



Montana GLCI Quarterly Newsletter

Montana GLCI Quarterly

January-February-March

Summary from the Fifth National Conference on Grazing Lands from the Co-Coordinator, Carla Lawrence

Montana GLCI Steering Committee

- Lon Reukauf
Chairman,
Terry, MT
- Dean Wang,
Vice-Chairman,
Baker, MT
- Russell Nemetz
Billings, MT
- Bob Lee
Judith Gap, MT
- John Hollenback
Gold Creek, MT
- John Anderson
Alder, MT
- Chase Hibbard
Helena, MT
- Jim Willis
Buffalo, MT
- Ben Lehfelddt
Lavina, MT

Co-Coordinator

Jon Siddoway, State Rangeland Management Specialist, NRCS, Bozeman, MT

Carla Lawrence, DBA Carla at the Ranch, Roberts, MT



Montana GLCI was well represented during the Fifth National Conference on Grazing Lands (5NCGL) in Orlando, Florida. Eight of the ten current Montana GLCI steering committee members (Lon Reukauf, Dean Wang, Russell Nemetz, Bob Lee, Aggie Helle, John Hollenback, Chase Hibbard, and Jim Willis) and one incoming member (Ben Lehfelddt), as well as co-coordinator, Carla Lawrence, were able to attend the conference which was held December 9-12, 2012.

During the conference, the Montana GLCI steering committee members made four presentations to include: Lon Reukauf, chairman, and Dean Wang, vice-chairman teamed up on a presentation entitled, "Putting GLCI on the Ground in Montana", a summary of demonstration projects, workshops and seminars that have been funded through the Montana GLCI. Russell Nemetz, immediate past-chairman of the Montana GLCI, presented,

"Cowboy up with Conservation, it can save your grass," the education and awareness campaign Montana GLCI rolled out in 2004.

Bob Lee, also a member of the national GLCI steering committee and Chase Hibbard, discussed "Recordkeeping 101", which featured a hard copy binder and an electronic version of recordkeeping, which will eventually become an APP after the prototype is developed. John Hollenback, rancher at Gold Creek, presented, "A Rancher's Perspective on Working with Others to Solve Resource Concerns in the Clark Fork Watershed.

Other highlights: The Honorable Frank D. Lucas (OK-3rd), Chairman, House Agricultural Committee, United States House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. provided the keynote address during the opening session on Monday.



Dr. Temple Grandin, Professor of Animal and Range Sciences, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO, was also a featured speaker on Monday and offered participants two opportunities for book signings. Dr. Fred Provenza, animal behavioral professor emeritus, Utah State University, Logan, UT and Kit Pharo, Pharo Cattle Company, Cheyenne Wells, CO spoke during the conference and also offered participants an opportunity to sign up for workshops on Wednesday afternoon.



Comments from Bob Lee

**Lon Reukauf –
Chairman,
Montana GLCI**
There was an ample amount of quality presenters. The poster presentations were very interesting. I was glad I got to visit with quite a few of the people who represented the posters. It is hard for me to believe that with all the knowledge presented about rotational grazing, that so few land managers throughout the country make good use of it.

As 2013 is officially here, it's time to reflect back on the 5th National Conference on Grazing Lands (5NCGL), held in Orlando Florida this past December.

Montana has gained as well as shared in this great event. The real dividend achieved is the relationships we have with other people, all with the same end goal of, "taking care of and enhancing our greatest renewable resource - our grazing lands". Montana has worked hard to demonstrate the value of GLCI's Vision, "Enhancing our private grazing lands".

We have accomplished this in many ways to include: projects on the ground to continuing education through workshops and seminars. Montana GLCI works closely with NRCS to get ideas on the ground. There is still much to do, such as helping to develop a grazing App for smart phones called, "Graze Keeper."

It was rewarding to watch the networking between Montana's delegation and the participants from across the nation. Everyone left enthused and reenergized.

On a personal note, I continue to gain from the knowledge and expertise of our National GLCI Steering Committee and its support staff. Under the leadership of Mr. Bob Drake, we continue to build our integrity as a grazing resource. We have a lot to do, but what an exciting time to be involved in grazing lands and the value it brings to the table. Thanks for everything you all do.

BOB LEE



Bob Lee serves as a moderator during the 5NCGL in Orlando.



Bob Lee received a token of appreciation for his work on the 5NCGL from Bob Drake, Chairman, National GLCI steering committee during the conference in Orlando,.



