

**Range Science Education Council
Annual Meeting Minutes, Fort Worth, Texas
February 6, 2005**

Members and Guests Present

Ernest B. Fish (Texas Tech Univ), Ron Sosebee (Texas Tech Univ), Randy Rosiere (Tarleton State Univ), Steve Whisenant (Texas A&M Univ), Rob Kinucan (Sul Ross State Univ), Val Anderson (Brigham Young Univ), Karen Launchbaugh (Univ of Idaho), Walter Fick (Kansas State Univ), Carl Wambolt (Montana State Univ), Wayne Leininger (Colorado State Univ), Mitch McClaran (Univ of Arizona), Karen R. Hickman (Oklahoma State Univ), Walter Schacht (Univ of Nebraska), Don Kirby (North Dakota State Univ), K.O. (Ken) Fulgham (Humboldt State Univ), Chuck Butterfield (Chadron State Univ), John Malechek (Utah State Univ), Bok Sowell (Montana State Univ), Dan Rodgers (Univ of Wyoming), Shawn DeKeyser (North Dakota State Univ), Dennis Thompson (USDA-NRCS D.C.), Geoff Carter (Student Conservation Association).

Meeting convened at 1:01:15pm by VP Bok Sowell, in absence due to illness of President Laurie Abbott (New Mexico State Univ) whose current health status was shared. Attendees provided self-introductions and the attendance roster was circulated.

Minutes 2004 Approved as circulated and shared with minor editing suggestions from Ken Fulgham.

Treasurer Report shared in printed form by Don Kirby. He noted that RSEC can now accept dues by credit card if needed by member schools. RSEC had 27 dues paying members in 2004 B a **new record**. Report accepted and approved by acclamation.

Historian Report shared by Wayne Leininger. Printed update highlighting past two years provided to add to previously provided extensive written history.

Geoff Carter (Recruitment Director, Student Conservation Association,

gcarte@thesca.org) shared information about activities and internship opportunities for range students with SCA. He invited referrals of our students. SCA places about 3000 students annually in all 50 states and a few internationally. SCA is eager to work with us and 99 other disciplines. Responses to questions indicated that internships generally involve support for expenses, and in some cases \$wages (ca200 salaried internships yearly). SCA funds come from 40K donors, service fees from agency partners, a few appropriated \$ from National Park Service.

OLD BUSINESS.

OPM Standards / Student Coursework Credit. Ken Fulgham (Ken, Mitch, Laurie & Bok volunteered for committee last year) initiated discussion on difficulty in proper evaluation of student job applicant coursework by agency personnel folks. All of us share continuing concern that our students' completed coursework may not be properly credited against CPM standards for range (& all disciplinary specialties) positions Some think that occurs because university course prefixes, course titles, and perhaps course descriptions do not match CPM standards closely. Others think the problem is with the raters (agency personnel officers, range specialists, the ranger's secretary). Bok Sowell discussed and circulated a Course Description List that the group created recently as one approach to assist both job applicants and agencies gain greater agreement between coursework completed and rating scores. Several requested copies of form and examples from Bok with some suggested modifications. Bok, Ken, Mitch and Chuck

Butterfield will explore getting final template onto SRM and student websites.

Ken reminded us that we may need to strengthen our advising also, so that students do complete the appropriate courses to better meet OPM standards!! In response to uncertainty by several about agency target qualifications, Wayne shared that Leonard Jolley (SRM Denver) says the old 1994 OPM standards still apply. Due to \$costs charged the agencies by OPM for rating panels, authority and responsibility for evaluation of applicant credentials has been transferred to the local agency level. Applicants (our students) should send with their resume and transcripts our/their own course list showing how their coursework meets OPM standards. Chuck wonders if there is any way to check if a student's coursework was properly credited.

Agency / RSEC Relations. Dennis Thompson (NRCS, National Office) stressed that the need for new replacement range employees is growing, and he is concerned how we can meet this coming demand for new hires. Geoff Carter volunteers SCA to help market both the need and our students be perhaps RSEC needs to lead the effort to market our students. Dennis says he is trying to grow the range area, but needs help from us is how best to do this. Who else should he work with? Will one-on-one efforts will be enough? Already he has worked with Tribal Colleges, but they are not unified. Don Kirby said NDSU is trying to help Community Colleges and Tribal Colleges in his region recruit natural resources students, teach some basic courses, and get them into the range program for upper division courses so they can later do a better job with an agency.

Several wondered if we can meet the demand with our campus based courses. Do we need to develop more online courses or other off-campus opportunities? Some suggested that this demand comes from those who wish to escape rigorous programs, or might make our teaching programs obsolete. Karen Launchbaugh says good online courses can earn \$s for the university. She declared that these online courses are best taught by experienced teachers, and some courses are not suitable for an online approach. Chuck Butterfield said we must step up and fill the need, or others will. Dennis shared that the agencies have similar problems and concerns about current agency in-house training courses and programs.

NASULGC. Walter Schacht indicated that range program Hds/Leaders met as a group last year and will meet again this week in Fort Worth with Tom Thurow (Uwyo) as chair. Range is still not represented on the Board of Natural Resources of NASULGC, but the Heads group is continuing to monitor and stay involved. Tom met with board again this past year, following Walter's meetings with them previously. Stay tuned.

SRM Recruiting Brochure. New SRM range recruiting brochure is out and available in needed quantities from SRM Office. John Mitchell (USFS Research, Fort Collins) says SRM needs help getting these out, but does not expect full funding by others. **Karen L. moved that RSEC contribute \$500 to SRM for postage etc for mailing. Seconded by Ken F. Passed.**

NEW BUSINESS.

Marketing Brochure. SRM requests RSEC and SRM committees help develop brochure to market need to hire range professionals and market our students B to complement above recruiting brochure. This will address need identified in our earlier discussion above. Target audience would be agency raters and other hirers of our graduates!!

Accreditation Standards for range schools are being revisited by SRM based on report by Mitch McClaran. Process set in motion by SRM President Mort Kothmann and Task Force named last year. Effort is addressing such questions as: What is the Minimum Standard? How

much range management is needed in natural resource management courses? Should program be one of inclusion rather than exclusion? Will be the bar be lowered? SRM Task Force announced schedule calls for: May 1 2005 - First draft; Summer 05 - First SRM Board review; Oct 05 - broad publication of new accreditation requirements and process.

TEACHING AWARD. Chair Don Kirby announced that the committee has chosen a winner from 6 nominees with usual difficulty. Winner will be announced at SRM awards program on Wednesday afternoon. Non-winners this year should not give up B your nomination will be kept for two years before needing updating/renomination. Ron Sosebee and Wayne Leininger rotate off the committee. Don Kirby is in third year. Karen Launchbaugh and Ken Fulgham continue in second year. Rob Kinucan and Karen Hickman agreed to begin three year terms. Mitch McClaran will replace Pat Johnson who has been unavailable for rest of her term.

SECRETARY. Ken Fulgham volunteered and was elected by acclamation to serve as secretary for 2005/6 and three year term as RSEC officer.

Adjourned 3:06:31pm [Minutes by Dan Rodgers, Secretary]