

## RESPONSES to Strategic Plan Revision DELPHI #25 -- July 18, 2005

### FOCUS – Strategic Goal Areas

#### RESULTS OF FIRST ROUND –

Fifteen SRR participants responded to the first round of Delphi 25. In the following pages you will find a compilation of the results & selected parts of “quotes” from individuals. Also included are further questions/prompts for you to respond to in this next round.

We appreciate your assistance as we prepare for the upcoming July strategic meeting. Your input will be used to refine the goals of SRR and determine objectives & tactics to address those goals. The following are two objectives for that meeting that will be addressed in a special strategic planning session:

- *Prioritize strategic goals in terms of timeline, available funds, and workshop outcomes. Begin to address objectives under prioritized goals, in the context of principal activities and products that SRR should concentrate on in the next 3 to 5 years, and update Strategic Plan to reflect these new goals, associated objectives and tactics.*
- *Ensure that each prioritized Strategic Goal is clearly articulated, with measurable outcomes and products, and integrate these goals into an updated strategic plan to actualize SRR activities and organizational commitments.*

#### PURPOSE OF THIS DELPHI --

This Delphi is designed to present the draft framework for SRR’s updated Strategic Plan to all SRR participants, obtain input from all interested parties, and further develop SRR Strategic Goal Areas identified at the April 2005 SRR meeting

#### PRIMARY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DELPHI --

- Guaranteed anonymity for all respondents
- Feedback to the Delphi in the form of individual contributions or responses
- Assessment of the group opinion and sharing responses anonymously with participants
- ***Opportunity for individuals to revise their original responses*** following the initial assessment of group opinion, based on other participant input

**YOUR CHARGE** -- Please examine the compilations of responses to the 5 Strategic Goal Areas on the following pages.

-- Using either the “comments” function on Microsoft Word or just by typing in a supplementary document, please indicate where you agree and disagree with statements people have made. You can do this by either writing it out or by indicating with the corresponding Likert number (0 – 5). We just want your feedback on what everyone has written!

-- Then, please email your response back to Jaime at [whitlock@cnr.colostate.edu](mailto:whitlock@cnr.colostate.edu).

-- This second round of responses will be **due back by 12 pm MDT Monday, July 25, 2005**, for use in the Strategic Planning sessions on July 27 and 28, 2005. To help keep organized, please change the file name to append your first initial and last name when you send the file back. Thank you!

## LIKERT REPOSSES FOR EACH STRATEGIC GOAL:

The ID number represents each anonymous person's answers to each of the Strategic Goal statements. As a reminder, the scale is from 1 – 5, with 1 (Strongly Disagree) and 5 (Strongly Agree) and 3 (Neutral).

ID NUMBER	GOAL 1	GOAL 2	GOAL 3	GOAL 4	GOAL 5
1	4	4	4	4	4
2	4	3	3	3	3
3	5	3	5	4	5
4	5	3	5	5	5
5	4	4	5	4	3
6	4	4	5	4	4
7	3	4	5	4	4
8	4	4	4	4	4
9	4	5	4	4	4
10	5	5	4	5	5
11	5	1	5	5	5
12	5	4	5	4	5
13	4	5	5	4	5
14	4	4	4	5	4
15	2	3	5	5	3
<b>AVG</b>	<b>4.13</b>	<b>3.73</b>	<b>4.53</b>	<b>4.27</b>	<b>4.20</b>

**The following is a brief and non-comprehensive summary of some of the points from the responses. The full responses are on pages 5 - 19**

### SUMMARY OF GOAL STATEMENT 1 COMMENTS:

Respondents on average agreed with the goal, considered it laudable, lofty & worthy of being pursued

Concerns about the implementation of this goal – especially the part involving Congress. Some concerns that SRR cannot ask this given its close affiliation with federal agencies.

-- I understand the concern with Congressional interaction (especially by our Agency participants), but the process of standardized assessment of rangelands will not move forward (especially the idea of obtaining “New” money) without the recognition of OMB and GAO (i.e. we need Congress and the Administration to see the value). If we do not do it, where is the push going to come from? We are strategically positioned with interest in both the NGO and University factions wanting to help if we have “real” action items in place and ready to go. We have to be extremely careful and have the strategy mapped out, but the non-governmental SRR folks could, and in my opinion should, pursue this action!

-- We have to push for the establishment of the administrative system and mandates to move this forward! Congress and the Administration is where this can take place. Though we are a grass-roots process, unfortunately, the decision-making will be, in my opinion, a top-down process.

-- The best approach for SRR is to pursue a charter to be signed by all stakeholders and a MOA that spells out fed agencies will collaborate.

Language of the goal seen as clunky & not clear

-- Agree strongly with this, need to reword to make SRR a coordinating organization that has value to the user groups. In this manner we create pull to attract folks to accept SRR C+I rather than have to sell the concept.

Concerns about the numbers of SRR left that could implement this (especially the non-agency people)

-- I concur with this concern. We are starting to lose critical mass. We need to find a way to re-engage the community with the actions we will be proposing for moving forward! We have to get the “**ACTIONS**” in place!

The breadth & scale of the goal may not be beneficial or practical for implementation (e.g. outreach to individual landowners)

-- I believe we should focus on selling standardized assessment of rangelands and use the SRR C&I as the “hook” showing the progress to a standardized approach.

-- A strategic approach can incorporate all three products identified in the goal.

The way we talk about C & I's should be looked at with relationship to the concept of sustainability & paradigms.

Many issues brought up concerning the order, ranking and language of this goal. Suggestions about adding some groups to the audience list

Need to keep focus on completion of the 2010 report & ID this as an objective

-- I am concerned with this concept. After much reflection, I believe that some of the resistance we are getting from certain groups may be a result of our push for a “2010” report. I am beginning to believe that we would be better off focusing efforts on getting the concept of “standardized assessment” accepted that includes the concept of Criteria & Indicators as its basis. Once the concept is accepted, the logical evolution would be the integration of SRR C&I into the mix as well as an eventual report using C&I. If we continue to push for a report based solely on SRR C&I, we may be traveling down a dead-end road. We have to have the paradigm understood and accepted before we can push for the product. That said, we can certainly rely on the work done as the cornerstone for the activities. Anyone interested will surely want to see an example of what we are proposing. With the C&I SRR has, we have the means to the product.

