

Annual Report

It's been a productive year for the Idaho Rangeland Resource Commission. We've been continuing to expand our outreach in the education arena, providing outreach to schools, FFA and more, and in the public arena with our quarterly meetings, media outreach and Life on the Range video series.

In September, the IRRC board participated in a strategic planning session with many of our partner organizations. The goal was for everyone to walk away from that meeting with an understanding of how their organization could help IRRC fulfill its mission. The Rangeland Commission has been operating with the same budget for the last 20 years, so leveraging partnerships with our partner organizations is crucial to our future.

Nancy Melville, a retired school superintendent and current volunteer coordinator for University of Idaho 4-H, was our facilitator and kept us on track. In short order, we developed a new vision and mission statement for IRRC.

New vision statement:

"Partners in promoting sustainable rangelands because we all care."

New mission statement:

"Foster understanding by creating collaborative partnerships to sustain healthy rangelands."

As for specific goals, we looked at continuing our support of rangeland workshops and rangeland monitoring, youth education programs, public outreach programs, research on rangeland management, and looking for ways to increase our funding through grants and the IRRC license plate.

One of our ideas is to launch a Rangeland Ambassador program to help spread the word about our education programs and the Life on the Range series throughout Idaho. The idea is to train willing volunteers to help spread the word in their communities and integrate our education programs into local schools, etc. If you are interested in being a Rangeland Ambassador, please contact Gretchen Hyde at ghyde@idrange.org.

Inside our annual report, you'll find more details about our outreach efforts.

We wish you a wonderful holiday season and all of the best in 2017.



Educating the Next Generation about Rangeland



Gretchen Hyde
Executive Director
ghyde@idrange.org



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[facebook.com/Life-on-the-Range](https://www.facebook.com/Life-on-the-Range)

The IRRC leads the nation in developing and delivering rangeland education materials to youth audiences both in the classroom and on the range. This long-term strategy pays off by building a basic understanding of the ecology and management of both public and private rangeland. The IRRC is constantly striving to find new opportunities to transfer knowledge to the next generation of voters in innovative and effective ways. The following are just a few examples.

On an unseasonably warm and dry day in November, the IRRC and University of Idaho hosted the Western National Rangeland FFA Career Development Event at the Rock Creek Ranch near Hailey. This event is the culmination of rangeland high school curriculum, teacher workshops, state rangeland CDE's, and online materials developed by the University of Idaho and the IRRC. Nevada, Wyoming, Utah and Idaho send up to five of their top qualifying teams to this event every year. The event rotates through each of these four states. The top five team results of the 2016 event are as follows: 1st Place-Wells, Nevada; 2nd Place-Gooding, Idaho; 3rd Place-Ruby Mountain, Nevada; 4th Place-Bliss, Idaho; and 5th Place-Carbon, Utah. Congratulations to all the teams who participated!

The 4-H Rangeland Skill-a-thon had a successful second year in June. This event is a competitive qualifying event for the national Wildlife Habitat Education Program. The Idaho Rangeland Skill-a-thon creates an opportunity for youth participants in any type of 4-H program who want to learn about rangeland ecology and management, wildlife habitat, plant identification, and wildfire. The students are given a wildlife species "problem" to solve. They make a 3-D diorama, prepare a presentation, and are primed with knowledge about rangeland for the competition. From ages 8-18, these students became familiar with this year's wildlife species—wolves. Hosted at a ranch in Cascade, rancher Phil Davis shared stories of how his family is dealing with wolves every year. Many of the kids had no idea of the conflicts between cattle and wolves before this event. They all left with a new and intimate understanding of the complexities of predator and prey interactions.

Bringing rangeland education into the classroom is also a high priority to IRRC. This past year, Jackie Ingram, rancher and retired science teacher from Challis, delivered rangeland education activities to students throughout southeast Idaho. In 2017, IRRC will expand this to southwest Idaho. Integrating lessons into the required state curriculum takes a lot of effort. Having a skilled educator like Jackie help teachers with this essential step ensures the kids will have a healthy appreciation for millions of acres of rangeland that surround their communities. Also available are field trip activities, outdoor school lessons and on-line videos and lessons at idrange.org and lifeontherange.org. Contact IRRC if you would like to bring rangeland education to your school.



Life on the Range Series Educates Idahoans About Ranchers' Good Deeds on the Range

Seven years ago, we launched the "Life on the Range" multimedia series for the Idaho Rangeland Resource Commission as an alternative to traditional advertising platforms such as radio, television and print. I think it's fair to say that the series has been a big hit!

