

Third in a Series: Insight From SRM's Charter Members

The SRM History Committee has conducted interviews with many of the Society's charter members to capture their perspective of events leading to and subsequent to the formation of the American Society of Range Management in 1947–1948. Interviews from several of these individuals will be shared for today's SRM members to enjoy and learn from.

SRM Charter Member—James R. Brunner

Editor's Note: On May 20, 2001, Tom Bedell interviewed Jim Brunner in his home. Brunner can be reached at 391 Ogara St., Medford, OR 97501-3744.

Jim is a charter member of SRM, joining as a result of several mailings to range people informing them of the new ASRM (American Society of Range Management) and asking for their participation.

Jim became interested in range and natural resources as a result of going to a Denver Boys Camp at Camp Granby in Middle Park, Colorado, after he graduated from high school at 16 years of age. He started school at Coffeyville Junior College (KS) but transferred to Colorado A&M, first majoring in forestry. During his junior year, the range degree was to be offered, at which time he switched over to range, where his professors were Enoch Nelson and Clint Wasser. He graduated from Colorado A&M with a BS in range management in 1941.

Brunner says that he enjoyed open spaces and the outdoors and has retained that love all his life. He spent his career in the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) with a few years in various segments of private industry before retiring December 30, 1978, with over 32 years of federal service.

After 4 years in the army in World War II, Jim became an employee of SCS starting in Fabens, Texas, a cotton farming area just outside El Paso, in

February 1946. His first practical range management came from working with Vic Bunderson. In 1947, Brunner was sent to Pecos to work as a unit conservationist. Pecos is desert country, and Jim was on his own doing primarily range work. It was while at Pecos that Jim received correspondence about the formation of ASRM.

Jim was reassigned from Pecos to Monahans, Texas, in September 1949 as work unit conservationist and remained there until August 1953, when he resigned to enter private industry in search of more income to support his family. During this time of about 2 years, Jim managed a grass seed farm on the Pecos River for an Ozona rancher/banker, managed a New Mexico irrigated property for an oil millionaire, worked as a scaler in a cotton gin on double shift in Monahans, and also sold cars at Monahans.

In June 1955, Jim returned to the SCS at Marfa doing irrigation work in the Presidio area on the Rio Grande in the winter and range work the rest of the time.

Jim comments that his joining the ASRM and also AAAS allowed him to network with professionals outside SCS and greatly broadened his horizons. He was becoming dissatisfied with SCS as its bureaucracy was pretty top-down heavy. Through contacts in the professional organizations, even though there was not yet a Texas Section, his capabilities were made known to others. He received a call from a BLM contact in Nevada in July 1957 offering him an immediate position at a higher grade (GS-9). Jim was a GS-7 at Marfa. Jim called his superiors in SCS and found they would give him the GS-9 if he stayed with SCS. He then called the BLM, and they said he would get an advance to a GS-11 grade within a year. So Jim went to the Ely, Nevada, BLM through the efforts of Boyd Hammond, range chief, and Tiny Greenslett, state director.

While in Ely, Jim underwent divorce proceedings and moved to the State Office in Reno in March

1959. He did a variety of work, including lands adjudication, minerals adjudication, public relations, and land examiner until September 1962. It was during this time that administrations changed from Republican to Democratic and land disposal under the Democrats was sharply curtailed, thus reducing that part of the work. At the same time, a large range improvement project, the Beowawe, was started in the Winnemucca district, and Jim took that on, staying in a trailer in the field a great deal of the time supervising range improvement activities. This project was sort of a brother to the very large Vale Project in southeastern Oregon.

When that was completed, Jim became Denio area manager, but his office was in Winnemucca. Shortly thereafter, he was posted to the Las Vegas district as chief of range management. He had a free hand to do virtually anything to do with range and stayed in that position until September 1968. At that time, he was recruited by Boo Allen to the Arizona State BLM Office as planner. The National Environmental Policy Act was passed in 1969, and all federal agencies were learning how to cope and respond to it. Thus, planning and environmental statements were necessary for virtually all activities. Jim retired December 30, 1978, from the Arizona BLM.