-- Too much focus on the 2010 report, we could and should develop a mock report within the next year that would be a produce that we could show to those with interest in what will SRR really do that is different than the present. Waiting until 2010 will erode the energy of SRR.

-- I agree. Evidently, this goal is not universally recognized within SRR.

Many concerns regarding the actual implementation – reminders that each of these goal statements needs an operational plan & concrete tactics. Also concerns about the order of implementation

### **SUMMARY OF GOAL STATEMENT 2 COMMENTS:**

*This statement received the lowest overall Likert score*

This seen as a very important goal

-- This is important and critical for if we do not set the system up “correctly” in the first place, we set it up for failure. We will have one shot at getting this right. However, SRR does not provide the infrastructure to do this directly. We can provide samples, ideas and concepts, but the Agencies participating in the process will ultimately have to do this or farm it out to others. I think we can draw upon the University systems in this as well as private industry and provide research, ideas, guidance, etc., but SRR, in my opinion, will not play a direct role in this part of the process.

-- Although I don’t disagree over the long term, I somewhat disagree at this time and believe that may be why it received the lowest overall likert score.

-- We should focus this goal more on information rather than data. The ability of SRR to integrate data into information is the strength we bring. This integration should not just be along the traditional lines but cross lines to show the strength of the combined C+I (i.e., biology and social sciences).

Some rewording, spelling out what we really mean and/or just adding this to Goal 1 suggested

-- I agree that this needs to be rewritten, but I think it is a separate issue from goal 1.

-- Disagree Strongly

Implementation again raised – with some feedback on data cataloguing offered

### **SUMMARY OF GOAL STATEMENT 3 COMMENTS:**

*This statement received the highest overall Likert score*

-- I believe the academic community will rise to the occasion on this if the proper incentives are provided (funding sources). I contend that SRR can be the impetus in organizing the type of University Consortium to address the many aspects of this goal. The goal of standardized assessment for rangelands will require a concerted effort in the research community to address the task. Coordination is critical! SRR in coordination with SRM, ESA and other groups with strong academic components can provide the forum for bringing the academic communities together.

Need to spell out why this research is important & why funders would want to make the money available to do this research

-- We need to include some of the tactics from the old strategic plan regarding working with the National Academies of Science to get this type of research on the radar screen so that funding agencies will see the value. If we do not do this, they will continue to believe that “monitoring” programs are not “basic” research!

-- Agree. Details can be worked out.

Seen as appropriate that SRR takes on this task – but is a monumental task to get the data and different groups unified

-- SRR should not and realistically can not “get the data” together. This is the responsibility of the agencies in their reporting to Congress and the public. SRR can provide the forum to get the “different groups unified.”

-- Agree. Still, it’s worth doing.

Need some quality control & specific indicators to be identified to move forward with the research

-- SRR can provide a forum for these activities in working in partnership with Agencies, universities, NGO’s and others.

-- Agree. Can be worked out.

Question about the distribution of research across the different areas

-- I assume this refers to “who” will be doing the research. Development of a consortium of interested universities can coordinate this effort. The consortium would not preclude anyone from conducting the research, but would be very strong in competing for scarce resources as well as provide a centralized effort that can strategically address pressing issues. Building this into the “politics” of the different universities might be challenging, but we do not need a “shotgun” approach to this. We have to have some means to remaining focused on the big picture – Standardized Assessment of Rangelands

#### **SUMMARY OF GOAL STATEMENT 4 COMMENTS:**

Coordination seen as potentially one of main strengths that SRR could offer – as a benchmark for other groups as well.

-- I agree!!

However, also seen as something that could take a lot of work and then not offer many tangible results. Alternatively, others think that without this type of coordination, the other goals & objectives won’t be able to be implemented.

-- SRR role may change in that the second part of the vision may come forward “...act as a forum for dialogue...”

-- I think that this is something SRR should be engaged in, so I am disagreeing with the first part of this statement concerning not receiving tangible results.

-- Some agency people in WO think it is essential to integrate roundtables, if for no other reason than cost savings. However, stakeholders of different roundtables will not closely relate to a single, combined roundtable. One solution is to maintain roundtables, yet work towards an integrated set of indicators. For SRR, they would be a subset of all 64 indicators.

Confusion about the “consistent statement of rangeland sustainability” & the “cross-walk” parts. Respondents requested the need to make sure all the statements are very plain and clear so everyone is interpreting the statements the same way.

Beyond just integrating between the groups – could also add how we are trying to integrating with other ecosystems... and thus, also the groups that manage those

Concerns about how will the agency coordination be realized – especially with decreased NGO numbers in the SRR

-- In some ways we may be infringing on the roles of the individual agencies with this goal. I understand where the goal is coming from, but we need to illustrate in no uncertain terms we are not trying to “coordinate” how the agencies do business. Perception is reality! We have to be explicit as to what kind of coordination we are talking about.

-- I do believe that we can provide significant coordination between the academic and NGO communities and act as a forum for bringing these together with the Federal entities participating.

-- I think this deserved further consideration and SRR needs to spend more effort and think about our role in promoting agency coordination.

#### **SUMMARY OF GOAL STATEMENT 5 COMMENTS:**

Seen as very important – without the money we can’t implement the rest of the goals

Concerns that this shouldn’t be a “strategic goal” for SRR though

-- I think I understand this concern, and this may not be something we advertise to outside interests as a primary goal for SRR because that would sound very self-motivated, but if we don’t deal with funding issues internally we will not be able to attain our other goals.

-- Disagree. It’s not the same, but funding needs to be a goal.

Need to make sure the funding is around a clear reason and because we are credible and can produce results. Not sure if funding can “ensure” adequate infrastructure

-- I concur. SRR must continue to provide relevant benefits in the process of instilling standardized assessment of rangelands into the dialogue. We really need to ask ourselves some hard questions regarding this issue. We cannot be perceived as a “money vacuum” by anyone. We must produce action, whatever that may be, that is valuable to the end users!

Alternatives to our current funding situation are wanted

-- I would support looking at other sources of funding besides agency \$ as alternatives.

Need a goal focused on how to retain and recruit NGO SRR members

-- I agree that this is important and believe it deserves a documented plan.

