

MINUTES
HOUSE AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

DATE: Tuesday, March 20, 2018

TIME: 1:30 pm or Upon Adjournment

PLACE: Room EW42

MEMBERS: Chairman Boyle, Vice Chairman Dayley, Representatives Bell, Miller, VanOrden, Burtenshaw, Kerby, Troy, Stevenson, Amador, Armstrong, Hanks, Zito, Erpelding, Toone

**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** Rep. Bell, Armstrong

GUESTS: None

Chairman Boyle called the meeting to order at 1:33 p.m.

MOTION: **Rep. Kerby** made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 6, 8 and 14, 2018, meetings. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

Chairman Boyle recognized **Caleb Pirc** who has served as the Agricultural Affairs Committee Page and thanked him for his service.

Chairman Boyle and the Agricultural Affairs Committee thanked Secretary, **Joan Majors** for her work in the committee this session.

Brooke Jacobson, Range Program Manager, said the administration of a Range Program is a legislative mandate duty of the Idaho State Department of Agriculture's (ISDA) Director to administer a range program and provide support, coordination and expertise to Idaho rangeland livestock producers and land and wildlife management agencies for the planning and management of vegetation, grazing permits and other rangeland resources that are of importance to the livestock industry. She said 53.8% of Idaho land cover is rangeland which includes public and private lands.

Ms. Jacobson said because of the multiple ownerships and resources on public lands, the range program coordinates with multiple public industry partners including the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Idaho Department of Lands, the University of Idaho and the Idaho Rangeland Resources Commission. She stated they also work with organizations such as the Idaho Cattle Association and Idaho Wool Growers Association to respond to the needs of the livestock industry.

ISDA's monitoring program was developed, **Ms. Jacobson** said, due to the need for collaborative monitoring planning and standardized collection of rangeland health data. Their goal is the utilization of technically sound monitoring methods and credible data for defensible, scientifically-based grazing management decisions. She stated the future for Public Land grazing must include collaborative, proactive engagement in public land management. She said the ISDA's Range Program strives to provide producers and agencies with the tools to accomplish this.

Karen Launchbaugh, Director of the U of I Rangeland Center, stated the mission of the Rangeland Center is to empower researchers and educators at the University of Idaho who strive to create insight and foster understanding for the stewardship and management of rangelands. Their innovative design promotes active partnerships with individuals, organizations and communities who work and live on rangelands. She explained Rangelands cover nearly half of Idaho and provide many goods and services including livestock forage, wildlife habitat, water, and outdoor recreation. She said the economy of Idaho depends heavily on rangelands as 65% of the total land area of Idaho is grazed by domestic cattle and sheep that support rural communities and agricultural enterprises. She explained the five areas their work focuses on as fire/fuel/invasive plants and restoration, rangeland uses, rangeland wildlife, water shed function and climate change. She explained the educational events, monitoring events and workshops offered through the Rangeland Center for hundreds of land managers throughout 2017. She said the partnership between The Nature Conservancy, the Wood River Land Trust and the University of Idaho guides education, research and management of the Rock Creek Ranch near Bellevue has hosted more than a dozen field tours and workshops for those who want to learn more about rangelands.

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 2:21 p.m.

Representative Boyle
Chair

Joan Majors
Secretary