Comments from John Hollenback

Some of my reflections from the 5NCGL: The conference was smaller in number than past years. I thought that all of the speakers that I listened to were very good. I enjoyed the talks about the different areas dealing with drought.

I was proud of the Montana group as they all did a great job with their presentations.

I was a little disappointed by the western part of the country, as attendance at the regional meeting on Sunday was very poor, so the activity

reports for individual states were not very good.

I believe GLCI is still relevant and needed. I hope it continues to be funded as there is still much to be done. Thank you for allowing me to be a part of Montana GLCI.



Aggie Helle receives a plaque of appreciation from National GLCI Chairman, Bob Drake for her work on the 5NCGL in Orlando.

Reflections from Ben Lehfeldt

Attending my first national GLCI conference gave me opportunities to not only meet several new individuals in different industries, but to also learn more about practical grazing research across the country. I particularly enjoyed learning more about concentrated grazing techniques and how they may be able to be used in drier climates. Temple Grandin spoke about animal handling techniques and I plan to use some of her expertise to design new cattle handling systems on our ranch. The conference also gave me a chance to meet my colleagues from Montana GLCI. Montana was well repre-

sented at the conference and it is clear to see the importance of having a strong statewide organization, represented by a variety of Ag individuals from across organizations and across the state. I met a majority of the other national steering committee members and I look forward to representing the sheep industry both on a statewide and national level through GLCI. Over the next year, I look forward to helping with the different state projects that GLCI has underway and I hope to be able to continue the commitment of excellence Aggie Helle has contributed to the organization

over the past decade plus. I want to thank the other Montana GLCI members; in particular Carla and Aggie, for their help making me feel like a part of the "Montana GLCI team" and introducing me to many of the other national GLCI members.



Chase Hibbard's Notes from 5NCGL – featuring Kit Pharo

Profitable Ranchers

Make the most efficient use of the available forage reserves on their ranch

Three keys: 1) Planned rotational grazing

2) Matching production cycle to forage reserves

3) Matching cow size and type to forage reserves

“Any time you worm or feed, you are fighting nature”

Wants cows to perform with no inputs Wants a cow not requiring any input



65% of annual cow cost is spent on feed (easiest money you make is what you don't spend)

70% of the feed your cow consumes strictly for maintenance only 30% goes to production

Bigger cows eat more than smaller cows

Heavy milking cows require more feed for maintenance even when they are not lactating

- Milk is the most inefficient growth trait there is

- Early weaning you can get the same gain 15-20% cheaper

- A good drought management tool but Kit prefers leaving calves on cows “milk is not a maternal trait, it is a growth trait”
- fertility is the most important maternal trait
- antagonistic with milk production

There is a direct straight line correlation between “cow size” and “cost of production”

(SPA ANALYSIS)

K. Ringwall 2008 Dickenson Research Extension Center

Dickenson, ND	<u>Cow wt</u>	Wean wt as a <u>% of cow wt</u>	<u>weaning wt</u>
#		%	#
	1242	49.7	617
	1357	45	611
	1456	40.5	589
	1549	38.6	598
	1698	33.7	572

“Angus has outgrown Simmental for mature size”

How can I match cow size and type to the resource on my ranch?

Require my cattle to live within their means. They must be able to produce with minimum inputs (vaccine – feed)

Produce or purchase cattle that fit my environment and management practices

Cull and sell animals that do not fit my environment and management practice

-the biggest may not be the best

-select for less milk and moderate size

-Kit keeps all his heifer calves. Mother Nature will sort them out for you

-Never grains his cattle – does not feed grain to bulls – does more harm than good no hay to cows

-moved calving from April to mid-May and stopped feeding protein

-he took fecal samples which indicated that he needed to feed protein but he didn't do it. He lost some cows but overall it worked fine. 5-6% protein over the winter worked fine

-don't worm or vaccinate cows

-use salt and mineral mix

-he does vaccinate calves at weaning

-castrate bulls after weaning

Question – what about public perception of late castration? Answer: Use a bander it works fine

Conclusion: - Don't keep cows over 1200#; Cows must be very moderate in frame size (frame score cows in chute?); Cows must have some maternal fleshing ability; Cows must have tremendous volume and capacity

Kingsville, TX – “seven year case study”; Increased profit \$440/cow; Replaced hay feeding with year-round rotational grazing; Switched from March/April calving to May/June calving; Replaced Brahma cross cows with 1000-1100# red Angus cross cows; He treats heifer calves the same as the herd, not pampered, runs them with the cow herd. Uses the same bulls on heifers and cows. Calves/heifers with the cows; Use “calving ease” bulls on everything. Yearling heifers bred up well and he has very little money in them (70% conception in a rough year) Cow herd; 90% conception is the goal- 94% optimum; 70% on 2 year olds for conception is also the goal; Keeps all heifers so there is not a problem since there are no inputs; Thinks its okay to keep the open, young cows for 1 more chance; Don't preg check; Keep it simple; Convert “free” solar energy into pounds of beef.

