

# ***W. R. Chapline Land Steward Award Recipient***

## **Ben Berlinger**

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Little did Alex and Bernie Berlinger of Denver know that on that day in February 24, 1953, a great conservationist was born in their safe keeping. He would grow up to inspire many to a life of land stewardship and help improve the landscape of millions of acres of rangeland. When asked, what inspired him to be a land steward? He replies "My up-bringing at mom's Penrose farm, the outdoors with dad, granddad, and uncles, and of course a student job offer during my high school senior year with the Forest Service... the Range Conservationist said go to CSU." Ben has worked with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service on our rangelands for over 34 years.



Ben graduated from Colorado State University (CSU) in 1975 with a Bachelors of Science in Range and Forest Management with Highest Distinction. He became a member of SRM in 1974 and held many positions in Colorado, including Board of Director, three levels of Presidency 1990-1992, Information and Education Committee chair, and most recently 2010 National Meeting Chairman of the Student Activities. His most inspiring service and the closest to his heart is serving as Youth Activities Chair where he provides inspiration and guidance to many incoming rangeland professionals across the United States.

Just as that USFS Range Conservationist solidified Ben's future career goal, Ben now follows the same quest, and instructs students working with the NRCS. His support for youth career development is exemplary. He conducts week long summer camps and workshops such as Camp Rocky, FFA Rangeland Judging, and the SRM High School Youth Forum (serving over 23 years each), and most recently the Black Mesa Ecological Academy (2002-2007).

His many years of service have not gone unnoticed. He has received the SRM Outstanding Achievement Award (1999), the NRCS Rangeland Conservationist of the Year (2002), and also a Congressional Recognition for Rangeland Management in the U.S. House of Representatives (2003). He has provided hundreds of trainings, workshops, and technical references such as ESDs to private land managers and agency representatives. He also initiated and supported CSSRM success in having Blue Grama recognized as the official State Grass for Colorado.

Ben retired this past year with 34 years in rangelands and still works as a Certified Professional in Rangeland Management. Thank you, Mr. and Mrs. Alex Berlinger for contributing this excellent conservationist to our Land Stewardship effort and thank you, Ben for all your contributions.

It is with great honor that we hereby present Ben Berlinger with the W. R. Chapline Land Stewardship Award.