

Western Rangelands Partnership

Minutes Annual Meeting March 14-16, 2010

Mark S. Thorne

Western Rangelands Partnership
Annual Meeting March 14-16, 2010
Laramie, WY

March 15, 2010

8:30 am – Norm Harris addressed the Partnership

- Noted contribution by the Arizona group
- Partnership has grown and matured but still has much to do
- Official WERA status expires September, 2011 and need to look toward the development of new proposal to continue work by December 2010.

8:50 am – Maggie Farrell, Dean of University of Wyoming Libraries addressed the Partnership

8:55 am – David Kruger discussed meeting logistics

9:00 am – Introductions – David Kruger, Cindy Watkins, Mark Thorne, Sheila Merrigan, Barbara Hutchison, John Tanaka, Rachel Meador, Walt Fick, Rachel Frost, Amy Shannon, Sherm Swanson, Dana Boden, Jenny Oleen, Corrie Knapp, Colin Kaltenbach, Jeanne Pfander, Norm Harris

On-line – Scott Cotton, Brad Shultz, Allison Level, Jim Dobrowolski, Kathie Richardson, Mindy Pratt, Patsy Palacios, John Kawula, Karen Launchbaugh, Rex Pieper, Susanne Clement; Roger Gates, Mike Borman

Break

9:50 – Jeanne Pfander/ Arizona Team Report on Rangelands West Technical Infrastructure:

- Jeanne Pfander – Presentation (Handout)
- University Libraries directed AZ RW group to conduct needs assessment/business plan for WRP
- Project goals: conduct a needs assessment of the WRP and develop a business plan for sustainability
- Contracted with UA School of Business – 4 graduate students; Final Business plan provided to Partnership
- Plan provides a good framework to more fully develop and refine a plan for the sustainability of the WRP
- Key Recommendations
 - Keep site fresh- up date site frequently
 - Optimize accessibility and usability
 - Increase website traffic via online advertising
 - Bring revenue through grant funding and WRP institutional annual contributions
 - Hire content manager- make use of students
- Financial plan needed; include expenses and income/revenues

Western Rangelands Partnership

Minutes Annual Meeting March 14-16, 2010

Mark S. Thorne

- Handout – Questions to be thinking about w/regard to the RW Tech. Infrastructure report
- Needs Assessments Report
 - On-line survey reported in 2009
 - Focus Group interviews; five states participated (Arizona, Hawaii, Oklahoma, Oregon, Washington).
 - Desired web site features from interviews:
 - New and frequent content updates
 - Tools that foster collaboration
 - Tools to filter/sort through information and identify most relevant
 - Libraries of documents and images
 - Location and application specific information
 - Searchable directory of experts
 - Customizable homepage
 - Video clips and interactive educational features
- Sheila Merrigan – Relationship between Rangelands West, eXtension and State Sites
Discussed content of handout-
 - Rangelands West – repository of full-text, journals, reports
 - eXtension – public, reference summaries, practical information with linkages back to RW
 - State sites – clientele specific for each state, local resources
- Barbara Hutchinson- Rangelands West: Bigger and Better Ideas and questions for discussion
 - Why we need to change
 - Respond to results of needs assessments and focus groups/meet needs of users
 - Current site is:
 - Too hard to maintain and use
 - Does not have the capabilities we want
 - Not sustainable
 - Need to adopt new technologies
 - What are the opportunities?
 - Interest of FAO in Rangelands West (Gauri Salokhe)
 - Interest of Urs Kreuter and John Taylor (South Africa/Australia)
 - Widespread use of open source, self managed content management systems
 - More funding options if we involve global partners
 - Ability to add 2.0 networking applications to directly engage ranchers and other stakeholders
 - GROKS - Global Rangeland Online Knowledge System
 - Discussed the different components of the mock-up of the Global Rangelands online knowledge system
 - Demonstrated use and functionality of new site
 - Presented Big Question:

Western Rangelands Partnership

Minutes Annual Meeting March 14-16, 2010

Mark S. Thorne

- Harvest/search first or Basic RW Drupal site first?
- Advantages of Harvest/Search first
 - Builds portal in logical order; most difficult and core parts first (metadata standards, smart search, etc.)
 - Will be more efficient over all; avoids having to redo programming later
 - Do it right the first time
- Disadvantages of Harvest/search first
 - Will take longer to build a prototype (1 year)
 - Stuck with the current site longer; may lose stakeholders
 - Takes more time to update current site (limited time and resources)
- Advantages of Basic RW Drupal site first
 - New site could be brought up quickly
 - Partners could add new content using simple data entry process for all formats (i.e. articles, reports, images, pdfs, links, etc.)
- Disadvantages of Basic Drupal first
 - Will only have the current 1500 links at first
 - Metadata may need to be re-worked later
 - May have to rebuild the site (or parts of it) to accommodate the harvesting feature and smart search (for FAO, journal archives, etc.)
- Discussion, Ideas, thoughts
 - Amy Shannon asked could the state sites work to harvest/search?
 - Amy – would like to be able to add to our state sites and stored in a database to be accessed later
 - Barb – can do, can find a way to organize metadata records so that content could be added to the basic Drupal framework
 - Allison – CSU looking to go into Drupal 7.0
 - Barb – AZ team working on Drupal 6.0; but cognizant that we will have to move to Drupal 7.0 later
 - **IT team volunteers: Allison Level, Amy Shannon, and Norm Harris (plus the AZ Technical Team: Sheila, Jeanne, and Barb)**
 - IT development team to provide report at monthly steering committee meetings
 - Shelia – asked to have a general feeling of whether to develop the harvesting/search or basic Drupal first....discussion by several partners....
 - Discuss issues further tomorrow

11:45 am - State updates

- **Norm Harris – Alaska State Report**
 - Working to develop site statistics report
 - Does not have any statistics as yet
 - But people are using the site; gets comments from others
 - Difficulty getting information uploaded site

Western Rangelands Partnership

Minutes Annual Meeting March 14-16, 2010

Mark S. Thorne

- Questions
- **Mark Thorne – Hawaii State Report**
 - See report document
- **Amy Shannon-Nevada State Report**
 - Challenges – Library webmaster retired; new webmaster not available to work on website; no new site changes right now; concerns about security using google analytics; interested in looking at Drupal; will need to rebuild the Nevada site from the ground up
 - Sherm Swanson – Dean provided monies to move forward with eXtension; hired student to help with work; looked at the website for dead links
- **Rachel Frost – Montana State Report**
 - Shift in responsibility – Rachel Frost is now contact for Montana; new librarian Rene Tanner will work with WRP
 - Montana contracted out web management outside in past, but now all moved back into the university so changes are much easier now
 - eXtension effort has taken up much of Rachel's time; but sees a great benefit for both RW and eXtension
 - Full Team on board; Range contact; Librarian; IT people, etc.
- **Cindy Watkins – New Mexico State Report**
 - Thanks the Arizona Team for their help and looking forward to having the NM site up soon.
 - Site went down and then faced some political issues; but things are turning around.
- **Jenny Oleen – Kansas State Report**
 - Jenny is the new KState representative
 - Did clean-up of site
 - 60,000 webviews and 5 questions
- **Dana Boden – Nebraska State Report**
 - 400 web views (counter) since installation of counter
 - Branding an issue at Nebraska
 - Nebraska already implements a content management system that allows editing by county office, district, departments and project. In addition the Nebraska Grazing lands coalition has established a new website that has resources being added and is editable by that group. Nebraska recently canvassed livestock/range producers across the state and found that plant ID, access to current information is desired. Nebraska is teaching the extensive use of USDA Web Soil Survey for Ecosite Management

12:20 pm - Colin Kaltenbach

- WERA expires September 2011
- Renewal needs to be written for first review by September 15 and finalized by December 15.
- Drafting of new objectives (change in objectives is key for approval)
- Recommends that a writing committee be set up with a deadline
- Believes that we will not have much difficulty getting the renewal

Western Rangelands Partnership

Minutes Annual Meeting March 14-16, 2010

Mark S. Thorne

Writing committee – Karen Launchbaugh, Rachel Frost, Mark Thorne, Allison Level, Barbara Hutchinson.

12:30 pm – Lunch break

1:30 pm - State Updates Continued (Virtual updates)

- **Roger Gates - South Dakota**
 - No Audio
 - Roger emailed report – read by Norm
 - No real updates
- **Karen Hickman – Oklahoma**
 - No Report
- **George Ruyle – Arizona**
 - George was going to show demonstration of using video for monitoring but had technical difficulties so Barb tried to summarize this work
 - Gigapan – a tripod mount for a digital camera for panoramic images; high definition and geo-referenced images Barb reported on a UA Community Connections grant proposal they submitted to engage ranchers in using Web 2.0 applications
 - Ranchers would participate in the development of resources and expanding Rangelands West
 - Building plug in applications that could be “uploaded” to state sites
- **Corrie Knapp – Colorado**
 - Present- Colorado is a full partnership site between the Library and the Dept. of Forestry, Range and Watershed Stewardship
 - Vetted broken links
 - Looking into transitioning the site into a new framework; libguide
 - Looking at linking the site with ecological site descriptions online
- **Tip Hudson – Washington**
 - No report
- **Mike Borman – Oregon**
 - No work since John left, but will begin work once the transition to Drupal is complete
- **Karen Launchbaugh – Idaho**
 - Presentation – (see PPT)
 - Update February 10, 2010
 - Added a What are Rangelands? Definition
 - Added a map of Rangelands of the World (SRM map)
 - Teacher Resource Guide on Rangelands
 - University of Idaho Range Department is transitioning to the Forestry Department and will become Rangeland Center
- **Mindy Pratt – Utah**

