

IDAHO RANGELAND

Resources  Commission

2020 Annual Report

Adapting to a Changing World

What a strange and weird year it has been with the Covid-19 pandemic and all of the reverberations it has caused! Our hearts go out to Idaho sheep and cattle producers who have had to cope every day 24/7 this year.

A big surprise for us this year has been the amazing onslaught of people – residents and out-of-staters – venturing outdoors for lack of anything better to do, and leaving an unbelievable wake of trash, simmering campfires, human waste, old furniture and god knows what else behind. I'm sure you've seen this around your ranch as well.

Years of education about Leave No Trace camping principles, Pack it in/Pack it out, Smokey the Bear, and Stay on Trails seems to have gone out the window. Increased reports of trespassing on private ranchlands are occurring as people leave the urban zone without doing any homework about where they're going and how to get there. Just rely on Google maps, and you'll be all set, right?

We laughed out loud at the photo pictured here taken in the Owyhee Front. But seriously, we feel for the landowner who sees oodles of tourists driving up his driveway looking for Jump Creek Falls. "I don't care what your phone says, This is not Jump Creek! This is my home!"

I have experienced people on side-by-side UTVs zipping up our driveway, thinking they're heading for BLM lands. But in reality, they are trespassing. When confronted with this reality, some of these people are not very nice; some are downright rude.

Education is IRRC's mission, and it's never been more important. In June, we put out a new Idaho Rangelands Recreation Brochure, sending it to Idaho DMV offices and sharing with Idaho public lands agencies. Overall,

we are seeing the recreation/access issue becoming a bigger problem in the space between urban/suburban areas and rural Idaho/BLM/USFS lands. The topic of recreation/access has become a primary area of focus for the Idaho Rangelands Conservation Partnership. And we are pondering a new series of Life on the Range stories on the challenges and quandaries related to recreation/access.

Part of the issue is knowing where they're going, understanding that rural/wildland areas have mixed ownerships, and public access is not guaranteed. Another issue is educating people about what to do if they encounter livestock on roads and trails. We've talked to ranchers who feel that our Care/Share campaign needs to expand beyond public lands trailheads to educating rural motorists and recreationists about yielding to livestock on country roads during cattle and sheep drives.

We are printing new Care/Share signs asking public

lands visitors to refrain from parking in front of livestock shipping corrals on private, state, BLM and Forest Service lands. Some of these corrals are used by equestrians or campers during the shipping (hunting) season. Please keep in mind that if they don't understand why these facilities (including water tanks, fences/gates, and corrals) are there, it's our job to explain it to them. Most recreational users want to do the right thing—let's help them understand and become a positive partner in promoting livestock and grazing on public land.

If you have issues in your area that need some proactive outreach and education, please contact me or any IRRC board member.

Gretchen Hyde, *Executive Director*



Education Update

Much like everyone's 2020 calendar, the IRRC youth education calendar is full of cancellations. In early March, the IRRC hosted an "IROAM Ambassador" training to kick off the inaugural year of the Idaho Rangeland Outdoor Adventure Mobile. Potential hosts from the University of Idaho Extension, Idaho Farm Bureau, Idaho Cattle Association, BLM, and soil conservation districts attended this one-day hands-on workshop to learn about the IROAM trailer and tents. The IRRC hired an education coordinator to take lead on coordinating with schools and educational community events to include the IROAM trailer/tent in their events. The calendar was full from early April through the end of June. Then the pandemic struck, and schools closed, and all events were canceled.

Rigby Agriculture Day



Over the past few years, the IRRC's online youth education resources have increased dramatically. These resources came in handy for many teachers all over Idaho. This year we co-hosted three virtual teacher workshops with Idaho Ag in the Classroom and Project Learning Tree (Idaho Forest Products Commission). The opportunity to showcase the Life on the Range videos, the online activities and lessons, and the IROAM virtual experience has enabled teachers to augment their classrooms (both in-person and virtual) with IRRC resources. One benefit of virtual workshops is to have teachers from as far north as Bonners Ferry and far south as Montpelier participate in the same workshop.

In September, Rigby High School FFA hosted an "Agriculture" day at the fairgrounds for over 500 4th graders. This event was incredible, and we were so

pleased to participate. The state FFA Rangeland CDE was hosted in-person in Blackfoot with several partners helping to make that event a success. The Western National Rangeland CDE was a virtual experience which increased participation because transportation was not a limitation. While virtual will never replace in-person education, it will potentially increase exposure for many of our events and learning resources.

Lowe's Farmstead (a fun corn-maze with many agricultural education stations) hosted the IROAM trailer during the month of October. It was a great place to include some rangeland education and showcase the new educational trailer. We appreciate the partnership with the Lowe family.

Watch the IRRC calendar of events for more items of interest coming up in the next year: <https://idrange.org/events/>



Lowe's Farmstead

IROAM Ambassador Training



LOTR crew spotlights Range, Water and Conservation stories

We had a busy year with the Life on the Range project. Just as the coronavirus was taking a grip on Idaho, we filmed interviews with Owyhee County ranchers about the growing targeted grazing program in the Owyhee Front (using appropriate social distancing, of course). The ranchers partnered with the BLM to create 400-foot-wide fire breaks at the foot of the Owyhees with targeted cattle grazing, “mowing” the vegetation to a 2-3 inch stubble height, by July 1.