Our videos get many views on YouTube, Facebook and other social media channels. Our most popular story, a 25-minute documentary about what it takes to raise sheep from baby lambs to the final product, has received more than 250,000 views on YouTube. The award-winning Life on the Range brand has become a trusted source of information about natural resource management on private and public rangelands.

In the last year, we've covered six in-depth stories, including topics such as:

- Using targeted cattle grazing to create fire breaks along dirt roads in the Owyhee Front with Daniel and Bree Richards.
- A \$3 million conservation success story on Pole Creek near the Salmon River headwaters with Mike and Mark Henslee of the Salmon Falls Ranch, and 10 state and federal agencies.
- The impact of gray wolves on the OX Ranch near Hells Canyon, the Davis Ranch near Cascade and the Soulen sheep operation in the Payette National Forest.
- The Envirothon natural resources competition in Challis, an extracurricular activity involving 80 high school students from throughout the state of Idaho.
- Ranchers creating wetlands and wet meadows in Owyhee County to benefit water supply for cattle, sage grouse habitat and wetlands habitat for spotted frogs and a multiplicity of wildlife species.

- The Davis family raising Japanese Akaushi cattle on their extensive irrigated pasture system near Cascade to raise scrumptious high-quality beef for the discerning consumer.

In 2010, Gretchen Hyde, executive director of the Rangeland Commission, worked with Boise multimedia PR specialist Steve Stuebner, to create the Life on the Range series, oversee the creation of a custom web site (lifeontherange.org), create social media channels, and develop cutting-edge story ideas. Our story ideas have come to fruition through collaboration with the BLM, Forest Service, NRCS, Idaho Farm Bureau, soil and water conservation districts, University of Idaho Extension Service, University of Idaho economists, University of Idaho professors, Idaho Cattle Association, Idaho Wool Growers Association, The Nature Conservancy and scores of cattle and sheep ranchers in Idaho.

The general themes for our stories come from the mission articulated on the front page of the web site:

"Life on the Range is an educational project that showcases stories about the ever-changing landscape of ranching, multiple-use management, entrepreneurial spirit, family and stewardship on Idaho's rangelands. The heart-warming stories provide a rare glimpse of how our neighbors in rural Idaho work every day to improve the earth and touch people's lives in positive ways."

We all know that many ranchers are shy and private people who often are too busy running the ranch to toot their own horn. The Life on the Range film crew tries to make it easy for them to tell their stories by visiting the ranches throughout the state and

producing videos and written stories about positive projects that improve the land, enhance water quality and riparian vegetation, the plight of threatened or endangered species, and more.

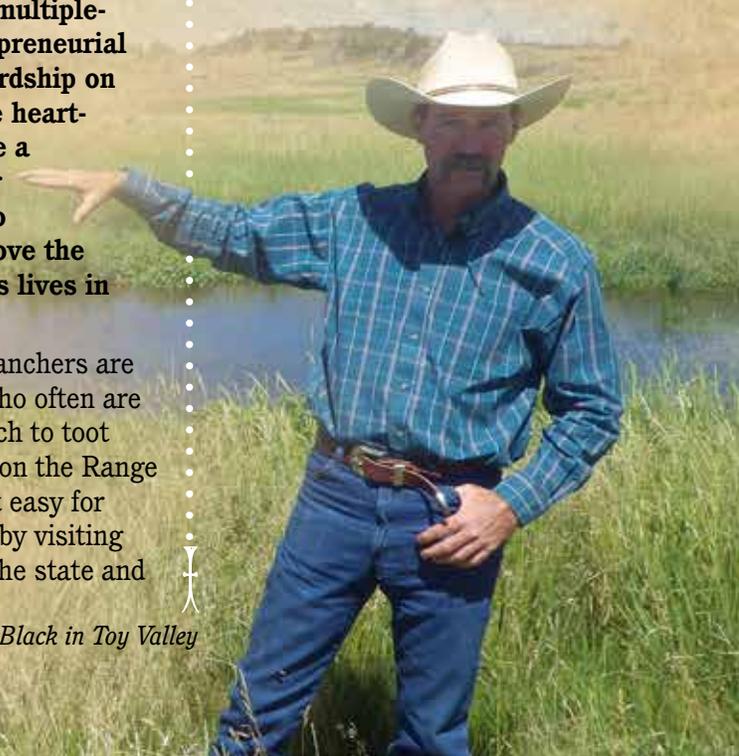
Life on the Range stories are longer and more in-depth than a typical YouTube video one might see on Facebook. That's why our stories have educational value in Idaho's classrooms and for urban and rural dwellers. They go into detail so the viewers/readers can learn about projects that they likely have never heard about before in hopes these proactive practices can be duplicated or enhanced in the future.

