

January 23, 2004

Society for Range Management

Strategic Outreach and Communication Plan

Executive Summary

Introduction

The Society for Range Mgt has committed to a long-term planning process that centers in a Strategic Plan. This Strategic Plan incorporates the Mission, Vision, Core Values, and Guiding Principles of our membership.

To serve our current and future members, and accomplish elements of our Strategic Plan, we must adopt marketing concepts to address these needs. Marketing is the process used to share products and services of SRM with our membership and to other targeted groups. This results in our outreach and communication plan.

Of the 6 major elements of the SRM Strategic Plan, at least 4 of the 6 (Professional Education and Development, Enhancing External communication, Support Rangeland Science, and Influence Public Policy) deserve emphasis by our Marketing and Communication Plan.

In the broadest sense, this Plan is to accomplish the Mission of SRM – “to promote the professional development and continuing education of members and the public and the stewardship of rangelands resources”.

Current Situation

Our current marketing goals include:

- i. Increase membership
- ii. Disseminate information on SRM values
- iii. Professional education
- iv. Form affiliations and partnerships
- v. Increase visibility

SRM membership peaked in the 1980's. While membership was once dominated by federal range conservationists, cooperative extension, and academic, trends in recent years have increased the number of state and local government employees and those employed by non-governmental organizations. Female membership continues to increase, as does ethnic diversity, following trends in undergraduate and graduate range school enrollment.

SRM membership has recently rallied, in contrast to the trend in many related natural resource professional societies. While the previous decline may be explained in part by the multiplicity of new societies competing for the attention of a finite pool of potential members, the 2003 rally may describe an increase in perceived value and relevance to young professionals.

The pattern of range graduates has also been used to explain the diminished pool of candidates for SRM membership. A clear pattern has emerged where those graduated from rangeland programs in the West being hired more by Federal agencies, while graduates from the Great Plains tend to be hired more by consultant organizations.

Priorities for Outreach and Communication

Membership

- Diligence in serving members is key
- Increase membership through service and perceived value
- Annual membership drive should be tied to Annual Meeting
- Member retention – follow up those who do not renew or are slow to renew
- Communicate with members on SRM values
- Mentor and nurture new members

Publications

- Partnership with Alliance publications will introduce electronic publishing

Strategic exploration of partnerships

- Recognize that partnerships with similar organizations will do more to advance SRM mission than influence membership

Visibility

- SRM speakers bureau/spokesperson list
- Maintain video library (and DVD library)
- Develop a key audience and customer database
- Annual meeting is showcase

Certification

- Civil servants need professional support and training – i.e. SRM Certification programs
- Ranchers need recognition for applied rangeland management

Image

- SRM must be inclusive without abandoning distinctiveness
- Research by SRM members validates the sustainability of livestock and large ungulate grazing and does not imply an ‘apologetic’ for the livestock industry.

Range Departments fill several SRM needs

- Fundamental source of rangeland professionals
- Recruiting for potential SRM members, future rangeland researchers and
- Source of expertise
- SRM must be part of process as Range Departments, and Natural Resource departments containing Range, reinvent themselves -SRM Accreditation

Tactics

- Better describe what SRM is marketing and intends to communicate
- Focus – professionalism or advocacy?
- Better characterize our membership-Demographics, survey them
- Image – balance ‘management’ and ‘science’
- Visibility
 - Create an SRM speaker’s Bureau.
 - Leadership
 - Communicate internally SRM core objectives
 - Develop ‘talking points’ for SRM leadership at national and section level
 - Increase comfort of leadership in contacting and dealing with media
- Cultivate Media outlets and media representatives likely to hear/respond to our message
- Make better use of the Internet
- Develop new range videos, DVD’s, and other communication resources
- Employ email strategically
- Outreach to high school and junior high youth
- Outreach to college youth
- Affiliations/Partnerships with other Professional Societies