

Policy and Public Affair Committee Report
29 Jan. 2012
Annual Conference Spokane, WA

Committee Chairs:
Carol Blocksome
Robbie Levalley

Board of Directors Representative:
Sandy Wyman

Progress Report:

1. The Policy Committee and Public Affairs Committee were united into the Policy and Public Affairs Committee (PPAC) to improve coordination and streamline workflow. The two committees were already meeting jointly during SRM annual conference each year for several hours to discuss items of mutual interest and responsibility. Following reorganization into a single committee, the committee handbook was revised to reflect the new committee duties and responsibilities. The membership of the two committees was combined.

The new committee name needs to be substituted into all SRM documents that reference the old committees.

2. The committee responded via email to several important issues that arose during the past year. These are summarized below.
 - a. Feb. 2011. Responded to request that SRM join the new Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Coalition CFLRC.
 - b. May 2011. Reviewed and responded to Grazing Improvement Act amendment to increase livestock grazing permits from 10 to 20 years.
 - c. May 2011. Reviewed and responded to the Wilderness and Roadless Area Release Act of 2011, in which lands designated as non-wilderness land would be released for management by BLM or the Forest Service as deemed necessary by their basic composition and no longer as wilderness areas.
 - d. May 2011. Reviewed and responded to updates to the Wild Horse and Burrow position statement.
 - e. Sept. 2011. Reviewed and responded to the conservation principles espoused by the Conservation Coalition and propose rewording to better reflect SRM viewpoint.
 - f. Nov. 2011. Reviewed and responded to the proposed Voluntary Grazing Permit Retirement legislation.

3. Oversaw review of four position statements from 2011, with ongoing review of revisions of 5 more. Sent six position statements to committees for review in 2012. These were:
 - a. Integrated Pest Management
 - b. Management of Fisheries Resource within Rangeland Watersheds
 - c. Noxious and Invasive Weeds
 - d. Off-Road Vehicle Use
 - e. Wildlife Management Incentives for Private Landowners
 - f. Wildlife/Livestock Interactions
4. Requested three position statements from appropriate committees and groups. These requests resulted in two symposia/workshops being scheduled for the 2012 Annual Conference to work on the position statement. Topics were:
 - a. Rangeland Energy
 - b. Climate (divided into two separate statements)
 - i. Climate Trends, Predictions, and Ecological Impacts
 - ii. Climate Adaptation and Mitigation Strategies
5. Created draft template for guidance in writing position statements.
6. Responded to the Advisory Committee with a recommendation that SRM become involved in the Yale Framework.
7. Responded to Kelly Fogarty, Washington D.C. liaison, with verbal comments about the proposed recommendations for technical assistants and others to have appropriate certification before working on projects using Farm Bill funding.

Planned Activities for 2012

1. Complete all position statements in review and submit them to the board for approval.
2. Submit items for posting to the newly designed website, including:
 - a. Committee reports
 - b. Membership list
 - c. Position statement template
3. Hold mid-year conference call to check progress on PPAC work items for the year.
4. Construct timeline for committee activities throughout the year.
5. Respond to requests from the BOD as needed.
6. Recruit new members to increase diversity of representation on the committee, with emphasis on younger members. Suggested recruiting activities:
 - a. Issue invitation at Young Professionals Luncheon
 - b. Issue invitation at High School Youth Forum
 - c. Place notice in Daily Trail boss at Annual Conference
 - d. Request suggestions for new members from the Board of Directors.

- e. Work individually to locate and invite SRM members
- 7. Sort out membership and determine who is on the newly combined PPAC committee.
- 8. Receive input from the membership through notices in Rangeland News or Range Flashes on issues in which the BOD has requested a recommendation.
- 9. Collect additional information on the Yale Framework for Integrating Climate Adaptation and Landscape Conservation Planning and report back to the Advisory Committee.
 - a. <http://www.databasin.org/yale/glossary#ecologicalProcesses>
- 10. Post position statement template on the PPAC section of the SRM website.
- 11. Complete draft of the Rangeland Energy Position statement and begin review process, with goal of submitting the statement to the BOD by mid-year.

Action Items for Board of Directors Consideration

- 1. Recommend that the BOD request a position statement on Sage Grouse.
- 2. Clarify the internal SRM process for position statements, issue papers, synthesis papers.
- 3. Update/revise Article XI of the bylaws to clarify the differences between recommendations to the Board, position statements, issue papers, and synthesis papers.
- 4. Update/revise Article XI of the bylaws to reflect how changes in how this process is currently working (i.e., the use of email between annual conferences to forward the preparation of position statements, etc.)
- 5. Update/revise Article XI of the bylaws to clarify the process for creating, submitting, and approving documents.
- 6. Consider creating an additional document type, a one-page fact sheet, that would contain a brief review of the science a given topic. This was proposed by the Wildlife Committee.
- 7. Consider allowing draft position statements to be posted on the SRM members-only section of the website and in Rangeland News. This would allow the entire membership to view and comment on the position statements prior to final approval.

Prepared and Submitted by Carol Blocksome, Policy and Public Affairs Co-chair.