-- Strongly agree. Active and widespread participation will promote adequate funding by agencies.

Need a staff that can work more full-time on SRR

-- I agree with this statement and I am very concerned about being able to keep SRR progressing without this kind of arrangement. I think we are seeing that participants are not able to continue to put forth the needed effort on a volunteer basis, but I doubt that sufficient funding will be available to pay full-time staff. Although I support this statement, I do not think it is realistic.

**\*\* NOTE: For the following comments from respondents, each individual's set of responses begins with a set of dashes, like this "--". Hopefully this will help you keep the comments' thought-path together.**

**STRATEGIC GOAL # 1: Promotion of Rangelands Sustainability Paradigms**

The SRR has many concepts or products it will encourage or market to other segments of society for them to adopt. Among these products are the concept of rangelands sustainability, the integration of social & economic indicators with natural resource indicators, and the actual criteria & indicators for sustainable rangelands.

Objectives:

- Encourage private landowners to consider the benefits and costs of the use of the C& I to evaluate rangeland sustainability respecting private property rights when considering data collected using this process.
- Promote the continued development of institutional capacities for implementing the organizational use of C & I in sustaining rangelands.
- Succeed in convincing Congress to pass a bill institutionalizing the use of our C & I when dealing with issues of rangeland sustainability and health. This bill will include funding and requirements for periodic reporting on the sustainability of technical, social and economic components of rangelands in the USA at the point when data to populate the C & I's for this purpose are available.
- Tailor a promotion plan to include the following audiences:
  - Producers of products from rangelands
  - Professional societies
  - Environmental groups
  - Conservation groups
  - Trade & business organizations
  - Policy-makers (Local, Tribal, State & Federal)
  - Non-consumptive land users
  - Other interested parties

**1A. Likert Scale of Responses:**

GOAL 1	
AVG	4.13

LIKERT #	GOAL 1
1	0%
2	7%

3	7%
4	53%
5	33%

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### **1B. How do you feel about this goal?**

*(Please write as much as you need here to capture your thoughts)*

-- I agree with the spirit of this goal, but not necessarily the wording. I found some of the language so clunky that it diminished the power of some of the statements and made others just not understandable.

-- This is a key implementation goal. It is very broad, and will take time to implement.

-- Promotion of the paradigm shift to sustainability, and promotion of the use of the SRR indicators is a very important part of SRRs activities at this time. Although convincing Congress to institutionalize the concept of sustainability and use of the SRR indicators is a worthwhile effort, and would represent accomplishment of our goals I am not sure how realistic that might be. Although I have no objection to doing whatever we can to accomplish that, we need to keep in mind that there are other things we can do to promote our objectives whether or not we are ever successful in getting legislation passed.

– agree with this sentiment.

-- I agree that there are other things we can do, and one of them is push forward with a 2010 initial sustainability report. We can use the inadequacies of that 2010 report to convince Congress that we need help to make it better. We can use the 2010 report to show Congress how woeful our national-level reporting ability is. Let's not be embarrassed about it . . . let's use it to our advantage.

-- I FEEL good about the goal, that it's a worthy set of things to strive for, but am not optimistic about being able to influence Congressional leaders enough to have this far-reaching level of influence in the short-term.

-- I agree with this statement

-- I think the focus needs to be changed from C & I to how this is the means for demonstrating sustainability.

-- Not sure what this means?

-- The goal contains some laudable components, but also some parts with which I do not strongly support. Thus, "as a whole" I am neutral with a tendency to agree. See below.

-- The goal is worthy of being pursued. I don't see enough SRR members remaining though to make this happen. Particularly we lack non-agency SRR members who would be critical to making this goal happen.

– the dwindling ranks of SRR members, particularly from certain constituencies, is a real problem to be addressed if we are going to tackle all the things in this strategic plan – perhaps it is worthy of its own goal?

-- What kind of people would be required? Seems like this must be defined.

-- This is a lofty goal, but it must be framed in such a way that we do not communicate the wrong message. Therefore, the objective of the Criterion and Indicators must be the

long term record that will be created to show presence or lack of sustainability in the way that range lands are being managed.

-- The third bullet on Congressional legislation may be less tractable and requires agency support. Regarding the first bullet, SRR is not at a stage where outreach to individual landowners is cost-effective and staying with organizations of landowners is the most effective mechanism to reach rangeland owners.

– I agree – SRR can't (and probably shouldn't) try to tackle individual rangeland users, be they ranchers, campers, or hunters

-- I don't like the title of paradigms. This implies that we have multiple paradigms, where in reality we have one as the set of C&I's. I don't think we are going to promoting other groups C&I's.

--agree

-- Very important to achieve real improvements

-- I agree with all items with the exception of a bill to congress. A bill that became law could result in the ability to collect data regarding C Sustainability C&I but depending on what was written could result in inflexibility that may be need in the future once data was collected and analyzed and found not to be what we really need.

-- Agree

-- I doubt that such a bill will ever be passed and I agree that some flexibility should be retained.

-- I disagree with this. I highly doubt much inflexibility will be built into a law on this. I highly doubt the bill would be written so specifically on the types of data and the indicators, that we would be ham-strung.

In addition we may already have all the legal authorities we need. This needs to be carefully analyzed.

-- The agencies do indeed have legal authorities for reporting . . . the problem is, we don't have any legal authorities for reporting on rangeland sustainability.

**1C. Please specify anything you think should be added and/or removed from the above strategic goal.** *(Please write as much as you need here to capture your thoughts)*

-- There are a lot of prepositional phrases that probably could be cut to make the statements more concise and powerful.

Is there a reason for the order of groups in the list? It seems like the Federal agencies have been and will continue to be our most important audience and maybe should be listed first. How are we distinguishing environmental groups from conservation groups?

-- Proposed Alternative Goal Language:

SRR seeks wide understanding, broad acceptance, and the general support of the public for the use of SRR Criteria and Indicators to measure and evaluate changes in rangeland sustainability through the use of a comprehensive array of social, economic, and environmental indicators so that all important aspects of sustainability

are considered.

