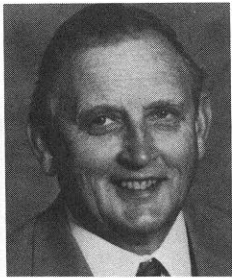


Is it time for a change?

WILLIAM A. LAYCOCK



I want to try to do two things in this address—talk about some of the progress and plans of the new task groups formed in the last year and then talk about some new ideas and some potential new directions that SRM should at least consider.

Some Thank You's

First, I would like to express my thanks to some of the people that helped me make it through the year as president of SRM. First, I would like to thank my wife, Charlotte, for her support, help, and encouragement during the year and for putting up with the long periods of my absence from home. Within SRM I would like to give special thanks to Pete Jackson. He is the one person that really holds this organization together and is truly "Mr. Range Management." Presidents are around for only one year, so Pete is the one that is known by people and organizations outside the Society as the one to contact about Range Management. Another individual who is doing a tremendous job for SRM in Washington, D.C., is Ray Housley. I made 4 trips to DC during the year and, every time, was impressed with the variety of people that Ray knows and that know Ray as the SRM representative. Any expression of thanks is not complete without thanking the staff in our Denver office. They really are a dedicated group of people and, by dealing with the day-to-day routine matters of the Society, make it run. The other group of people who attend to the professional work of the Society are the committee chairmen, the members of the various committees and task groups, and the Section officers and committees. Except for our Denver staff, SRM is run by volunteers, most of whom have another job. We never can say thank you enough to these people as well as all of the members of SRM who make this such an exciting organization.

Special Task Groups

The standing committees of SRM do the routine and continuing work of the Society and we cannot function without them. The progress made by each of these committees will be published in *Rangelands* and I urge you to read their reports. What I want to do in this report is talk about the progress being made by the special Task Groups formed during the last year and a half that are dealing with different or potentially important issues.

The Conservation Reserve Program Task Group was formed late in 1987 to address the implications of this major program and to consider the charges given to SRM by Wilson Scaling at the CRP symposium in Denver in September, 1987. The committee, chaired by Harold Goetz, has contacted all Section presidents and requested that they each establish CRP committees within each Section. SRM's program on CRP was presented at a meeting of the Grazing Lands Forum in October 1988 and also as part of a program presented to the USDA Joint Council in January, 1989. One of the main concerns of SRM, as well as many other organizations, is how to keep erodible lands now in CRP in that protective cover when the CRP contracts end in the mid 1990's.

The Watershed/Riparian Task group was formed at Corpus Christi, with Fred Gifford as chairman, to provide a focus for the concerns about watershed and riparian issues not only within SRM but nationwide. This task group has arranged for a symposium at the 1990 annual meeting in Reno to address how healthy, self-perpetuating riparian zones and intact watershed are important components of a quality environment. The National Wildlife Federation, Trout Unlimited, Sierra Club, The Wilderness Society, National Audubon Society, The Izaak Walton League, and the Defenders of Wildlife have all been invited to participate. The task group also reviewed the 1988 GAO report on riparian areas.

The Wildlife/Wildlife Habitat Task Group was also formed at Corpus Christi with Kieth Severson as chairman. The Task Group is planning a text book, to be published by SRM if it is approved, dealing with Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat on Rangelands. The Task Group also plans to sponsor a symposium "Can Livestock Be Used To Enhance Wildlife Habitat?" at the 1990 SRM meeting in Reno. An important contact has been made through the Task Group with the president of The Wildlife Society, which should lead to closer and better relations and cooperation between our two societies in the future.

The Task Group on Small Tract Range and Pasture Management with Emphasis on Horses was also formed at Corpus Christi with John Buckhouse as chairman. The committee was very small to start with but has now expanded. The task group feels that the concern for management of small tracts is real and should be represented in SRM. They are exploring the possibility of preparing a book dealing with the subject.

The Remote Sensing Task Group met informally at Corpus Christi was formalized as a task group a couple of months late with Paul Tueller as chairman. This working group is committed to the future importance of remote sensing for rangeland resources inventory and monitoring. A reconsideration of this matter is important now in light of the increased emphasis on the inventory and monitoring of the earth's renewable natural resources. Dr. Tueller and some other members of the working group have been involved in planning a session on International Range Inventory and Monitoring to be part of the international conference on "Global Natural Resource Monitoring and Assessment: Preparing for the 21st Century" to be held in Venice, Italy, in September 1989.

