

President's Address

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My year as President of the Society convinced me that rangelands and range management are much more vital to the welfare of the human race than even range people contend. The continued drought and famine in the Sahelian countries of Africa illustrate the results of continued overgrazing and misuse of rangelands. Application of range management principles before land degradation had taken place would have averted much of the human hunger and misery in Ethiopia that we heard about almost daily in 1984. Perhaps we, as a Society, should adopt as our purpose the promotion of sound ecological management of rangelands worldwide and direct our objectives to accomplish this purpose.

A year in the Presidency convinced me that the public's image of range management is too narrow. Indeed, too many "range people" relate range management only to livestock use. Livestock grazing is, and will be, the most important use of rangelands for some time. Nonetheless, range management is germane to all products and uses of rangelands. We have allowed our profession to be identified narrowly as *only* range grazing when we should be identified as total resource managers concerned with all products of rangelands.

In no way, however, should livestock grazing be de-emphasized. After all, the ruminant animal is the best way to utilize range forage for production of human food, and grazing is an important component of the range ecosystem. Rangelands are important as a meat and fiber source now but will be even more important in the next century as the demands for food and fiber increase with population growth. Consequently, rangeland should be identified as the resource of the future and every effort made to conserve its productivity. By the year 2030 the human population will exceed 7 billion, almost double the present number, yet the earth's 14 billion acres of rangeland will have shrunk considerably. The United States alone expects to lose 67 million acres of rangeland to other uses during that period. The combination of more people to feed and less agricultural land in production will make rangelands the primary base for livestock production. The demand for the use of rangeland for wildlife and recreation will also increase until such a time that red meat, fiber, and water production preempt them in importance.

Our Society must seek and accept the responsibility of stewardship of the rangeland resource. We must be recognized as the managers of a vital resource. The range profession cannot stand back and do nothing while other commodity groups enjoy public support and increased funding.

We must step forward and take our position as the leaders in the management of a critical resource—rangeland.

The Society for Range Management was founded in 1948 to give the range profession status and unity. Our first meeting took place in this city. The need for unity of effort was no greater in 1948 than it is today. The range profession must unite and develop a broad, overall purpose. We must convince the public and the policy makers that range is a major renewable natural resource without which this nation and other nations cannot survive. To be successful, we must broaden our base and include all rangeland commodities in our management schemes, and we must develop interdisciplinary approaches to research, teaching, and land management. To survive as a profession and to contribute to society, we must broaden our concepts and principles of range management. We must become the driving force and the leaders in an interdisciplinary effort in multiple-use management of rangelands. In doing so, we must also cooperate with other groups dealing with rangeland resources. Society can no longer afford several disciplines or commodities going separate competitive ways in managing rangeland resources. However, the Society for Range Management can be the uniting force if we pursue our purpose and become active in its accomplishment.

Two of the most important objectives adopted by the Society for 1984 were: (1) to increase public appreciation of the economic and social benefits of range to society and (2) to increase political activity at the Society and Section levels. It is imperative that we continue to pursue these objectives in future years. We must influence our own destiny with action both in public education and the political arena where policy decisions and resource allocations are made. Unless the public perceives the need for range managers, there will be no range profession. Unless policy makers perceive rangelands as a vital resource and receive inputs on proper range management from a credible source, there will be no favorable policy on range.

From my view, progress toward these and other objectives of the Society was substantial for 1984. Testimony which urged support for range management programs was presented to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations. The SRM participated in Secretary of Agriculture John Block's "Conservation Workshops" aimed at integrating conservation policy with farm commodity policy. We were successful in obtaining funding for the Rangeland Research Act and, together with other organizations, influenced an increase in appropriations for the Renewable Resources Extension Act. These actions will influence range management research and extension for years to come. However, subsequent funding for these and other range programs will require a continuing effort at the Society and

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Section levels. I urge the Board of Directors to maintain a constant effort by the Society in public policy formulation.

Credit for accomplishments in 1984 is due to a dedicated Denver office staff; a participating Board, good committee leadership, and excellent Section activities. The effectiveness of the Society lies with the Sections—with their leadership and with their activities. Membership recruitment and retention takes place at the Section level. This is where you, the individual members, make your major contribution to the Society. The SRM needs leadership as much now as ever before. I urge all who have not become involved in Society affairs to do so now.

The Society's future is bright, especially with the addition of dedicated new Officers and Board members to an already outstanding Board and the outreach provided by our Executive Vice President, Pete Jackson. It is bright because of the

new, young leadership emerging from the ranks of the Sections. It is bright also because more and more people realize that rangeland is a vital resource with economic and social benefits and that conservation of this resource is important to each nation's welfare. As this realization spreads, the profession of Range Management will have reached new levels.

My charge to each member is to support your new officers fully and to be active in SRM affairs. With well thought-out objectives, plans, and unity of effort, SRM can grow and be even better. It has been a pleasure to serve as President of the Society for Range Management. Thank you for the honor you have given me by allowing me to serve as your President.