Meeting of the Western Rangelands Partnership
Project Meetings: Rangelands West and eXtension Rangelands
March 15-18, 2009

NOTE: Follow up items are highlighted in red

Carla Casler - Welcome, first time using Go To Meeting to involve others remotely. High points of year include:
- successful eXtension proposal
- sponsored successful SRM symposium
- signed MOU with SRM
- down side was working on technical issues
- at this meeting, we will discussing commonalities and differences with eXtension
- so our story is still unfolding

Colin Kaltenbach
- good news – increase in Hatch funds last week signed; 50% is to be spent on multi-state activities, 25% on WERAs support (Hatch funds are given to CSREES to distribute to states)
- most Experiment Station Directors think the multi-state activities are most important, feel they get a tremendous return on them
- The R.W. WERA 1008 is in the middle of life-span (Sept. 2011), next year will have to start on renewal
- Mid-term report was submitted
- RCIC review committee will review it this year. It is a cursory review and he predicts no problems
- By May 15th need a yearly/mid-term report for this year (March to March) – put in period date as per last year; more on activities rather than impacts

Q: How do we stack up with other WERAs? – Answer: There are extension, research, and academic programs. They cover many aspects including social sciences, nutrition, fundamental sciences. There are 3 or 4 types of committees: research, coordinating committees (R.W.) are integrated for collaboration and communication on any topic. We fulfill this by making info available to audience(s) and we meet once a year. Expectation is a little less than a research committee.

Q: What type of impacts are they looking for? Answer: Economic, dollar amount; changed behaviors of commodity or other group serving; show utilization of work product.

Jim Dobrowoski – CSREES
Question on how he uses impact reports. Answer: he is putting together annual report and outside panel review in 2010; will bring in people like Colin to see if they are being effective, then that goes up to management and budget

Jeanne Pfander

- Needs Assessment that started last summer as per request from UA Libraries (funded by the Libraries rather than for technical fixes), preliminary results were used for eXtension proposal, too
- 16 questions, online, anonymous; 13 states participated; 1066 received invitation to participate; 177/196 completed (17%)
- Areas you work: ranching 48%; land management (41%), fed/state govt (35%), Extension (33%) – split public and private
- Current sources: colleagues, symposium, extension pubs, websites, govt pubs, journals, other land managers, etc.
- Online resources: Google, govt agency websites, SRM, CE websites, library online resources, eXtension, NGO websites
- Subjects: grazing management, climate/drought, plant id, weather, inventory & monitoring
- Top 4 websites: federal agencies, state extension, SRM website, R.W., Google
- What looking for: invasive species, planning, grazing, ecological processes, fire, etc.
- What decision-making: grazing, rangeland vegetation, climate, water/drought, & livestock issues
- Proposed features: journal articles, meetings/events, guides and manuals, policy info, FAQs.
- How likely to use features: documents and graphic figures; then videos, experts directory, interactive educational features, audio clips.
- Collaborative features: bios and contact info for C.E. professionals but others, too, and web-based tools
- Customizable options: 70% wanted this
- Misc. input – more explanation of controversial issues, RSS feeds
- Next Steps: follow-up with focus groups to help define requirements for next version of R.W.

Q.: Mark – can you separate out extension responses so we can follow trains of responses? Answer from Holly: that might be possible and will look into it.

Holly Hartman – Implications of Survey for R.W.