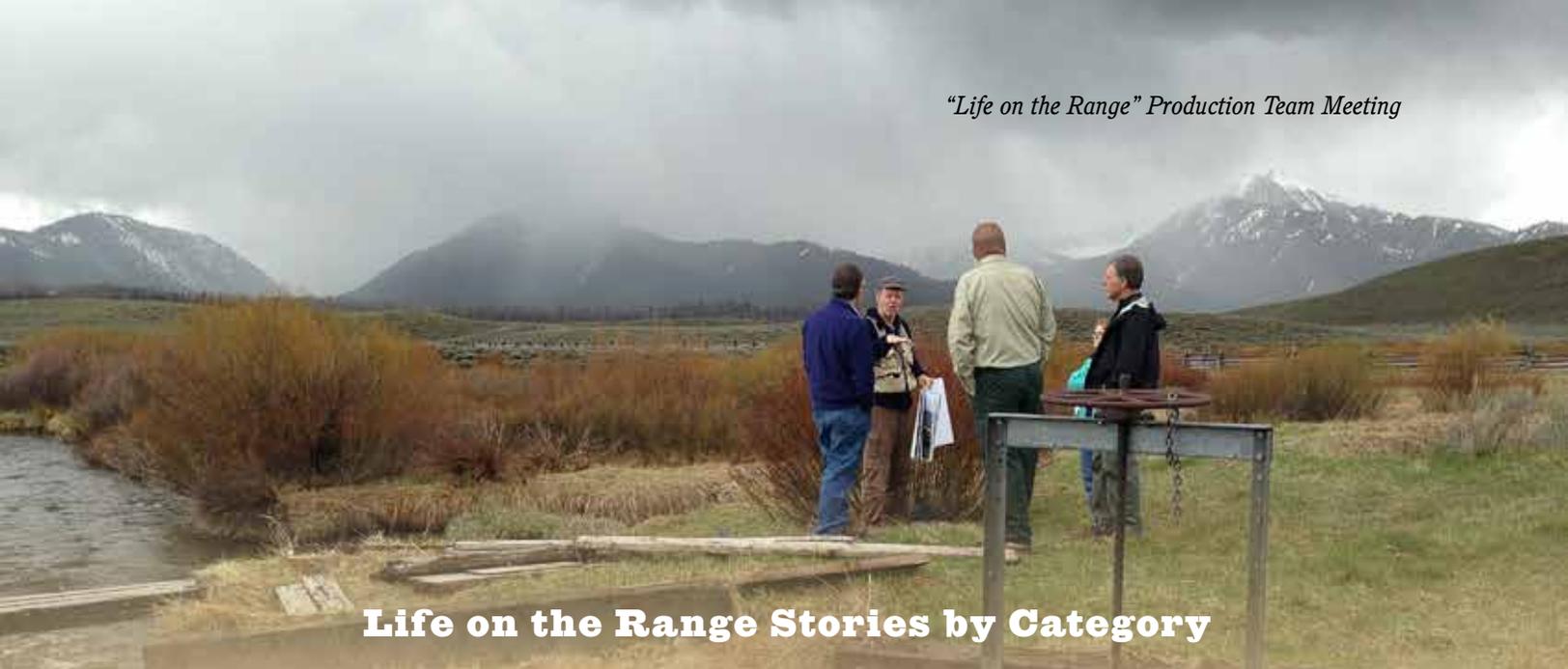
We are always looking for more Life on the Range story ideas. Please let Gretchen or Steve know if you have a story idea, and we will follow up with you to bring that story to life. Gretchen can be reached at gghyde@idrange.org and Steve at [sstuebner@cableone.net](mailto:ssstuebner@cableone.net)

And please spread the word about Life on the Range! See us on the web at lifeontherange.org, Life on the Range on YouTube or Life on the Range on Facebook. Thank you!

