



The Officers and Directors of the Texas Section convened a strategic planning session on July 20 at 8:33 am. Present were Bob **Knight** – President, Charles **Anderson** – 1st Vice President, Paul **Loeffler** – 2nd Vice President, Charles **Hart** – Past President, Hoyt **Seidensticker** – Director, Bill **Pinchak** – Director, Bruce **Healy** – Secretary, Ray **Schimceck** – Director, Tim **Reinke** – Director, Robert **Moen** – Treasurer. *Absent - Cody **Scott** – Director, Willy **Conrad** – Director.*

Jeff Grote, **Mason HS Counselor**, served as moderator. Mr. Grote updated the group with his biographical information. He will help us focus and provide direction and strategic planning. He is impressed with our organization.

A copy of several of the Society's publications was provided to the Officers and Directors for reference purposes.

Primal/Short Term Issues:

1. None brought forth.

Define Issues: *What do we want to look at and deal with?*

Cottonwood > Live Oak – old, stable; need to incorporate younger members. Longevity, stable

Pecan tree > Live Oak – big, hearty > always green & growing

Live Oak > - long lived, encompasses everything. We are like the live oak in trying to reach everyone, but not necessarily

Sycamore > Madrone - large group, spread across the state, aren't a very strong group as an organization, we tend to shed things too readily (lots of ideas that come up, but not followed through on). We want to be recognized, people to gravitate towards us, increase our visibility, unique, high impact, evergreen, valued by a cross section of society.

Mesquite > Live Oak - no matter how hard you try to control one, it keeps coming back... > more stately/prominent. Would like us to gain more recognition on statewide issues.

Annual Grass > Perennial – we are flush when there is moisture but not worth a lot in the long term.

We need to be more like a perennial grass, longer lived, able to take grass

Green Sprangletop > Eastern Gamagrass - comes on fast, but not much production > strong roots, high production.

Where does the state currently look to for rangeland issues? (not TSSRM)

What is our potential membership in the State? As we presently define ourselves (range professionals working on healthy rangelands), we may be at our potential, but we could have a very large number if we redefined our goals, objectives, vision. It could be anyone interested in the proper stewardship of land. We need to incorporate more groups (Nature Conservancy).

One of our strengths is our diverse membership – we are not just agency professionals.

How to we let in the small rancher/ranchito? What about the vendors?



Is one of our goals to increase membership? If we take care of some issues, growth will take care of itself.

Maybe the word “professional” scares off potential members.

Information transfer needs to improve to everyone. How to accomplish this?

- 80% of the people don't know what rangeland is.
- Rangeland is not sexy, or touchy/feely. (recognition)
 - What is the footprint that we leave on Texas landscapes?
 - How do we engage a broader cross-section of society in what we do?
 - How do we get our message out on the importance of rangeland to all of the diverse groups?
 - We are the foundation/underpinning of all the uses – thus
 - Ranchers don't view themselves as producing forage; they view themselves as producing livestock.
- Our members are involved and having impacts as individuals – but the section/society is not also receiving recognition.
- Are we a professional development group – or are we a public service group? We have evolved from the initial professional development group that we were founded on, and now we are now working on a new track. We have never talked about how to be the equivalent of Autobon Society (Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation) in public policy development.
- We take a science based approach, not opinion based.
- Texas is so big that we have a few statewide issues and a large number of local/regional issues.
- Do we have more impact representing the section or as individual?
- Our individual impact may be just as important as a position statement?

We want to grow/reach more people – this means more money.

Maybe we are reaching these groups, but they just don't have a membership card? Are we doing a good job of reaching them? We don't have a good tracking method (other than dues).

We are here, but they don't know us or who we are?

Membership in Professional Organizations –

- Our number 1 source is range/wildlife students - ~200 students annually. We have a terribly low retention rate in this category. ~25% go into traditional range positions, balance to consulting, etc.
 - We need to focus on this group for internal growth. We just need to better define what they need to stay as a member.
 - How many students are members? How do we retain them?
- Try to plan annual conference at college towns – and have them bring their students to the conference.
- How many times do we work with people and then not invite them to be a member?



