

PRESS RELEASE

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O'CONNOR RECEIVES YOUNG PROFESSIONALS CONCLAVE (YPC) OUTSTANDING APPRENTICE AWARD FROM THE SOCIETY FOR RANGE MANAGEMENT (SRM)

Rory Charles O'Connor of Manhattan, Kansas, received the *Young Professional Conclave's (YPC) Outstanding Early Career Award* at the Society for Range Management's (SRM) 72nd Annual Meeting, Technical Training, and Trade Show in Minneapolis, Minnesota, February 10-14, 2019. The *YPC Outstanding Early Career Award* is presented by the Society to an individual member who has shown outstanding dedication to the Society within the first five (5) years of their career. This award is meant as an encouragement for young professionals that make the difficult transition from SRM student member, to fully-engaged

professional members of the society.

Rory O'Connor has made a large footprint in the rangeland world in his short time with the Society for Range Management. He earned his Bachelor's degree from BYU-Idaho in Ecology and Rangeland Management in 2009, his Master's in biology from BYU in 2014, and is earning his PhD from Kansas State University, researching the mechanisms of woody encroachment on the Tallgrass Prairie. He has been a member of SRM for 10 years. During this time, he has studied everything from pygmy rabbit and sage grouse habitat, juniper encroachment and sagebrush communities in the Great Basin, to prescribed fire in the Great Plains. Along the way he has found opportunity to advance the knowledge of the importance of rangelands to the public.

Rory founded BYU-Idaho's Range Club in 2009 and worked to improve the University Herbarium. He has assisted with planning the SRM Pacific Northwest Chapter's Range Camp, and has helped implement Junior High ecology and outdoor research programs in Harney County, Oregon while training teachers in plant identification and vegetation monitoring. He has served as a volunteer fireman and educator for the Konza Prairie Volunteer Fire Department (KS) since 2014.

Rory has been active at multiple levels of SRM including serving as the Young Professionals Conclave's (YPC) Vice President and President, serving on the SRM Advisory Council, and Coordinator for the YPC Fun-Run at the Society's Annual Meeting each year. He has served as the YPC Liaison to the SRM Board of Directors, and has served on the Endowment Fund Development Committee. Rory has impacted rangeland education from Junior High to the professional level, and is a model for outreach and information regarding our American rangelands.

For his many accomplishments and dedication to range, the Society for Range Management is proud to recognize Rory O'Connor with the 2019 *YPC Outstanding Early Career Award*.



SRM 2019 Outstanding Young Professionals Conclave Outstanding Early Career Award recipient Rory O'Connor with SRM President (2018) Dr. Barry Irving



MISSION: Providing leadership for the Stewardship of Rangelands based on sound ecological principles.

VISION: A well-trained and highly motivated group of professionals and rangelands users working with productive, sustainable rangeland ecosystems.