

SOCIETY FOR RANGE MANAGEMENT
POLICY STATEMENTS, POSITION STATEMENTS
AND RESOLUTIONS
February 2002

The **vision** of the Society for Range Management is productive, sustainable rangelands. The **mission** of the Society for Range Management is to promote and enhance the stewardship of rangeland ecosystems and associated renewable resources to meet human needs based upon scientific research and sound policies. The **objectives** through which the Society strives to meet its mission are to: 1) properly take care of the basic rangeland resources of soil, plants and water; 2) develop an understanding of range ecosystems and of the principles applicable to the management of range resources; 3) assist all who work with range resources to keep abreast of new findings and techniques in the science and art of range management; 4) improve the effectiveness of range management to obtain from range resources the products and values necessary for man's welfare; 5) create the public appreciation of the economic and social benefits to be obtained from the range environment; and 6) promote professional development of its members.

To meet these objectives the following **policy** and **position statements**, and **resolutions** have been developed.

POLICY STATEMENTS

RANGELAND AND RANGE RESOURCES

Rangelands, a broad category of land comprising more than 40% of the earth's land area, are characterized by native plant communities, which are often associated with grazing, and are managed by ecological, rather than agronomic methods.

The term "range" can also include forestlands that have grazing resources, or seeded lands that are managed like rangeland. Range resources are not limited to the grazable forage, but may include wildlife, water and many other benefits.

Management of Rangeland Ecosystems

The Society believes that rangeland ecosystems should be managed to provide optimum sustained yield of tangible and intangible products and benefits for human welfare. This can only be achieved through the sound use of ecological and economic principles. The use of valid resource inventories and monitoring are a basic requirement for planning and management of rangeland resources. Other manipulative management practices, including fire and integrated pest management may be employed to create positive changes in the landscape through development of sustainable, desired plant communities.

Multiple Use of Rangeland Resources

The Society supports managing combinations of rangeland uses, which best meet the needs and desires of people and are compatible with the sustainability and adaptability of the land. Multiple use management, where appropriate, is encouraged on both public and private lands.

Uses of rangeland the Society for Range Management supports includes:

- **Livestock Grazing.** Rangelands constitute an important forage base for livestock, and livestock constitute an important management tool for rangelands. The Society supports appropriately planned and monitored livestock grazing based on scientific principles that meet management goals and societal needs.
- **Water Management.** Rangelands constitute a large portion of the water producing land area of the earth. The Society promotes rangeland management that results in healthy ecosystems which enhance the quality of water and minimize soil erosion and sedimentation.
- **Wildlife Management.** Rangelands provide habitat for many species of wildlife. The Society promotes ecologically sound wildlife management integrated with rangeland management practices to maintain or restore desired wildlife habitat.
- **Management of Aesthetic Value.** Rangelands possess natural beauty and other aesthetic values. The Society supports the concept that range management activities should not detract from aesthetic values of rangelands and may often enhance them.
- **Recreational Use of Rangelands.** Rangeland provide recreational opportunities. The Society supports development of recreational

opportunities, as appropriate, in range management planning, providing that such use is compatible with other rangeland resource values.

DESERTIFICATION

Desertification is a permanent or semi-permanent reduction in the capability of land for biological productivity. Over long periods of time, desertification may result from change to a more arid climate. Desertification also occurs because of irreversible reduction in the ability of the soil to supply moisture and/or nutrients to vegetation. On rangelands, soil erosion by wind or water is the most common cause for loss of soil productivity, although permanent degradation of soil structure, nutrient loss, or salinization are other possible causes. Permanent loss of soil productivity may result from natural processes or human activity.

The Society for Range Management advocates use and management of rangelands to provide sustainable benefits for people. Rangeland management should aim to prevent desertification resulting from human activity and, where feasible, to stabilize or improve productivity of lands which have already suffered such desertification. Rangeland managers should seek to identify and understand desertification processes resulting from all causes, and if possible, to mitigate adverse impacts of such processes.