- This alternative wording gets a lot closer, for me, to what a goal should read like and I think gets more at what SRR can tackle – also gets rid of paradigms which I was stumbling over in the original – I think we really need to pay attention to the language used and the order of the objectives – the language used in the first draft wouldn't have me charging up the hill (and I'm already way up having devoted 4 years to this effort)

Objectives:

- 1) SRR will seek the support of the ranchers and other users of public and private rangelands for the use of SRR Criteria and Indicators in evaluating rangeland sustainability.  
– why single out ranchers, why put them first – haven't the Federal agencies been (and continue to be) our biggest "customers"? – not sure this should be the first objective under this goal
- 2) SRR will work to convince ranchers and other users of rangelands that the benefits of using SRR Criteria and Indicators outweigh the costs, and that the value of the information garnered outweighs the aggravation of gathering it.  
– again, I don't understand why ranchers are singled out over other users; I'm not loving the wording of the second phrase
- 3) SRR will work to guarantee that private property rights will be respected, and protected, during the collection, processing, and use of data collected using the SRR Criteria and Indicator process.  
– Can SRR really guarantee that private property rights will be respected and protected? This seems quite a ways from our "jurisdiction"
- 4) SRR will work to assure that the institutions that oversee rangelands have the resources and programs necessary for implementing SRR Criteria and Indicators on rangelands.  
– yikes! – again is this something that SRR can assure; perhaps we need to temper this to say SRR will advocate for or something along that line
- 5) SRR will work with all interested parties to obtain Congressional legislation and funding that institutionalizes the use of SRR Criteria and Indicators when dealing with issues of rangeland sustainability and health.  
– again this probably needs to be tempered since no one seems very optimistic about the possibility of it happening – or agreed that it is a good idea – suggest we may want to phrase this in terms of advocating for (if we agree that we want to do that)
- 6) SRR will advocate for suitable data collection and management capacities in the institutions that protect and manage rangelands, including those institutions that conduct research into the many facets of rangeland sustainability.  
– this seems to be goal #2 rather than an objective of goal 1

- 7) SRR will facilitate coordination between other roundtables, agencies, and organizations involved or potentially involved in monitoring data collection and analysis, and criteria and indicator and dataset development.
  - this seems to be goal 4 rather than an objective of goal 1
- 8) SRR will facilitate cross-walk among the rangeland indicator sets with the goal of promoting future integration of rangeland indicators using common definitions and protocols.
  - again part of goal 4
- 9) SRR will develop a consistent statement of rangeland sustainability.
  - hmm, I think I might like this better under goal 1 than goal 4 – it’s certainly links to both

SRR will promote coordination between agencies that monitor and report on rangelands.  
 – part of goal 4?

-- I don't necessarily think anything needs to be removed, but the order caused me some confusion. Although I recognize the importance of acceptance by "private Landowners", I am not sure why they are singled out in the first objective.

– I agree completely, it seemed like we were giving private landowners special consideration when it seems like the Federal agencies have been and will continue to be are major "customers"

Later we talk about tailoring a promotion plan for a variety of interests, but in the first paragraph under objectives we refer only to private landowners. If the intent was to specifically identify certain groups as being of primary importance, then I think the fourth objective that discusses tailoring a plan for a variety audiences should be listed first.

– agree that we should start with the broader objective first

That can be followed by objectives stating that special effort should be placed on private landowners, policy makers within government and legislators. It appears to me that the second objective that says we should promote the development and institutional capacities for implementing C & I would be accomplished through the fourth objective that discusses development of a promotional plan. If we combined those objectives into one objective it would help clarify what the promotional plan for a variety of audiences is intended to accomplish, and by placing that first is identifies that as our overall goal.

I am afraid we are losing site of preparation of an initial report and we need to specifically identify completion of an initial report by 2010 in this section. If we want our indicators to be used in national level reporting that has to start somewhere, and I believe we should identify the completion of an initial report in our objectives.

– I'm unclear if you are suggesting that SRR should take on doing the report or if we're still operating under the agreement that SRR will encourage and support the agencies in doing the 2010 report – can we really say that one of our objectives is have a report complete by 2010 when so much will depend on whether or not the agencies take it on (or fund SRR to take it on) – if we add this we'll probably need to include some caveats  
 -- Whoever wrote this needs to be applauded. I agree very much

-- Part of the promotion of our SRR products needs to involve doing some quality control on the products themselves. I think this objective should also involve taking a hard look at our list of indicators and consider needed revisions. One thing SRR can be doing now

is looking at some of the indicators that we are not sure will be useful for discussing sustainability, and evaluate them to the best of our ability. We need to either determine they do not appear to be useful and revise our list, or identify research needed to make the indicator useful.

– another “go” at the indicators (in a more systematic and thoughtful way than the way we cut down to the “core” indicators) actually might be something that some of the folks who have fallen by the wayside might get re-invigorated by

-- This is important. We have done some work on prioritizing but I agree that this must be considered a bit more. What indicators will actually be useful and which ones can be populated with data in the foreseeable future?

-- Perhaps the audiences need to be “ranked” in some form, assuming that ALL cannot be covered at once, at least not in full. That prioritization doesn’t mean some don’t matter or won’t be covered, just that it can’t all happen at once.

-- hmm I see the pragmatic reasoning for this, but I would recommend that we have some sort of low-level attempt to cover all audiences with perhaps concentrated and targeted efforts for high priority audiences – otherwise I feel like we’ll just continue to ignore certain groups with no attempt to reach them

-- I agree that it can not all be accomplished at once.

-- C & I should be written out. The focus appears to be C & I rather than the ability of C & I to determine whether you are sustainably managing rangelands – a way to hold ourselves and others accountable to society and future generations.

– we probably need to develop more reasoning behind how the C&I can be used to sustainably manage rangelands – we’ve kinda been going on faith and “expert opinion”

-- Seems like we have written them out.

-- Because of the scale issue, I do not see a benefit to asking private landowners to consider the SRR indicators for evaluating how sustainably their lands are being managed. I cannot make the connection between our indicator pertaining to property rights and the objective. If it only alludes to asking landowners to give access to their property so data on other indicators can be collected, then the question is too detailed.

-- This is a good comment. We tend to think about individual plant communities or ranches and have a more difficult time thinking about what is happening on all rangeland throughout the U.S.

