2018 Summer Tour

Summer Tour
Friday, September 13, 2019
Taos Pueblo

It is not too early to be thinking about the 2022 SRM National Meetings! The NM Section will be hosting the 2022 National SRM Meeting in Albuquerque. Contact the Section to find out how you can help us plan and prepare!

Send items of interest to be included in the next New Mexico Section newsletter to Dave Stricklan (including photos) at this email:
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Upcoming Events

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From Silver to Santa Fe to the Polar Vortex, it’s been a busy year for range management. The New Mexico and the Arizona Section of the Society co-sponsored an annual conference in Silver City, New Mexico, January 9-11, 2019. One hundred and thirty attendees participated in the three-day event, in spite of the government shutdown. Speakers from the New Mexico Association of Conservation Districts, New Mexico State University, Arizona State University, University of Arizona, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Rocky Mountain Research Center, and private enterprise met and covered a diverse set of topics important to range management and ranching operations. The keynote presenter was Dr. Fred Provenza, professor emeritus of Behavioral Ecology in the Department of Wildland Resources at Utah State University. Dr. Provenza is a pioneer in understanding foraging behavior and how behavior links soils and plants with herbivores and humans.

The first day of the conference, Freeport-McMoRan Copper Mines provided a tour into the open pit copper mine in Tyrone. Ty Bays, Senior Land and Water Analyst, hosted the tour, which included travel to the pit, a tour of the SX concentrator, the plating warehouse, reclamation areas owned by the mine, and an up-close look at Yukon haul trucks.

This mining operation continues to be an integral part of the economy and the history in the area. Prior to 1860, Native Americans mined turquoise at the site, then during 1909 to 1916, Freeport-McMoRan Corporation (formerly Phelps Dodge Corporation) acquired mining claims in the area and began concentrating ore produced from large-scale underground mining. Underground operations ended in 1921 but returned as an open pit operation in 1967, with copper production from a concentrator. Today the Tyrone mine operates as a solution extraction/electrowinning (SX/EW) facility with a maximum capacity of approximately 100 million pounds of copper per year. Freeport-McMoRan’s direct impact to Grant County averages $100 million dollars yearly.

(Freeport-McMoRan, 2017).

Brenda Simpson,
NM SRM President
On February 10-14th, the Parent Society held its Annual National Conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota. This year the theme was “Gateway to the Prairie,” a fitting title as several biomes come together in Minnesota, including the prairies that stretch far to the west. This year over 1000 participants braved the trip including a dozen New Mexico SRM members, during one of the coldest winters the state has had in decades. The temperature dropped to -50 degrees Fahrenheit with the wind chill. Minneapolis, at one point, was even colder than Antarctica! But the temperature did not dampen the excitement and enthusiasm of the conference, which kicked off with a special presentation on Native American Rangelands and a presentation of Aldo Leopold’s Journey of Range Management.

One of the highlights of the trip for the New Mexico Section was a dozen or so past and present range students from New Mexico State University gathered for a birthday dinner celebration in honor of Range Club Sponsor Dr. Andres Cibils. The mentorship and inspiration that Dr. Cibils provides his students was evident in the joyful occasion.
Passing of Don Dwyer

Donald Dean Dwyer, 84, passed away Thursday, July 11, 2019 after a long experience with dementia.

Don was born December 28, 1934 in Hugoton, Kansas. He grew up during the Dust Bowl in southwestern Kansas, sharing family responsibilities with his mother, a seamstress, following the Great Depression. He started earning his own money at age 10 and garnered a sports scholarship to Fort Hays State University, where he achieved world class honors running the 400-meter hurdles, even qualifying for the 1956 Olympics. He turned, instead, to academics and Marie Elder, with whom he was married for 63 years.

Don graduated with his PhD in Range Management from Texas A&M, and became a full professor in the field, including a 7-year stint at NMSU and a 14-year position as department head at Utah State University. At the heart of his academic passion were the plants of New Mexico's deserts. For him, these plants represented stalwart sturdiness, innate lessons regarding conservation, and life where many see desolation.

Don found joy in sharing regular rounds of golf, a good cup of strong black coffee, and a fine glass of wine with good friends. He will be remembered for his dry wit, stinging sarcasm, devotion to Wall Street News analysis, and daily answer to the "How are you?" question with a boisterous "I'm great!"

Don is survived by Marie; son Dane and his wife Kimberly; son Eric and his husband Benjamin Baez, as well as their two children Daniel and Maria.

The family thanks all who contributed to Don's well-being and happiness, as well as the abundant assistance during the final difficult years. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations in Don's name be made toward Alzheimer's and dementia research, namely at BrightFocus.Port.BrightFocus.org/alzheimers/donate.

A memorial service was held Wednesday, July 17, 2019 at the New Mexico Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum, 4100 Dripping Springs Road.

Published in Las Cruces Sun-News on July 14, 2019

New Legislation

On April 2, The New Mexico Healthy Soil Act was signed by Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham in Santa Fe during the 2019 Legislative Session. The Act provides a commitment by the State toward fostering healthy soil and a framework to focus the efforts, including basic funding and educational components.

The NM Department of Agriculture will administer the program through the Soil and Water Conservation Commission. The purpose of the Act is to promote and support farming and ranching systems and other forms of land management that increase soil organic matter, aggregate stability, microbiology and water retention to improve the health, yield and profitability of the soils of the state.

More information on the Act can be found at: https://www.nmlegis.gov/Legislation/Legislation?chamber=H&legtype=B&legno=204&year=19
Don’t miss this year’s summer tour!
Register online at https://nmsrm.nmsu.edu/
2019 New Mexico Society for Range Management Section Awards

Excellence in Range Management Award

Hugh B. and Margie McKeen operate a remote ranch in Alma, NM, comprised of deeded land and a U.S. Forest Service-administered allotment in the Gila National Forest. With mountainous uplands interspersed with riparian areas and pinon-juniper woodlands, the McKeen Ranch contains a diversity of habitats, supports a wide range of multiple-use activities, and epitomizes sustainable and resilient southwestern range management.

Despite several years of drought, range conditions on the ranch have remained resilient over the last several decades. This is a direct result of vigilant livestock and rangeland management. In fact, the ranch has promoted pushing invading pinon-juniper with a bulldozer on mild to moderate slopes. This practice has historically been met with resistance, due to concerns of ensuing erosion. However, the ranch has demonstrated its successful use on numerous pastures across the ranch. Moreover, they are always looking for educational opportunities to share this knowledge. Hugh B. and Margie readily serve their community and industry, providing leadership within the region as well across the state of New Mexico. Improving range conditions, a genuine appreciation for multiple-use, and outstanding service to the range and ranching communities all combine to make the McKeen Ranch an excellent nominee and recipient of the “Excellence in Range Management” award from the New Mexico Section of the Society for Range Management.

President’s Award

Dr. Doug Cram was awarded the 2019 New Mexico SRM Section President’s Award for outstanding support of the New Mexico Section, livestock producers and land managers. Dr. Cram is an Assistant Professor/Extension Forestry & Fire Specialist at New Mexico State University.