

Dr. John 'Derek' Scasta

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PROFILE

20+ years of land-grant university service and experience in extension, teaching, research, and administration. Beginning in 2004, served ~7 years as an extension agent for agriculture, natural resources, community development, and youth development in rural Texas counties. Completed a Ph.D. in 2014 with research in Oklahoma and Iowa, and then served ~10 years as state extension specialist and teaching/research professor and in Wyoming. Since 2023, providing administrative service to both Agricultural Experiment Station and Extension with oversight for land, livestock, personnel, budgets and finance, reporting, stakeholder relationships, and educational outcomes.

DEGREES

Ph.D., Oklahoma State University, *Natural Resource Ecology & Management*, (2014)

M.S., Texas Tech University, *Crop Science*, (2008)

B.S., Texas A&M University, *Rangeland Ecology & Management*, (2004)

CERTIFICATES

University of Wyoming, *Faculty Leadership Institute*, (2026)

Harvard Business School, *Specialization in Leadership & Management*, (2025)

Society for Range Management, *Certified Professional in Rangeland Management (CPRM, #CP11-002)*, (2011-Present)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2014-Present, University of Wyoming – Laramie, WY, USA

Interim Associate Dean and Director of Extension (2026-Present)

Provide leadership for UW Extension for all field educators and staff in all 23 Wyoming counties, F.E. Warren Air Force Base, and the Wind River Reservation in addition to on-campus specialists. Engage with stakeholders to ensure state needs are addressed. Manage human resources and budgets and assist with college, state and federal reports, and budgets. Support the Dean through the College (CALSNR) leadership team. Participate in Western and National Extension Director Associations (WEDA/NEDA). Manage annual operating budget, salary, and investments valued at ~\$10 M.

Professor (2026-Present), Associate (2020-2026), Assistant (2014-2020)

Authored/Co-Author 121 peer-reviewed manuscripts; 1 co-edited book; 4 book chapters; >200 abstracts/proceedings/reports. Completed 17 graduate students (5 Ph.D.; 12 M.S.). Taught *Poisonous Plants and Plant Toxins*, *Nutritional Ecology and Management of Rangeland Herbivores*, *Applied Fire Ecology*, and various investigation, problems, internship, undergraduate research, thesis, and dissertation courses in the Department of Ecosystem Science & Management. Career extramural funding ~\$32 M.

Director of Laramie Research & Extension Center (2024-Present), Associate (2023)

Oversight of farm, ranch, and feedlot operations for ~10,000 acre Agricultural Experiment Station facility with horses, cattle, sheep, pigs, hay, greenhouse, rodeo, and management of facilities, equipment, and events. Supervise 8 full-time employees and ~15 part-time employees. Support ~25 faculty and ~20 student researchers and ~15-20 undergraduate and graduate courses annually.

Manage annual budget, revenue, inventory, and investments valued at ~\$3.3 M and recent ~\$5 M feed mill upgrade.

State Extension Rangeland Management Specialist (2014-2024)

Provide support for UW Extension to all 23 Wyoming counties in rangeland management with a focus on grazing, disturbance, and multiple use. Conducted >450 programs/off-campus visits with >13,000 direct contacts and innovated with social media and blogs to disseminate information. Clientele included UW ANR and 4H Extension Educators; farmers and ranchers; local, county, state, and federal organizations; commodity groups; Indigenous groups; legislators (state and federal), and UW trustees.

2011 – 2014, Oklahoma State University – Stillwater, OK, USA;

Graduate Research Associate

Lead vegetation sampling at the patch-burn grazing experiment in the Grand River Grasslands (MO/IA) including species-level transects and vegetation structure across pastures. Support burning and cattle grazing coordination and data collection with Iowa State University staff and at the OSU Range Research Station west of Stillwater OK with OSU staff with minor cattle and range vegetation work at three other OSU research farms and one state WMA; Department of Natural Resource Ecology & Management.

2004 – 2011, Texas A&M University, Texas AgriLife Extension Service

County Extension Agent, Navarro County, Agriculture & Natural Resources (2007-2011);

County Extension Agent, Ward County, Agriculture & Natural Resources and 4-H Coordinator (2004-2007)

Conducted county-level educational programs through local planning committees in livestock production, range and pasture management, hay, crops, water conservation, waste management, community development, and youth development. Conducted TDA private pesticide applicator training for >60 producers and provided CEUs. Coordinated 4H and FFA livestock validation program and assisted families at county, regional, and state livestock shows. Coached 4H Range and Livestock Judging teams.