Kit Pharo: Kit@pharocattle.com



Chase Hibbard's Notes from the 5NCGL featuring Temple Grandin

- Remove chains and other distractions in the lead-up chute
- NO nipping dogs
- Too many people in the wrong place along the chute is common
- A curved chute needs solid sides especially on the outside corners.
- Don't have too many backstops
- Stay out of the animals flight zone, work opposite the flow, no hot shots— but hotshots are better than breaking tails
- Use flags gently and only to turn animals
- Fill crowd pens in the tub only 1/2 full. You do not need to use the crowd gate.
- Use optimal pressure. Not too tight, but not too loose.
- Don't make any sudden jerky motions. Put cardboard on the back half of the squeeze chute to block animals vision.
- Cattle that run out of the squeeze chute fast may perform poorly. Should walk or trot out.
- Get rid of the nutcases but don't get your cattle too gentle. They must defend their calves from predators.
- Cortisol levels are high with rough handling and hotshots.
- The first experience that cattle have with people, places and equipment must be a good one. As an example, one four wheeler might be okay, three is not okay.
- Acclimating animals to handling and handling facilities reduces stress. Cattle perceive men on horses differently than men on foot. They need to be habituated to both.
- "Manage what you measure."
- Eliminate defining terms such as "properly", "adequate" and "sufficient".
- Cattle shouldn't vocalize in the chute. If they do, you are hurting them or throwing them off balance.
- Animals are afraid of dark places.
- In a lead-up chute, cattle must be able to see ahead two body lengths. This could be one problem with our lead-up coming out of the crowd pen at Adel.
- Bud boxes are skill-dependent. They need to be laid out correctly.
- Rough handling is easy to fix.





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We're on the web
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It was an outstanding conference. From my perspective, as a first time attendee, it was gratifying to see the respect that the Montana contingent receives as a leader in the GLCI arena. There are three components of a convention: the business of the organization; education; and entertainment. All three were extremely well done. Kudos to the Floridians for putting on an outstanding convention.

The Montana group presented well and looked sharp doing it. Thanks to Carla for shepherding us through the process.

Dean Wang



State Winter Grazing Seminar Well Attended in Harlowton Heidi Crum, RREC coordinator

2013 Winter Grazing Seminar a Success!

2013 Winter Grazing Seminar was hosted by the Upper Musselshell Conservation District in Harlowton, MT on January 16-17. The two-day event welcomed 85 people from across the state. Dr. Simon Atkins kicked off the seminar with an energetic presentation on the climate and how it affects commodities. Next, Dr. Rachel Endecott gave a very practical talk on feed strategies during a drought. The first day of presentations concluded with an informative panel of people from the eastern side of Montana with their experiences in oil development. Julie French from Scobey gave the crowd some useful information that she learned as a mineral lease owner and the legalities involved with leasing minerals.

Dick Iverson from Sidney shared information on the Board of Oil & Gas and gave some precautions to people whose area may experience an oil boom. Dexter Thiel from Sidney gave his perspective on the effects of the oil boom on the town infrastructure and systems. After the presentations, a social hour with music from the Musselshell Mudcats was held at the Moose Lodge where Bob Lee served as emcee for the evening. Range Leader of the Year awards were given to Jed Evjene, rancher and Justin Meissner, professional. Sarah Calhoun, owner of Red Ants Pants, gave an inspiring presentation on her journey as a small business owner in rural Montana. The second day of the event began with four scientists from the Agriculture Research Station in Logan, UT. Each one presented

different material on rangeland forages that could be implemented in Montana grazing systems. The event concluded with Dr. George Haynes, MSU Agriculture Economics professor with a talk on the Agriculture Outlook for Montana. All six members of the Rangeland Resources Executive Committee (RREC) were able to participate in the seminar. Additionally, a few members from the Montana GLCI were able to attend the seminar: Bob Lee, Jim Willis, Chase Hibbard, and John Hollenback, who serves on both committees. The RREC would like to thank the GLCI for the continued support of the program events and the partnership we share in the great state of Montana.