



Society for Range Management

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May 17, 2017

Dear Secretary Zinke:

The Society for Range Management (SRM) congratulates you on becoming the 52nd U.S. Secretary of the Interior. For more than 70 years, SRM has promoted the wise use, management, and conservation of rangelands through the application of professional knowledge and experience based on sound scientific principles. Indeed, SRM has been a perennial leader in providing science-based education for public and private land managers, ranchers, and the general public about the importance of sound use and stewardship of rangelands. SRM's members are excited and stand ready for the opportunity to work with you and your team to advance effective and sustainable rangeland management practices across the country.

Rangelands cover about half the land area of the United States, and are vital watersheds for the production of livestock, energy, clean water, clean air, and productive wildlife habitats. Rangelands are comprised of some of the most iconic, wide-open vistas in our country that have long been, and will continue to be, the lifeblood of both rural and urban communities.

The US Department of the Interior (DOI) has a critical role in developing effective rangeland stewardship policies while balancing all of the stakeholder interests in these lands. SRM is well-positioned to be a valuable resource for DOI in carrying out this role. SRM membership brings together private and public land managers, academics, agricultural and natural resource businesses, ranchers, and representatives of various wildlife and natural resource conservation groups to ensure sustained health, proper use, and productivity of these unique lands.

We respectfully ask that you and your team keep in mind the following points for policy development in managing the nation's natural resources:

- Healthy rangelands underpin productive economies for rural communities.
- Successful management of public and private rangelands is achieved through cooperative conservation planning and public-private partnerships on natural resource issues.
- Rangeland management relies heavily on research and education programs of universities and various federal agencies for information, technology, and planning expertise.
- Drought, wildfire and fuels, invasive species, and other threats to communities require flexible risk management approaches.
- Providing sound information and outreach to rangeland users, wildlife managers, and the public will ensure continued improvement of rangeland stewardship and wildlife habitat.

- The best management plans are produced by a workforce that is highly trained, and in specific cases, professionally certified; USDA must encourage professional training and continuing education opportunities for federal and public employees who are tasked with managing our country's natural resources.

SRM stands ready for the opportunity to partner with you and your team as your "go to" organization for training, continuing education, and professional certification opportunities for the nation's rangeland and wildlife habitat managers. We look forward to discussing these issues with you and your staff during SRM's DC fly-in that is scheduled for August 10 and 11, 2017. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact Jess Peterson, SRM Executive Vice President (202-870-3867), or myself (Larry Howery, SRM President; 520-309-5412) with any questions or requests for information or advisement.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Larry D. Howery". The signature is written in a cursive style and is placed on a light-colored rectangular background.

Larry D. Howery, Ph.D.
President, Society for Range Management