

**FINAL SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MEETING
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 06, 2022**

ATTENDEES (IN-PERSON)

Layne Coppock (IAC chair/ Utah State Univ. Faculty Retired/North America Regional Support Group Co-chair), Lia Biondo (SRM Washington Liaison), Kaelie Pena (SRM Young Professionals Conclave/Student Humboldt State Univ.), Jim O'Rourke (IYRP Chair/Chadron State College Faculty Retired), Barry Irving (Univ. Alberta Faculty Retired/North America Regional Support Group Co-Chair), Dan Miller (USAID Retired), Ray Smith (Professor Univ. Kentucky/Chair IGC 2023), Urs Kreuter (Professor TAMU), Humberto Perotto (Assoc. Professor TAMU-Kingsville), Carlos Ortega Ochoa (SRM BOD rep to the IAC), Poncho Ortega (SRM President/Professor TAMU-Kingsville), Val Anderson (BYU Faculty Retired).

ATTENDEES (VIRTUAL)

Ann Waters-Bayer (Agrecol Association/CELEP Germany), Ben Norton (Utah State Univ. Faculty Retired), David Briske (Professor TAMU), John Taylor (SRM Board member, Chair North Australia Beef Research Council), David Toledo (USDA ARS), Maryam Niamir-Fuller [IYRP International Support Group (ISG) Co-chair], Lauren Svejcar (USDA ARS Post-Doctoral Research Associate), Robin Reid (Professor Colorado State Univ.), Michael Benanev (writer/photographer)

Some attendees were IAC members while others were guests. It was mentioned by the chair that IAC members who have been inactive in 2021-22 or who wish to step off the IAC in the coming year will be identified soon. New IAC members may be recruited. The updated membership list will be submitted by Mid-March as part of the IAC annual report to the Board of Directors (BOD) for 2022-23.

We thus had 22 attendees at this hybrid gathering, split almost evenly between in-person and online. Overall, Zoom worked very well while the in-person technology was often inadequate, both for video and audio. Zoom participants complained that the in-person attendees were hard to hear and see. Assuming that in-person technology will remain dodgy for Boise 2023 and beyond, it is logical that future IAC meetings simply be conducted via Zoom.

Agenda Item 2: Update on Shift in IAC Activities for 2021-22:

The chair updated the group on the shift from the IAC awarding a few SRM International Travel Fellowships (ITFs) each year to supporting a process called the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP) 2026. The SRM BOD declined to support the IAC proposal based on ITFs in July 2021, and in response the IAC chair submitted a proposal in August to support the IYRP. This included a request for covering over 300 complimentary virtual registrations, a scholarly symposium, and two planning workshops for IYRP stakeholders in the context of the 75th Annual Meeting of SRM for 2022 at Albuquerque. This proposal was enthusiastically supported by the BOD.

Agenda Item 3: Update on the Approval Process for the IYRP by UNGA:

International Years must be endorsed by the UN General Assembly. In the case of the IYRP a proposal has been submitted by the Government of Mongolia. The proposal has cleared several hurdles thus far, but the final endorsement by the UNGA is pending. Approval was anticipated during late 2021, but a delay has occurred. Niamir-Fuller and O'Rourke described the current situation. We are optimistic that approval by UNGA will occur during Spring 2022. This will enable a formal planning process to proceed.

Agenda Item 4: Update on the International Rangelands Congress (IRC 2025):

The recent virtual IRC (2021) hosted by Kenya has been concluded and details are being wrapped up. The next IRC to be hosted by Australia (Adelaide) in 2025 is already well into the planning stage. Robin Reid, vice president of the IRC 2025 Continuing Committee (CC), updated us on how the CC is pivoting to become more active between congresses based on the resolutions passed at the IRC (2021). This will include conducting strategic planning and quarterly meetings, participating actively in the IYRP, focusing on diversity, inclusion, and indigenous leadership, exploring congresses with allied groups, and formalizing procedures for virtual congresses. See www.irc2025.rangelandcongress.org for updated information on congress details.

