

A series of schools were developed to further the educational opportunities of those who depend on rangelands for their livelihood, are responsible for the management of state and federal rangelands, or are just interested in rangelands and want a better understanding of their management.



Rangeland Management School 501 offers range grazing, monitoring expertise

Situation:

The Wyoming section Society for Range Management began offering its Rangeland Management School 101 in 2004. There have been 16 schools throughout the state as of May 2009 with more than 500 ranchers, federal and state land management agency personnel, and college and high school students participating. The 101 school is not sufficient for ranchers and land managers to fully grasp the methods and benefits of rangeland grazing management and monitoring. Thus, a series of schools were developed to further the educational opportunities of those who depend on rangelands for their livelihood, are responsible for the management of state and federal rangelands, or are just interested in rangelands and want a better understanding of their management. The capstone school of these is the 501 school, a two-day program that ends with participants developing a grazing management plan.

Serving as presenters were University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service educators and specialists; U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Forest Service, and Natural Resources Conservation Service rangeland management specialists; and Wyoming Weed and Pest Control District supervisors. A \$1,000 grant was received from the Wyoming Private Grazing Lands Team to help defray costs. Additional sponsors of the schools are the Wyoming Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management.

Impacts:

Two 501 schools were held in 2009 with 43 attendees. Many participants indicated they were going to obtain ecological site descriptions for their rangeland pastures and study the state and transition models developed by the Natural Resources Conservation Service to determine management strategies to achieve desired plant communities. Some stated they would attempt to improve livestock grazing distribution and grazing management, including monitoring forage residual levels. Improving their weed control efforts was also indicated as a result of attending this school.

Participants at both schools completed an evaluation form in which they were asked to indicate their knowledge level of the subject matter prior to and after the school on a 1 to 5 rating with 1 being least knowledgeable and 5 most knowledgeable. They were also asked if there would be any management changes in their operation based on what they had learned, what they liked most about the school, and what they would like to see changed.

Attendees indicated 23 percent were knowledgeable about the subject matter prior to participating in the school. After the school, 65 percent of the participants believed they were now knowledgeable.

Some comments on what was liked most:

- “The work group problem at the end of class was great. Could do more of these or a larger part of the class.”
- “The way it tied all facets of management together, i.e., plants, livestock, wildlife, and management practices.”

Attendees indicated 23 percent were knowledgeable about the subject matter prior to participating in the school. After the school, 65 percent of the participants believed they were now knowledgeable.

