

GLCI Steering Committee Meeting  
February 26th, 2012  
Washington, D.C.

Attendees: Howard Straub, Duane Hertzler, Martin Massengale, Aggie Helle, Dick McElhaney, Gene Fults, Kent Bushman, Dennis Thompson, Kevin Ogles, Jeff Goodwin, Chad Ellis, Chuck Stanley, Salvador Salinas, Kristie Maczko, Bob Hendershot, Jim Dobrowolski, Ed Burton, Carlos, Suarez, Keith Bartholomay, Larry Hensley, Pat Pfeil, Kim Stine, Mark Boggess, Jess Peterson, Mike DeArmond, Jeremy Peters, Ralph Giffen, and Monti Golla.

Bob Drake welcomed everyone, and thanked them for coming. The first item on the agenda is a discussion of the upcoming 5th National Conference on Grazing Lands.

***5NCGL Budget and Progress:***

Kim handed out the budget prepared by John Peterson for the 5NCGL. John was unable to attend due to a conflicting meeting in Las Vegas. Kim then went over registration costs and the budget.

Early conference registration is set at \$295 (prior to October 15th). Late conference registration is set at \$365. Spouse/Student registrations are set at \$125(early)/\$135(late). One day registrations are \$145(early)/\$165(late). Trade show registrations are: 1. Commercial \$650/\$735 and 2. Government/Non-profit \$450/\$525.

Kim also went over projected Food/Beverage incomes, Trade Show income, Sponsorship income (please see attached budget that was passed out at the meeting for additional details). Kim pointed out that total income projected for the 5NCGL is at \$247,170, whereas the preliminary budget income for the 4NCGL was \$312,000.

Expenses were also covered. Administrative expenses are budgeted \$80,000, but were \$91,000 in Reno for the 4NCGL. Marketing and Registration costs were covered, Food and Beverage costs, Trade Show expenses and Invited speaker expenses were covered including speaker expenses for Kit Pharo, Temple Grandin, Fred Provenza and Ball and Lacefield.

Kim noted a few alternatives that John suggested if the committee thinks we need to boost our bottom line on the budget.

1. Raise registration fees by \$40 - it would increase our bottom line by \$16,000.
2. Charge for the Tuesday noon luncheon (\$14,000 revenue increase)
3. Eliminate the Proceedings (could save close to \$30,000)
4. Raise the banquet fee to \$50 per person (\$5250 revenue increase)
5. Cut back on invited speakers to 10 (savings of \$20,000)

Pat Pfeil made a motion to keep the budget John Peterson has set without the alternative suggestions. Howard Straub seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the motion carried.

Monti then went over the Cvent system, which the GLCI has recently contracted with to handle the online registration process. Monti explained that Cvent will create an online registration website that will allow us to process credit cards. They are a total conference management system, and provide conference marketing tools, budgeting tools, and customizable reports. They will be a true content management system. Monti said she is working with them now and plans to have the online registration system up and running by June 1st.

***Strategic Plan Update:***

Howard and Pat introduced the committee to the newly revised GLCI Strategic Plan. Howard said we could use this on the Hill, but don't leave it. Use it to point out key talking points. Pat encouraged the committee to read it, especially to people new to GLCI, and explain what technical assistance is all about. Pat said that cropland producers can get all kinds of information from industry, but grazing lands owners cannot. This is why we need technical assistance. Both Pat and Howard said that they would like to see each State Conservationist's office receive a copy of the strategic plan with a letter from Bob Drake. In addition each State Grazing Specialist should receive a copy.

Howard made a motion that a copy of the GLCI's Strategic Plan should be placed in the 5NCGL conference bags. Dick McElhane seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the motion carried.

***Bureau of Land Management (BLM) - Bob Bolton***

Bob gave the committee a brief review of what the BLM has been working on lately. Grazing permits are still a hot button issue. Currently there is a 4900 permit backlog. Since 1999 Congress has give rider language to allows the BLM to extend permits a certain amount of time so that they can get through the permitting process. Currently that is extended until 2013. BLM actually received a bump in funding of 16 million for rangelands. The budget was also increased a couple of million for the Sage Grouse initiative. They are hoping they can keep the bird from being listed on the Endangered Species List. If the bird is listed it will require an extra step in section 7 consultation. Bob also discussed Landscape Monitoring, which is the collection of resource data on a landscape basis. He touched on the wild horse and burro issue. Strategies they are implementing currently involve population suppression (ie birth control), public/private sanctuary, adoptions, and a comprehensive animal welfare program. They have been hit with a lot of propaganda from the social media outlets on this.

