By Gary Frasier

Frasier's Philosophy

Another year is coming to an end. It is a time to reflect upon the past and what the future holds. Within the realm of natural resources it has been a year of fire, drought, floods, and record heat, depending upon where you live. We have a growing shortage of water caused by increased demands in many places, both surface and ground water.

Within the Society for Range Management we are going through critical times. There are some concerns about our identity, role, and future. Some of these thoughts are reflected in two papers in this issue. One paper discusses the issue of the rangeland curricula at our universities. This paper addresses the problem of what is happening to range management curricula and the implications for the management of our rangeland resources. The second paper discusses the results of the Reader's Survey conducted in June 2007. The Reader's Survey was directed toward obtaining an impression of how the SRM membership feels toward the Society for Range Management and how well we (SRM) are doing in meeting these needs. Without pre-empting your reading of the paper, I wish to note that four items identified from the survey have already been (or are being) addressed. These relate to 1) an online employment listing on the website that is being developed, 2) the 2008 annual meeting in Louisville, which will have a job fair and on-the-spot hiring, 3) the SRM-sponsored Ecological Site Description Workshop in October 2007, and 4) a calendar of professional meetings, training, and workshops listed on the SRM website and in the monthly *Rangeland News* starting in September 2007.

The SRM professional certification program item on the survey inspired numerous comments both pro and con. One common comment was, "If a person has a degree in the natural resource management field, is a certification program necessary?" What is the purpose of the certification program? I use the following analogy to put my thoughts in place. I recently went to a doctor, and, while waiting in the small room they always stick you in, I got bored and started reading the certificates on the wall. There was one from the medical school showing that the doctor had completed the necessary course work and graduated. The one that caught my eye was one from the State of Colorado stating that he had completed the testing to be certified as a Medical Doctor for practice of medicine in Colorado. What does this mean? He had completed his medical training, so why the extra testing by the state in which he was practicing? It assured me that the state was concerned enough to ensure that the medical training was adequate. That is where we are with the SRM certification program. It means that we (SRM) are concerned that our college graduates are qualified to practice in the field of rangeland resource management. College graduates who pass the certification test can be assured and proud that their training has provided them with the knowledge to properly manage the natural resources just as the certificate for the medical doctor assured me that he was adequately trained to practice medicine. If you cannot pass the certification exam, then maybe your training was not

adequate. If you are hiring a consultant, the certification shows that the person has the knowledge needed for the job. If you hire an employee that is certified, then you can be assured the person has the knowledge to do the job.

What does the new year hold for us? Many of the responses to the survey indicated that the SRM membership believed in the vision and goals of the Society for Range Management. As the new year dawns it behooves all of us to do our best to meet these standards. The world's natural resources are just like the human body. With proper care and management we can be around for a long time.

As a start I encourage readers to talk to their neighbors at some time in the next year and tell them that it is only through the efforts of all that our natural rangeland

resources can enjoy a long life. Tell them what happens if they have too many animals on a small ranchette. Tell them what happens if they let noxious weeds grow on the edge of their property. Tell them what happens if their recreation activities disturb the cover vegetation on the watersheds. Tell them that there is a group of people dedicated to the proper management of the world's natural resources.

In closing I want to call to your attention a series of papers coming in the June issue of *Rangelands* on "Rangelands and Climate Change." In the April issue we will have the second of the series of papers from the King Ranch Symposium on "Ranch Management."

Here's looking at you for 2008. Have a happy and safe Holiday season. ♦

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