EDUCATION

A continuing need exists for people formally educated in range management to play a major role in decisions regarding the management of rangelands. The Society promotes education providing expertise in the climate-soil-plant-animal complex in relation to human needs and uses of the resources.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

The Society promotes international development and dissemination of range management knowledge and sound management of rangelands worldwide. The Society maintains liaison with relevant professional organizations around the world.

MAINTAINING AND IMPROVING ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Range management programs must consider possible effects on environmental quality. The Society advocates measures which enhance beneficial effects and minimize detrimental effects consistent with reasonable and prudent use of the rangelands resources.

RANGELAND INVENTORIES

The Society promotes the use of valid resource inventories as basic requirements for planning and management of rangeland resources.

RESEARCH NEEDS FUNDING AND IMPLEMENTATION

The Society for Range Management recognizes the need for adequate and sustained public and private support of rangeland research programs. Funding is also needed for prompt synthesis, dissemination and implementation of research results to serve the growing needs of managers with diverse objectives in diverse rangeland ecosystems.

The Society supports strong programs based on long-term planning in both basic and applied rangeland research and prompt dissemination of results.

POSITION STATEMENTS

BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

The Society for Range Management affirms that consideration of biological diversity is important and appropriate when developing land management objectives. The Society advocates research, education, and development of management technologies regarding the role of biological diversity in rangeland ecosystems.

Biological diversity is the variety and variability of the world's organisms, the ecological complexes in which they occur and the processes and life support services they mediate. Biological diversity is a complex phenomenon influenced by the kinds of organisms (i.e. plants, animals, microbes), their genetic variation, spatial distribution (e.g. ecosystem, landscape, regional, global), structural organization (e.g. vertical stratification) and functional role (e.g. nutrient and water cycling, energy flow). Biological

diversity varies in time and space and is influenced by many natural processes and management activities. It can be expressed in many different ways including richness, evenness, community processes and organization structure. No one expression is intrinsically superior to another. No single expression of biological diversity is sufficient nor is one scale of consideration paramount.

There is no simple relationship between biological diversity and properties of ecological systems such as stability for all rangeland sites. Loss of biological diversity, however, may reduce future land use options and the ability to maintain sustainable systems. Biological diversity is of fundamental importance to the operation of ecological processes and directly provides for human wants and needs.

The Society for Range Management recognizes the value of biological diversity to ecosystem structure and function and promotes the inclusion of biological diversity in the

array of facts to be considered in rangeland ecosystems. Maximizing biological diversity is not always possible or desirable at all levels of biological or spatial organization. Management for biological diversity should focus at the landscape level of organization or higher. This recognizes the natural mosaic pattern of ecosystems within landscapes associated with various in biotic and abiotic factors and disturbance regimes.

CARRYING CAPACITY

The processes on rangelands are dynamic thus making it impossible to directly measure carrying capacity for herbivores. Carrying capacity is dependent on the characteristics of the range resource, management intensity, management objectives and related variables. In the absence of other information, rangeland inventories done at one point in time can be used to provide general estimates of present or potential carrying capacity of management units. Such estimates are based upon many attributes including topography, ecological sites, present vegetation, water distribution and other measurable factors. These estimates should be combined with animal intake, diet preference, animal distribution and other similar attributes to evaluate carrying capacity. Carrying capacity estimates based upon one-point-in-time rangeland inventories do not produce results of sufficient accuracy to be the sole basis for adjusting time of grazing or stocking rates on specific grazing units. Carrying capacity should instead be based on impacts of historical and current stocking rates, grazing management, and weather. Adjustments in carrying capacity should be made through monitoring over time to ensure progress toward desired resource conditions.

CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM

The Society for Range Management supports the concept of sustainable rangeland ecosystems consistent with reasonable and prudent use. A detrimental effect to achieving this goal has been the conversion of highly erodible lands from rangeland to cropland. The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) has been successful in achieving soil conservation, clean water, clean air and enhanced wildlife habitat.