SERVICE & LEADERSHIP

- Editor-in-Chief: *Rangelands* journal (2026 – Present)
- Assistant Chair: University of Wyoming – Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (2025-Present)
- College Rep: University of Wyoming – Faculty Senate – Research Advisory Committee (2025-Present)
- Member: Society for Range Management – Program Accreditation Committee (2025-2027)
- Member: Society for Range Management – Strategic Visioning Task Force (2026)
- President: Wyoming Section – Society for Range Management (2021)
- Board Vice-Chair & Member: Snowy Range Academy (2021-2024) – Led ~\$1 Million expansion for K-8th public charter school
- Vice-Chair: Wyoming Prescribed Fire Council (2019-2020)
- Coordinator: Navarro County Youth Exposition 4-H and FFA Judging Contests (2008-2011)
- Secretary: Navarro County Exposition Center Board (2007-2011)
- Member: Holiday Classic Livestock Clinic – Lamb Committee (2007-2011)
- Advisor: Ward County Livestock Show Board (2004-2007)

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

- 2026: US Department of the Army – *Public Service Commendation Medal*
- 2022: Wyoming Stock Growers Association – *Outstanding Range Professional Award*
- 2020: University of Wyoming, College of Agriculture, *Early Career Research Award*
- 2019: Society for Range Management, *Outstanding Young Range Professional Award*
- 2018: University of Wyoming, College of Agriculture, *Lawrence Meeboer Agricultural Teaching Award*
- 2016: University of Wyoming, College of Agriculture, *Outstanding Advisor Award Recipient*
- 2016: University of Wyoming, Center for Global Studies, *Faculty International Research Fellow*
- 2011: Navarro County Youth Exposition, *Distinguished Service Award*
- 2011: National Association for County Agriculture Agents, *Search for Excellence in Livestock Production, Texas State Winner, Southern Regional Winner, Top Three National Finalist*
- 2009: Texas AgriLife Extension Service, *Superior Service Award Volunteerism*
- 2009: Texas County Agriculture Agents Association, *Early Career Agent Achievement Award*
- 2008: Texas Section Society for Range Management, *County Level Award – County Extension Agent*

EXTRAMURAL FUNDING SOURCES

Arch Coal; Big Horn Cattleman's Association; Bureau of Indian Affairs; Bureau of Land Management; Firestone Corporation; Foundation for Food and Ag Research; Guardians of the Range; Joint Fire Science Program; National Science Foundation; MILJØFORSK-Research Council of Norway; National Sheep Industry Improvement Center; Navarro County Community Foundation; Noble Research Institute; Padlock Ranch; Northern Plains Climate Hub; Pactiv Corporation; SR Cattle Company; Tarrant Regional Water District; Trinity River Authority; Turner Institute of Ecoagriculture Inc.; United States Forest Service; University of Wyoming (multiple programs); USDA-ARS; USDA-NIFA; USDA-NRCS; Western SARE; Wyoming Animal Damage Management Board; Wyoming Department of Agriculture; Wyoming Game & Fish Department

EXPERT REVIEWER SERVICE

American Sheep Industry Association, NE B.C. Fire Council (Canada); Bureau of Land Management; City of Laramie; Czech Science Foundation; Joint Fire Science Program; Noble Research Institute; Northern Plains Climate Hub; The Nature Conservancy; University of Denver; University of Nebraska – Lincoln; University of Nevada – Reno; University of Pittsburgh; University of Saskatchewan; University of Wyoming; USDA AgInnovation West; USDA Forest Service; USDA NIFA; Wyoming Department of Agriculture; Wyoming House District 44; Wyoming Stock Growers Association

TENURE AND PROMOTION REVIEWER SERVICE

New Mexico State University; Oklahoma State University; University of Arizona; University of California – Davis; University of Idaho; University of Wyoming; Utah State University; USDA-ARS

PUBLICATION AND MASS MEDIA OUTLETS (select highlights featuring interviews)

Ag Proud; Art of Range podcast; Barnyards and Backyards; Beef Magazine; Beef Watch podcast; Bloomberg Environment; Canadian Cattleman Magazine; Cow Country Magazine; Drovers; EquiNews; Feedlot Magazine; From the Cowboy State podcast; Hay and Forage Grower; High Plains/Midwest Ag Journal; Nature; Popular Science; The Fence Post; The Progressive Farmer; The Horse; RFD-TV; Tri-State Livestock News; Western Confluence; Western Farmer-Stockman; Western Livestock Journal; Wyoming Livestock Roundup; WyoFile; Wyoming Public Media; YouTube