- Unknown Biases: participants were selected by respondents so don't know how representative the responses are; no conditional analysis, eg ranchers vs. extension
- Bottom Line: need to serve varied audience
- People to people is where people get interactions; but after that publications; and then peer-reviewed journals and trade publications; least were media sources
- Current use of online sources – 75% monthly basis; 50% weekly, 20% daily – most with fast connections
- Searching is important = Google; so how is it people decide where to go to get info is a follow-up focus group question
- What are people looking for? Some clear areas of interest, but really a full range of topics, so then becomes issue of priorities

- What kinds of websites do they like? Many didn't answer, but mostly generic responses; top sites were SRM and USDA plants; R.W. was favorite of 15 people (R.W. has a constituency)
- Trying to find a metric that will help show impacts: relation to decision-making was difficult for them to respond to, vague responses, need to associate with specific roles (eg. ranching, education, policy, research)
- Use of information: planning, writing reports and educational programs, compliance with regulations, invasives, etc.
- Preferred info: access to journal articles/reports; specific events; searchable FAQs; guides and manuals (would be good to know why these are preferred to online tutorials)
- Website Features by preference: libraries of documents; directories, video, interactive education. Reluctant to do 2.0, blogs, but may not know about these applications)
- Low-hanging fruit: reports on technology breakthroughs, litigation, wildlife/range info, policy manuals; fully searchable, graphics, tutorials, fast homepage info for dialup uses
- More difficult but perhaps with big payoff? Watershed orientation/overlay; incorporating rancher and local knowledge, serving the "beleaguered"

Follow-up Focus Group Process Options:
- Two options: Local RWP host facilitated or remotely facilitated vis WebEX or Go To Meeting
- RWP Host Role: identify participants and recruit 6-10 people
- UA role: provide questions and analysis
- IRB approval may be needed
- Goal to conduct focus groups by end of April

Next Step: Need to know who is willing to help in conducting a focus group session in their respective states. ($1,000 is available per state for doing this – check with Holly, Barb or Jeanne about this if interested)

Next Step: Technical Requirements development based on user input: we know we need to move R.W. into a more flexible, open source content management system such as Drupal and there are many other features needed including validation of citation entries, others?

Barb Hutchinson – Business Plan Process and Results so far (see PPT and Handouts from UA Eller College of Management Field Project on Google Docs.)

Holly Hartman – Year in Review
- R.W. portal – first iteration hacked and destroyed
- George Ruyle funded "Forensic Software Development": repair & upgrade of RW2 at $40,000
- ALIC: funded 2 new services (Virtual Machines) and programming tools
- Damian Hammond & AZ Rangelands Group: repair and upgrade priorities, implementation, metadata review/update, content review/update
- Maintenance & Reporting: ongoing 2 days/month
Need Your Feedback! If technical questions, contact Carla and she will work with technical staff.

Sheila Merrigan – Inputting Metadata/New Content to R.W.

- (See handout on Google Docs – cheat sheet/step-by-step process for Content Contributors)
- Q: Data Object Owner: can other groups be added, i.e. subject area groups? Answer: Yes
- Q: Do we know whether users are accessing the site through the search or browse features? Answer: Not at this time.
- Q: Can states that have entered records go back and fix those? Answer: We can ask Damian to give states access to previous records, but Arizona can also set up metadata fixing sessions virtually to include others (Arizona Team will set up a Go To Meeting metadata repair session where everyone can work together on fixing the remaining records; *mostly this is changing the browse location categories as they need to be "the most specific" locations, not the higher level general category as that leads to inappropriate search results*)
- SUGGESTION: Need to fix metadata tag for Rangelands West (rangeland doesn't show up at all; but does for rangelands and range management)

Mark Thorne – Content Development and Review Procedures for R.W. (See handout on Google Docs)

- Describe an organizational structure for content development/review
- Issues: time constraints, breadth of topic areas/contents, may not have critical mass of expertise for all topics, communication/info sharing issues, oversight and quality control
- 3 ways of acquiring content: (1) materials on web that are links, (2) material solicited from experts, and (3) unsolicited material from prospective authors
- Needs to be accurate, credible, relevant
- Needs to determine: who conducts the review? What are review criteria? What are delineations between state and R.W. sites?
- There are 10 topic areas on the home page, then sub-topics that result in a set of results
- There are the 15 hot topics areas – should they be integrated?
- Now there are the eXtension topics, too.
- Need to prioritize content areas, form content groups, enlist help of other potential contributors
- Resources: Google Groups/Google Docs/others?; GoToMeeting, etc., others? Process needs to be fully integrated. We need to decide which technology platforms so we can work collaboratively.
- How to bring people into the process?
- How to create control over the process?