### ***Agriculture Research Service - Dr. Mark Boggess***

Dr. Ev Byington has retired, but his position is being held open for now. Dr. Boggess suggested that the committee visit their website for more information on some of their National Program reports, such as the Food Animal Production annual report: <http://www.ars.usda.gov/SP2UserFiles/Program/101/AnnualReports/NP%20101%20Annual%20Report%202011%20Final.pdf> and the Rangeland, Pasture, and Forages Action Plan 2007-2012 at [http://www.ars.usda.gov/SP2UserFiles/Program/205/215ActionPlan\\_Jan07.pdf](http://www.ars.usda.gov/SP2UserFiles/Program/205/215ActionPlan_Jan07.pdf)

ARS lost four locations recently, one of which included Beaver, West Virginia, and Boonville, Arkansas is on the chopping block for this fiscal year. They have also been dealing with a great deal of legal pressure and had an excess of 1 Million dollars in legal fees.

### ***National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) - Dr. Jim Dobrowolski***

Jim said that he currently has several roles at NIFA. He spend time on the National Water Team, the Fisheries and Wildlife team and is also the National Rangeland & Forage Leader. He said that China is gaining on the US in terms of investing in agriculture. He hopes that Ag research will become more important.

He said that NIFA is still looking for a new Director.

### ***Sustainable Rangelands Roundtable - Dr. Kristie Maczko (synopsis courtesy of Kristie)***

SRR is continuing to work on many of the projects we've talked about at past meetings, but also adding a few newer ones into the mix.

**Sustainable Ranch Management Workshop** - They are holding a ranch sustainability assessment workshop at SWCS in July. This project focuses on ranch level monitoring with 17 indicators to feed into a business planning process. This assessment process was featured in the February issue of Rangelands. There's also a related pilot project going on at Rooter Brite's ranch; began with collecting indicator data and business planning...NRCS worked with Rooter to set up sample plots and data was collected last Fall. The Noble Foundation has been working with Rooter and Lynda on the business planning side of the project; one of the biggest changes there is going from hand written records to a computer based system on Lynda Brite's Mac with Quicken. There's potentially some energy development going on that may impact Rooter's ranch with large trucks traveling across his property...he suggested we expand the pilot project to collect additional data in those areas to help him assess impacts and restoration efforts. NRCS soil scientist was out on his place last month getting that set up.

**Energy Development and Rangelands** - Energy has been part of SRR's broader focus, and this month we heard that a paper we wrote on assessing impacts of energy

development on rangelands in the context of the other ecosystem goods and services that rangelands provide has been accepted for publication in the Journal of Rangeland Ecology and Management.

**National Climate Assessment** - We've also been working with the interagency team tasked with putting together the 2013 National Climate Assessment. This is a legislatively mandated report completed every 4 years or so. Rangelands does not have its own resource chapter, but rather looks like it will be lumped in with Agriculture and then regional chapters for the Western US. SRR has contributed a discussion paper that talks about impacts of climate change on rangelands by region and then summarizes some recommended management adjustments, using the conceptual framework, lots of boxes and arrows, to talk about the tradeoffs and interactions among social, ecological and economic aspects of rangeland systems. We also contributed the full text of the SRR criteria and indicators, with the data status summaries since there is a rumor that the next iteration of this report – not 2013 but the report after that – will be an indicator-based report. SRR is also involved with what they're calling NCAnet, a coalition of organizations involved in communicating information from and about the National Climate Assessment. There isn't much to share yet beyond some regional listening sessions that they've scheduled working with the Keystone Center, but we wanted to make sure rangelands and rangelands stakeholders were part of the discussion so we signed on to work with their network.

**Climate Change Journal Article** - Some other climate change related projects we're nearing completion on include submission of an article to the Journal of Climatic Change, similar to what we provided to the National Climate Assessment. We used the SRR conceptual framework to look at tradeoffs and transitions on rangelands that may be driven by changing climate, talked about the importance of indicators for tracking those shifts, and then outlined some regional management implications for the Southwest and the Northern Great Plains.

**General Climate Change Publication** - We also wanted to put together some information the projected regional changes in climate and some ideas about management responses for general audiences, something that wouldn't have the page limits of a journal article. To that end we have a draft of a more general publication dealing with climate change on rangelands that will be sent out for review as soon as our last author finishes up his final section. Gene and Chuck and Chad have already provided comments to some of the authors for their various sections, and once it goes through a formal peer review that the University requires, we'll make changes and get it published, hopefully sometime this summer.

**Rangelands Contributions to Food Security** – As food security issues find their way into goals identified by the Department of Agriculture and many of the agencies we work with, SRR decided that it was important to ensure that people were aware of the contributions that rangelands make to food security in the US and around the world. The first part of that project was identifying food products produced on rangelands; and the working group decided to define the question in terms of data that can be obtained from the National Ag Statistic Service and refined. With NASS data available for cattle, sheep and potentially bison, the working group has developed an outline for a paper to quantify rangelands contributions to food security by incorporating this production agriculture information and then adding system stressors including fire, invasives, policy changes, and climate change. The end product should be a model that teases out the importance of rangelands contributions to food security in the context of other rangeland ecosystem goods and services.