I disagree that a stated goal of SRR is to convince Congress to pass laws that institutionalize the SRR C&I. Our goal is to promote the acceptance and use of the indicators to all stakeholders. If some of our stakeholders take on the role of asking for Congressional actions, so be it. However, the SRR has too close of an affiliation with federal agencies to allow such a goal for the Roundtable, itself.

-- Sure we have been funded prominently by the Federal Agencies. However, this should not stop us from trying to get some legislation going.

The promotion plan is fine.

-- I am struggling with the first objective. I cannot see anything tangible there about how SRR would implement that objective. How would we encourage the private landowners? Whoever came up with this objective, what did you REALLY have in mind?

-- Same comment here applies. How do we think about an individual allotment rather than the entire U.S. This has always been a problem for my mind to comprehend, that is, how do the indicators move up or down the scale from an individual allotment to the all the U.S. rangelands.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> objective is probably only feasible if Congress passes such a bill first for forests. Perhaps Congress is moving that direction for forests with the HFRA (Healthy Forests Restoration Act?). Congress will never, in my lifetime, care more about rangelands than forests. It's going to be a hard sell. The other thing that bothers me about this goal is that if we think the bill from Congress will be contingent on having the data first, then I don't think we'll ever get there. We need the bill from Congress to force us to collect the data.

-- This is a very good comment.

And Congress needs to hold us accountable. Right now, BLM for example has legislation directing us to collect inventory and trend data for range condition and report continuously on range condition. Yet we aren't being held accountable to it.

-- Each of the bullets requires an operational plan to be developed in addition to the strategic plan framework.

-- this is true for all the goals and objectives – it's one thing to say we are going to do something it's quite another to say specifically how we are going to do that

-- Objective 1 reads rough. There needs to be something connecting “evaluate rangeland sustainability” and “respecting private property rights” such as “while”. Even then, it still reads rough.

Objective 3 should have ecological not technical in it. I am not sure we want to only have reporting “at the point when data to populate the C & I's for this purpose are available”. Also, don't we also want them to fund the required research necessary to develop and evaluate the indicators.

-- It seems that the main audience is to the agencies that manage our rangelands, at least in the 11 western States. Seems they were left off of your audience list and should be added. They are probably the most important audience. Or perhaps that was meant to be included under policy makers but they are to manage other set the policy on the federal lands.

- agree

-- The first objective should include both private landowners and public land users (grazers, recreationalists, etc.).

– agree that we should expand to all rangeland users and not just focus on private land users

-- Agreed

Though I would feel best about convincing Congress to use SRR's C&I, I believe we should leave to door open that a combination of C&I from multiple efforts might make up the final list implemented. We have to promote SRR, but I believe we need to also promote the overall concept of C&I in assessing sustainability on rangelands.

-- this provides a nice link between goals 1 and 4

If we are going to truly try and get Congress to move on this, we had best be ready with direct action oriented objectives that are well thought out and ready to move. We do not want to succeed in getting the “Congressional Hearings” scheduled and not be ready. We had also better think about who Congress will be calling to testify on these matters. We need to position ourselves to be represented, but they will also be calling others that may not be as “supportive” of our cause.

– I agree that we have not always capitalized on opportunities as best we could and should have a plan of action to be ready when such opportunities come up

The Congressional move is a huge step, and one I agree that we need to proceed with, but we better make sure we understand all the intricacies before we move on it!

-- I doubt if anyone understands all of these intricacies. I wish I did.

-- Need development of better decision support tools toward this end ... for cost-benefit

-- SRR could serve as a champion and coordinator of agencies with responsibilities to collect data and identify data gaps...

– we certainly should in some way – but we need to think about how we go about doing this, what does it mean to be a “coordinator”?

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## **STRATEGIC GOAL # 2: Promote Quality Data**

Develop capacities to promote data accountability, data management, and knowledge information systems for analyses of rangeland sustainability indicators.

### **2A. Likert Scale of Responses:**

GOAL 2	
<b>AVG</b>	<b>3.73</b>

LIKERT #	GOAL 2
1	7%
2	0%
3	27%
4	47%
5	20%

### **2B. How do you feel about this goal?**

*(Please write as much as you need here to capture your thoughts)*

-- Wow, compared to goal 1 this seems rather sparse. Are there no specific objectives under this goal?

-- This is duplicative of several of the objectives in the first goal. I doubt that it is needed as a separate goal.

-- I think this is a very important goal but we probably need some additional expertise in the area information systems and data management. This is likely an area that many of us are quite weak in our understanding of appropriate methods.

-- I think this is a goal that could be important to SRR down the road, but right now getting the indicators widely used needs to be a higher priority. Once the concepts have been well accepted and the indicators are commonly used, our priorities could be shifted toward data quality and management.

-- I think that this should still be a separate goal, rather than rolled into another goal, but perhaps it should not be goal #2

-- The need for data management is still important and is probably necessary to get the indicators used by whoever it is that should use them.

-- Data quality is a major part of monitoring (measuring) sustainability, but excellent accountability, management and analysis of bad data will not be helpful. I think we want to promote quality in the whole process of assessing the sustainability of rangeland, including data quality.

-- agreed

-- This seems like a given on some levels. Among the group (internally), I would assume this is a standard to uphold re: scientific merit. Perhaps this is most important though in order to legitimate the establishment & “testing” of the criteria among broader circles/audiences.

-- also in making data available and “cross-walk-able”

-- Good idea, but needs to be reworded.

-- agreed

-- Seems there is always need to continually do some good wordsmithing.

-- The SRR cannot actually develop these capacities; however, it is important that SRR promote their development.

-- agreed -- Yup!

-- A laudable goal, but how do we go about doing it? I guess this is a strategic plan, rather than a tactical plan.

-- This is about understanding the metadata supporting the SRR indicators—promoting quality data is a second step beyond understanding.

-- I don't think that it is up to SRR to develop capacities. I do think SRR can review or promote data accountability, data management, and knowledge information systems.

-- agreed, but we also want to make sure that SRR is known for it's stance on the importance of data quality, availability, etc.

-- We have to develop these capacities or have others do it if the data is to be available and used.