Jim has been a member of the Nevada, Arizona, and Pacific Northwest Sections. He was Nevada Section president in 1965, the year the annual meeting was at Las Vegas in the newly opened Dunes Hotel. Jim's participation at annual meetings while employed was irregular, but he believes the first one was 1960 at Portland. He also went to the 1971 meeting in Reno. In the early 1960s, the national BLM office encouraged participation in professional organizations, and employees became much more active. BLM wished to get away from the predominant grazing image, and more emphasis on professions was one positive way to achieve this.

Jim believes the Society is going well but has a great challenge in today's public relations arena. He believes we need to get the truth out about range management and counter the half- and mistruths bandied about that ranges are still declining and that stopping all uses will rectify that. He believes the public is being misled and that SRM should stay the

“high ground” using our long history of good, well-designed, and well-managed rangeland research as the basis for stating what actually is taking place.

Jim feels that young people will continue to be attracted to range and related natural resource fields when they are shown the truth on the ground. When students see what is going on and why, Jim strongly believes they will become advocates for rangelands and the many kinds of management activities that are necessary to maintain and improve them. He states that cows and grazing are not the problems that so many believe they are. With hands-on work and seeing the truth, understanding will result.

SRM Charter Member—Dwight R. Cable

Editor's Note: Dwight Cable was interviewed by Tom Bedell in his home in July 2001. Cable can be reached at 2405 Willakenzie, Apt. 6, Eugene, OR 97401, phone (541) 345-3750.

Dwight R. Cable graduated from the University of Idaho in 1938 in range management (started in forestry) after transferring from the University of Arizona, where he had spent 2 years. In 1938, the federal government was hiring range people, and that was an opportunity to use his range degree. His first job was with the SCS in southern Idaho doing range survey until money ran out. After a couple of months of unemployment, he was hired on with the BLM in northeastern Nevada for 3 months but then got on with SCS in Amarillo, Texas, working on range surveys under J. S. McCorkle, then to northeastern New Mexico in 1939 and Tucumcari, New Mexico, in 1940.

Dwight was drafted into the New Mexico National Guard, and in the spring of 1941, his Guard unit was activated, ultimately being sent to the Philippines, via Hawaii, prior to the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Although he was a company clerk and assigned to office/clerical work, he was armed and in the fight. In late December 1941, he was sent to Bataan. When the Japanese broke through the line in April 1942, he was taken prisoner. His captors had them in various locations before he ultimately arrived in Tokyo in January 1945 almost 3 years after being taken. His prisoner uniform was made from gunnysacks painted green. Two meals and 1

canteen of water were provided daily. These were tough conditions since warm and humid weather prevailed.

On being freed in September 1945, he was able to return to the SCS doing range work at Larned, Kansas, and then for 2 years with the Land Use project at Springfield, Colorado. His next assignment was at Prescott, Arizona, working with Danny Freeman. It was here that he heard about the American Society of Range Management, which he joined as a charter member.

Dwight was working primarily with farmers in Prescott, but he preferred to be doing range work. An opportunity arose to work at the Southwest Forest and Range Experiment Station for the U.S. Forest Service headquartered in Tucson. In 1950, he was assigned to the Sierra Ancha Experimental Forest northeast of Roosevelt Lake in central Arizona. Dwight transferred to the Santa Rita Experimental Range near Tucson in 1956 and spent the next 19 years there. He authored and coauthored many research publications. He retired in 1976 having spent the last year or so at the Albuquerque location of the Station.

While on the Santa Rita, Dwight obtained a master's degree in range management at the University of Arizona under the tutelage of Dr. Robert R. Humphrey. He was able to use one of the Santa Rita research studies for his master's thesis.

Dwight was active in the Arizona Section, and besides Section meetings, he participated in several international meetings, including those in New Orleans, Tucson, Denver, and Mexico City.

Since 1978, he has lived in Eugene, Oregon. He has traveled extensively, taking Elderhostel and personal trips to Mexico, Norway, and Canada as well as within the United States. Photography is a special interest of his, and his apartment has shelf after shelf of photo albums.

SRM Charter Member—Danny Freeman

Editor's Note: On July 9, 2001, Jeff Schalaus, county extension agent in Prescott, Arizona, conducted a tape interview with Danny Freeman at his home in Prescott. Tom Bedell transcribed the tape and paraphrased part of it to save space from the

literal transcription. Danny Freeman passed away in Prescott on January 4, 2003.