The Society advocates that productive, sustainable, economically and ecologically sound management systems be developed and applied on all CRP lands. This should be accomplished by keeping highly erodible lands in permanent vegetation cover. The Society also supports a strong education and information program so CRP contract holders can make informed land use and management decisions and expanded technical assistance programs that ensure all CRP producers receive conservation planning in a timely manner.

COORDINATED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The Society for Range Management advocates using a

voluntary Coordinated Resource Management (CRM) process for stakeholder/consensus decision-making to help individuals and communities work together to plan the use and management of all resources in a sustainable, productive, environmentally beneficial, and economical manner. The CRM process provides an arena in which diverse interests and personalities may resolve or prevent conflicts, exchange ideas, build trust and mutual respect and produce an action plan that all parties agree to implement and monitor. More ideas for solutions are generated by the collective wisdom of diverse interests working together to achieve common goals. More ideas usually lead to better solutions for the benefit of the entire community and all resources. People working together using the CRM process often build strong, long-term relationships and trust for the common good.

The Society for Range Management can provide information and assistance related to the CRM process to individuals and groups who wish to employ it in addressing resource issues.

FIRE MANAGEMENT

The Society for Range Management recognizes two kinds of fires exist: Prescribed fire and wildfires.

Prescribed fires may be ignited or naturally caused and permitted to burn within specific conditions to achieve established management objectives. Fires outside of prescription are wildfires and appropriate suppression actions should be taken. The Society supports the concept of prescribed fires as a useful management practice. To exclude fire either as a natural force or as a management tool means that we accept a highly unnatural ecological environment.

INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT

Integrated pest management should be used as necessary and possible to rehabilitate range resources and/or control specific plant or animal pests. The Society supports such practices when ecologically, economically, and socially sound.

LIVESTOCK GRAZING ON RANGELANDS

Property managed livestock grazing is a sustainable form of agriculture and is compatible with a wide array of other sustainable uses of rangeland. The Society recognizes the cultural and economic importance of livestock grazing especially to rural communities. Livestock grazing is an efficient method for converting low quality forages to high quality agricultural products that supply human needs worldwide. Managed grazing may be used for expediting desired changes in the structure and function of rangeland ecosystems. Livestock grazing can be complementary and synergistic with other rangeland restoration technologies. Livestock grazing may not be appropriate on certain fragile and highly erodible lands; the removal of livestock grazing

on other lands may be of no benefit.

MANAGEMENT OF THE FISHERIES RESOURCE WITHIN RANGELAND WATERSHEDS

The Society for Range Management (SRM) supports the responsible conservation of species and their habitats, and recognizes the importance and function of biological diversity (Footnote: See Biological Diversity Position Statement). Several species or populations of fish have been federally listed as threatened or endangered. Population declines in these and other fish species can be caused by many different factors. Because of their specific requirements of water quality and stream conditions, fish species may be indicators of some watershed conditions.

Improper watershed management and competing water uses can affect fish populations by altering stream channel morphology and timing and duration of flow, resulting in degradation of water quality and fish habitat. Other factors, including competition with introduced fish species, excessive fishing pressure, stream modification and natural climatic events can also negatively effect these populations.

The SRM believes that when declines in fish populations on rangelands are documented and restoration actions proposed, there should be a complete analysis of causative factors. Based on this analysis the uses and users should share proportionate responsibility for restoration of watershed and riparian areas.

The SRM encourages all federal, state, tribal, provincial, and private land managers to carefully plan and apply watershed management practices that maintain or restore watershed and riparian areas. Improved fisheries habitats within rangeland watersheds should be one of many considerations in resource planning and management.

NATIONAL-LEVEL RANGELAND INVENTORY AND ASSESSMENT

Management of this Nation's one billion acres of rangeland is a critical environmental and economic issue. The status of America's rangeland ecosystems as viewed by a broadening cross-section of society is of major importance and concern. Consistent and reliable information to aid in policy formation for all classes and ownerships of rangeland is not available because an adequate database does not exist to support this process.