Steve Stuebner

Chris Black in Toy Valley





Life on the Range Stories by Category

Cattle

- Joseph Black & Sons** – *Holistic management on private and public lands*
- SS Cattle Company** – *Creating fish and wildlife habitat on private lands*
- Bar H Bar Guest Ranch** – *Urbanites learn about Ag on working ranch*
- Ranching in Bonner's Ferry** – *Ranching next to the Kootenai River*
- Mount Borah Ranch** – *Competing with frosty weather next to Idaho's tallest peak*

Sheep

- Lava Lake Ranch** – *Marketing lamb directly to restaurants and grocery stores*
- Noh Sheep Company** – *Ranching in the South Hills*
- Frank Shirts** – *A year in the life of raising sheep*
- Henry Etcheverry** – *Savvy Basque sheepman finds niche in competitive market*
- John and Diane Peavey** – *Founders of Trailing of the Sheep Festival*

Land Management

- Multiple use in the Boise Foothills** – *Ridge to Rivers cooperative land management*
- Eastern Idaho Grazing Association** – *Raising cattle and sheep on common range*
- Juniper Control** – *Reducing juniper to create space for cattle and sage grouse*
- Butch Klaveano** – *Cooperative land management in heavy recreation area on USFS land*
- Range monitoring** – *Photo monitoring to track cattle use of public and private rangelands*

Investing in Hells Canyon – *Optimizing range health for cattle and wildlife*

Spring Turnout – *Trailing cattle on U.S. 95 to reach spring pastures*

Range Monitoring Part 2 – *Joint BLM-ISDA initiative to expand photo monitoring on rangelands*

Grazing in Harriman State Park – *Evolution of cattle grazing at historic state park*

Education

- Borah High students learn about sage grouse** in the Owyhee Mountains
- Care & Share Program** – *Trailhead signage gives recreation tips on co-existing with livestock*
- Sheep in the Foothills** – *Annual spring education event for kids and adults in Boise*
- Idaho Envirothon** – *Natural resources competition prepares high school students for college and careers*

Conservation

- Upper Salmon Basin Watershed Program** – *Enhancing salmon and steelhead habitat on private ranchlands*
- Pahsimeroi Valley** – *Restoring streams to benefit salmon and steelhead*
- Jared Brackett: Ranching in a Fish Bowl** – *Improving sage grouse habitat on BLM rangelands on China Mountain*
- Tom Page** – *Adapting land management to benefit sage grouse via Sage Grouse Initiative*
- Lemhi Ranchers: Welcome home Chinook** – *Enhancing salmon and steelhead habitat on private lands*

Tyler family inks conservation easement – *Partnering with Lemhi Land Trust to enhance salmon and steelhead habitat*

Owyhee County ranchers create wetlands for wildlife (spotted frogs), livestock and water conservation

Pole Creek conservation success story – *Multiple agency partners work together with Henslee family to enhance salmon and steelhead habitat while providing enough water for irrigating cattle pastures.*

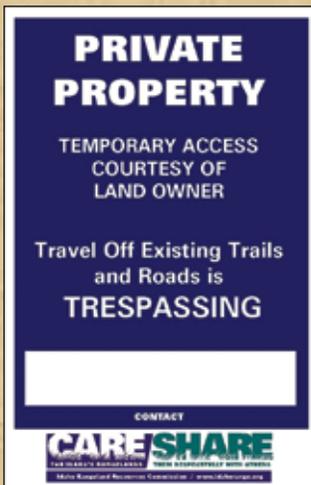
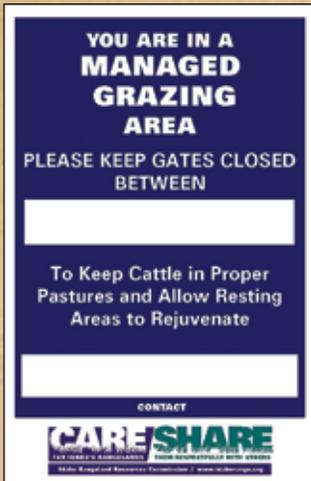
Noxious weed management

- Ray Holes – The Goat King** – *Using goats to combat noxious weeds*
- Idaho County Creative Weed Control** – *Targeting noxious weeds with strategic approach*

Rangeland Fire and Rehabilitation

- Mountain Home RFPA** – *Ranchers get trained by BLM to work together on range fires*
- Huge fires impact ranchers** – *Coping with large-scale fires*
- Restoring the land after the Pony and Elk wildfires** – *Focus on BLM and USFS rehab techniques*
- New fire prevention policy works to preserve sage grouse habitat** – *Large-scale initiatives in Idaho and the Great Basin*
- BLM Paradigm Project seeks to stop the fire cycle** – *Creating 356 miles of fire breaks to stop fire cycle between Boise and Glenns Ferry*
- Targeted grazing with cattle to create fire breaks** – *Using cattle to create fire breaks along dirt roads*

Care/Share signs provide helpful tips to recreationists about co-existing with livestock on public lands



With the assistance of the BLM and the U.S. Forest Service, the Idaho Rangeland Resource Commission has been creating illustrated trailhead signs for a number of public trailheads across Southern Idaho to provide tips for recreationists about what to do if they encounter sheep or cattle on public lands.

