

PRESS RELEASE

FOR RELEASE: February, 2020

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COPPOCK RECEIVES W. R. CHAPLINE LAND STEWARDSHIP AWARD from the Society for Range Management (SRM)

Dr. D. Layne Coppock, of Providence, Utah, received the *W.R. Chapline Land Stewardship Award* at the Society for Range Management's (SRM) 73rd Annual Meeting, Technical Training and Trade Show held in Denver, Colorado, February 6-20, 2020. The *W. R. Chapline Land Stewardship Award* gives special recognition to members of the Society for exceptional accomplishments and contributions in the application of the art and science of range management to specific to rangeland entities, and to wildlife and domestic livestock on such lands. Dr. Coppock received this prestigious award in recognition of his more than 30 years of active membership in SRM, with particular reference to his achievements in fostering improvement in the livelihoods of pastoralists in the developing world.

Dr. D. Layne Coppock's contributions to rangeland management are many. He is a respected teacher and mentor of both undergraduate and graduate students at Utah State University. He has conducted research and mentored colleagues in Ethiopia, Bolivia, Kenya, Nepal, Tanzania, Uganda, Namibia, and Utah. His work has improved rangeland management and changed the lives of many who depend on rangelands for their livelihoods. He describes his approach as stakeholder-driven, namely bringing together researchers, development agents, and local communities to share power, co-create new knowledge, and solve problems.

The best example of his approach occurred when Layne was the lead principal investigator for the USAID-funded Pastoral Risk Management (PARIMA) project in southern Ethiopia and northern Kenya from 1997 to 2009. The project goal was to find ways for pastoralists to better manage risks imposed by their drought-vulnerable, livestock-based livelihoods. Because of steady growth in the human population, traditional options to move livestock across the landscape had become restricted. Livestock pressure on the land increased, resulting in over-grazing, bush encroachment, and soil erosion. Recurrent droughts would kill many livestock, resulting in more poverty and heightened risk of famine. How could this vicious cycle of despair be overcome?



R to L: SRM President (2019) Dr. Clayton Marlow with 2020 W. R. Chapline Research Award recipient, Dr. D. Layne Coppock, and nominator Dr. Fee Busby (Utah State University-Emeritus).

Through a variety of participatory methods, Layne and his team focused on the pastoral women who lived on Ethiopia's Borana Plateau. Poor, illiterate, and dispirited, it was women who first volunteered to join capacity-building activities intended to reduce poverty. Fifteen women leaders had emerged by 1999, and they quickly organized their communities. Within five years 59 collective-action groups had formed with 2,300 founding members. In each group the women pooled a few dollars per week, eventually generating enough savings to extend small loans to each other. Eventually, over 5,300 microloans were made by 2009, with a cumulative value of US \$647,000. The loan repayment rate was 96%. Entrepreneurial activities involved livestock production and trade as well as investments in urban rental properties, butcheries, bakeries, small retail shops, and commercial vegetable and hay production. The women also began to actively support their children going to school. Using the leadership skills learned via group engagement,



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.

other activities included the initiation of peace committees to settle disputes over grazing and water. Husbands increasingly recognized the value that empowered spouses brought to their households, and fundamental, positive changes in domestic family circumstances also occurred. By 2015 ripple effects of the project had spread across the region, involving 87,000 women and men in 795 groups, generating the equivalent of US \$28 million in capital accumulation. The vicious cycle had been transformed into a virtuous cycle for many households. The project then received national and international recognition.

The PARIMA project had an undeniable focus on the importance of building human and social capital in risky rangeland environments. It is contended by Layne and his team that restoring hope and imparting skills to diversify livelihoods to better manage risk also influenced rangeland resources via direct and indirect means. Community based methods were subsequently used to improve local watershed management in a follow-up project between 2012 and 2015, for example.

In summary, Dr. Layne Coppock is a non-traditional researcher. To achieve impact on global rangelands he has strived to combine science with public engagement to help solve big problems. His work illustrates the value of taking a broad, social-ecological approach and he has helped people and improved land management in difficult places. Layne's colleagues and students are multiplying his impact in many parts of the world. In recognition of his life's work, it is with great honor that we recognize Dr. D. Layne Coppock with the Society for Range Management's most esteemed *W. R. Chapline Land Stewardship Award* for 2020.