In 1947–1948, when the Society was being proposed, Danny was in Prescott, Arizona, with the SCS. He had been transferred there in 1941 as a range conservationist but was working in a more general context with farmers and ranchers in 1948. Danny went to work for SCS in 1935, when the Safford, Arizona, office had opened. He, as a range conservationist, worked under Fred Renner, who was Washington, DC, range conservationist with SCS, and had attended several regional meetings with Fred. In 1948, Fred contacted Danny and others to encourage them to join the fledgling ASRM. As Fred was not working directly in range in 1948, Fred had singled out those employees who he thought should have an interest in the Society. Danny greatly respected Fred and joined ASRM before the cutoff date for charter members. Dues were \$5 per year.

Danny said the journal (*Journal of Range Management*) was very much needed and used. He read and kept them all for many years. After some 30 or so years, Danny found that Sul Ross University wanted a set, so he donated them.

Sections were not part of the Society at the beginning. The Arizona Section was formed in 1950. The first meeting was an organizational one at the University of Arizona in Tucson. Danny did not go to this one but did go to the summer meeting in 1950 at Flagstaff. He enjoyed it and liked it very much. Danny knew many of the people who were in the Section through his range work with SCS. The meetings were good ones and quite helpful.

Danny did not go to the first ASRM meeting at Salt Lake City. His first meeting was at Albuquerque in 1953. He took part in most of the annual meetings until about the past 10 years. Danny was well known.

Regarding his expectations in 1948, Danny says he visualized that the Society would help give direction toward practical management of rangelands. This was fulfilled for a long time. However, Danny wonders about the last 10 years with so much environmental stuff going on. He says that some of the perceptions are just not true because he has been

there. He says he currently has no platform from which to speak but is concerned with the direction that events and people are taking the Society. He says that younger folks with new ideas should be, and are, in charge, but he wishes we could hew to the path of good and solid range management. Danny is a life member and has been for some time. He continues to read *Rangelands*, but has stopped receiving the journal.

Danny was born and raised on a ranch south of Amarillo, Texas. He went to New Mexico A&M, majoring in agriculture, and graduated with a BS in 1935. In those days, there was no range management degree as such. He took ecology, biology, and animal husbandry. Everyone who wanted to work in range needed an animal background. Jobs generally were scarce in the middle of the Depression, but the SCS had just been formed, and Danny wrote for jobs. A job in range management in the SCS office in Safford, Arizona, was just opening. Ironically, Danny's animal husbandry professor at A&M had gone to work for SCS at Safford and hired Danny as a junior range examiner to do range survey work. The purpose was to determine carrying capacity on ranches. Danny also was offered a job with the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) at Tucson, but he would rather work with farmers and ranchers than do research. There were CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) camps in the area, and the young men would be doing range improvement work on ranches where a range survey had been made and recommendations developed. Danny was transferred to Prescott in May 1941 and has remained at that location ever since. He was "frozen" on the job and did not enter military service.

In 1941, the Arizona legislature passed legislation to allow formation of soil and water conservation districts. But they excluded rangeland. The act was amended in 1954 to include rangeland. Danny was a district conservationist (SCS) for a while, but in 1954 he became area conservationist, remaining in Prescott. He covered the 5 northern counties with over 39 million acres. He was on the road a lot, and, as he says, he could talk up the Society at every opportunity. He was area conservationist until 1967.

Danny feels fortunate that he could move up the SCS ladder by staying in the same location.

Danny commented on the academic background obtained at New Mexico A&M (now university) in those days as compared with University of Arizona. There were only 6 people in Danny's graduation class of 89 students qualified to take range jobs. Of course, in more recent years, the curriculum has broadened a great deal with more general courses as well as core course work.

Danny was quite active in both the Arizona Section and the parent Society. He was secretary of the Section in 1953 and its president in 1954. To get on the ASRM ballot in those days, petitions with a minimum of 10 signatures were submitted to the nominating committee. Danny found out that friends of his had circulated a petition for him to run as ASRM vice president. He also found out that a petition had been circulated for his close friend Bob Humphrey, a range professor at University of Arizona. Danny won the ASRM election and was vice president in 1955, advancing to SRM president in 1956. Danny also has been chairman of several committees. Of high significance to the Society is Danny's tenure as editor of *Rangelands* for over 10 years.