**5NCGL** - We also plan on putting together a session for your grazing lands conference, probably dealing with ranch sustainability assessment, energy, climate change or food security, since we have teams working on these projects already. John Peterson and I have talked a little bit about it, but what we do is also budget-dependent, so we're waiting to see how 2012 turns out before we can make final decisions about how much travel we can support in terms of session speakers. At an absolute minimum, we'll have a tradeshow exhibit that talks about rangelands and food security.

**National Criteria and Indicators for Rangelands Sustainability** - The final version of the Monograph detailing the full set of 64 indicators and 5 criteria was published electronically in December 2011, jointly by the Sustainable Rangelands Roundtable, University of Wyoming and the Society for Range Management, at <http://www.sustainableangelands.org/pdf/SM56.pdf>.

#### ***GLCI Funding - Dennis Thompson***

NRCS took a hit in CTA funds to the tune of \$40 Million this year, which has led to a reduction in GLCI funding by about \$2 Million; however, the Chief still has GLCI in his initiative. GLCI is not in the President's budget.

GLCI maintained roughly 1029 staff that spend at least 50% of their time on grazing activities. We now have 68 grazing specialists in the Eastern US, where at one time there were only 2.

At the National level, we have lost 5 positions, including Tom Sommers, Leonard Jolley, Arnold Norman, and Jeff Repp. We are losing some of our senior staff and they probably won't be replaced anytime soon.

Dennis said that Dr. Ken Spathe is acting in Leonard Jolley's place at CEAP for the time being.

### ***Natural Resources Conservation Service - Tony Kramer, Deputy Chief for Programs***

Tony said that the Chief has set aside a certain amount of funding for grazing lands. Currently, \$23 million has been dedicated to State Conservationists for grazing and this is due to the Chief's initiatives.

Since 2009, \$1.5 Billion in EQUIP funds have gone to livestock resource issue. For FY 2011 \$12.8 Million has been obligated within EQUIP for grazing.

What's coming for the 2013 budget? Tony said that he is sure there will be cuts for NRCS in the President's budget. They are expecting about a 6% decrease.

### ***US Forest Service - Ralph Giffen***

Ralph said that Charlie Mason has been named the new director and will be in that position shortly. He also said that the Range budget has been increased 20% for this fiscal year. Ralph also talked about Ecological Site Descriptions and the continuing work between agencies on this initiative.

He said that they are updating their directives which haven't been updated since 1985. They are holding listening sessions soon to address this.

They are also involved in the Sage Grouse effort with the BLM. Roughly 10% of sage grouse inhabit Forest Service lands.

They are hoping to help support the 5NCGL with \$5000. It is a collaborative effort that is worthwhile.

### ***Regional GLCI Specialists Reports***

Gene Fults gave the West Region report. He said that Jeff Repp retired in October and the Director intends to fill the position. The West region has recently held a successful workshop for sheep and goat producers, produced a webinar to instruct rancher how to use Google Earth to map their Ranch, continued development and preparation for publication of the "Guide to Monitoring and Assessment of Rangelands", and held seven demonstration projects in Montana.

Kevin Ogles gave the East Region report. Alabama Forage and Grasslands Council, as part of the GLCI activities, hosted a biannual, state wide forage conference. The Florida GLCI and the Florida Section of the SRM presented Deep Roots Meat, LLC with the third annual Grazing Lands Stewardship award. In Georgia, the GA GLCI completed a two year program to assist Georgia livestock producers with efforts designed to improve farm sustainability. Kentucky hosted 2 multi-day grazing schools each year, and Maryland GLCI co-sponsored a series of Hay and Pasture Conferences.

Chuck Stanley gave the East Region report. Some of the highlights are: Arkansas GLCI continues to work with County Conservation Districts, NRCS and Extension agents to conduct field days, Nebraska GLCI developed the Rangeland Monitoring

program to provide on site assistance for landowners who are ready to implement a pasture monitoring system, but need help getting started. Texas GLCI developed a video targeting local county officials; "prescribed Fire: A Historical Tool with New Opportunities." Illinois GLCI supported the 11th annual Heart of America Grazing Conference in Southern Illinois as well as other workshops and meetings.

### ***State Conservationists Reports***

Salvador Salinas said that NRCS at the State level has fared pretty well considering the budget climate, although they still saw some decrease in funding. Texas has a good number of grazing specialists....eleven. He would like to see two or three more added. Sal said that there has been a tremendous turnover in landownership in Texas and this is resulting in a higher need for technical assistance, since many of these new landowner have no idea what conservation is or how to implement it.