Proposal: Establish Topic Area Editorial Groups
Topic Area Priorities – tackle a few areas first? Assign groups for each of the 10 areas?
Suggests having a librarian and range specialist as co-editors for each group

- Responsible for content development for their topic (set up a process as per Figure 4 in Mark's handout)
- Facilitate submissions, review, editing (as appropriate)
- Schedule regular meetings
- Decide on acceptance and/or rejection of content
- Invite others to participate and submit content

- Report to Content Development and Steering Committees or to Annual Meeting
- Issue: state site content metadata vs. R.W. content development for topic areas

Julie Conley: Hot Topics Sections - shared document in Google Docs called "Hot Topics"
 http://docs.google.com/Presentation?id=df76rk5n_154g5vtn7fb&invite=d2ww6nv
- Intent was to provide overviews of controversial issues
- Hasn't been reviewed
- New content is available on NEPA, but needs design
- Grazing on Public Lands section needs review. It is posted on GoogleDocs
- Need to revisit issue areas. What are key areas and determine if more or less are needed; review newly developed content; Content groups pick an issue to develop together via the Google environment? Purge out-of-date content including Arizona specific news items.

Q: Should the hot topics be added to other content area groups so they would be reviewed and revised? Answer: *Yes, that seems to be an appropriate way to go*.

Follow up: Everyone in attendance signed up to either be a leader or a member of content development teams by broad category. Mark will follow-up with those not at the meeting. These groups will review the hot topics to determine which ones should be included in the broader content areas. They will also consider new content to populate those categories and create metadata records for them. Content development groups will be posted on Google Docs.

Karen Launchbaugh – some final thoughts

Why do we come?
- Good things happen
- Work with diverse people; unique model involving both range specialists and librarians
- Group has become friends
- Others are recognizing the value of this group
- Has a great product and great potential for expanding and enhancing that product(s)
- Interesting and timely subject
- Potential usefulness of what we are trying to do
- Way to provide service to state clients
- "We are a small, thoughtful group of committed people" (Margaret Mead)

Areas of Agreement:

1) State site content is already evaluated and metadata records should be added to R.W. database for it (trust each other as experts)

2) Content Groups should facilitate/be cheer leaders for developing content in topical areas.

Q: Might need to think about becoming our own group and have our own money – 501c3 status might be needed; consider working through SRM in a more official capacity. Need to consider potential strategic partners, sponsors, and potential funders.

Carla Casler – Business Meeting

1) Colin and Carla Stoffle (Dean of Libraries) made appeal to Deans and Directors of other partner states for $1000 contributions to help support R.W. technical infrastructure. $12,000 was received (Handed out report; will be on Google Docs) (Need to send follow-up letters of thanks with a short summary of what the money helped to achieve)

2) Thanked and installed new Executive Committee (Norm Harris (chair), Amy Shannon (vice-chair), Mark Thorne (Secretary). Members thanked Carla for her service to the Partnership.