The BLM and Forest Service provide cost-share grant funds for the trailhead signs, and IRRC works with the agency officials, ranchers and recreationists to create a custom sign with local photographs that fit the local landscape with messages that also fit the local situation.

IRRC has created Care/Share signs for trailheads in highly trafficked recreation areas such as Owyhee Front (BLM), Boise Foothills (Ridge to Rivers), Galena Lodge (Sawtooth National Recreation Area), South Hills (BLM and Forest Service), and Caribou-Targhee National Forest (Forest Service). We have projects pending with the Palisades District of the Caribou-Targhee and the McCall District of the Payette National Forest.

The Care/Share signs provide much-needed guidance on what to do if mountain bikers encounter a band of sheep and guard dogs on the trail (dismount from the bike and walk through the sheep), and for motorbikes and ATV's that might encounter cattle on the trail (slow down and ride slowly through livestock, being careful not to spook or drive livestock). We also remind trail users that they are recreating in areas that are being managed for multiple-uses. We urge the general public to treat livestock with respect and refrain from shooting holes in water tanks, etc. For information about ordering signs for your ranch, please contact IRRC.

The bottom line is: If we all can show respect for other trail users and livestock, we can all share these lands and care for them for generations to come.

IdahoRangeLivestockSymposium

INTEGRATING THE NEEDS OF **ANIMALS, RANGELANDS, AND PEOPLE**

FREE TO ATTEND!

Coming to a location near you!

January 10, Salmon | Elks Lodge

January 11, Twin Falls | CSI Herrett Center

January 12, Marsing | American Legion Hall

University of Idaho
Extension

Program: 9 AM to 4:30 PM Registration, coffee, donuts, lunch & trade show

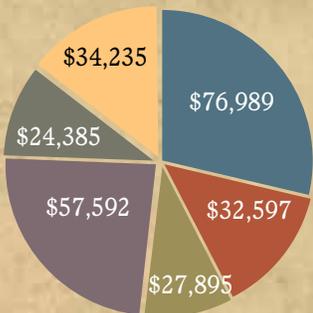
- Communication and mediation to resolve public land issues. Taylor Payne, Utah Dept of Ag.
- Market outlook. Dr. Hernan Tejeda, UI Extension Ag Economist.
- What the new veterinary feed directive means for cow/calf producers. Dr. Bill Barton, ISDA.
- Toxic range plants in the intermountain west. Dr. Jim Pfister, USDA Poisonous Plants Lab.
- Mineral supplementation of range livestock. Dr. Jim Sprinkle, UI Extension Beef Specialist.
- Shipping livestock. Idaho brand and health requirements. Dr. Bill Barton and Larry Hayhurst.
- Stock trailer transportation and BQA. Scott Jensen, UI Extension-Owyhee County.
- Semi trailer transportation and trailer inspections. Speaker TBD.



IRRC Revenue

The IRRC has been successful in developing partnerships and grants to help fund many of these programs. But without the support of the livestock producers, these programs would not exist. The assessment rates for state, federal and private land are the same as was set in 1997. The total assessment for 2016 was \$195,101 with requests for refund of less than 1%. The graph left, represents the past year's revenue for IRRC.

The expenses vary year-to-year, but are focused on the education, public relations and research opportunities that take priority every year. The board works hard to get the most out of every dollar received.



- BLM Assessment
- USFS Assessment
- State Lands Assessment
- Private Assessment
- Grants/Other
- License Plate

IRRC board and advisory members:

A volunteer board of five voting members, appointed by the Governor, governs the IRRC. They each serve a five-year term.

IRRC Board Members

- Chris Black, Chairman**
Joe Black & Sons
Bruneau, Idaho
- Royce Schwenkfelder**
SS Cattle Company
Cambridge, Idaho
- Ross Goddard**
Goddard Cattle Company
Tendoy, Idaho
- John Peavey**
Flat Top Sheep Company
Carey, Idaho
- Todd Holbrook**
Holbrook Ranches LLC
Bancroft, Idaho

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BLM Idaho State Director
- Virgil Moore**
Director, Idaho Department
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- Tom Schulz**
Director, Idaho Department
of Lands
- Curtis Elke**
Idaho State Director
Natural Resources
Conservation Service
- Celia Gould**
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Director, Governor's Office of
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Myra Black

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