

## Partnering for Rangeland Education

# BC RANGELAND MANAGEMENT SCHOOL



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### How is knowledge on rangeland management shared?

This is a challenge that is faced around the world; here is the story about one way we are responding in British Columbia. In 2006, a number of agencies came together to form the BC Rangeland Management School Team, starting an inter-agency collaboration for rangeland education through a series of BC Rangeland Management Schools.

Today, the school is approaching its fourth year of operation with seven collaborating agencies: the BC

Cattlemen's Association, BC Ministry of Forests and Range, BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, Agri-Environment Services Branch of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Thompson Rivers University and the Grassland Conservation Council of BC (GCC). While the team members represent diverse groups, everyone leaves their hats at the door and works collaboratively to share the principles of rangeland management.

### How did we come up with such a novel idea?

We didn't! Several years ago a few people from BC were introduced to an innovative multi-agency rangeland school operating in Colorado. The long-term success of the Colorado school has been based, in large measure, on its commitment to extension education through a multi-

agency team. We borrowed heavily from our friends in Colorado and Oregon to develop one-day classroom and one-day field sessions adapted for BC. We exchanged materials, phone calls, mentoring and presentation support.

## Has the school been working?

Yes. In three years of winter and summer schools, we've had about 700 participants, including ranchers, First Nations, consultants and staff from various government and non-government agencies. For one of the sessions, we present a one-day "Principles of Rangeland Management" classroom session, which covers plant growth, time and timing of grazing, animal nutrition, and animal behaviour. In the summer, the team presents a one-day "Grazing Response Index (GRI)" field session, which applies the classroom principles of range

management to an easy-to-use grazing management decision aid, the GRI. Since 2007 we've conducted twenty sessions in fifteen communities between Fort St. John in the north, Cranbrook in the east, Osoyoos in the south and Burns Lake in the west.

The schools' indicators of success are based on written evaluations and other feedback received from participants. Some participants come back again and again and report learning new things each time.

## So, why has this school worked so well?

The answer to this question has two parts. The first part is because of the terrific participation by those who attend. They bring different backgrounds to the same place and have the time to discuss and learn about rangeland management. The attendees, independent of their background, hear the same message at the same time in an open forum where non-judgmental discussion is cultivated.

The second part of the answer is due to the team members themselves and their supporting agencies. From diverse backgrounds, we share a passion for

BC's rangelands, their management and the people responsible for their stewardship. We're dedicated to working collaboratively and committed to continually improving the school. Most recently, we created a linkage with the GCC to support the extension of the Grassland Monitoring Manual for BC: A Tool for Ranchers.

Our vision is for "a dynamic, well-received extension program supporting sustainable rangeland resources" and our mission is for "a provincial rangeland extension program based on scientific principles and practices".

## Where does the school go from here?

To a location near you! Our goal is to keep spreading the message of applying scientific principles and practices to sustainable rangeland management. If you are interested in learning more about the Rangeland Management School or having it presented in your area,

please contact the BC Cattlemen's Association at 1-877-688-2333 or Russ Horton, Range Extension Specialist, Ministry of Forests and Range at 1-250-371-3826. Workshops will be held this November in Tower Lake, Houston and Quesnel.



## Upcoming Workshops

### BC Rangeland Management School November 2010

**Tower Lake Nov 15 -- Houston Nov 17 -- Quesnel Nov 19**

The principles session of the BC Rangeland Management School is an interactive, full-day workshop designed to increase range managers' knowledge of plant growth, grazing decisions, cattle nutrition and animal behaviour in an effort to improve rangeland management practices and ranching profitability. Workshops run from 9 am until 4 pm and the **registration fee of \$25 includes lunch** and materials.

Workshops will be held in the following locations:

- Tower Lake** Nov 15 at the Tower Lake Hall
- Houston** Nov 17 at the Houston Ice Rink (Viewing Room)
- Quesnel** Nov 19 at the Best Western Tower Inn

Registration forms will be available for mail out through the BCCA office toll free 1-877-688-2333 and is available on the website [www.cattlemen.bc.ca/rms.htm](http://www.cattlemen.bc.ca/rms.htm)

The BC Rangeland Management Team is a partnership between:  
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, BC Cattlemen's Association, BC Ministry of Forests and Range, BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, Ducks Unlimited Canada, Grasslands Conservation Council of BC, and Thompson Rivers University.