The Coordinated Resources Management Task Group also has been working together informally for several years and was formalized as a Task Group in March with Brent Lathrop as chairman. This group also has planned a CRMP symposium for the 1990 meeting in Reno. A workshop for State Advocacy team members and a Task Group breakfast were held at the Billings meeting.

The newest group is the *Task Group for Unity in Terms and Concepts* formed in January and met for the first time in Billings. The charges given this new Task Group were to continue professional dialogue on terminology and ecological concepts relating to range classification, inventory, and monitoring and seek agency commonality and unity in technology and methodology relating to rangeland condition and trend.

Publications

Several other accomplishments by committees and others during 1988 need some comment. At Corpus Christi, the Publications

This address was presented 22 February 1989 at the 42nd annual meeting of the Society for Range Management in Billings, Montana. Dr. Laycock was 1988 president of the Society.

Committee presented the Board of Directors with an updated version of the *Glossary of Terms*. The subcommittee that prepared it had done a tremendous amount of work bringing the terms up to date. Even so, there were still a number of terms in the glossary that lacked universal acceptance, and some terms (such as a few from the RISC Report) were missing. First Vice-President Tom Bedell took the draft *Glossary* and has spent a great deal of time adding the missing terms and trying to make it as accurate as possible. The *Glossary* should be published early in 1989.

Two other publications were prepared in 1988 and will be published by SRM in 1989. One is a Range Research Initiative that has been in preparation for several years by several members—Gary Evans, Phil Sims, Fee Busby, and others. It outlines range research needs along with the additional budget required. A similar document by the Research Affairs Committee, prepared at the request of the Experiment Station Committee on Policy, was completed about the same time. The two documents are completely parallel in subject matter and budget requests. The range research initiative paper is now available from the SRM office in Denver. This publication was presented to the USDA Joint Council and discussed at their meeting in Washington, D.C., in January.

The other publication, entitled "Assessment of Rangeland Condition and Trend of the United States, 1989," was prepared in 1988 by a subcommittee of the Public Affairs Committee. It is the culmination of several years of work by the subcommittee chaired by Dr. George Ruyle and with members from FS, BLM, and SCS and several universities. It shows the most current data on range condition and trend within each agency. One of the problems brought out in the report is that some of the data is not as recent as it should be because of lack of money, manpower, and emphasis within each agency to monitor rangelands at the proper intensity and frequency. The results of this study were also presented to the USDA Joint Council in January. This publication also should be available from the Denver office by the time this article is in print or shortly thereafter.

Are Changes Needed?

There are a number of encouraging things about SRM and range management in general. Membership in SRM increased slightly in 1988 and we went over the 5,000 member mark for the first time in several years. After a continuous decline for 5–6 years, the number of students in colleges and university range science departments has leveled off and some schools have had small increases in student enrollment the last two years. There have been more jobs available for range management graduates the last couple of years, and summer jobs for students are plentiful.

In spite of all of these positive signs, there are other indications that the profession may be in trouble. As I commented in a column in 1988, the image of the profession and of SRM to many other groups is not what we want it to be. We are perceived by many of the environmental organizations as strictly a livestock organization. This perception prevents SRM from forming coalitions with some wildlife, fisheries, and other types of organizations that would be beneficial to SRM and to rangelands.

Funding for range management programs and range management research has declined dramatically in the last decade and a half. Some of this has been budget cuts from Congress but much has been the result of shifts of funding from range to other activities as a result of priority shifts within the Forest Service and BLM. The Rangelands Research Grants Program under CSRS has not been allocated any funds again in the FY90 President's budget. Range management research in the Forest Service has been cut to the level that it hardly exists. All of these things indicate a low priority for range management in the federal government.

The 2 GAO reports issued in June, 1988, dealing with riparian

areas and overstocked allotments were very critical of the range management programs of our two largest land management agencies and of livestock grazing on public lands. Livestock grazing on public lands seems to be under attack from a number of fronts. One example is Earth First's slogan of "Cattle Free by 93", which describes one of their goals for public lands.