eXtension Rangelands Meeting
Tuesday Morning – March 17, 2009

Craig Woods – **Associate Director, Content, eXtension – Overview of what they are doing**
- eXtension is "collaborative built Internet-based learning environment delivering sound, science-based information."
- Funding: institutional assessments from state Extension (.8 of 1 %); also New Technologies for Ag Extension (USDA) – used for leadership CoP support - and private funding through their Foundation.
- Director, Assoc Directors, Communications/Marketing, evaluation/Assessment leader, corporate Development, Content staff at Kentucky, IT staff at NCSU.
- Community of Practice – virtual environment, multi-institutional, multi-disciplinary, open, fluid and flexible, responsive to Communities of Interest.
- How it works – serving Community of Interest with products: basic info, ask the experts, FAQs, discussion & web chats, decision tools (have created a generic program), webinars, streaming videos, individual learning modules (Moodle), certificate/credit courses, and distance diagnostics
    - About.extension.org – how to get involved, "ask" widget, talks about internal aspects of eXtension, all applications are listed at top
    - People.extesnion.org – to get eXtension ID
    - COP-extension.org – CoP wiki
    - FAQ/Aae (faq.extension.org)
    - Events (calendar.extension.org)
    - About wiki (about.extension.org\wiki) – business workings of eXtension
    - Collaborate.extension.org – for those thinking about building a COP
    - Campus.extension.org and pdc.extension.org for Moodle info and course development info (professional development)
- Change in eXtension CoP home page: now picks up your IP address so pages are branded with state extension banner (new since January)
- Q: branding of content that may be appropriate only for particular geographic areas. Answer: They are working on customizing content for localities, but right now they are giving suggestions at the bottom of pages for other information that may be more appropriate (using Google maps, too)
- What you get as a CoP
    - 2 hours of web conferencing a month
    - Access to an audio conference bridge
    - Technical infrastructure for development and business functions
    - Applications support and training
    - Communications and marketing support

- o Evaluation and assessment support
  - o Development and sustainability support
  - o Professional development opportunities
- What's in it for you as a faculty member?
  - o Wider range of experts
  - o Different points of view
  - o Better access to research
  - o Exposure to cutting edge technology
  - o Efficiencies of time
  - o Increased quality of materials
  - o Increased audience reach and impact
  - o Evaluation and reporting 4 P&T
  - o Increased competitiveness for grants
  - o Single access point to CE and brand identify
  - o Expanded customer service
  - o Direct link to county offices
  - o Connection to new audiences
- What's Social Media?
  - o It is an umbrella term that defines the various activities that integrate technology, social interaction, and the construction of words, pictures, videos, and audio – i.e. Blackberry, smart phones
  - o It is having people having conversations online
  - o Conversations online: blog, twitter (micro blogs – 140 characters), online chat, RSS feeds (subscribe to info so don't have to go to sites – faqs have this), widgets, wikis, etc.
  - o Wikipedia – over 4 million articles – usually comes up in first four links from Google search; 75,000 people contributing
  - o You Tube – more than 100 million videos, 65,000 new videos per day
  - o 200 million blogs
  - o 1.5 million Second Life residents (eXtension launch offered virtual state fair with music & activities)
  - o 73% of active online users read a blog in some way (April 2008); 45% have started their own blog; 39% subscribe to RSS feeds (brings info to you); 57% of online users have Facebook or some account; 55% have uploaded photos; 83% have viewed videos = it is how we are communicating
  - o Web 2.0 is not a fad, it is a fundamental shift in the way we communicate
- Check out eXtension You Tube video about the scholarship of eXtension (prof. at KSU, family care giving); many COPs have You Tube contracts.
- Slide Share is a way to share your PPTs, etc. and they can be down-loaded into your content areas; can also add audio to the slides (new feature added)
- Facebook is used in eXtension because they have Groups
- Demonstrated iGoogle personal site and all the feeds and applets he has used
- eXtension also has a Twitter account; follows institutional feeds – can be delivered to phones
- Second Life demo now has audio so you can chat; only family care giving CoP is working with this now.
- Also use Friend Feed

- They experiment in environments before they become mainstream so they are prepared to help CoPs when there is an expressed need

Suggestion for Rangelands eXtension site: develop content using low-hanging fruit – focus first on faqs, basic content, and ask a question

