

Ecological Collaborations Bring Out the Best in Land Use and Stakeholders



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An Opportunity

- ▶ Conservationists, government agencies, and landowners often have different ideas about the best uses for land and natural resources.
- ▶ When stakeholders build partnerships that achieve common goals and meet their individual needs, it is something to celebrate.
- ▶ A special conference session was organized to increase awareness of successful partnerships in land management and to encourage future collaborations.



A Celebration



- ▶ The special session involved a full day of presentations at the 2011 Society for Range Management Annual Meeting, Billings, Montana.
- ▶ Twenty oral presentations were given representing the collaborative efforts of researchers, field managers, forest supervisors, rangeland management specialist, range conservationists, landowners, ranchers and permittees.

- ▶ Presenters addressed the primary problem (concern)
- ▶ Discussed the collaborative process that brought the partners together
- ▶ Highlighted accomplishments to date



The Collaborators

Agencies include:

United States Geological Service (USGS)

Agricultural Research Service (ARS)

United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

United States Forest Service (USFS)

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

USFS Rocky Mountain Research Station

Bureau of Land Management (BLM)



Main Message

Collectively, these stories demonstrate that successful rangeland management has no specific recipe, but has many common elements including technical expertise, commitment, trust and probably most important a desire to make it work.



Successes can be found on private land, federal land and mixed ownership.





- ▶ Throughout the West, demonstration projects reach out to local communities promoting the adoption of ecologically-based invasive grass management.
- ▶ In Colorado, a countywide collaboration promotes long-term landscape management among livestock owners and private landowners, and federal, state, and local natural resource management agencies and organizations. This effort has lasted 17 years.

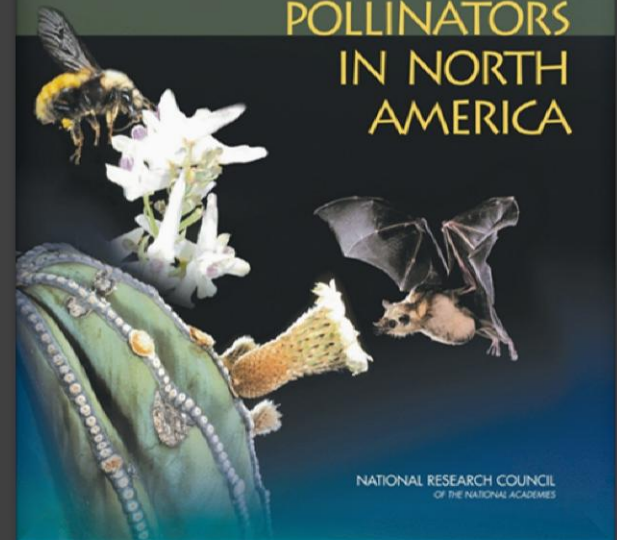
- ▶ The Mojave Desert Initiative provides regional guidance for fire personnel, attempting to minimize further loss of habitat, restore key areas, and develop strategies to adapt to changing conditions.
- ▶ One large scale multi-partner program seeks to restore rangelands and native plants to the Idaho Great Basin.
- ▶ Another program changed land health assessments in Montana from a grazing permit allotment system to one that views all partner-based lands as components of an entire watershed.



- ▶ A Wyoming project has reintroduced native fish species to a watershed and removed nonnative invasive species.
- ▶ Another program has focused on protecting pollinators and pollinator habitat, in order to maintain the capacity and integrity of partner-based rangelands.



STATUS OF
POLLINATORS
IN NORTH
AMERICA



NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL
OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMIES

The Hope

These successful projects and collaborations can pave the way for new programs that make a difference on America's rangelands.



General Themes

- ▶ Partnerships take work but are, more often than not, worth it and are critical in setting the stage for future successes.
- ▶ Broader success in on-the-ground efforts is often more effectively and efficiently achieved by partners, than can be done by a single agency alone.



- ▶ The more complex the issue, the more value gained by reaching out to a broader array of diverse partners.
- ▶ Common goals are not always apparent at the beginning, but do begin to develop as partners shape the road to success.
- ▶ Success is often sweeter when shared.



Feedback from the audience suggested that this information should be captured in a written format for further distribution

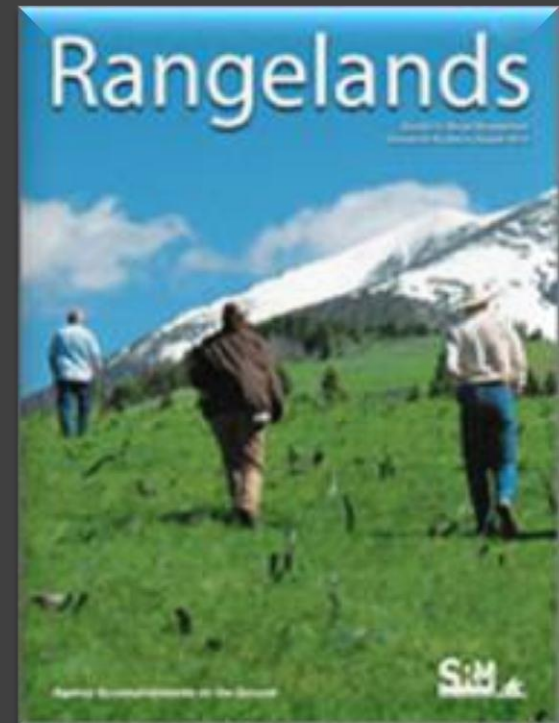
- ▶ A sponsored issue of *Rangelands* was created and 10 authors further developed their presentations for publication



Rangelands

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- ▶ “Agency Accomplishments – Making a Difference on the Ground”
- ▶ Features these ecoregional collaborative projects that demonstrate a variety of paths to success.
- ▶ available at www.srmjournals.org/toc/rala/34/4



In the face of adversity, partnerships
can and do prevail



“It eventually becomes obvious that if we don't work together it's not going to work “



Lessons Shared

- ▶ **Values** – Important values and goals must be shared across the partnership.
- ▶ **Quality** – The quality of the partnership is greater than the quantity. Organizations from private, local, state, regional, or national levels can help to cover all of the bases.
- ▶ **Strength** – Identify those groups that can strengthen your position, and they just might be able to push your project past the finish line.
- ▶ **Weakness** – Knowing your weaknesses helps to identify those organizations that can strengthen the project. This takes being honest with yourself and your organization.
- ▶ **Flexibility** – The larger the project, the more willing you need to be to expand your partnership. Embracing new partners shows a determination to get the project completed. Flexibility can also mean compromising lesser values for the better of the mission or partnership.
- ▶ **Trust** – Strong partnerships can transcend projects, and metamorphose into other opportunities. Trusting in your partner is, arguably, the most important quality.