

# The Society for Range Management (Its Values and Characteristics)

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The Society for Range Management was founded in 1948. Despite some predictions of failure during its formative years, the Society today is more vibrant and vigorous than at any time in its history. Moreover, the organization's influence on the way the world's forage producing lands are used is more pronounced than it ever was, and this influence continues to grow. The vision and confidence of the founders, many of whom are yet active members, have been rewarded by the organization's growth, its achievement of professional prestige, its contribution to the advancement of range science, and its influence on the conservation and wise use of rangeland and related resources throughout the world. From an organization of 665 range scientists, educators and livestock operators in 1948, the Society now has more than 5,000 members representing numerous disciplines and residing in 37 countries.

Who are these members? They are a diverse lot, unified, however, by a common interest in the wise use and management of the resources of the world's rangelands. Many members come from the livestock industry, imparting a traditional image of the early American west which is still apparent at Society meetings. Equally important is the pragmatic influence these members exert on the organization. Many members are state and federal employees who, like all others, find enduring professional enrichment in associations fostered by Society functions. Society membership includes educators and research scientists, for whom the Society serves as a forum for the exchange of ideas. And finally, there are bankers, legislators, industrialists, doctors, environmentalists and housewives, all sharing the common interests the Society represents.

What makes the Society for Range Management so unified and viable, stretching as it does across National boundaries and encompassing peoples of such diverse interests and occupations? There are common characteristics which attract and hold the membership together.

Foremost without doubt, is the common goal of all members to make that one half of the world's land surface known as rangeland, as fruitful of its numerous resources and products as possible. Land which produces native forage comprises more acreage on the face of the globe than does land of any other type. Most nations have some of it; some nations possess vast acreages. Thousands of people live upon and are directly dependent on the products of rangeland for their existence. Many more receive indirect benefits from these lands. Vegetative management affects water yield and quality, wildlife habitat, biological stability and environmental enhancement. As the world's population increases, it is inevitable that rangelands will be called upon to produce more food products and provide other multiple-use benefits. Most humans yearn for open space and rangelands generally are open space. The foundation then, for the coherence of the Society for Range Management is a reverence of the land,

the same reverence felt by peoples from all nations and many walks of life.

People who revere the land and work with it have another common characteristic. They are by and far a friendly people. They especially enjoy their association with peoples who share this common interest. At the Society's meetings the livestock operator hobnobs with the plant ecologist, the banker with the range manager, the university professor with the cowboy, and all combinations herein. Not the individuals' profession but rather, a common reverence for the land brings them to the enjoyment of one another. Too, this association gives all members an opportunity to learn from and better understand one another and their respective problems.

Another characteristic of the Society for Range Management, which sets it apart from many groups, is its programs for young people. Both male and female high school and university students have their niche in the organization. Youth are encouraged to participate in Society affairs and many opportunities are afforded for them to do this both at the Section and Society level. Summer range camps, sponsored by the organization, provide special on-the-ground training. Youth discussion groups make up an important part of each annual meeting of the Society. Students participate in the regular sessions of the meetings in addition to having their own discussions and contests. Their enthusiastic social activities add zest to the entire Society membership.

A family atmosphere and a sense of belonging pervades in the Society for Range Management. Members simply have a strong feeling for the welfare of one another, share a mutual trust, and enjoy each others company. This family atmosphere extends across National boundaries and to people of all social and economic levels. A member of the Society for Range Management is indeed a member of a large and caring family.

And finally, one of the very significant characteristics of the Society for Range Management is that it provides an outlet for expression, a means of conveying to the peoples of the world the importance of that vast area of the world's land surface which grows largely native plants and which we call rangeland. It was in a quest for an expression outlet that the Society was established. It has served this purpose well and promises to be even more effective in the years ahead. ●



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