

**JOINT MEETING BETWEEN
GOVERNMENT POLICY AND PROGRAMS AND
PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEES
Annual Report to Board of Directors
Society for Range Management
Billings, MT 2011**

The Public Affairs Committee (PAC) and Government Policy and Programs (GPPC) held a combined meeting at Billings. This report will start with a recommendation from both committees. After reviewing committee missions we would like to make a recommendation to the Board of Directors.

REQUEST FOR BOD ACTION: The collective membership of both committees expressed a need to combine them into a new committee entitled **Policy, Programs, and Public Affairs (PPPAC)**. Rationale for this action follows:

1. A concern was raised that the term “Government” in GPPC’s title provides a perception of only Government membership and the current makeup of the committee has been government employees. This has made recruitment of producers almost impossible.
2. The missions of both committees have a large amount of overlap.
3. The two committees have held joint meetings for the past four years.
4. This action would provide more diversity in membership when dealing with issues that need a diverse input.

After BOD approval, a sub-committee will be formed to combine the two handbooks, revise the membership list and provide updates for the website. After discussion, we will provide a leadership structure that includes a Chair, a Co-Chair, and a Co-Chair Elect. This provides an executive structure that would facilitate responsiveness and efficiency. As a new committee that leadership structure is in place in part with an incoming Chair – Gary McCuin and Co-Chair – Robie LeValley. A Co-Chair Elect will be named no later than the Spokane meeting.

Actions Taken Prior to 2011 Meeting

The PAC was asked to provide input on several items after the 2010 Denver meeting for discussion and resolution at the 2011 Billings meeting.

1. A Committee Survey was prepared for Gary Frazier following the format he provided.
2. PAC input was provided to the BOD and a letter drafted regarding the proposed Family Farm Estate Tax Relief Act of 2010.
3. PAC input was provided to the BOD on a proposed Department of Interior Science Policy.

4. PAC input was provided and a letter drafted for the President's signature regarding our opposition to a potential closure of the College of Agriculture at the University of Nevada Reno.
5. In addition to the drafted letter provided in item 4. above, a generic response was drafted that would be suitable for submission to any institute of higher learning that might be contemplating re-alignments that eliminate or drastically reduce programs associated with rangeland ecology and management.

The PAC Chair updated the Committee's website including all materials associated with the 2010 meeting in Denver and the site is completely up to date as of the beginning of this meeting.

The GPPC provided a review of the Wild Horse and Burro and CRP position statements.

Actions Taken During the 2011 Meeting

Our BOD Liaison provided an update to the joint meeting of both committees. Kelly Fogarty gave a DC Liaison update. The membership provided a recommendation to Kelly that she and/or the EVP communication of Society information transfer with Legislature staffers would be a desirable effort. Such interaction could include information about policy and position statements and SRM contacts to provide more detailed technical information. Access to existing SRM information is difficult and as such is useless to those external to the Society having a need for the information. There was substantial discussion concerning public outreach and education needs. This discussion followed distribution of Hope on the Range DVD by Linda Coats-Markle.

SRM Advocacy Guidelines: Discussion about advocacy identified a need for review of the guidelines.

PPPAC Action: A sub-committee was formed to provide review of the guidelines and provide any suggested edits/revisions to the BOD for approval at their June conference call.

Position Statement Review: This activity was initiated after the 2010 meeting in Denver. Requests were made to the appropriate SRM Committees through their BOD Liaisons for updating selected position statements.

PPPAC Action: The request for review was intended to facilitate updating of the position statements and resolutions during the Billings meeting. Several reviewing committees requested additional face to face discussion at this meeting. With this request in mind, the PPPAC will set a deadline for finalizing the review that parallels the timeline for the advocacy guidelines. Additionally, the schedule for position statement review was updated and a copy is attached.

Resolution Review: The four existing resolutions were reviewed by the PPPAC and the following recommendation made.

PPPAC Recommendation:

1. Drop the CRP resolution as it is covered under the existing position statement.
2. Drop the Reauthorization of the ESA resolution.
3. Drop the Wild Horse and Burro resolution as it is covered under the existing position statement.
4. The Wildlife Habitat Committee is reviewing the Salmonid Fisheries and Rangeland Watershed Management for inclusion in an existing position statement. This action is scheduled to again parallel the advocacy review timeline.

2012 Farm Bill: An email request from Jim Thorpe was sent to the GPPC Chair prior to this meeting in which he is proposing a resolution regarding the 2012 Farm Bill to be considered at Spokane.

PPPAC Action: The email was also extended to the Advisory Committee and the PPPAC will work with them for needed follow-up action.

Western Energy Development: This subject was also discussed at the 2010 meeting in Denver. Subsequent follow up at this meeting resulted in a PPPAC Recommendation.

PPPAC Recommendation: We recommend that a symposium be convened at the Spokane meeting. After robust discussion the following recommendations were identified.

1. The symposium would be entitled Energy Development on Rangelands.
2. We recommend that an entire issue of Rangelands be devoted to this subject.
3. We discussed development of the symposium and a PPPAC member (Carol Blocksome) assigned as a lead sponsor. Our BOD Liaison spoke with the Wildlife Habitat and Watershed Riparian committees and they are interested in assisting this effort.
4. There is a need to coordinate this with the Spokane Planning Committee.

Ecological Integrity: A discussion centered on the need to include ecological integrity in Society outreach and education. This evolved into a PPPAC recommendation as follows:

PPPAC Recommendation: The RAM and Remote Sensing/GIS Committees should be combined into a new committee entitled Ecological Integrity Assessment and Monitoring. In addition a specific mission should be added that includes working with ESD. As further justification for this action, when assigning committees to review existing position statements, there were several that did not have a clear connection with existing committees, especially in the arena of ecological integrity. Additionally, awareness of ecological integrity through outreach and education is becoming more socially important to a broader audience.

Staffer and External Outreach and Education: Additional discussion concerning outreach and education with Washington staffers and other external audiences resulted in the following recommendation:

PPPAC Recommendation: The PPPAC recommends that a definition and purpose statement be included on the website for each committee. Such communication should be geared toward laymen use. We recommend that the EVP and Washington Liaison develop an information template that is suitable for use with staffers including recommendation regarding what information is needed to effectively accomplish this task.

Statement of Appreciation

The Chair and Members of the PPPAC wish to again express our appreciation to our BOD Rep, Sandy Wyman. She has been strongly involved with our Committee throughout the year and her assistance has been invaluable. We look forward to what we are sure will be a productive partnership in the future.

Respectfully Submitted,

MIKE MCNEILL
Outgoing Chair, PAC

GARY MCCUIN
Incoming Chair, PPPAC

JACK ISAACS
Outgoing Chair, GPPC