Carlos Suarez said that the FL GLCI has a very good relationship with the FL NRCS. They are also seeing smaller acreage ranches, and a lot of non-typical producers. Florida also leads the nation in wetland reserve program (WRP) easements. WRP allows for limited grazing on wetlands. They are working with Florida Fish and Wildlife Department to help with this multi-use agreement.

Ed Burton said that he has been with the GLCI from the beginning and has been privileged to be a part of GLCI. He also stated that the leveraged power of GLCI is tremendous and has resulted in a 200-300% increase in technical assistance. He regards the NCGL's are a wonderful training event for grazing lands personnel.

### **Partnership Reports**

Aggie Helle reported for the American Sheep Industry. She said they just held their annual convention in Scottsdale, AZ. They had a total of 42 states represented. National Ag Statistics report a 2 % decline in sheep numbers, mainly due to the drought in Texas this past summer. The American wool sock industry is introducing a new washed and preshrunk wool that is produced here in the US that will be used in socks that should revolutionize the wool industry.

Keith Bartholomay and Pat Pfeil gave an overview of Society for Range Management (SRM). Neither was able to attend the convention, but the convention drew 1500 participants. Gary Fraiser is the incoming President, and Wally Butler is the incoming Vice President. The next convention will be February 2nd - 7th, 2013 in Oklahoma City, OK. GLCI is now a full committee within SRM. They were converted from a Task Force to a full committee at the last conference and Jeff Goodwin is the Chair. They serve three purposes: 1) provide two SRM reps to sit on the GLCI Steering Committee; 2) Review policy/position statements that SRM has regarding grazing; 3) hold a GLCI SRM grazing forum at each SR annual meeting.

NFU report Quoted from Larry Hensley: “Fiscally responsible farm policy, Whereas, farm support programs are in a place to guarantee the American consumer maintains access to clean affordable, abundant food, from a network o independent family farms. Any change contemplated in the overall farm program system must continue to protect the farm from predatory market/contracting tactics, as well as protect the consumer from the abusers of such a system. Therefore the next farm bill must include a farm safety net for producers that will provide meaningful assistance, especially in times of low agricultural commodity prices and or low production. The next farm bill should be considered and approved during the present session of congress and it should help protect farmers against deep losses due to weather related disasters as well as devastatingly low prices or high input costs. The farm bill programs should maintain the ability to effectively and efficiently help agriculture provide natural resource conservation and renewable energy benefits. NFU supports a conservation farm title in the next farm bill that includes: working lands programs provide critical financial and technical assistance to farmers to install and maintain conservation practices that sustain food, fiber and renewable energy production while enhancing soil, water wildlife habitat and related natural resources.

Land Retirement programs: multiple natural resources benefits are realized from enrollment of agricultural lands, particularly fragile lands. These benefits include reduced soil erosion, restoration of natural habitat for wildlife, and the removal of millions of tons of carbon dioxide from the air. Landowners can receive annual rental payments. NFU urges congress to maintain the ability to effectively and efficiently help agriculture provide natural resource conservation benefits.”

Howard Straub and Duane Hertzler reported for the Dairy Industry. Currently there are two pieces of legislation that the Dairy Industry is concerned with: 1) Dairy Security Act and the 2) Dairy Advancement Act. Prices are not so good for dairy right now. The prices fluctuate on a 3 year cycle: Two good years and one bad year. Duane said that dairy in the North East has been short primarily because of the Greek Yogurt craze. It has caused a shortage. Duane also reported that Jana Malot has now retired and Susan Perry has taken her place.

Dick McElhaney gave the American Farm Bureau Federation report. AFBF held its annual convention in Hawaii this year. They are currently in litigation with EPA over the Chesapeake Bay and TMDL’s in Pennsylvania.

Bob Hendershot gave the American Forage and Grasslands Council (AFGC) report. Bob said he is glad to be a part of the committee, and is replacing John Spain, who has taken an emeritus status. The next AFGC will take place in Cincinnati, OH, January 7th - 9th, 2013. Howard Straub is the current President.

Bob Drake reported for the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association (NCBA). Bob said that over 8200 people attended the NCBA convention. He also reported that the trade show has grown by 50% in recent years.

### ***Final thoughts on the 5NCGL***

It was suggested that in order to help increase government employees to attend that continuing education credits should be offered. It won't guarantee that they attend, but it would help.

Another idea was to have an article in the GLCI newsletter about travel to the conference and include carpooling groups/ideas.

Meeting Adjourned.

#### Action Items:

1. Kim will get out: a copy of the GLCI's Strategic Plan to each State Conservationist's office with a letter from Bob Drake; a copy to each State Grazing Specialist.
2. A copy of the GLCI's Strategic Plan will be placed in the 5NCGL conference bags.
3. Monti will contact Tina Bowling at AFGC to see about getting the 5NCGL placed on their calendar of events.
4. Monti needs to send an invite for the 5NCGL to the new Director of the Forest Service, Charlie Mason, when he comes on board.