-- This certainly an important goal but I am not clear who and how this will be accomplished. I guess that is the reason for the goal. There certainly must be some

research on how to do this. The data sets are few and far between and so there is a great need to determine how to accumulate new data (probably based on research) and how to manage the data. I have a difficult time trying to identify who will do this.

-- This goal is critical! We must remember that there are many players already in this game and we need to be aware of opportunities and threats that may be faced. I think we need to get a good handle on what is being done already so we are not seen as trying to “re-invent the wheel.” The following are some key points...

-- (perhaps we should develop some sort of SRR white paper from these points?)

## SUSTAINABLE RANGELAND ROUNDTABLE DATA WAREHOUSING & INTEGRATION DISCUSSIONS

-- This is an excellent summary. I am not sure that we have the expertise in the SRR bunch to do this. So where do we get it?

### A. What are the current problems?

1. Funding & mandates spread across agency responsibilities
2. Data is disparate and non-standardized across all agencies
3. File formats are different (GIS, dB, spread sheet, text, etc.)
4. Individuals protective of their role in data collection, management, etc.

### B. What are potential solutions?

1. System that empowers people to work together, but retains independent agencies roles
2. Technology that is generic & scalable across users, formats
3. Provide for the needs of individual agencies and their funding sponsor
4. System allows for handling disparate data

### C. What are the outcomes?

1. A system that provides no threat to the individual mandates within agencies and draws upon their strengths
2. A system that provides for individual agencies to retain control over their own data
3. A system that promotes collaborative networks across agencies
4. A system that provides faster access to data from multiple agencies and that in a managed format allows for use by interested constituents
5. A system that provides common formats, common data and ultimately common metadata
6. A system that is developed under a common structure and transferable across agencies

## THE PRODUCT: A RESEARCH NETWORK!

### D. CONCERNS: What do the “usual suspects” provide?

1. Giants like Oracle and IBM provide the basic software at reasonable prices
2. But, the consultant fees are tremendous for development of processes outside the basics
3. Systems are packaged and lack flexibility required for a dynamic systems as proposed

- Good, well documented data are needed to understand conditions and options
- Need more information on the purpose

**2C. Please specify anything you think should be added and/or removed from the above strategic goal.** *(Please write as much as you need here to capture your thoughts)*

- Perhaps we should define what we mean by data accountability, data management and knowledge information systems – these terms could mean different things to different people.
- Yes I think that this must be more carefully defined.
- Delete “Develop capacities to promote data accountability, data management, and knowledge information systems for analyses of rangeland sustainability indicators.” Add amended version as an objective in revised Goal 1 above.
- I suggest: Promote the Accurate Assessment of Rangeland Sustainability  
Promote the development of the capacities to accurately measure and report rangeland sustainability, including field methods, sampling design, data quality control, data management, analysis, and reporting.
- I think I like this, but is it too much to bite off?
- This is important but the things mentioned here are part of the research goal I think and not the need for handling the data, etc.
- The way this goal is phrased, no one but us will know what it really means. We need to dumb it down to be more understandable.
- This is often true.
- Objectives need to be crafted covering a data catalogue for all the SRR indicators and for a pilot project for SRR to work with data holders to harmonize their collection and management regimes in order to avoid duplication of effort and conflict.
- I think a pilot project would be good. There is a need to develop a real honest-to-gosh example of how some of these things can be accomplished.
- Important to add in the ability to evaluate uncertainty ... both of data and models/decision support tools that use the data. Also need for more monitoring data (in-situ) that are consistently measured. - agreed

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**STRATEGIC GOAL # 3: Research**

SRR will promote ecological, economic and social research to assess indicators of rangeland sustainability and their interrelationships/interactions. SRR will encourage research funding organizations to support the above activities. Research funding organizations include private foundations, federal research organizations (NSF, CSREES, etc.), federal natural resource and environmental management agencies.

### 3A. Likert Scale of Responses:

GOAL 3	
<b>AVG</b>	<b>4.53</b>

LIKERT #	GOAL 3
<b>1</b>	0%
<b>2</b>	0%
<b>3</b>	7%
<b>4</b>	33%
<b>5</b>	60%

### 3B. How do you feel about this goal?

*(Please write as much as you need here to capture your thoughts)*

-- So are we just going to go around and say give us money? Again, I agree with the spirit of the goal, but think it falls short. We might want to think about why the research is important. Also enrolling researchers in research on the ecological, economic and social aspects of rangeland sustainability and the interrelationships/ interactions of the indicators may be as important as getting funding agencies to pony up the bucks. There is much more to the decision to conduct research than money being available (though that is a big driver), but why would funding agencies want to make the money available? What is the relationship between the stakeholder demands for information and the research supply?

-- Some good thoughts that I mostly agree with.

-- This statement is probably a truism, but it is really an “Objective” statement in disguise. Revise and include in the revised goal statement above.

-- I think the promotion of research relative to the SRR indicators is very important, and some of that research should be started as soon as possible. In some cases we have identified indicators that we “think” may be useful for providing information on rangeland sustainability. In some cases further research is needed to help us evaluate some of our indicators, therefore this research is needed now as we attempt to promote wide acceptance of the SRR indicators.

-- This, once again, suggests the need to do some additional prioritization so that the most important indicators can get researched. It is wishful thinking to suppose that very many of the indicator data sets can be researched at any reasonable level.

-- Very strong agreement, as this seems like the only way to establish more of a track record re: the indicators, as well as have them be a dynamic group of measures that can & will evolve with time.

– I think we need to say more than just we’ll promote research funding if we really want to establish a “track record” – we need to expand more on what we mean in the first sentence; this goal needs some objectives (and of course tactics)

-- Really needed in order for agencies and organizations to agree on how to collect standard data.

-- I would like to see the federal natural resource agencies come together in a united manner and fund such research.

-- Me too but I remain somewhat pessimistic about seeing much of this.

Other funding organizations might then take notice. A model example of how this is happening is the Joint Fire Science Program. A wildfire catastrophe of epic proportions in the late 1990's and early 2000's was necessary to jump-start Joint Fire Science Program though, and I'm pondering if such a catastrophe for rangeland sustainability in this country will have to happen first. Without such a catastrophe, perhaps we can look at research that is already being conducted. Right now, JFSP is funding a 5 year, 12 million dollar project on evaluating effects of fire and fire surrogate treatments in the sagebrush biome, in the Great Basin region. It is an interdisciplinary research project with biological, physical, economic, and social-political indicators being proposed for measurement. Mark Brunson is on this project and knows what I mean. They will be exploring the interactions of these indicators and interrelationships. Such interdisciplinary research is necessary to explore indicator relationships among ecological, social, and economic. Can't SRR take on this role of interpreting the findings of such research? Rather than just supporting the research?