One of the questions asked involved observations and perspectives and whether SRM is on the right track. In this regard, Danny believes that generally the Society is on the right track, but in recent years he has become much less happy with the direction taken. He says that as he is no longer active, maybe he shouldn't be spouting off. The observations are pointed out to apply not only to SRM but to the situations in range management in general. The pendulum has swung too far toward the environmental side and away from solid resource management. Danny still strongly supports the Society and trusts the leadership will lead more toward the center. Rangelands, the underpinning of most western ranches, require that an organization support the ranchers and range users, as they are the range managers at the base of the pyramid.

It is true that range deterioration took place. That was one of the driving factors toward development of the profession and the Society. Range manage-

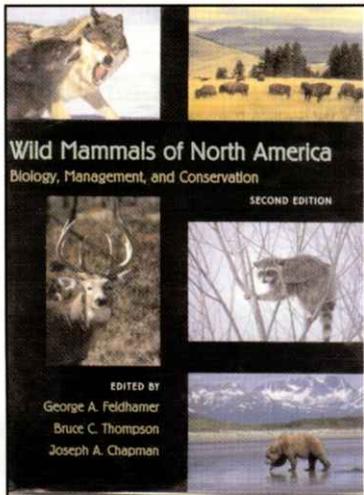
ment is much better now than in the past. In Danny's early experience, he found that some ranchers didn't like being told that a survey showed that something had to be done to correct deterioration situations. There was help available to get water developed and fences built in order to control grazing management. A cooperative spirit helped.

Range seeding success was essentially nil until Danny participated in the first seeding of Lehmann's lovegrass. In 1939, Danny received 10 pounds of lovegrass seed in which to seed 100 acres! He got it mixed with other seeds and [the] CCC boys hand-dropped seed into raw furrows made on a contour. It was not covered. A stand developed, and the grass spread. Danny recalls that rancher's cattle didn't prefer it, but that it was

much better than what they had before.

Asked about advice to give young people, Danny's first comment was to join the Society. Getting into the Society will help people become more interested and involved. He said that his involvement in the Society helped him immensely. It helps shape one's perspective and really gives meaning to the profession.

Postscript: SRM membership has really changed over the years. Interviewer Jeff Schalau believes that outside forces strongly influence the direction taken. But his relatively short tenure in SRM has been very helpful. Danny commented on the fact that early on, ASRM was about one-half ranchers, but that has changed dramatically, and this is most unfortunate.



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2002 Census of Agriculture

Are the farms and ranching that make up American agriculture changing? A snapshot of these enterprises can be obtained by looking at some facts from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), Census of Agriculture.

In 2002, 68% of the principal operators were between the ages of 35 and 64. Seventeen percent were over 70 years of age. The average farmer was 55 years old. The average land cost in 2002 was \$1,213 per acre compared to \$967 per acre in 1997.

The number of farms and ranches across America is declining. There were 2.62 million farms and ranches in 1974 but only 2.13 million in 2002, a decline of almost 500,000. Some of the agricultural land near cities and larger towns has been converted to suburban "ranchettes," but there is also a trend for consolidation of farms and ranches into larger holdings.

The Census is a once-in-every-5-years status of American farms and ranches. By law, every farmer and rancher must answer the detailed survey. The Census has been conducted by the government since 1940, with the USDA-NASS compiling the information since 1997.

These are some of the Quick Facts obtained in June 2004 from the 2002 Census of Agriculture, NASS release at the Web site <http://www.nass.usda.gov/census>. More information will be released throughout 2004.

Activities Calendar

Society of Range Management

58th Annual Meeting

Ft. Worth, Texas

February 5–10, 2005

Information on:

<http://www.rangelands.org/texas2005>

59th Annual Meeting

Vancouver, British Columbia

February 12–17, 2006

Information on:

http://www.rangelands.org/meeting_59th_annual.shtml

60th Annual Meeting

Reno, Nevada

February 11–16, 2007

Information on:

http://www.rangelands.org/meeting_60th_annual.shtml

Section Activities

Information on:

http://www.rangelands.org/events_sectionmeeting2.shtml