SRM supports the expansion of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service's National Resources Inventory (NRI), or similar concept, to include all lands. Implementation of a large statistically valid sampling procedure, as exemplified by NRI, is necessary to provide accurate assessments of the status of U.S. rangelands. Use of a uniform inventory and assessment methods on rangelands of all ownerships will make such determinations possible.

SRM encourages every agency involved in advising rangeland owners or managing rangelands to participate in

the Federal Interagency Rangeland Health Committee (FIRHC) in its efforts to establish standard rangeland inventory and assessment procedures for all U.S. rangelands. SRM also urges the federal agencies to meet their respective legal mandates for periodically preparing factually consistent and relevant reports to Congress and others regarding the Nation's rangelands.

NOXIOUS AND INVASIVE WEEDS

The Society for Range Management recognizes that native or exotic noxious and invasive plants have a major debilitating effect on rangelands and other grazed ecosystems worldwide. Noxious and invasive plants threaten biological diversity, and the structure, function, and sustainability of ecosystems. They diminish the multiple uses and values these ecosystems are intrinsically capable of providing.

The Society promotes:

- 1) educational programs for landowners, resource managers, and the general public on the causes of invasion and increasing abundance of noxious and invasive plants, their impacts on natural resource and society, and proven management technologies;
- 2) research to improve technologies to manage noxious and invasive plants; and
- 3) laws, regulations, and cooperation among land management agencies, private landowners, governmental entities, and other interested groups to minimize the dispersal of noxious and invasive plants and to maximize efforts to contain or reduce existing infestations.

The Society believes it is ecologically and economically sound to prevent the arrival of noxious and invasive plants into new areas, and that the next best solution is to detect new outbreaks before seed production occurs and to initiate aggressive eradication efforts. Established infestations of noxious and invasive plants should be contained and controlled with integrated management systems that utilize mechanical, chemical, biological, or cultural control technologies. Neither single-treatment approaches nor short-term efforts will result in satisfactory long-term solutions to noxious and invasive plant problems. The affected ecosystems and their native or desired species should be restored and protected after noxious and invasive plants have been controlled.

OFF-ROAD VEHICLE USE

Several kinds of off-road vehicles are used on rangelands to implement range management systems and for recreational purposes. The Society supports operation of these vehicles in a manner that protects the range resources and minimizes conflicts with other uses.

The Society for Range Management (SRM) recognizes

that off-road vehicle (ORV) (Footnote: ORV refers to all motorized and non-motorized vehicles for the purpose of this statement) use is a valid recreation activity and a tool for resource management. Managing this use along with other recreation and resource uses and values has become increasingly difficult with increasing public demand for ORV use.

The increasing popularity and use of ORV's on public lands in the 1960's and 1970's prompted the development of a unified federal policy and two executive orders addressing OHV (off-highway vehicles) use. These executive orders directed the federal agencies to establish policies and provide procedures for control of ORV use to 1) protect the resources of public lands, 2) promote the safety of all uses of those lands, and 3) minimize conflicts among the various uses of those lands. Under these orders, ORV use can be restricted or prohibited to minimize damage to resources of public lands, harm to wildlife or habitats, and minimize conflict between user groups. While the federal land managing agencies have developed regulations in response to these executive orders, reviews have identified weaknesses in implementation of these orders to regulate ORV use.

Millions of acres of public land are currently available to cross-country ORV travel. Unmanaged use has created trail networks and impactive trails that are in riparian areas and on steeper, more erodible slopes. Monitoring by the land management agencies has indicated that most ORV problems occur where unrestricted, cross-country travel is allowed. While some managers have completed or have begun site-specific travel management plans for some areas to resolve these problems, use in the majority of the areas continues unrestricted and resource degradation caused by ORV use is continuing or even accelerating.

