia lanata*), a low growing and highly palatable shrub, which he has seen more and more of over the years since he implemented intensive grazing management. The tour capped off with a climb atop Wedge Tent butte with a beautiful view of the operation.



Shannon and Brett Carmichael accepting the Excellence in Rangeland Management Award (photo by S. Smart).

The business meeting started at 4 pm and we discussed a number of topics. The SD SRM finances are doing well with market gains in investments last year. A new scholarship was created in honor of Mitch Faulkner and will be available to students pursuing range management degrees or programs at universities in Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming. The Youth Endowment Committee will manage the scholarship. Elections for officer and board of director positions were held. Ryan Knutson was elected 2nd Vice-President and Andrea Westlake was elected to the board of directors. The group thanked outgoing President Tyler Swan and board member Jessica Michalski for their service. Krista Ehlert moved up to President and Logan Vandermark moved up to First Vice-President. The High School Youth Forum delegate Karlee Kammerer presented her talk to the group. She will be attending the SRM International Meeting in Spokane, WA February 9-13, 2025. Finally, the SD SRM Crazy Auction raised \$2,336 for student scholarships.

This year's Excellence in Range Management Award winners included Darwin Peckham from Bristol, SD representing Area I, Adam and Jacquie Roth from Highmore, SD representing Area II, Corey Tart from Plankinton, SD representing Area II, and TJ Gabriel from Midland, SD representing Area IV.



Pictured left is Caleb, Adam and Jacquie Roth; middle picture is TJ and Jeanine Gabriel; and right picture is Marshall, Mason, Darwin, and Dennis Peckham. Krista Ehlert, President of SD SRM, is also pictured giving awards. (photos by S. Smart).

Top hand winners included Hans Stephenson from Rapid City, SD for his work to promote and educate others in riparian and stream health in the Black Hills. He has taken a leadership role, spear-heading volunteers and rallying other organizations in the Silver Creek Riparian Restoration Project. Bringing in outside partners that advocate and contribute to the goals of healthy riparian areas and rangelands and recognizing them for their contributions to such effort is contributing to success of SRM and our partners. The other top hand winners included Rodd Voss, Heidi Reints, and Tom Hausmann for their efforts in working to create new prescribed burn associations in South Dakota to combat eastern redcedar encroachment on grasslands.



Rodd Voss and Heidi Reints receiving the Top Hand Award from the SD Section of SRM President Krista Ehlert (Photo by S. Smart).