- Do we have a part of the opening ceremonies to recognize new members?
- How do we allow youth to break through the glass ceiling and get involved? How do we better follow through on the invitation to get involved?
- Does your occupation promote the society/membership?

Who we are/what we are – I think that is in place. Our direction is somewhat taken by our membership in the Society. Strategic Plan – probably no more than 2-3 years as this group will change? What do we want to accomplish in the 2-3 years? If we go to a longer planning horizon, then we have an “institutional memory” to help guide future boards. Have a long term plan with a revisitation every 3 years. Need to update the new board members at the first meeting and ask them for input on the long range plan – they may have good ideas.

We need to write goals for the Texas Section.

We are not as “rancher friendly” as it may be perceived. If a rancher doesn’t have a good working knowledge of rangeland and attends our annual meeting, they would be lost – there is no “ranching 101” class option.

What are our strengths? How are we going to strengthen them?

- Quality membership (well educated, committed/focused to the resource)
- Science based – objectivity
- Longevity
- Feeling of being part of a community
- Youth Range Workshop
- Peer Society Recognition
- Largest SRM Section – larger student body
- Presence across Texas with membership
- Technical expertise
- Central Focus – community – camaraderie
- Academia/Research/Stewardship relationship
- Most Active Section
- Financially Solvent

What are our weaknesses? How are we going to improve?

- (some) committees not functioning
- Membership is more research/academia
- Getting the information out
- People not knowledgeable of what rangeland is.
- Lack of focus
 - We are focused on the resource and science, but not good on dissemination
- Involvement of Young Professionals
- Internal Communication
- Publicity/Marketing/Media Relations
- Lack of follow through



Structure may be fine, but accountability is poor.

What are our other issues? How are we going to strengthen them?

- Who really is our audience?
- Financial stability attainment?
- Who really is our membership?
- Why are we here?
- What do we get as a member?
- How do we involve more members at the section level?
- Do we need to reorganize committee structure (reevaluate)?
- Where do we want to be in 5 years?

Do we have a Legislative Action Committee? (Public Affairs)

Selected list identified from above:

Committee Structure and Function

Who is our audience?

Youth Range Workshop

Membership Retention (including Young Professional)

What we offer for membership

Follow through

Communication

Financial Stability

What are the top 3 issues which the Section needs to address?

1. **Membership & Communication**
 - a. **Relevance to membership**
2. **Membership - Who are we? Continue as a professional science based organization, but allow newsletter subscriptions, etc.**
 - a. **Who do we want to be?**
 - i. **People that educate Audubon, or battle from the outside?**
 - ii. **Technical Professional People we are**
 - iii. **Do we want more rancher, business members?**
 - b. **Repackage ourselves to be relevant to other groups that are emotionally involved in resource management, not science based management.**
3. **Committee Structure & Function & Accountability**

Deal With 'Em: (5, 10, 15 years)

1. **Break Out Sessions for the big 3 topics identified**



- **Committee Structure & Function**
 - i. Assign Board members to each of committee (2 per member) - How can the board help you better function?
 1. Schedule a meeting at annual meeting with all committee chairs/chair-elects to go over goals, etc.
 2. Reporting/accountability, committee timelines
 3. Each committee chair/chair-elect will have their committee together by December 1st. By January 1st, they need to provide their budget requests and committee goals - do you need help? January committee chair workshop (after BOD meeting).
 4. Develop a mechanism to replace non-functioning committee chairs. How to identify – process to remove. Process to allow members to sign up for committees at the annual meeting (but we need to follow up on it).
- **Membership**
 - i. Goal: Maximize professional land manager and young professional recruitment and retention.
 1. 61% of potential range students are not members
 2. ≤50% of NRCS Range Mgmt Specialists are not members
 - a. Identify those who are not currently members.
 - b. Board member to contact each professional who is not a member. Survey the professionals we talk to.
 - c. Board member will go to each University Range Program to talk about TSSRM to the classes – what it is, what we offer, etc. Survey the students we talk to.
 3. Undercurrents as to why we lose members
 - a. Perception of every venue we have to gather information from is too technical.
 - b. Ensure a balance on information design
 4. Newsletter format
 - a. Keep the newsletter as a newsletter, and develop a new quarterly *e-publication* (Texas Wildlands or Texas Rangelands) – statistically valid information but easy to read, and it would work in a booth. Not a fact sheet – relevant, value. *Goal to have the e-pub online by second quarter.*
 5. (in balance of 2005) Identify nonmembers, survey. Review at January Board meeting.
- **Communication**
 - i. Invited articles to popular/trade journals with TSSRM recognition (not employer)
 - ii. Improve booth/communication with other societies
 1. How can membership in both societies benefit you?
 2. How/why to keep members – why did they drop
 3. Better recognition on joint awards.
 - iii. Committee/Board relationship
 1. Board members responsible for each committee
 - iv. Website