-- I think that the SRR could certainly have a role in interpreting some of the ongoing research. Those who get paid for the research may not always be as objective as they should be.

-- I believe that this is an appropriate goal for SRR to pursue. We need to work with all of those funding sources to adopt the indicators as reasonable research objectives that they will find worthy to fund.

-- Probably only a bit of this will get done in the near term. It must certainly be a long-term goal. However, long-term research is very difficult to fund. It certainly must be encouraged.

-- We need to have some means of quality control/quality assurance in the research arena. This may be in the form of SRR members serving on review panels, etc.

Right now, most funding agencies are not interested in funding "monitoring" or "assessment" research. We need to work to change this mind set or we will not be able to get this type of research into the big funding scene.

-- This is probably very true.

**3C. Please specify anything you think should be added and/or removed from the above strategic goal. (Please write as much as you need here to capture your thoughts)**

-- I believe we could add some language to this goal and SRR could actively be identifying and developing research needs that would help facilitate evaluation of our indicators. At this point I think we have been too general about what research is needed and as a result I would not expect much research to be initiated. We should identify specific indicators that have an immediate need for research and help identify what we need to know about the indicator to help move this process forward. At that point we would have a product that we could promote to organizations and agencies that could fund the research.

- agreed

-- What will the balance be between the different areas (ecological, economic, social)?  
Equal?

– that probably is not our call, though we certainly could work to encourage a balanced approach (which may not be the same as an equal dollar approach)

-- This is a good arguable question. I guess it would depend on where you fit. Someone or perhaps all of us will have to determine this one.

-- SRR will promote ecological, economic and social research to improve or develop state of the art tools, technologies and techniques to assess indicators of rangeland sustainability and their interrelationships/interactions.

– this sounds like a good objective for this goal

-- The goals all sound good like Christmas and the Easter Bunny but the “how to do it” seems missing. Possibly this is a continued process that SRR should be involved in.

-- It might not hurt to try and have something in here from the first strategic plan regarding efforts to get funding agencies to develop priority research areas for C&I efforts.

-- Agreed.

-- Greater emphasis on monitoring data (links between in-situ and remote sensing) to be able to understand conditions and options, and to scale from ranches to watersheds to basins. Needs to include completion of key national databases such as SURRGO. This comment also applies to Goal 2.

– this sounds like it could be crafted to be an objective under this goal

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#### **STRATEGIC GOAL # 4: Coordination**

SRR recognizes that rangelands are integrated with other ecosystems and that coordination with other roundtables and organizations is necessary to assess landscapes comprehensively and promote sustainability of rangelands. The SRR will facilitate coordination between other roundtables, agencies, and organizations involved or potentially involved in monitoring data collection and analysis, and criteria and indicator and dataset development

##### Objectives:

- Facilitate development of a cross-walk among the rangeland indicator sets with the goal of promoting future integration of rangeland indicators using common definitions and protocols.
- SRR will develop a consistent statement of rangeland sustainability.
- Promote coordination between agencies that monitor and report on rangelands.

#### **4A. Likert Scale of Responses:**

GOAL 4	
AVG	4.27

LIKERT #	GOAL 4
1	0%
2	0%
3	7%
4	60%
5	33%

**4B. How do you feel about this goal?**

*(Please write as much as you need here to capture your thoughts)*

-- The statement may be a truism, but it is not rally an important goal of SRR. The goal section is really a poorly worded "Objective" and the other "Objectives" are just more of the same. Clean them up and include as Objectives in the revised goal above.

-- I think coordination may be important enough to be it's own goal, I'm worried that if we roll pieces of it into other goals it will get lost and this might be the thing we can actually make happen; however the goal and objects as stated leave me flat – they are sorta ambiguous and not very powerful (though I think the sentiments behind them might be)

-- I think that SRR needs to accomplish this overall goal and I support the objectives but I am not sure I fully understand each of the objectives. Specifically I am not sure what is meant by "develop a consistent statement of rangeland sustainability".

-- Worthy goal. This could add lots of work that may or may not produce tangible results though. It would be ideal, but the types of things people would shove to the back when there is too much else to do, which seems like most of the time.

-- Good ideas

-- A laudable goal. But for this goal and goals 1, 2, and 3, where's the money going to come from to allow SRR to do these things? Are we going to rely solely on federal resource management agencies?

-- Coordination among other groups could be one of the strengths of SRR.

- agree

-- This should be an important goal of the SRR. However, it is difficult to get people to coordinate when they often do not want to talk to others.

-- I wish I knew a sure fire method for promoting coordination. I don't think there is one. I guess the best is to keep hammering away, making lots of good noise at the proper times and places.

-- Agreed!

-- It is going to take more than SRR to pull this coordination off. Yup!  
This may be something that falls in the realm of CEQ as they are accustomed to pulling these types of large, cross-cutting efforts together. We need to continue to move up on the CEQ radar even beyond where we are at.

This goes beyond the “usual suspects” and across many Departments and Agencies. Therein lies the strength of working with CEQ to get this done.

-- Critical in advancing everything given limited budgets

**4C. Please specify anything you think should be added and/or removed from the above strategic goal. (Please write as much as you need here to capture your thoughts)**

-- Do we want to add something about international coordination with groups in South Africa, Australia, Asia, etc., who may be doing related things?

-- I don't know that any of these objectives need to be removed, but I would consider the objective of promoting better coordination between the agencies that monitor and report on rangelands to be a higher priority right now.

The objective that refers to developing a consistent statement of rangeland sustainability needs to be clarified. I also am not sure I fully understand the first objective that discusses development of a crosswalk between the indicators sets (Does indicator sets mean the indicators SRR identified under the 5 criteria?), so I believe that could be clarified as well.

I think SRR has had problems in the past with statements that are too vague and mean different things to different individuals. We need to take extra care to make sure this plan is well understood by each SRR participant, and reduce the number and variety of individual interpretations as much as possible.