Western Rangelands Partnership

Minutes Annual Meeting March 14-16, 2010

Mark S. Thorne

- Not much to report; site was locked and working to move it over to a new framework to edit and fix dead links
- New librarian
- **North Dakota – Kathie Richardson**
 - Site is down
 - Expect to have it up and running soon
 - Will have a better capability to update
- **Texas**
 - No Report
 - Barb reported she had talked to Wayne Hamilton and that Urs Kruter is willing to stay on as contact but there is a lot going on at Texas due to budget cuts and unable to attend or do much right now
- **Rachel Mealor and David Kruger – Wyoming**
 - Wyoming has been busy to prepare for the annual meeting
 - Site is shared between the Renewable Resources Department and the Library
 - Good working relationship with the web master
 - Activity on the website has been minimal; working to clean up the site so that it will be a good product for clientele
 - January 6 hits; February over 1,000 hits so hope is that more promotion will increase activity on the site
 - Added specimen database from Rocky Mountain Herbarium
 - Some future activities that will be highlighted- Reclamation work, other projects
 - Dave – overview of Rocky Mountain Herbarium Link
- **California – Mel George (given by Barbara Hutchinson)**
 - Working on the development of online courses and learning tools
 - Active group in California

3:00 pm Break until 3:30

3:30 pm – Amy Shannon moderated – WRP Project Updates

- **Grazing Effects Info System Project – Karen Launchbaugh and Rachel Frost**
 - Joint project between University of Idaho and Montana State University
 - Project developed out of interaction through Rangelands West
- **Rangeland – USDA Higher Education Challenge Grant – Karen Launchbaugh**
 - Multi-State, Cooperative Proposal between UI, Humboldt, UC Davis, USU, NMSU, MSU, SDSU
 - Fewer schools offering Rangeland degrees
 - Fewer Students seeking Range degrees
 - High demand for range professionals (75% if range professionals will retire within the next five years)
 - Result, great opportunity or pending disaster
 - Proposal in and pending approval
- **International Science Education Grant Application – Barb Hutchinson**
 - USDA-NIFA International Science and Education Program

Western Rangelands Partnership

Minutes Annual Meeting March 14-16, 2010

Mark S. Thorne

- Proposal: Building Global Access to Sustainable Rangeland Management Resources for Research, Teaching, and Extension – Submitted January 28, 2010.
- Collaborators: UA, UC Davis, UI, Rangelands Australia, FAO of United Nations
- Signatories: WRP, eXtension, WERA, Grasslands Society of Southern Africa, Range Science Education Council
- Objectives:
 - Redesign Rangelands West Portal to host global materials
 - Establish partnerships with key organizations/associations
 - Upload and create applications to provide greater accessibility to content
 - Develop two multi-media learning modules
 - Create synthesis documents on aspects of international outreach practices for Extension
 - Create customized search interface and implement web 2.0 networking applications

March 16, 2010

8:12 am – Welcome back and logistics for day – Rachel Mealor

Brett Hess – UW Director of AES – Overview of Wyoming and the Experiment Station

Present today - David Kruger, Cindy Watkins, Mark Thorne, Sheila Merrigan, Barbara Hutchison, John Tanaka, Rachel Mealor, Walt Fick, Rachel Frost, Amy Shannon, Sherm Swanson, Dana Boden, Jenny Oleen, Corrie Knapp, Colin Kaltenbach, Jeanne Pfander, Norm Harris, Ginger Page

Virtually Present – Jim Dobrowolski, Patsy Palacios, Kathie Richardson

8:32 am – Business Meeting: WRP Organizational Issues Norm Harris

- Communications – virtual meetings increasing; Steering committee will meet via Go To Meeting arranged by Mark Thorne;
- Technical Committee will meet at a regularity TBD among committee members; Committee will use Go To Meeting or some other method as available; Members: Allison, Amy, Sherm, Norm, Mark, Jeanne, Sheila, Barb.
- Jeanne Pfander duly named Secretary/Treasurer for 2010
- Commitments – How can we help the state sites meet their commitments
 - John Tanaka asked whether we were committed to keeping the state sites look the same or is that desirable
 - Sheila – asked how many states would like a template to help design their site; or the help with a transition to Drupal
 - Amy – noted that in Nevada they need to see what the options are
 - Barb – go around the room to determine site needs
 - Most would like to keep their current sites, however, several want more information about Drupal and how it will help or affect them;

