**North American Support Group for the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists, January 7, 2021.**

Agenda Items

1. *Self introductions*

Barry Irving: SRM IYRP Task Force

Barb Hutchinson: University of Arizona (Rangelands Partnership); ISG

Maryam Niamir-Fuller: ISG (UNEP); IYRP Support Group

Maria Fernandez-Jimenez: Colorado State University; SRM IYRP Task Force

Elena Dosamantes: University of Arizona; rancher in Sonora, Mexico

Anne Gondor: University of Arizona (Rangelands Partnership)

Elisabeth Huber-Saanwald: Instituto Potosino de Investigación Científica y Tecnológica; ISG

Jeanne Pfander: University of Arizona Libraries (Rangelands Partnership)

Lauren Svejcar: USDA-ARS (post-doc)

Serkan Ates: Oregon State University (ICARDA/Jordan)

David Borre: Pronatura Noreste, Mexico

George Ruyle: Range Management Specialist at University of Arizona

Ray Smith: International Grasslands Conference

Jim O’Rourke: SRM Past President; IYRP Support Group; rancher

Arvind Panjabi: Bird Conservancy of the Rockies

Kelly Hopping: Faculty at Boise State University

Aimee Roberson: Rio Grande Joint Venture

Bill Payne: Dean of the College of Agriculture at UNR

Mark Thorne: Range Management Specialist at University of Hawaii

Lia Biondo: SRM Director of Policy and Federal Relations

Jurgen Hoth: Consultant (IUCN)

Larry Thomas: Environment Committee with Canadian Cattlemen’s Association

Adrian Quero: Grasslands, Mexico

Juan Frausto: Mexico Firm for Conservation of Nature

*2. Background information on IYRP and approval process thus far*

*Barb Hutchinson (U of Arizona)*

\*\*See Presentation\*\* - <https://globalrangelands.org/international-year-rangelands-and-pastoralists-initiative> (under “Presentations and Posters” dropdown)

**Discussion:** **Need for Broader Support in Region**

* Need broader network of supporting organizations
* Native American groups in the US have been contacted but no response as yet
* Jurgen has contacted Assembly of First Nations in Canada
* Maryam has heard word that Canada has submitted an official letter supporting IYRP
* State Depts. (or equivalent) of the countries will give the final word. Need to move from Technical Depts into these
* Mexico- Need a written letter; so far only have verbal agreement
* USA- Need letter from Dept. of Ag., US is typically not a fan of International Years. Need at least from them to not vote NO. Need more letters from NGO’s saying why the IYRP is important.
* Maryam reported that the UNCCD is already on board. They have offered to be our “bridge” to the UN General Assembly through their Director of NY Office.

**Discussion: Self-organisation/coordination of the NASG**

* Chair(s)
* NASG representative to the International Support Group
* NASG representative to global communications team
* Confirmation of geographical composition of NASG
* Leave open for another week. This role would be to convene this group and keep it organized. Feel free to nominate yourself.
* Communications Group: Will manage the website, communicate with regional groups, additional videos, photos, posters, social media, public relations in general.
* Jurgen is putting his name forward to help coordinate as chair.
* Request for a short list or description of what the roles are, including periods. Barb will send a description for terms of reference.
* Barry: Keeping our focus on UNGA Oct. 2021 is crucial… if we don’t make it past that point, we have no 2026. The USA is critical for the 2021 date.
* Could be a 1-year term. Time periods should be included in the descriptions.
* Perhaps a rotating chair from each country… the first being USA, to get passed 2021.
* Will follow-up in virtual poll.
* Once the new administration is installed Bill Payne can work with our delegation and the new secretaries of agriculture and interior. Tom Vilsack has a very international mindset.