Q: learning modules – eXtension's courses are commercially hosted on servers

John Tanaka – Relationship of WRP, RW, and eXtension
- Leadership Team has been having conference calls
- Administrative Advisors (Colin, Scott Reed – Oregon, Jim D. – CSREES, and Extension Marketing Specialist from Oregon will need to search for new person since he is leaving)
- Topic Area Groups and sub-topic areas – R.W. database of links, but who to create synthesis content?
- Possibly Hire Lead Writers (3-4) topic based, how many, how to select, responsibilities, coordination?
- Possible Process
  - o writer assigned to topic area
  - o writer contacts topic area group to identify peer-reviewed literature and extension literature to assess
  - o writer develops initial page in wiki and input metadata into R.W.
  - o topic area group leaders might assign/find specialists to review written page, coordinate changes
  - o once page is ready, Leadership Team coordinates peer review
- Q: how do librarians and non-extension members fit? A: review content as non-specialists or from other perspectives
- Q: is it that the WRP will be working together on creating both the R.W. and eXtension Rangelands products? Yes, that is preferred.
- Q: what about the R.W. ask a question function? Suggestion: Librarians could help monitor and help answer "Ask an Expert" questions.

Craig – in most successful CoPs, the experts contribute content based on the topics and create a group that collects/pools all the content from all the members. Then summaries are written. Often hire one or two people who understand the technologies and help package the content.
- What is important to users? Do we have that available? If not, then need to write it based on scientific literature. <u>Link back and forth from .edus so will be found by the search engines.</u>

Discussion:
- Sherm suggested we have writers to help
- Mark suggested having a specialist and librarian to facilitate each team
- Sherm asked if the basic information will be in the areas of the R.W. hierarchy? Answer: John said yes, but there was discussion about using a smaller number of broader categories instead to keep the home page list more focused.
- Mark suggests the Topic Area groups use wikis to prepare that content
- Jeff doesn't think this will work by committee, and that a hired writer will be needed

- Norm said we need to decide on how the two sites will complement each other first; in beginning R.W. and Arizona Rangelands was to have synthesis summaries first before the links
- Rachel- the eXtension site is the best of the best summaries; R.W. would be all the scientific information (in the repository metadata database)
- Sheila – shouldn't we focus on audience needs and target key topics to develop as part of eXtension? (*Craig suggests following the bee biology CoP model – what do users really want to know? Can bring the two together without having to click several times. Can link back to R.W. to get original documents; need to create outline that users want and then develop/redo content on those topics*)
- Sherm – take what we have done and be free to create new content or optimize current content (modify, edit, optimize) – *Craig: that is the place to start*
- Norm – who is the audience? Do they need to know plants and animals? Should consider focusing on practical information needed by users.
- Jeanne – agrees we should focus on most needed content now and fill out more later
- Sherm – is there enough money in grant to pay for full-time writers? Not 4, maybe some part-time writers?
- Karen – the range specialists and professors can help provide input; suggests we go back to the six content areas in the proposal

Organizational Structure
- Kelly – why not hire Rachel, Levina, and Mindy to coordinate the content groups as suggested in previous leadership conference calls?
- Craig – most CoPs have a chair and a vice-chair, core leadership group, determine how long the chairs will stay in that position
- Amy – suggests we not set up a whole new organizational structure, should have Topic Area content coordinators do the work
- *General agreement – to use the R.W. organizational structure as much as possible*
- John – in terms of organization and leadership; 19 member group isn't workable, so maybe John, Sherm and other partners to keep it one organization
- *Summary: John will be eXtension project leader for one year, Sherm will take over in 2nd year to carry it on. John will work with CSREES to get funds transferred to 3 schools to hire three people to help with writing (Montana, Utah, and Idaho)*
- Wednesday pm will discuss and agree on topic areas/content groups to work with writers.

Agreement: The eXtension site will be practical summaries, faqs, and ask an expert service. R.W. is complementary in that it provides access to all relevant, quality rangelands-related content, including a repository of scientific information in the form of full-text articles and documents. eXtension Rangelands site content should be added to the R.W. database through metadata records.