Agenda Item 5: Update on the International Grasslands Congress (IGC 2023):

Ray Smith, Chair of the IGC 2023 Organizing Committee, updated the group on progress concerning planning for the IGC 2023 to be held in Kentucky USA, May 14-19. He noted the possibility for the IYRP proposing a thematic session at the IGC; an IYRP booth at the Trade Show may also be appropriate. The IGC website will be open for registration in January, 2022. Deadline for session proposals is July 15, 2022. A Zoom meeting between the IYRP Global Coordinating Group (GCG) and the IGC Program Committee could help shape plans. Details for the IGC can be found at <http://internationalgrasslands.org>

Agenda Item 6: Update on Strengthening Relations between SRM and the Australian Rangeland Society (ARS):

The group was updated on this topic by John Taylor. He noted that an informal dialogue has begun between SRM (Launchbaugh) and ARS (Walsh). The current recommendation is that an informal process should be pursued at the leadership level, and that there is no need for the IAC to be involved at this point. Ideas for restoring interactions include swapping newsletter items, cross-linking social-media feeds, conceptualizing joint publications, etc.

Discussion mentioned ideas for collaborative symposia and integrating support for the IYRP. The IAC can offer other suggestions to the BOD. Niamir-Fuller thanked both SRM and ARS for supporting the IYRP and asked whether future supportive efforts could involve joint endorsements rather than independent endorsements. Could other professional societies, including pastoralist associations, join SRM and ARS in a global network? Can we prepare a list of such societies? Ann Waters-Bayer and Jim O'Rourke agree to work on this. Could the network connect to IYRP regional planning groups?

Could multi-lateral global agencies be in the mix? And might future ITFs be targeted towards individuals who work on SRM/ARS activities?

Agenda Item 7: Update on the IAC Webpage, Handbook, Social Media Presence, Archives, and Funds to Subsidize International Memberships:

The chair noted that the current IAC webpage—hosted at the SRM website—is totally inadequate and needs some TLC. The handbook may need some edits with regards to adding flexibility in the tenure of IAC officers (see below). There is no social media presence for the IAC, and hence no mechanism for advertising itself, making people aware of funding opportunities, etc. (see below). We also need to figure out what messages we want to convey and to whom.

A modest fund (~\$2,700 currently available—maybe more—to be confirmed!) traditionally created by SRM to help defray costs of international memberships for people from the developing world, has been largely unutilized in recent years—the fund is held at SRM HQ. There were several ideas as to how this fund could be better managed. One idea was to match funds with targeted people for specific collaborations rather than as an open funding source for registrations. Using social media to better advertise the fund also matters (above). Archived material of minutes, symposia, etc., were on the SRM web site at one time and hard copies are now kept at Chadron State College. To what extent there is an e-archive of historical IAC documents is unclear. Both the University of Wyoming and Utah State University have been identified as possible repositories, but this needs to be confirmed. It was concluded that such housekeeping items are very important and need attention from the chair, co-chair, and other designated persons in the coming year.

Agenda Item 8: Proposed IAC workplan for 2022-23:

The chair opened the floor on ideas as to what activities the IAC should pursue and why in the coming year. The group felt that the workplan elements pursued in the run-up to SRM 2023 should build on what is achieved at SRM 2022 at ABQ. The group felt that support for the IYRP process is still the foundation for the coming year, and core elements could still include offering complimentary virtual registrations*, maybe organizing another symposium, holding workshops, etc. One idea for a 2023 symposium in sync with 2022 could be to have the 11 regions report on their planning progress. The details, however, cannot be determined today because IYRP approval by the UNGA and other unknown factors still loom large. For example, even if the IYRP is approved, an implementation committee co-chaired by FAO and Mongolia may take the next steps in directions that we cannot control. Ben Norton suggested that the IAC should be prepared to make new plans if the IYRP proposal is rejected by UNGA. If the UN fails to sponsor IYRP, perhaps the IAC could organize its own version of an IYRP, capitalizing on the concepts, structure and membership already established.