Members of the public, state fish and wildlife commissions, and resource advisory councils have shared concerns with the land management agencies about unmanaged ORV travel on rangelands. Unmanaged ORV travel on rangelands has the potential to spread noxious weeds or other invasive plants, cause erosion, damage cultural sites, disrupt wildlife, damage wildlife habitat, disrupt livestock grazing management damage forage resources, degrade water quality and create user conflicts.

The SRM strongly encourages the land managing agencies, landowners and ORV users to address unmanaged, cross-country ORV travel through appropriate actions to prevent resource damage and related problems associated with ORV use.

In support of this position, the SRM recognizes that access allowed under the terms and conditions of leases or permits should not be affected and that ORV use for management and administrative purposes should remain a tool by authorized users.

PLANTATION GRAZING

Domestic livestock grazing is a useful management

tool to bring about desired changes in certain plant communities including tree plantations. The Society encourages and endorses continued research and development of plantation grazing as a method of achieving desired timber management goals. Emphasis should be placed on the importance of integrating silvicultural, wildlife, and livestock grazing management in order to more efficiently meet resource management objectives.

PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Government agencies must bear responsibility for sound resource management and equitable, ethical work force management. The Society for Range Management supports the principles of work force diversity and equal employment opportunity, but in achieving these principles, professional qualifications in natural resource disciplines must be retrained and positive educational requirements be maintained for positions with responsibility for making natural resource decisions as well as professional and scientific positions.

PROTECTION OF RANGELAND AND OPEN SPACE VALUES

The Society for Range Management recognizes the agriculture industry as a critical element in maintaining private land ownership in a changing society. Public land grazing is often associated with this private land base, which provides valuable resources for multiple use. Changes in use of these private holdings affect the balance of multiple uses and interdependency of resources on public and private land.

A healthy and viable agriculture industry, among other multiple uses, provides incentive for maintaining or enhancing rangeland open space values.

Agriculturalist/conservationist partnerships could offer such needed business stability.

The Society supports continued multiple use management of public lands, which are interwoven with private land, in a manner to promote the open space concept.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHTS OF PRIVATE RANGELAND OWNERS

The Society for Range Management recognizes the role of the private landowner as a primary steward of rangelands. The Society supports the right to own and use private property and recognizes that within those rights are imbedded certain responsibilities. These rights should be respected and protected. The Society also recognizes that owners of private rangelands – whether they are individuals, institutions, or commercial business – have a vested interest in the condition of their rangelands, an incentive that often leads to maintenance or improvement of the resource.

Privately owned rangelands, and those lands that are ancillary to the sound management of rangeland ecosystems (pasture, haylands, woodlands, and croplands) greatly

influence the economic and environmental health of nations throughout the world. These privately owned lands, when thoughtfully managed with stewardship of all resources, serve many beneficial purposes. Included among these are: Healthy watershed function, the retention of the essential habitat for many species, including threatened or endangered plants and animals, and the supply of food and fiber to the work economies.

Private rangeland ownership carries responsibilities. The Society supports rangeland owners in managing their resources, within the context of the whole ecosystem, in such a way as to protect resource health and long-term sustainable production.

RIPARIAN VALUES

The Society for Range Management believes that many uses are compatible with proper riparian area function and riparian values. SRM actively encourages the implementation of management strategies for riparian areas and watersheds that optimize their values while protecting or restoring riparian and watershed function.

Riparian areas are integral components of watersheds that are the transition between aquatic and terrestrial elements of the ecosystem. These lands occur adjacent to streams, springs, seeps and other bodies of surface and subsurface water. Soil moisture content is significantly higher and, in many regions, riparian areas support different plants and animal communities than adjacent uplands.

Complex hydrologic, soil, and biotic relationships in riparian areas are important to watershed function. These functions include flood energy dissipation and sediment capture; groundwater recharge, nutrient cycling and maintenance of water quality. Riparian areas support and depend upon the watershed as a whole.

Riparian areas are essential for structural and biological diversity in the landscape. They offer important habitat elements for fish, wildlife and other organisms. Human health and safety, and aesthetic, economic and recreational opportunities require properly functioning riparian areas.

