

RANGELAND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MINUTES
Wednesday October 9, 2024
9:00 AM-12:00 PM

PRESENT

Members:

Chair Diane Ahlgren
Member Leah Lewis
Member, John Hollenback
Member, Ron Devlin
Advisory Member, Reyer Rens

Staff:

Stacey Barta, DNRC State Rangeland Resources Program Coordinator
Shantell Frame-Martin, DNRC Rangeland Resource Program Specialist

Public:

Carol Hollenback, Rancher
Bob Lee, National GLCI (joined for the last 20 minutes of the meeting)

Call to Order

Chair Diane Ahlgren called the meeting to order at 9:07 am. Everyone in attendance introduced themselves.

Diane asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes from 7/31/2024. Ron made the motion and John seconded. No discussion, motion passed

New Business

Stacey provided an outline of the EPA Pollution Reduction Grant through DNRC. DEQ, MDA & DNRC received a \$50 million grant that has seven different components. DEQ broke off and did a \$50 million grant on their own. DNRC had 3 weeks to complete all of the necessary paperwork and submit. MDA was awarded \$10 million for a Ranchlands Stewardship Program (Measure 6) and they will hire for the position. The focus of Measure 6 is to focus on regenerative grazing to capture carbon. The group discussed how best to move forward and what their involvement as a committee may be. Stacey suggested a few ideas including hiring people to monitor and buying virtual fencing items that could be rented out to landowners. The committee agreed that besides helping with the path forward, the RRC plans and illustrate their track record of successes and knowledge.

Coordinator's Corner:

Stacey provided an update on events she attended and projects she's been working on which include BLM subaward for RSA & ACES. This agreement had salary written into it for Stacey's time so that she is reimbursed for the work on this. She also shared a Good Neighbor Agreement that is possibly in the works that would use BLM funds for identified projects to be completed by MT Conservation Corps—the

RRP would be a pass-through for the Restoration Landscapes Program. Stacey provided an update on 406 Grazing Academy which will be held in Havre at the Northern Ag. Research Station June 3-5, 2025. There will be a 406 Level 2 held in Lewistown August 18-20, 2025 and the grant funds received from Western SARE will be used to fund both events; with this addition of funds, the cost will go down for attendees. Stacey also mentioned that there has been interest from Redmon salt, AgWest, and Agoro Carbon to help sponsor the 406. Stacey attended the ESAP tour on the Goggins Ranch outside of Ennis, WSE Expanding Markets Conference in Billings, and she shared that MRT will be June 18, 2025 in Winnifred/Hilger.

Stacey provided a brief outline of the WLIP regarding how the summer went with the interns. Overall it was good however there were a few hiccups but nothing major. Next year, there will only be 2 interns as that's what the budget will allow. She also mentioned that her and Rachel Frost are working collaboratively on a 3-day boot camp that would be incorporated into the current mandatory safety training to teach interns basic ranch skills and duties.

Shantell provided a brief update that included website progress, and other tasks she's been working on including logistics for the events next summer.

Budget:

Stacey presented the committee with a comprehensive budget that provided an overview of funds spent and funds available. The committee really liked the new budget layout and recommended that the format be used moving forward for updates.

Bylaws/Terms:

John stated that he would like to step aside and Stacey asked if John would like to remain on the committee as advisory and participate if/when he was able. He was agreeable to this, so when his term is over the end of December he will remain included on all RRC communications. If anyone wants to "re-up" they will need to reapply with the governor's office and that office will handle the nomination/appointment process to fill vacancies on the RRC.

Montana Happenings:

Committee members Ron, John, Leah, and Diane provided brief updates including reporting on precipitation/drought, hay crop and calf prices in their areas. Leah, Diane and John reported on various committees and groups they serve on and what they've been up to in those organizations.

Reyer- BLM; working to fill range vacancies across the state. Budgets are tight when it comes to operational dollars, and they're working on standardization for monitoring.

Rachel- MSU: (update provided via email, Stacey presented) Enrollment in the Dept of Animal & Range Science 19 in the program, 36 in wildlife, department total is 437. MSU's fall enrollment in 2024 was 17,000, freshman enrollment is down 9% and College of Ag is down 3%. Out of state students account for 60% of enrollment and 60% of College of Ag are female. Students from CA & CO makeup the majority of out-of-state enrollment. Stacey mentioned that she's on the Animal & Range

committee and that they're actively working on recruitment for the College of Ag. with videos and other outreach to increase enrollment.

Bob Lee from National GLCI joined the meeting for the last 20 minutes and thanked the RRC for their commitment to rangelands and invited everyone to GCLI's National Convention that occurs every 3 years. Bob outlined the convention this year in Tuscon, AZ December 4-6, 2024.

Diane thanked everyone for attending the tour the Petroleum County Community Center, their place, and Cat Creek that took place on Tuesday 10/8. The RRC enjoyed the tour and dinner at the Ahlgren's.

Public Comment- no public comment.

ADJOURN

Diane asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting, Ron motioned, Leah and John seconded. Motion carried; the meeting was adjourned at 12:06 p.m.