

Wyo Society for Range Management honors professionals during meeting

The Wyoming Section of the Society for Range Management (WY SRM) hosted their annual meeting with the Wyoming Wildlife Society in Cody, Nov. 15-17.

WY SRM is a professional organization comprised of individuals who study and manage balanced use of rangelands and related ecosystems, and 85 percent of Wyoming's lands are rangelands.

WY SRM objectives include to properly take care of the basic rangeland resources of soil, plants and water; to assist all who work with range resources to keep abreast of new findings and techniques in the science and art of range management; and to improve the effectiveness of range management to

obtain from range resources the products and values necessary for human welfare

Wyoming's rangelands are the heart of the state.

Wyomingites recreate on rangelands, and livestock and wildlife graze them. Additionally, rangelands provide for mineral extraction, and the very plants and soil that form rangelands filter and provide us the clean water we all depend on.

The value and complexity of rangelands cannot be overstated and thus the responsibility of those who study and manage them is significant.

It is with great pride WY SRM celebrated and honored individuals and organizations that are the boots-on-

the-ground, stewarding Wyoming's rangelands.

WY SRM presented four honorary awards during the November annual meeting.

Trail Boss Award

The Trail Boss Award is the most prestigious award WY SRM offers. The nominee must have made eminently noteworthy contributions through service and aid in the advancement of the Section and/or the parent society.

Brad Russell received the award this year. Russell is a rangeland specialist on the U.S. Forest Service's Shoshone National Forest.

Nominators described Brad as an outstanding man of the range and a true trail boss. His long career on the Shoshone exemplifies the ideal role of a rangeland professional in working with ranchers to sustainably use and restore rangelands.

Some of his allotments have applied innovative management, such as collaborative conservation, strate-

gic grazing management and herding.

Outstanding Woman of Range

The Outstanding Woman of Range is recognized as a leader, as being a progressive, enterprising person looking ahead to the improvement of range management.

This year's award went to Mandi Hirsch, the sage grouse and rangeland management specialist at Popo Agie Conservation District.

Nominators noted Hirsch actively participates in the collection of critical monitoring data in cooperation with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and local producers to inform management decisions in important sage grouse habitat.

Additionally, she participated in the development of the second generation of ecological site descriptions within the Wind River Basin, helping to develop a solid foundation in which management decisions can be made. Her efforts and support is

appreciated.

Hirsch's professionalism and quality of work are said to stand out as examples for the range community.

Additionally, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Powell's Rangeland Management Specialist Marji Patz was honored.

Patz has been a member of the WY SRM for 16-plus years, and her contributions to the section are numerous. She currently serves as the Secretary/Treasury for the Section, and she's the current chair of the Wyoming Resource Education Days (WyRED) program.

Patz actively displays knowledge of sound ecological principles of range management through her career with the NRCS. She has been recognized for doing an outstanding job of promoting the art and science of range management.

Award of Merit

The nominee for the Award of Merit has made

noteworthy contributions to the WY SRM.

For this award, Laramie River, Conservation District Resource Specialist Martin Curry was honored.

Curry is recognized for his continued efforts and leadership with the Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts for their support and coordination of the annual WyRED camp and the update and publication/distribution of the *Rangeland Management* handbook.

His willingness to step up to complete tasks both behind the scenes and hands-on in the field while teaching students is always greatly appreciated. Curry's experience adds to the dynamics of our team, and he is a valued member of WY SRM and WyRED committee.

This article was written by Windy K. Kelley, of University of Wyoming Extension and USDA Northern Plains Climate Hub. Kelley is a former Wyoming SRM council member.



Trail Boss - Brad Russell of the U.S. Forest Service's Shoshone National Forest received the Trail Boss Award in recognition of his long career improve the range and implementing innovative management on the ground. Courtesy photo



Award of Merit - This year, the Wyoming Society for Range Management presented their Award of Merit to Martin Curry of the Laramie Rivers Conservation District. Curry's leadership, particularly related to Wyoming Resource and Education Days, was recognized with the award. Courtesy photo



Outstanding woman - Marji Patz of the Natural Resources Conservation Service has dedicated many years to range management and implementing conservation practices on rangelands around the U.S. She was recognized as an Outstanding Woman of Range this year by the Wyoming Society for Range Management. Courtesy photo



Working for range - Mandi Hirsch of the Popo Agie Conservation District was recognized for her work in monitoring and development of ecological site descriptions in the Wind River Basin. Her work and professionalism earned her the honor of Outstanding Woman of Range. Courtesy photo