SPECIES CONSERVATION

The Society for Range Management supports the conservation of species and the maintenance and/or restoration of their habitats through the application of sound ecological and economic principles supported by rigorous research. Furthermore, the Society advocates that legislation and laws governing the conservation of species should be implemented and managed in a cooperative manner cognizant of social and economic impacts.

UNIVERSAL SOIL LOSS EQUATION

The Society opposes use of the Universal Soil Loss Equation as a determinant of rangeland resource condition, treatment needs, treatment effectiveness, program funding, stocking rates, or any other management or regulatory decisions. The refinement of data is inadequate, thus use of

the model is inappropriate to detect the subtle changes in the resource that indicate a need for management changes. Plant composition should be used to indicate early changes in resource condition in these rangeland ecosystems.

USE OF FORAGE UTILIZATION AND RESIDUE MEASUREMENTS

The Society for Range Management recognizes and endorses forage utilization and residue measurements as useful tools in rangeland monitoring, and acknowledges their value in land management. When used with other monitoring information, utilization can be employed to design and evaluate management decisions. These measurements, when properly timed and conducted using appropriate methods and sampling procedures, can be used as an aid in:

1. Analyzing distribution of animal use on a management unit.
2. Interpreting cause and effect relationships for observed changes in resource attributes such as soil cover, species composition, residual cover, etc.
3. Adjusting stocking rates and/or timing of grazing when used in conjunction with other monitoring information including: long term vegetation or habitat data, current and historical stocking records, precipitation records, etc.

Utilization and residue measurements are not management objectives. They are tools to be used with other information in evaluating whether desired resource conditions are being achieved.

USE OF NATIVE AND INTRODUCED PLANT SPECIES

The Society for Range Management supports the management of rangeland ecosystems to provide for sustained yield of products and benefits for human welfare and multiple uses. The SRM prefers the use of native plant species in seeding and restoration of rangelands. The SRM also recognizes in certain circumstances that introduced plant species are a desirable tool for rangeland management.

Restoration of vegetation cover on rangelands may be necessary when vegetation has been destroyed or seriously reduced by disturbances such as improper grazing, wildfire, or mechanical disturbance. Failure to implement such re-vegetation may result in permanent degradation of rangelands, reduced wildlife populations, and reduced economic benefits. Range seeding may involve replacing existing vegetation with plants that provide improved soil and watershed protection, livestock forage, wildlife habitat, or other benefits.

Selection of plant species or species mixtures to be used in re-vegetation of rangelands should be governed by four primary considerations: 1) species must be capable or establishing and growing on the specific site to be treated, 2) species contribute toward attainment of management objectives, 3) species will not become invasive by spreading to areas where it is not desired, and 4) adequate seed

sources and economical establishment techniques are available. Although the use of native species is preferred, it may not be possible to use them due to the unavailability of native seed stock that meets the above requirements.

Selected introduced plant species have provided major benefits in rangeland management and other areas of resource management. While the SRM prefers the use of native plant species, the SRM supports the continued use of introduced plant species to protect rangeland resources and meet management goals where use of natives is not suitable or possible.

WETLANDS

The Society for Range Management believes that many rangeland uses are compatible with proper wetland function and values. SRM actively encourages the implementation of management strategies for wetlands that optimize their values while maintaining or restoring the wetland function. This may include restoration techniques when these values have diminished or in creating wetlands where their values are designed.

Wetlands are areas characterized by soils that are usually saturated or ponded (i.e., hydric soils) that support mostly water-loving plants. Wetlands are unique ecosystems that vary in their complexity due to hydrology, soils, climate, animal and plant interactions. The function of wetlands may include water quality enhancement, flood control, nutrient cycling, sediment capture, groundwater recharge and the provision of habitat for a diversity of living organisms.

Wetlands values provide for human health and safety, biological diversity, aesthetic, economic, and recreational opportunities which require properly functioning wetland areas.

