DRAFT Society for Rangeland Management Committee Report: RAM Committee

Date: January 31, 2016

Committee Chair: Kenneth Spaeth 2015-16

Committee Chair Elect: Larmar Smith (2016-17)

BOD Representative: Joe Hicks

Attendees: Kenneth Spaeth, Lamar Smith, Del Despain, Amanda Gearhart, Nancy Ibrahim, Joe Hicks, Judith Dyess, Jessie Page, David Pyke, Sarah McCord, Jason Karl, Matt Reeves, John Mitchell.

Progress Report: Agenda

* **Recommendations from the Committee for Organizational members to officially represent the various agencies (Joe Hicks issue).** Committee discussed and agreed that invites to various agencies, universities, and organizations would be favorable for promoting RAM. SRM, BOD can assist with identification and expanding committee attendance and interest.
* U**pdate on USDA-NRCS/BLM NRI activities (Ken Spaeth**). Ken Spaeth presented a current overview of USDA-NRCS Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) Program and accomplishments. Dave Pyke also highlighted some NRI accomplishments and discussed status of new “Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health Technical Reference Version 5”, which should be published this year. Jason Karl reported on BLM, NRI activities. Matt Reeves discussed USFS, FIA program, and its expansion of FIA protocols to non-forest land using the All Conditions Inventory procedures.
* The committee expressed concern that some Federal Agencies (US Park Service, US Fish and Wildlife, and Military Lands) are currently not part of NRI, FIA resource data collection efforts. Discussion revolved around how to contact and start a dialogue with other agencies on joining a Nationwide Resource Inventory and Assessment with common core field protocols already established in NRI, AIM, and FIA. Preparation of a “White Paper” would be of considerable value given the big holes in national assessments. The committee wants to develop an outline for the paper and write it. It was also discussed that the paper should address that these national efforts do not always address site specific monitoring needs. These site specific monitoring needs are best addressed locally and built collaboratively.
* The SRM BOD can help facilitate with letters to non-participating agencies.
* **AUM definition (Lamar Smith issue).** This issue was discussed and committee agreed that the SRM, AUM definition not be changed because of livestock weight > 1,000 lbs. Lamar Smith will draft a Technical Issue Report for the Journal that will address the issue.

**Update of the Interagency Technical Reference on “Utilization Studies and Residual Measurements” (Sherm Karl issue).** Sherm Karl could not attend meeting, Ken Spaeth will contact Sherm Karl on this agenda item.] Note from Matt Reeves: This is very timely given the sagegrouse issue and monitoring protocols that are being adopted for stubble ht., etc. One area that we could help on is that we (possibly) could aid development of “site specific” guidelines. For example, it makes little sense to require 8 in. stubble ht if the vegetation only gets to 6 inches. This was a concern posed by several I spoke with…just a thought.

* **NRI/AIM QC/QA (Jason Karl, Pat Shaver issue, or Curtis Talbot).** The committee discussed this issue and agreed that every effort needs to be made by leaders in Federal Resource monitoring programs and field personnel to maintain and improve QC and QA. More complete information is needed from Pat Shaver and Curtis Talbot about specific concerns. Pat Shaver would like to see records kept and follow-up of QC/QA calibrations for NRI in the field. Are the NRI field teams sending in reports? Also, Shaver recommended that rangeland health calibrations also be done during NRI training and in follow-up QC/QA. The RAM committee discussed, but did not resolve how this information will be related to the NRCS Resource Inventory Division.

Other related notes: Amanda Gearhart mentioned an article on the subject. She will send out to committee members.

Lamar Smith passed out list of past RAM discussion items. Committee discussed how to address these concerns during the 2016 year i.e., determine current relevance). Committee members were asked to review and comment on items that are still relevant to RAM committee and send to Lamar Smith.