

The Rangelands Partnership Launches Websites Promoting Sustainable Rangeland Management

The Rangelands Partnership, a university-based, multi-disciplinary collaboration, has launched a suite of websites with a database of more than 13,000 resources, the purpose of which is to support research, sustainable management, and education about the world's rangelands.

Rangelands cover 70 percent of the world's land area and 66 percent of the U.S. They include grasslands, savannas, shrublands and deserts. Rangelands are important resources for wildlife habitat, watersheds, recreation and forage for livestock production and, therefore, are critical to economic development in rural communities and to people everywhere for access to natural resources and open space.

"The spark to create a web-based portal for rangeland resources was supplied by the Agriculture Network Information Center (AgNIC), an initiative coordinated by USDA's National Agricultural Library," says Jeanne Pfander, associate librarian at the University of Arizona (UA) and current Chair of the Rangelands Partnership. "The UA AgNIC team brought together Cooperative Extension rangeland specialists and rangeland scientists, librarians and IT specialists in 1996 to develop an Arizona Rangelands website. The astonishing aspect of this unique interdisciplinary collaboration is how quickly the idea and model spread beyond Arizona."

In 2002, the Arizona Rangelands project expanded to become what is now known as the Rangelands Partnership – a collaboration of 19 western U.S. land-grant institutions and several international organizations which have been working to develop evaluated, science-based information resources and tools now available in the following websites.

[Global Rangelands](#) is the home website, useful for gaining an international perspective on rangeland themes and searching the database which contains full-text articles, reports, videos, learning tools and key websites.

[Rangelands West](#) provides access to the global database as well as specific "Hot Topics" with a focus on Western U.S. rangelands. It also includes sections on "Recruitment & Careers" and "Range Educational Resources" that are being developed by the Range Science and Education Council.

From the *Rangelands West* home page, users can link to state sites developed by multidisciplinary teams serving local constituency information needs. An example is the [Arizona Rangelands](#) website which provides access to extensive resources and videos on vegetation monitoring, a critical tool for making management decisions based on data collected over time.

"These websites have organized, comprehensive information on all aspects of rangelands, much of it not previously easily available to practitioners or the public, especially those living in remote locations," says George Ruyle, Marley Endowed Chair for Sustainable Rangelands Stewardship in the UA's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences' (CALs) School of Natural Resources and the Environment.

Barbara Hutchinson, director of the Global Rangelands Program as well as the UA CALS Communications and Technologies department adds "Providing a broad range of information about rangelands is hugely important. We are taking scientific information to rangeland communities so that they can be more economically viable while retaining open spaces."

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Web URLs: <http://globalrangelands.org>; <http://rangelandswest.org>; <http://globalrangelands.org/arizona>
See also news article at <http://uanews.org/story/major-rangelands-web-portals-connect-science-practice>