**KEY POINTS/ ACTION ITEMS:**

* Effort is to increase worldwide understanding of importance of rangelands & pastoralists.
* Need Broader network of supporting organizations.
* Heard word that Canada has submitted an official letter of support.
* Mexico has verbally committed but need follow-up for a written letter.
* USA, need to keep delegation from State Dept. from voting NO; Need more letters from NGO’s and other stakeholder groups
* Will leave vote open for positions, follow-up with virtual poll.
* Need a short description of role, including time periods. (Suggested 1-year term, rotating, 1st term from USA)

1. *Paper on US and Canada for Joint International Grassland Congress/International Rangeland Congress (Oct 2021).  Barry Irving and Larry Howery*

**Discussion:**

* Elisabeth: Mexico would be difficult to add in the current text. If they add, it will need to be changed. Mexico has more in common with Latin America vs. North America. Doesn’t think it needs to be rewritten… just tied to Latin America.
* Elena and Jurgen: Canada, USA, and Mexico are a unit geographically, ecologically. Capitalize on that existing relationship. Think we should give it a chance and a starting point for strengthening grassland conservation on a continental scale.
* Abstracts and titles can be edited/adapted.
* Goal of paper: Show the linkage of these countries to the urban consumer which will determine the success of the Canadian and US rancher(s).
* Closing comments: Moving forward with an openness to edits on the paper. Add socio-political aspects of Mexico into the Latin America paper. Would like a coordinated edit from Jurgen, Elena, et al. One week to send those in.

**KEY POINTS/ ACTION ITEMS:**

* Mexico would be difficult to add in the current text, closer related to Latin America.
* Canada, USA, and Mexico are a unit geographically, ecologically. Capitalize on that existing relationship.
* Jurgen, Elena, and others to send minor edits to paper
  + Add socio-political aspect of Mexico to Latin America Paper

1. *Focus of immediate activities (all)*

**Discussion: FAO Conference, June, 2021**

* Barry: Relatively moot point. The countries that supported COAG, will support at FAO.
* Maryam: There is always a risk that a country could object. Very good chance it will pass, but don’t expect rubber stamping.
* 2026, Think in a longer term vision… need to think the politics and General Assembly, as well as the people.
* We have from now until July to see if it will pass the next FAO hurdle. But July-September is a short window. Need letters to be continually sent so FAO has the letter in hand.

**Discussion:** **UN General Assembly, September, 2021**

* Main focus should be here.
* The more countries we can bring forward before July, the better.

**Other Discussion:**

* Elisabeth (Mexico): Had heard the Secretary of Agriculture was going to commit to this year. She needs to check back on the commitment.
* Lia (USA): Developed a google document of potential stakeholders to become a part of the North American support group. Need a logo, letter of support and commitment to supporting IYRP. Over 75 groups so far in the USA, Mexico and Canada.
* Maryam would like the chairs to be cc’d on letters.
* Bill Payne will contact the Deans of the land grant institutions.
* With change of the administration, we’ll be looking for critical points of contact to educate on IYRP. Lia will keep everyone updated as we find inroads into the administration as leadership is appointed.
* Barry will send the list from Canada.
* Barb will send example letters of support and commitment.
* No budget, no conference plan…. This will be a global event….once it takes off, it will spread like wildfire. We have a one-pager that explains what types of activities there may be. Focus has been on getting the year designated.
* After approval of the IYRP, a next step will be to create national committee in each country to implement programming and outreach.

**KEY POINTS/ ACTION ITEMS:**

* Main focus is gaining support prior to UN General Assembly, September, 2021, but all correspondence need to be by July 1 or it will not be included in any Assembly packages
* Mexico: Follow-up for written commitment (Elizabeth)
* North American outreach list, add contacts <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1JL8L04KjS4Q1OPjYITa7L1qGEcBtAv_camxsqsCVJAI/edit#gid=0>
  + Barry to add Canadian contacts
  + Bill to reach out to Deans of Land Grant Institutes
* With the change of administration in USA, SRM will be looking for inroads and contacts as leadership is appointed.
* Barb will send example letters of support and commitment

*5. Next meeting*

**DISCUSSION:**

Decided that Barry will BCC when he sends emails but will attach excel file with contacts.

1st Thursday in February at 1pm Mountain Time will be next meeting.

**KEY POINTS/ ACTION ITEMS:**

**-**Emails will be bcc, with excel file of contacts

**-** Next meeting Feb. 4, 1pm (MST)