One thing that some people believe reinforces our image as a grazing organization is the Trail Boss logo. This is an emotional subject but we (SRM) need to seriously consider our logo and what it portrays. To many, it simply portrays a single use orientation for SRM. In a letter from a former SRM president he stated: "True, I would miss the Trail Boss—for a while. But, in real life his job changed too, with time. In today's world, resisting change is courting disaster. We cannot afford to let that happen."

Along with, or before we consider changing our logo, I believe we have to consider changing our name. As I indicated in the October President's Notes in *Rangelands*, we need to add something to our name to make us identifiable in a world where country and regional Rangeland Societies are becoming common. I was fortunate enough to be able to travel to Kenya, Mexico, and India in 1988. In every situation, I found that SRM was referred to as the "United States Rangeland Society", the "American Society for Range Management" or something similar. I took part in the closing ceremony of the 3rd International Rangeland Congress in India and was introduced as the president of the "American Rangeland Society" in spite of numerous letters to the organizers on official SRM stationery. As I pointed out earlier, we are no longer "THE Society for Range Management and we are not the "INTERNATIONAL" Society. We are just one of a number of rangeland societies in the world and our name should reflect it. I received some mail supporting a change to the "North American Rangeland Society" or "North American Society for Range Management". Some mail simply said, "Leave our name alone."

I also received mail indicating that simply adding a country or regional part to our name was not enough. These letters advocated a name change to something completely different such as the "Society for Natural Resource Management" as well as a change in our logo. One writer said, "It's time (actually 15–20 years past time) the society made a serious effort to convey the message of multiple use management to the rest of the United States (world?)." Another writer said, "As the Society for Natural Resource Management, we would broaden our membership base immeasurably. We have long prided ourselves on membership diversity; this change would truly give us opportunities for diversity of backgrounds and expertise in our society".

In August, I received two thoughtful and thought provoking letters from two ranchers, both quite active in SRM affairs. I am going to quote a few things from these letters and hope that they serve to make all of us think about the role of SRM, its name, and its members.

To have a first class, respected, professional-scientific society that is creative and *gaining stature in the scientific arena is a must* for SRM. The Soil Science Society, Society of Agronomy and Animal Science Society have few to no farmer or rancher members. These are old societies and I am sure they represent the right way to be an effective society....(We) have convinced ourselves that the opportunity for growth on a permanent, constructive basis lies within the employees of the (agencies and universities) that have the responsibility for developing new technology plus getting all of it applied where needed....If all of the professional people who work in range management from the classroom to the ranch were SRM members and were properly trained, our ranchers would soon become interested in the application of sound practices and be a strong support group for SRM and its programs. Ranchers could become members, and we will have a few, but let's not waste our real responsibility of being a strong, sound source of scientific information and professional guidance in range management....Let's work to stock SRM with the right kind (of individuals) and then assist

and encourage them to carry the ball in the game where ranchers are involved. I personally would feel honored to belong to the organization that was recognized as representing the very best scientific and professional people in the field of Range Management...So let's forget trying to be all things for all people and concentrate on being the best in our field."

Is this the direction SRM should take? Many members will say "no" but, considering the source of the comments, I think we have to take the ideas seriously and at least consider them.

In the other letter, similar ideas were presented—"We are looking for new members. Especially new members who can influence the application of sound range use practices. What better group could we solicit than the large number of technical people who work with landowners every day as agency representatives?...If every person from the university to the ranch who works with rangeland management was an active member of SRM, we would see miracles occurring on the land. We could double our membership and quadruple our on-the-land accomplishments if we just had as members, the university and agency people who, by their assignments, should belong to SRM." I don't believe anyone would disagree with the latter quote.

In Summary

To survive, any organization has to be dynamic and not become a dinosaur. Most of the ideas I have presented above came from members, members who are deeply concerned about the future of the range management profession and of SRM. The least we can do is seriously consider all of those potential areas of change as well as other areas that might need change that I have not even thought of. I encourage all of the officers, directors, and committees of SRM; all of the Advisory Council officers and members; and all other members of SRM to think seriously about the future of SRM and to not resist change just because the way we operate now or what we call ourselves is "the way it always has been."

It has been an honor and a pleasure to serve as president of SRM. One thing that became very obvious to me is that one year is too short for one person to have very much influence on the course of a dynamic organization such as SRM. I encourage all members of SRM to work together and work with the officers and committees of both the parent Society and the Sections to continue to help SRM both improve and grow.