

# Lesson 21: Range Management Related Careers and Professional Societies

## What Jobs Are Available in the Range Management Area?

Rangelands are diverse and so are the types of jobs related to them. People with all sorts of interests work on the range. Obviously, ranchers, cowboys and shepherders work on the range. There are many types of careers available to people who want to work outdoors, who like to hike or ride horses, who enjoy studying and interacting with nature and who want to have a positive impact on rangelands.

Range management specialists and wildlife biologists work on public and private rangelands. So do soil scientists, hydrologists, botanists, rangeland ecologists, recreation specialists, educators and more. A career dealing with rangelands can be had in just about every country on the planet.

## Who Hires Range Professionals?

Federal land management agencies employ a large number of range professionals. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), US Forest Service (USFS), and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) are all agencies that hire range management specialists to manage federal lands. But, did you know that the Department of Defense (DOD) also hires range professionals to manage the rangeland associated with military bases? Or, did you know that USDA-Agricultural Research Service (ARS), maintains research stations that manage range experimental research stations. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) also hires trained range specialists to assist ranchers and farmers in implementing rangeland conservation practices on private lands.

State agencies also hire range professionals. In Nebraska, the Board of Educational Lands and Funds (BELF) hires range specialists as managers. Across the

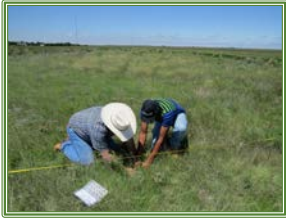
country, many state agencies hire individuals with range ecology knowledge: departments of agriculture, fish and wildlife, environmental protection, and parks and recreation departments are other opportunities for a career dealing with rangeland resources. Local agencies such as the Natural Resources Districts in Nebraska hire individuals with range management knowledge.

There are opportunities for rangeland related jobs in the educational system. High school ag teachers may have an educational background in range management and many universities and colleges have range management, range ecology or range/wildlife departments. Professors at these colleges and universities teach range ecology classes and conduct rangeland research. Land-grant universities in the central and western US have research centers that employ range ecologists to conduct rangeland research.

The private sector offers opportunities for those interested in a range management career. Many large ranches hire individuals with degrees in range management or range ecology to manage their land. Many consulting firms and farm-ranch management companies that work with ranches and hire range professionals. Energy companies, tribal agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) hire range professionals. Some NGOs that hire range professionals include Pheasants Forever, The Nature Conservancy, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and many local and national land trusts.

## What Education Is Required to Become a Range Professional?

Most rangeland management positions require a four-year college degree with an emphasis on range management with additional classes in natural resources management, range ecology, plant and animal science, and other natural and physical



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sciences. Range technician positions require at least one year of study that includes range, wildlife, and/or natural sciences, forestry, or other natural or physical sciences. See the following web site for more information about jobs in rangeland management.

<https://rangelandswest.org/careersandeducation/>

## What Do Range Management Specialists Do?

Range management specialists use the principles and techniques outlined in the previous 20 lessons to manage and study rangelands, or assist landowners with managing rangelands, or to teach others about rangeland ecology and management.

Range management specialists generally work with people; good communications skills are a must. Many range specialists use GIS programs to assist with mapping and planning.

## What is a Professional Society and Why Do People Become Members of These Societies?

A professional society is an association or group of people in a profession that maintains oversight of the legitimate practice of the profession. A society represents the interest of the members of the society and of the professional practitioners.

Professional societies usually publish scientific articles related to the profession and have regular meetings where members of the profession present research findings.

Professional societies provide networking opportunities to their members and are a vehicle for sharing information and maintaining professional skills. Many professional societies provide training to their members for the benefit of the profession as a whole.

## What Professional Societies Are Related to Range Management?

The professional society dedicated solely to rangeland management is the Society for Range Management (SRM). SRM is a professional scientific society and conservation organization whose members study, conserve, manage and sustain the varied resources of the rangelands. Members are land managers, scientists, educators, students, ranchers and conservationists. The membership is guided by a professional code of ethics and unified by a strong land ethic. More information may be found at the SRM website: <http://rangelands.org/>.

Other societies whose membership are have interests in the rangeland resource include societies dealing with natural resource management such as The Wildlife Society, Soil and Water Conservation Society, and Southwestern Association of Naturalists.