– agree strongly

-- Need to put individuals in charge of these areas, or it would never happen as intended.

– I agree, but I think we need to make sure those individuals are supported by the group and recognize that most of us are volunteers

-- This goal set could be written more clearly to reflect its overall objective of “integrating with other ecosystem.” In addition to promoting a better understanding of interactions among SRR indicators, we need to emphasize the integration of SRR indicators with RSF indicators and rangeland sustainability indicators at the local, management-unit level.

- agree

-- Or do we want to integrate the thinking of various groups relative to all kinds of rangeland ecosystems. Once again it is a matter of interpretation.

I disagree with the statement that SRR will develop a consistent statement of rangeland sustainability. Our work promotes the use of indicators to assess trends in sustainable management (which requires integrating across indicators and criteria), but it does not address statements of rangeland sustainability, itself.

-- For the first objective, I don't understand what the cross-walk will be cross-walking. What will the rangeland indicator sets be cross-walked to?

-- A good question. Cross-walk to who or where?

For the 3<sup>rd</sup> goal, we hardly have any NGO SRR members remaining. So who will promote the coordination among the agencies? The agency SRR members themselves? We just had a meeting (Ardmore) where the attendees were flabbergasted that this goal wasn't already happening and that SRR hadn't yet made it happen. And we've had House of Representative Report language out there for 4 years now that is promulgating this same goal and some agencies are still foot-dragging.

-- . I would say that agency heads must be interested in and willing to coordinate or it simply will not get done. There is a need to ascertain the thinking of these leaders relative to coordination and determine if they really are willing to do any coordinating. I doubt if they are really, in most cases, interested in doing this beyond just talking about it. The need to coordinate sounds good.

-- I'm not sure the 2<sup>nd</sup> objective fits here. It says SRR will develop the definition, but this is in the coordination goal.

-- SSR should recommend pilots to test concepts of indicator consistency across agencies. SRR needs to go beyond just recommending this type of approach, but also help identify the geography, biophysical settings, and agencies/organizations to be involved.

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**STRATEGIC GOAL # 5: Critical Financial needs goal**

Ensure that SRR infrastructure and funding supports attainment of strategic plan goals and objectives between now and 2010.

**5A. Likert Scale of Responses:**

GOAL 5	
AVG	4.20

LIKERT #	GOAL 5
1	0%
2	0%
3	20%
4	40%
5	40%

**5B. How do you feel about this goal?**

*(Please write as much as you need here to capture your thoughts)*

-- Of course this is important – without the financial resources we can't do the above goals, but is it really equivalent to the other goals – they just seem so much bigger to me than ensuring that SRR has an operating budget.

-- This is well said.

-- I strongly agree with the statement, but it is not a goal of SRR – **it is a charge to the representatives of the convening agencies.** Note that the charge is **to** the convening agencies – not **from** them. It comes from somewhere on high.

That may seem like splitting hairs, but the convening agencies have always had the responsibility to provide funding and direction in amounts necessary to achieve the desired results. It is OK to ask the participants for advice – and to “allow” group suggestions to help “guide” the process, but when it gets crunchy, the convening agencies have to take control and be accountable.

- I don't really follow this argument, I agree that funding the whole C&I adoption and implementation shebang is probably beyond SRR's purview, but I'm not sure I understand where you are going with the whole second paragraph

-- Agreed.

I do not think that this statement is a necessary strategic goal for SRR!

-- On the other hand without such a goal the SRR will quickly fall by the wayside.

-- We can't accomplish any of our goals if we don't make sure we have the funding and infrastructure to support those efforts.

-- Agreed

-- Again, this seems ideal, but may require an insurmountable level of coordination. May have to rely on smaller groups attempting to organize proposals and seek funding, which is hard enough, so the larger scale seems ominous.

-- Good to promote funding, but we need to be around for a reason and because we are credible and produce results.

-- I'm not sure how we can guarantee that SRR funding will “ensure” adequate infrastructure and funding.

– agree; the way the goal is currently worded seems like we are looking for SRR funding, but I guess it could also be interpreted to mean funding in a broader sense to cover whole C&I adoption and implementation shebang – we probably need to be clear on what we are talking about

-- Again a laudable goal. I just wonder how we're going to fund it. The federal resource management agencies have been funding SRR. If we keep losing NGO SRR members, we're going to be left with SRR being a Federal group. Not good.

-- I like the thought, but the goal itself reads is hard to read and understand.

– not sure if this was intentional, but I enjoyed it

-- This is a must goal.

-- Without it we are dead in the water!

-- Important if SRR is to be a player and leader in this area

-- Need additional information what is the objective , how much is needed, what will be done....

**5C. Please specify anything you think should be added and/or removed from the above strategic goal. (Please write as much as you need here to capture your thoughts)**

-- Although I don't know the exact specifics that need to be included in this section I think this is sufficiently important that some specifics should be included. With shrinking federal budgets, SRR needs to anticipate reduced support from the federal agencies. I would like to see some specific alternatives identified that could be implemented if the federal agencies are not able to continue supporting this effort at current levels. This could involve identification of other funding sources, or identification of how SRR could continue to function at reduced levels of funding.  
-- agree in fact the whole exercise of identifying alternatives to the Federal agencies for SRR funding could be an objective under an this goal (assuming this goal is about funding SRR)

-- We need a strategic goal focused on retaining current NGO SRR members and recruiting new NGO SRR members. I don't see how SRR can stay alive much longer if we continue to lose NGO members. .

-- agree strongly -- we do need a strategy for maintaining members from as broad a stakeholder contingent as possible and need to not focus on some groups while ignoring others

-- There is a need to have staff for SRR that moves beyond a secretariat function and into pursuit of the strategic plan objectives on a daily, ongoing basis.

-- This would be ideal I suppose but wonder if such funding can be forthcoming.

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**PLEASE NOTE: RESPONSES MUST BE EMAILED BACK TO  
JAIME WHITLOCK [whitlock@cnr.colostate.edu](mailto:whitlock@cnr.colostate.edu) BY 12 PM MDT  
ON MONDAY, JULY 25, 2005.**

*THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS DELPHI ROUND!*