WILD HORSE AND BURRO MANAGEMENT

Society for Range Management policy is to support wild horse and burro use of rangelands in accordance with the Wild Horse and Burro Act and as part of the multiple use mix of products and benefits for human welfare in locations where these animals existed when the law was passed. The law specifies management to provide “a thriving ecological balance”. SRM interprets this to mean that long-term sustainability and productivity must be the primary consideration in devising legislation and policy for management planning and administration of rangelands, including establishment of proper numbers and management levels for wild horses and burros. Rangeland “health” standards and guidelines are equally appropriate for all herbivores.

Wild horse and burro populations increase rapidly and their numbers commonly expand beyond herd management areas and exceed carrying capacity unless excess animals are regularly removed. Adoption programs and sanctuaries for excess horses have only been partially successful. Overstocking results in deterioration of vegetation, soils,

and watersheds and leaves a potential for expansion of invasive species. Serious conflicts with wildlife, endangered species, domestic livestock, and other uses of rangelands have resulted.

The federal government must implement more effective methods to manage and control populations of wild horses and burros. SRM supports changes in laws, policies, and administration to effectively and economically manage wild horse and burros to maintain healthy populations, reduce conflicts with other uses, and maintain long-term sustainability of rangeland resources.

WILD HORSE MANAGEMENT METHOD

The Society believes in the practice and enhancement of multiple use values of rangelands, while maintaining basic soil, water and vegetation resources. The Society also believes that a “thriving natural ecological balance” is essential to the health and maintenance of viable wild horse and burro populations.

Therefore, SRM recommends that public land agencies develop the planning, implementation and monitoring of vegetation management that incorporates wild horse management strategies along with other resource demands. Funds saved through the following recommended strategies should be used for the basic resource management in the herd management areas.

The Society for Range Management believes new and innovative herd management strategies can reduce the number of unadopted wild horses that are removed from the rangelands. These herd management strategies should include:

- a. Leaving the breeding herd on rangeland for its natural life.
- b. Removing excess from young of the herd.
- c. Leaving sufficient young to offset death loss and sustain the integrity of the herd.
- d. Retaining desirable characteristics.
- e. Removing undesirable characteristics from the gene pool.

The Society for Range Management urges the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service to adopt the use of herd management strategy and explore other cost effective methods.

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT INCENTIVES FOR PRIVATE LAND OWNERS

The Society for Range Management recognizes that private lands commonly supply important wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities. Habitat quality and quantity may be critical factors limiting wildlife populations. Without appropriate incentives, landowners may not devote the necessary resources toward enhancing wildlife habitat and increasing recreational access. Monetary compensations may provide incentives for landowners to incorporate wildlife management as an integral part of their total land management strategy. Further, state, provincial, and federal

agencies should be encouraged to provide private landowners with educational programs, technical support, and financial incentives to enhance and sustain productive natural resources on private lands.

WILDLIFE/LIVESTOCK INTERACTIONS

With increases in big game numbers on rangelands, there is an increasing potential for conflict between domestic and wild herbivores.

The Society has developed the following position statement: The land management agencies are responsible for habitat management. These legally mandated roles necessitate a cooperative approach to resource planning, management and monitoring with wildlife agencies. This cooperative approach should involve all concerned users, interest groups and landowners. Management goals and population objective numbers should be developed in a consultative manner on a herd unit basis, and management direction incorporated in land and resource management plans.

Land management agencies should establish and implement monitoring of ecological status of the range resource influenced by annual herbivore use.

Land management agencies must cooperate with wildlife agencies to insure consistency and compatibility of data used in determining range vegetation status and wildlife population trends.

Adequate funding must be provided to support achievement of land and resource management plan goals and objectives.

Adequate funding and staffing must be provided for collection, analysis, and interpretation of ecological status and trends towards meeting plan objectives.

Timely land resource decisions should be based on the best and most current data. It is in the best interest of basic resource management to make decisions with the best available data.

