

Pilot Run of Targeted Grazing for Oxeye Daisy, Scentless Chamomile, and Thistles

Jared Lloyd, a young entrepreneur from Western Colorado and the US Forest Service, Grand Mesa National Forest, teamed up together to try and knock back a tenacious patch of oxeye daisy as well as focus on reducing populations of scentless chamomile and musk, Canada, and bull thistles. Jared runs the largest known herd of Shetland sheep & blue-faced Leicester sheep in the United States. With about 400 head of the pint-sized Shetlands and 20 or so Leicester's, Jared and his brother's in-law have their work cut out for them.

The sheep grazed oxeye daisy along a stretch of riparian area that is difficult to treat because of the willows, standing water, etc. They seemed to relish the daisies and nibble off the flower heads like candy. Of course, they don't kill the plants but they do greatly reduce the current year's seed production. To totally get rid of the oxeye, you would have to follow up with herbicide following the grazing and repeat the treatment for many years. With the water, herbicide use is not desirable. The sheep do fairly well on the daisies. The daisies do cause the sheep to have the "runs" but that is likely due to the number they are eating. There are no known toxic properties with daisies.

The sheep also take a toll on the scentless chamomile found on road shoulders and on many thistles. They'll eat a thistle down to the stalk. Overall, this agreement has been beneficial to everyone. It is a temporary agreement between the Forest Service and Jared. Jared has his herders (brother's-in-law) with the sheep at all times. They are penned every night- which is beneficial in that you can concentrate them on a specific area to knock back more weeds. This also reduces losses to the sheep. In the 2-1/2 months they've been grazing, they've only lost three sheep to predators that they know of. It is difficult to keep the sheep all together in brushy country so until they get home, Jared won't have an accurate count of the sheep.



Oxeye daisies before being grazed



Sheep taking down the daisies in their night pen

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This agreement has been beneficial in reducing the year's production on many weeds on the Forest and by the end of the season, Jared will know if it was beneficial for him. He says that the sheep are all fat and happy but has been a lot of work. Hopefully, he'll be willing to try again next year!



Delicious oxeeyes



Not much left of a musk thistle after the sheep found it

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CSSRM Spring Tour

This year's CSSRM spring tour- Rangeland Inventory, Grazing Planning & Ranching Diversification Workshop- was held June 16 and 17 in the San Luis Valley. The two day event was conducted in partnership with CSU Extension and the Mosca-Hooper and Rio Grande Conservation Districts and sponsored by Frances Vanderstappen and the Grill at Cattails, KW Farms, Ranchlands, San Juan Ranch, and Soil Health Services, PBC. The first day was hosted by Duke Phillips and Ranchlands at the Zapata Ranch. The second day was hosted by Cory Off of the Off Ranches.

The RSVP list pointed towards a gathering with at least 70 attendees- help was required on all fronts! Major appreciation to all that readily jumped in to lend a hand- your help was invaluable! Hospitality from the Ranchlands crew is also greatly appreciated and was vital!

After registration formalities, the herd of participants assembled on the lawn under cottonwoods where Duke Phillips introduced himself and presented an overview and philosophy of Ranchlands, the group which manages the Medano-Zapata Ranch. In order to create some familiarity and ease, participants were asked to form a greeting circle- a twice through rotation where each person is a greeter and/or greeted in each rotation. While this took a bit longer than anticipated, the results were reflected in participant engagement throughout the two days.



The Greeting Circle conducted at Zapata Ranch.

The tour included observations and philosophical discussions at: a golf course being reclaimed with grazing management of horses and cattle without supplemental water; valley sand, deep sand, and salt flats ecological sites; a salt meadow within yards to the Medano resident 2,500 head bison herd of uneven-aged bulls, cows, and calves; and the bison barn- the working facilities on the Medano Ranch.

The day capped off at the Zapata Lodge with a grilled supper and pie, a presentation by Fred Bunch, Chief of Natural Resource Management, on the Great Sand Dunes NP, a talk by George Whitten and Martha Skelley of San Juan Ranch on Ranch Management, Intergenerational Transfer, and Life with Apprentices, and music with Kimberly and Carla Diller et.al.

The second day took the tour to Off Ranches on the west side of the valley along the Rio Grande to discuss intensive management. Cory Off walked the group through wet meadows where discussions included the history of management of the ranch, the change from traditional management to intensive planning, the difference in herd management and health with this change, the lengthening of the grazing season, the change in management and timing of use of his USFS permit, and soil health. He demonstrated the ease of moving a herd which is moved frequently and the level of residual left behind to meet his management objectives; this provided a perfect opportunity for Roy Roath to open a conversation on the theory of GRI- Grazing Response Index. We observed a cottonwood stand which struggles to regenerate- possibly due to an unbalanced carbon to nitrogen ratio precipitated by historic management of cows allowed to camp under the stand- versus an uneven-aged stand, vigorous and regenerating, further down river. John Kretsinger of KW Farms suggested distributing straw in the understory to help balance C:N. The tour ended midday with many still standing by parked cars in deep discussions with Cory.



Off Ranches- left side of temporary electric fence ungrazed; right side grazed. Photo taken just before the herd was moved from unit on the right to unit on the left during the tour.

2020 THEME CONTEST

Put on your creative thinking caps!! We need a catchy theme for the 2020 Annual Meeting. Send your theme ideas and description of how it would be captured graphically to Julie by October 26 at julie.elliott@co.usda.gov. Rough sketches (if you have something in mind) are welcome!

GUIDANCE: The theme needs to be something that can be captured graphically. The theme should generate interest and excitement for the meeting and the unique opportunities the venue offers. (We have access to an indoor arena with space for equipment, hands on training, and livestock.)

Submission deadline is October 26, to allow time to develop your ideas after the October 17 tour and planning meeting. CSSRM section members will vote on a theme at their 2016 winter training/annual meetings on November 1-3 in Pueblo. After the Wyoming meeting November 15-17, the votes will be tallied and the winner announced.



Oh, did I mention, there will be a prize for the winning submission? The creator of the winning submission will receive an autographed and framed print/poster of the final design!

CSU Rangeland Ecology Club ~ It's about land health

On behalf of the CSU Rangeland Ecology Club I would like to invite you to our annual Fall Picnic at the Fort Collins City Park on Tuesday, September 20, 2016 starting at 5:00pm. The Range Fall Picnic is a great way to relax and meet students, faculty and professionals who also share a passion for rangelands. Please feel free to also invite your family!

Faculty will be providing the meat, the club will provide condiments and buns, and we would like to ask our guests and members to bring a dessert or side to share with everyone. If you would like to bring something you can [sign-up here](#).

Arielle

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