“Creating Firebreaks with targeted grazing in the Owyhee Front” is the title of the 12-minute video on idrange.org. Four Owyhee ranchers we interviewed, Ted Blackstock, Tim and Jason Miller, and Daniel Richards, were recognized by the BLM with a National Stewardship Award this year. Congrats to all.

In late winter, we visited Emmett sheep rancher John Peterson’s ranch to film newborn lambs. We’re following his operation from lambing to shipping for a LOTR feature to be released in Spring 2021. John also is working with Steve and Gretchen to help educate hikers, bikers and dog-walkers about interacting with sheep and guard dogs at the Avimor development, north of Eagle.

In May, we rolled out a positive story about post-fire range-rehab with Mayfield rancher Jeff Lord in the Danskin Mountains. Lord has a good time poking fun at himself about the regrowth he expected and didn’t expect. See “Restoring Rangelands in the Danskins,” on LOTR.

Next, the LOTR crew shifted focus to two rancher-led conservation stories. We visited Preston rancher Jay Wilde’s amazing complex of beaver dams on Birch Creek. We will detail how Jay brought the beaver back with the

Birch Creek Beaver Dam



help of watershed scientists from Utah State University. Our story on Lemhi River fish-habitat work provides a major update on key conservation milestones achieved in the basin over the last 25 years. We detail how ranchers and agency officials work together to not only help salmon and steelhead, but also improve ranch assets, create jobs, keep working lands working, and enhance the community.

In Pocatello, we told a detective story about E.coli issues that arose in Mink Creek, a popular recreation

destination in the city’s backyard. Questions about the sources of elevated E.coli were solved with environmental DNA testing and support from the University of Idaho and the Caribou-Targhee NF. Our story explains how a water quality issue largely blamed on cattle, turned out to be mostly caused by humans. “See Mink Creek Water Quality – An E. coli mystery solved with DNA.”

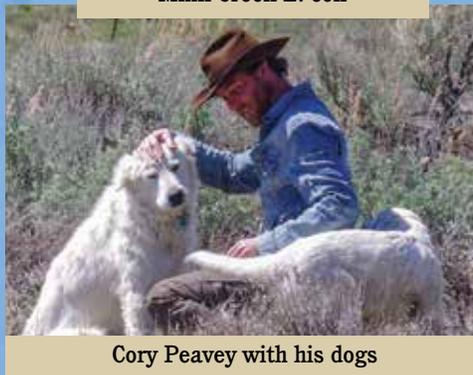
As we move into late fall, we’re developing a story with sheep rancher Cory Peavey on changes he’s making while training his livestock guardian dogs to keep close track of them during the grazing season. Another issue is newcomers taking guard dogs out of the woods, thinking they’re lost. We put out a press release about that

issue last summer, informing people that the guard dogs protect the sheep from being attacked by predators. Our video will help educate people about that issue.

Mink Creek E. coli



Cory Peavey with his dogs

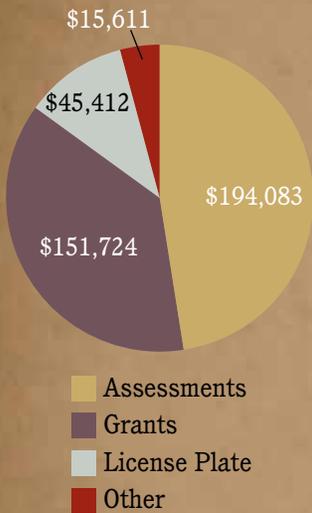


Steve Stuebner is the writer and producer of the Life on the Range education series, a public education project sponsored by IRRC.

IRRC Revenue



Total Funding \$406,830



Like us on Facebook!
facebook.com/Life-on-the-Range

The IRRC appreciates every dollar contributed by ranchers, landowners, and partners. The IRRC is audited annually and presents the financial statements to the germane legislative committees. Grants and assistance agreements augment the IRRC budget. IRRC supports the Life on the Range outreach program, underwrites with proactive messages about rangeland and ranching NPR in Boise and Pocatello and is active on social media. Local grant projects are funded by IRRC and are available for 2021 as well. The education, public relations, and research programs would not be possible without the support of the ranching community. The “On the Range” license plate is another source of funding which goes directly into the educational campaigns.

IRRC Board and Advisory Members:

A volunteer board of five voting members, appointed by the Governor, governs the IRRC.

IRRC Board Members

- Royce Schwenkfelder,**
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Cambridge, Idaho
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Grand View, Idaho
- John Peavey**
Carey, Idaho
- Ross Goddard**
Tendoy, Idaho
- Jerald Raymond**
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- Idaho Department of Lands Director*
- Idaho State Department of Agriculture Director*
- Office of Species Conservation Director*
- Natural Resource Conservation Service, Idaho State Conservationist*
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- US Forest Service Forest Supervisors*
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