1. Improve the look
2. Keep it current
3. New articles section with links to information on current
- v. Tour of the ORM Award winner
- vi. Major one day symposia every 3rd year (statewide) – ½ day classroom, ½ day tour. Also regional symposia on current topics.
- vii. Newsletter
 1. Electronic, professional design/attractive.
- viii. Website
 1. Allow submission process to post items on this website. (Send to the Secretary.)
 2. Committees – link to bring up committee duties and committee members (when name is clicked on).

Who is responsible?

Evaluation – How do we know we did what we said we were going to do?

Goals :

1. Membership

- a. Goal: Maximize professional land manager and young professional recruitment and retention.
 - i. Plan of Action: (Pinchak & Reinke)
 1. Develop surveys for professional land managers, non-renewals, and young professionals by September 15th.
 2. Professional land managers will be contacted by a Board of Director's member and phone surveyed by December 1st.
 3. Young Professionals will be contacted by a Board of Director's member in University classroom settings across the state by December 1st.
 4. January 2006 – survey summaries will be presented at the winter BOD meeting.
 5. During calendar year 2006 – develop programs and services for recruitment and retainment.
 6. Develop new quarterly technical e-publication and post on the website/email by second quarter 2006. (Pinchak)

2. Communication

- a. Goal: Improved communication to internal and external clientele
 - i. Plan of Action:
 1. Internal
 - a. Electronic Newsletter by September 1st (Knight) – call those with no listed email. Mail hardcopy to those without email address.
 - b. Website – Establish website task group to update the website by September 1st. Complete website update by January 1st.
 - c. (Improve committee structure & function – see below).
 2. External



- a. Solicit popular articles to submit to trade journals/popular publications.
- b. Conduct statewide symposia every 3rd year (2006) and regional as needed (½ day classroom, ½ day tour).
- c. Conduct a tour of the 2005 ORM winner during 2006.
- d. Improve the booth/communication with other societies by 2006.
 - i. How can membership in both societies benefit you?
 - ii. Determine what we want the booth to say at each meeting, and then solicit pictures from members to fit this need.

3. Committee Structure & Function

- a. GOAL: Assign Board members to committees.
 - i. Knight: Resolutions
 - ii. Anderson: Activities
 - iii. Loeffler: Endowment
 - iv. Hart: Planning
 - v. Schimcek: County Level Awards, YAC
 - vi. Seidensticker: I&E, Scholarship
 - vii. Conrad: College Activities, Audit
 - viii. Reinke: Nominations & Elections, ORM
 - ix. Scott: Awards, Publication
 - x. Pinchak: Membership, Public Affairs
- b. GOAL: Board meeting with committee chairs/chair-elects at Annual Meeting
 - i. Amend annual meeting guideline D.1.H to schedule meeting time/place.
 - ii. South Padre Island: Scheduled on Wed. Oct 5th – 5-6 pm.
- c. GOAL: Develop accountability timeline for committees.
 - i. Communicate expectations to committee chair/chair-elect at annual meeting.
 - ii. Committee chair to submit committee roster to Board rep by December 1st.
 - iii. Committee chair to submit budget and goals to board rep by January 1st.
 - iv. Review & adhere to committee reporting requirements for each meeting – submit to board rep.
 - v. Submit committee report to board rep for each meeting 2 weeks prior to each meeting.

Bruce S. Healy
Secretary/Recorder