RESOLUTIONS

CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM

WHEREAS, the Society for Range Management supports the concept of sustainable rangeland ecosystems consistent with reasonable and prudent use; and

WHEREAS, a detrimental effect to achieving this goal has been the conversion of highly erodible lands from rangeland to cropland; and

WHEREAS, the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) has been successful in achieving soil conservation, clean water, clean air and enhanced wildlife habitat; and

WHEREAS, Conservation Reserve Program contracts will begin to expire September 30, 1995; and

WHEREAS, the future use and management of these lands depend on the decisions of 350,000 CRP participants; and

WHEREAS, their decisions will be guided by USDA program policy, economics of alternative land uses, and resource potential of the land.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Society advocates that productive, sustainable, economically and ecologically sound management systems be developed and applied on all CRP lands. This should be accomplished by keeping highly erodible lands in permanent vegetative cover.

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, the Society also supports a strong education and information program so CRP contract holders can make informed land use and management decisions and expanded technical assistance programs that ensure all CRP producers receive conservation planning in a timely manner.

THE REAUTHORIZATION OF THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

WHEREAS, the Society for Range Management supports the conservation of species and the maintenance and/or restoration of their habitats through the application of sound ecological and economic principles supported by rigorous research; and

WHEREAS, the Society advocates that legislation and laws governing the conservation of species should be implemented and managed in a cooperative manner cognizant of social and economic impacts; and

WHEREAS, the Society defines an ecosystem as "Organisms together with their abiotic environment, forming an interacting system, inhabiting an identifiable space."

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Society supports reauthorization of Public Law (93-295 as amended; 16 U.S.C. 1531-1543) entitled, "The Endangered Species Act of 1973" with the following amendments:

- a. Redirect the focus of the Act from the individual species to the management of ecosystem function and sustainability.
- b. Require external peer/technical review of the information used in the listing process and recovery plans;
- c. Identify key information needs and provide for research, inventories, monitoring, and specific timelines to fill information voids;
- d. Designation of critical habitat and development of recovery plans shall comply with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 as amended;

- e. Provide a cooperative approach to the management of private lands that may include:
1. development of voluntary, cooperative management plans/agreements;
 2. purchase of easements; and
 3. land exchange or just compensation for landowners who cede control of their property to society for species conservation.

SALMONID FISHERIES AND RANGELAND WATERSHED MANAGEMENT

WHEREAS, the Society for Range Management supports the conservation of species and their habitats and recognizes the importance and function of biological diversity, and

WHEREAS, salmon, steelhead and trout, because of their specific requirements of quality water and stream conditions, are indicators of watershed conditions in many parts of the world, and

WHEREAS, several species or populations of salmonids have been federally listed as sensitive, threatened, or endangered, and many other salmonid populations are at historically low levels because of many human impacts, and

WHEREAS, among these impacts, improper watershed management and certain competing water uses where identified can affect salmonid populations by altering timing and duration of flow and stream channel morphology and by degrading water quality and fish habitat,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Society for Range Management encourages all federal, state and provincial land management agencies and private land owners to plan and apply land and water management that maintain or restore watershed functions, and stream and riparian conditions.

WILD HORSES AND BURROS

WHEREAS, the Bureau of Land Management has adopted and implemented standards and guidelines for rangeland “health” as a basis for assessing livestock grazing effects, and

WHEREAS, the Society for Range Management takes the position that all land uses should provide for long-term sustainability of rangelands, and

WHEREAS, the Society for Range Management recognizes the standards and guidelines for rangeland “health” as prepared are equally appropriate for all herbivores, and

WHEREAS, the Society for Range Management is concerned about present management of wild horses and burros on Bureau of Land Management lands.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Society for Range Management strongly urges the Secretary of the Interior to:

1. adopt rangeland “health” standards and develop guidelines as a basis for assessing wild horse and burro grazing effects; and
2. implement timely corrective actions when wild horse and burro grazing impacts result in the inability to meet or progress toward rangeland “health” standards.