

High School Youth Benefit from Rangeland Management Forum in Spokane, Washington
By Ben Berlinger, Colorado Section of the Society for Range Management, Youth Activities Chair

The Colorado Section of the Society for Range Management (SRM) was well represented at the 2012 High School Youth Forum (HSYF) held in Spokane, Washington on January 29 to February 2, 2012. The HSYF is an integral part of the SRM annual meeting. This year there were 26 delegates representing 13 of the SRM Sections. During the Forum, high school youth from all part of the western United States and Canada are invited to participate and interact among the various professionals and college students attending the meeting. Each of SRM's 21 Sections is allowed to send up to three youth delegates to this program that provides a high quality learning experience.

This year the Colorado Section sponsored three delegates to Spokane. **Nakayla Lestina** of Dove Creek, **David Everhart** of Boone and **Cheyenne Foeppe** of Fountain were selected to participate in the Forum. All three delegates were chosen based on their exceptional participation at the Colorado Association of Conservation District's (CACD) **Camp Rocky**, Colorado's premier natural resource summer camp for high school youth.

The goals of the HSYF are to recognize youth for outstanding accomplishments in rangeland activities and to provide young people the opportunity to discuss rangelands, career options, and meet with leaders in the field of range management. One requirement of the HSYF is that each delegate must present an illustrated talk on some aspect of rangeland conservation or management.

David's presentation was titled ***Drought Management***. During his presentation he discussed how drought is defined and measured, as well as the varying effects drought has on our rangelands and the families who make their livelihoods from their rangelands. David's personal experience regarding the current drought on his family's farm/ranch in northeast Pueblo County was the motivation for his choice of the topic of drought. As a result, David's paper presentation was awarded **SECOND PLACE** out of the 24 presentations made during the Forum!

Nakayla presented her talk on pollinators. It was titled ***The Importance of Native Pollinators and Their Habitats***. Nakayla discussed the different varieties of pollinators and the important role they play to our society. She highlighted the habitats that support pollinators and the need to enhance these habitats through proper management. Nakayla concluded that on rangelands, pollinators benefit people by enhancing aesthetics that improve recreational experiences and that through these activities people get to enjoy the beautiful native forbs that these pollinators help produce. Pollinators also help conserve rangeland plant communities by making them diverse, healthy and productive.

Cheyenne's presentation was about the advantages of grass-fed beef. Her title was ***Grain-Finished Beef vs. Grass-Finished Beef: the Truth Revealed***. During her presentation Cheyanne contrasted the differences between conventional feedlot finished beef that have been fed a grain based diet versus grass-finished beef production. She discussed the health advantages and the environmental benefits of grass-finished beef being reduced feed grains needed leading to reduced soil erosion, less energy inputs and improved management of rangeland & pastureland. Cheyanne cited Colorado rancher Steve Oswald and his successful grass-finished enterprise.

The **Colorado Section SRM** and **CACD** congratulate David, Nakayla and Cheyanne for their outstanding achievements in rangeland management and wish them the best of luck as they further pursue their ambitions in the field of natural resource management. Contact Ben Berlinger (719-384-5408), or Naomi Marcus (970-), for more information about the SRM High School Youth Forum and Camp Rocky.



Colorado delegates to the SRM High School Youth Forum in Spokane, WA:

(l-r) Cheyanne Foepfel, David Everhart, and Nakayla Lestina.