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eXtension Rangelands Meeting
Tuesday Afternoon – March 17, 2009

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Workshop on using eXtension tools and applications; setting up User Profile pages, adding photos, links, etc.

eXtension Rangelands Meeting
Wednesday Morning – March 18, 2009

Workshop on using the FAQ system; providing answers, reviewing questions and answers

Metrics, Reporting, and Promotion and Tenure: Scholarship of eXtension – Craig Woods

[First – eXtension is considering alternative (more intuitive) ways of creating content for CoP. Had talks with Google. Some institutions are opposed to using Google docs, etc. because of concerns about the terms of contract. Everyone in the room said their institutions don't have any problem (although Sheila mentioned guidelines at UA of what not to put on Google docs, etc.)]

PPT: How do you get credit for work done in team environment? Virtual team environment? Committee in eXtension looking at these issues. Paper on this topic in "About Wiki" (linked from PowerPoint).

    a) Scholarship of Collaboration

    b) Scholarship of Engagement

    c) Criteria

    d) Scholarly work of CoPs

- Developing a one page document to include in P&T packets
- Showed how to use/view reports on FAQ/AaE activity
- Using Google Analytics. Can request access from eXtension. Need to provide email address that you use to access Google account to Craig Wood to have access to eXtension Google Analytics. List was passed around to give info to Craig.

  For example:

  80% of traffic comes from search engines. 7% come from front door of eXtension.org. 12.5% from referring sites. Anything over about 30 seconds spent on a page is good. eXtension pages have an average of ~ 1 minute
- eXtension will be sending state & institutional reports to state/local Extension directors & administrators.

Discussion:
- Notice that reports to administrators don't give activity stats per individual.
- Question: how does CSREES view web reports from eXtension? The problem is regarding recording hits – not an accurate measure. Page views are best. Jim D. responded CSREES "takes with a grain of salt". Want to know how deep on site / how long they spent. There is option for users to rate on bottom of eXtension content pages.
- Jim D. asked if eXtension tracked people who return. Yes, track return visits to site but don't ask them to respond to surveys, etc.
- Will eXtension be using the email addresses from people who use the Ask an Expert service to conduct surveys? They can but haven't yet. An IRB form is on file at Nebraska. It would only be done by the eXtension.
- Looking to develop a customization for the Youth version of the site. Will need registration for that. Can do (legally) with a one-time interaction. Anything that involves engaging in conversation would require parental consent (for kids under age 13).

eXtension Rangelands Meeting
Wednesday Afternoon – March 18, 2009

Discussion of Topic Area Outline for eXtension home page and working groups

1) May want to change the terminology for the six major topics as we work on them to make them more user friendly. Suggest should be different from the browse categories on R.W.
2) Suggest need to include term rangelands in each of the major categories; need to focus on particular topics first and fill those out before going on
3) How long do the articles need to be? Answer: a few paragraphs to a few pages
4) Could use SRM glossary as a way to initially populate the site
5) How much hierarchy is usually the model? CoPs are encouraged to only use minimum because it is harder to change later on if there is a complex hierarchy. For those topics with large hierarchies might want to consider instead creating a learning module.
6) Have topic groups work in their areas and they decide who will do eXtension summaries. So need to get everyone into those groups.
7) Suggests some wording changes to broaden the six general topics (i.e. sustainable management practices to include grazing, etc.)

Leader and Collaborator volunteers in Topic areas
1) Asking for everyone to sign up to be a leader and/or collaborator (see spreadsheet – everyone in attendance signed up)
2) Each group needs to develop about 10-15 FAQs and about 10-15 pages of synthesis
3) Authors recommend 1st and 2nd reviewers, but should include both a range specialist and a librarian outside topic team (first internal and then external to group); don't need a blind review

Organizational management
1) Can use Adobe Connect 2 hours a year as part of eXtension project; can do this monthly for group; is there a day and time that works best for everyone (suggestion: noon to 2:00 PST first Wednesday of month)
2) Can also use Breeze or possibly Go To Meeting for R.W. meetings (Arizona will check and try out options)
3) You can ask to be a Rangelands community of practice member, but have to ask to be added (contact John)