Knowing more about how the SRM Boise meeting (2023) will be organized also matters. For example, expansion of “global rangeland themes” at Boise may be a vital aspect that the IYRP can tap in to as well. The IRC 2025 should have a presence at SRM 2023. Pulling in range-wildlife issues may also be a good idea to increase interest. A

symposium on geospatial technologies may have an international perspective, according to Humberto Perotto. Planning details for SRM 2023 can be delayed until submission of the IAC budget request in July (see below). And it was agreed that the IAC should have a special Zoom meeting in May, June, or July to polish the program and budget request detail prior to final submission.

*(*note that on Feb 07—the day after the IAC meeting—it was revealed by SRM that the number of complimentary virtual registrations used by IYRP stakeholders was 98, about 31% of the original request of 320. Engagement of IYRP stakeholders with SRM is expected to be an incremental process—the 98 is thus viewed by the IAC chair as a “good start.” Also, informal estimates (Bestelmeyer, pers. com.) put total registrations for SRM 2022 at 700 (in-person) and 400 (virtual). If these numbers are accurate, it suggests the IYRP is a large segment of total virtual representation.*

Agenda Item 9: Submitting IAC Documents:

The chair noted that a report summarizing 2021-22 activity is due to the BOD by March 15. The proposal and budget request for 2022-23 is due to the BOD by July 31. Both must follow formal templates. The chair will submit these documents after consultation with the co-chair and other IAC members. It was noted that the BOD appreciates proposals for the coming year that are focused on action items.

Agenda Item 10: Introducing Writer/Photographer Michael Benanav:

Michael Benanav is a New-Mexico based writer and photographer who has much experience documenting the inhabitants of remote landscapes around the world. He presented some highlights of his work to the group. Michael is seeking connections to the IAC and IYRP as a means to help tell stories about people who are important to the global network of rangelands and pastoral stakeholders. See Michael’s work at www.michaelbenanav.com

Agenda Item 11: Ideas and Actions to Help Diversify the IAC Ranks:

In recent years the IAC membership has become older and representation of women and minorities has been modest. The IAC needs to address these trends, mostly via efforts to expand targeted recruitment. The IAC must also raise its profile generally. Many ideas were discussed. For profile raising, the IAC could have a booth at the annual Trade Show. IAC members could each bring one new guest to the annual IAC meeting. The IAC social media presence is totally inadequate (above), and more effort needs to come from social media to advertise what the IAC is doing. One approach is to get more information about the IAC out to stakeholders via social media well in advance of the annual meeting.

To help get young people more interested in international issues it is good to summarize ideas about international career paths. Discussion included developing contacts for young people with individuals around the world who these students might contact to volunteer their services or help with activities on a short-term basis, etc., rather than relying on contact with projects as in the past. The Regional Support Groups for the IYRP might be a starting point for these contacts. Creating a concise summary

and posting it at the IAC webpage and via IAC social media is another useful goal for the coming year. Another idea relevant to many SRM committees would be to have a “meet and greet” involving students and representatives of committees early during the SRM annual meeting. Committee representatives would give short talks about what their committees do and why. It is also good to know that participants in a Zoom meeting need not be SRM members or registrants for any particular meeting. Thus, extending invitations to a larger pool of participants could increase exposure and make sense.

Agenda Item 12: Election of Chair and Co-Chair for the IAC

The need to elect a chair and co-chair for the IAC was reviewed. Coppock was nominated by Ben Norton to serve for another year as chair to maintain IAC continuity and momentum, and Coppock agreed. No objections were noted.

Urs Kreuter then nominated Lauren Svejcar to serve as co-chair. Coppock revealed that Doug Johnson, a former long-term member of the IAC and the IRC Continuing Committee, called privately in recent days and also nominated Svejcar as co-chair. Her excellent credentials as a researcher as well as her international experience make her very well qualified. Svejcar agreed to serve. No objections were noted. The meeting was adjourned at about 3:50 pm.

Summary of IYRP SRM Campfire Session by Barbara Hutchinson et al. held In-Person at Albuquerque on February 07:

<https://iyrp.info/sites/iyrp.org/files/IYRP%20Campfire%20Conversation%20summary%20022122%20v2.docx>

END OF IAC ANNUAL MEETING SUMMARY