Educational Seminars/Workshops

- Planned and conducted a Curt Pate Livestock Handling Workshop and seminar with an attendance of 75 people. Immediately prior to the workshop RSA hosted a Beef Quality Assurance training.
- Hosted an estate planning seminar by Cornerstone Financial.
- RSA member Dale Veseth coordinated with Justin Morris of NRCS a follow-up workshop to assist producers in developing record keeping skills related to their grazing practices.
- Several RSA members attended a grazing workshop conducted on and by the Charles M. Russell Wildlife Refuge. Included were five monitoring stations demonstrating different monitoring techniques.
- RSA member Aaron Otarant attended a range management seminar at the Beaverhead Watershed sponsored by Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).
- RSA member Leo Barthelmess hosted five executives from Coca Cola at his ranch to discuss water sustainability.
- Dale Veseth hosted six University of Montana (UM) biology and forestry students at his ranch.

Fostering and Developing Partnerships

- Twelve members of RSA attended a tour on the Antelope Ranch at Cohagen, MT. This is a holistic grazing management ranching operation where participants learned about water development, intensive grazing, stocking rates, etc.
- RSA hosted a workshop with Ducks Unlimited (DU) and Montana Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program. They discussed funding available to ranchers for water development, wildlife, fencing and reseeding needs. DU also has an estate planner that would visit about estate planning and how Ducks Unlimited fits into that role.
- Staffed an informational booth for Ag day in Malta.
- Leo and Brian Martin (The Nature Conservancy, TNC) traveled to California for a presentation to the California Conservation Coalition on the Matador grassbank.
- Leo Barthelmess and Brian Martin gave a presentation to the National Association of County Commissioners at the Matador Ranch about the success of their grassbank.
- RSA hosted a presentation by John P. Hughes, a Wildlife Biologist with the U.S. Fish Wildlife Services, in regards to a new government program that will pay for prairie dog infested acres to be monitored by ranchers.
• RSA met with Nancy Labbe, Jeff Nelson, and Kevin Ellison from World Wildlife Fund. WWF has come to realize the need to work with and support ranchers for the betterment of the natural resources/wildlife community. They also made three proposals to RSA:

a) provide funding to expand a bird study beyond the Matador Ranch;

b) produce a series of videos of life on a ranch in Phillips County. RSA members Bud Walsh, Dale Veseth and Leo Barthelmes participated. See one at www.worldwildlife.org/videos/cattle-and-conservation-ranching-with-wildlife; and

c) partner with a committee from RSA to begin to develop standards for sustainable beef production.

• RSA received an update from Kevin Ellison and Marissa Lipsey on the bird project with the UM Avian Center and WWF. Five ranches were surveyed for nest success rates, numbers and biomass statistics.

• The Nature Conservancy brought 3 proposals to RSA for consideration. They are:

a) partner in a pre-proposal with National Fish and Wildlife Service for pronghorn research;

b) request RSA be an advisor/facilitator for a proposal with DU, National Fish and Wildlife Service, and MT Fish, Wildlife, and Parks and

c) request RSA be an advisor/facilitator for a Conservation Innovation Grant through NRCS on fire grazing. RSA would receive the money, implement the plans with producers and TNC would provide matching funds and administer the grants.

We are awaiting the outcome of these grant proposals.

• General RSA Activities

• Five members attended a grant writing workshop.

• RSA member Perri Jacobs presented at 2 grant writing workshops.

• Two members attended a fundraising workshop as well as a communicating your message workshop.

• RSA membership began working through a planning process to bring focus to our organization.

• Reviewed and updated by-laws.

• Through the bird study grant RSA was able to purchase educational books, video equipment, a projector screen, and a conference call phone system.

Thanks!!!

Saying thank you never seems to be enough to tell those of you who give to us of your time, energy, and expertise how much you are valued. We are also very appreciative of those who support RSA with monetary donations. All of you play a key role in our efforts to sustain, nurture and grow our ranching community. Best of luck to all of you in the coming year. Again, thank you for your support!

We feed the world, preserve our prairie neighborhood, and nurture the next generation: This is conservation, done right!