Western Rangelands Partnership

Minutes Annual Meeting March 14-16, 2010

Mark S. Thorne

Alaska and New Mexico expressed interest in working directly with Arizona to create Drupal sites for their states

- Reports on requests for financial support from Library and Extension Directors/Deans
 - Washington State – Positive reply for support
 - Discussion about using Dean's support for Annual Business Meetings
 - Affirmative on use of funds for annual meeting
 - Depends on the amount received and cost of meeting
 - Some funds needed for IT work
 - Colin cautioned about using too much of the funds for meetings. Expectation by Deans is that they are supporting work not meeting attendance; advised not to pay for whole meeting with Deans funds;
 - Dave and Rachel noted that it is good to have the funds available to make deposits when planning meeting activities
 - Karen Launchbaugh has agreed to serve as SRM financial liaison re: tracking the meeting funds in the SRM account (reporting to Secretary/Treasurer and Partnership). SRM has person to contact to get an update on the WRP account.
- Steering Committee – everyone is welcome to participate in the monthly steering committee meetings
- Writing Committee for WERA – Karen L., Rachel, Allison, Barb, Mark; Task to write WERA renewal
- 2010 Business Meeting Minutes and Progress Report to be completed within 60 days (May 16, 2010) and submitted to Colin (Mark Thorne and Jeanne Pfander)
- Next Meeting: May 2011 possibly in Montana (to be confirmed later); David and Rachel to provide assistance and checklist for local arrangements. Steering Committee in charge of setting agenda.

9:15 – Presentation on Building Extension's Public Values by Laura Kalambokidis of University of Minnesota – CES

10:10 Break

10:30 am – Discussion about writing Public value messages for Rangelands West

- Agreed that RWP should develop a set of Public Value Statements; this could be done during a Virtual Meeting mid-year (October-November).

11:00 am – John Tanaka – eXtension Rangelands update and overview

- Content Development Updates
 - Ok on pages/content
 - Short on Frequently Asked Questions, need at least 150.
- Review of Content development team membership

12:00 pm – Lunch Break

Western Rangelands Partnership

Minutes Annual Meeting March 14-16, 2010

Mark S. Thorne

12:55 pm – Group Photo

1:00 pm – Sheila Merrigan – Drupal Information for RW

- What is Drupal
 - Drupal is a content management system
 - Advantages
 - Dynamic
 - Distributed content entry
 - Initially more effort, but more efficient in the long run
- Who can add to the site
 - Anyone with an account
 - All will need to go through some training
 - Default for everyone will be editor
 - Can add content anywhere
 - Can edit only your own content
 - Can delete only your own content
 - Can publish and view content immediately
- Setup – State sites only
 - Two ways to set up the sites
 - All state sections on one server
 - All will need to have the same type of content
 - Will need server and Drupal support at one institution
 - Server security issues, etc. – not sure any state will be willing to do this
 - Each state hosts on their own server
 - One Drupal infrastructure setup and then shared
 - Allows for more flexibility in content and look since you can modify setup
 - Will need server and Drupal support at each institution
 - This is not an all or none situation
 - States that do not want Drupal do not need to use it

1:30 pm – Extension Breakout sessions

3:30 pm – Topic Group leader reports from breakout sessions

3:45 pm – Meeting summary – Amy Shannon

- Decision is to take the time to build the system right – Harvest/search first; use the next year to complete the move to Drupal
- Jeanne Pfander is our new secretary-treasurer
- Karen Launchbaugh will serve as liaison to SRM

Western Rangelands Partnership

Minutes Annual Meeting March 14-16, 2010

Mark S. Thorne

- Arizona will continue toward Drupal build, leaving RW mostly as is meanwhile due to limitations to logistics and funding for IT work; the RW 3.0 build is expected to take about a year;
- There is now a Technical Committee which will meet virtually to guide this process
- There was discussion about how and when states can contribute to the new site, with more discussion to come.
- State reports revealed different experiences in maintaining the sites; several states have problems while others have very functional sites
- The eXtension CoP has been building, but more work will be needed before rollout in May; need 150 FAQs and 200 plus content pages
- WRP Steering committee will continue to meet virtually. Any WRP member is welcome to participate in the committee meetings
- Writing Committee has been established to develop the WERA Renewal
- Annual meeting will be moved to May to accommodate more members; tentatively the next meeting will be held in Bozeman, Montana
- Amy would like to hold a mid-year virtual meeting to report out on progress; one topic may be the development of Public Value Messages for RWP

3:50 pm – Evaluations handed out and final thoughts.