



# *What's the Future of Grasslands and Rangelands in the East Kootenay?*

May 1-3, 2025  
Kimberley BC

## ***Invited Speaker Biographies***

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A call for proposals is open until January 24, 2025. In the interim, the following presenters have accepted an invitation to participate in this event:

**Edward Bork**, University of Alberta, Faculty of Agricultural, Life and Environmental Science

At the University of Alberta, and beyond, Dr Ed Bork's major theme of research is in improving the level of productivity and long-term sustainability of rangeland plant communities and ecosystems. This includes research in rangeland management and planning, monitoring and assessment, as well as rangeland improvement and restoration. Major areas of investigation include the integrated control and management of Canada thistle on pastures using proper fertility, herbicide, and grazing management activities, work on establishing guidelines for applying liquid hog manure to range and pasture, and research into the ecology and management of grazed and burned prairie systems. Other areas of research include riparian area grazing management, forest restoration following ingrowth, assessment of wildlife impacts on range condition, and the evaluation of agro-forestry production systems.

**Gail Berg**, rangeland ecologist (retired)

Gail has over thirty-five years experience studying and attempting to interpret "natural" ecosystems including semi arid and arid temperate and high elevation rangelands, wetlands and open forest situations. This included inventorying rangeland plant communities and setting sustainable carrying capacities, comprehensive range use planning, rare and poisonous plant surveys, repeat plot work and photography after thinning and burning, developing training material and preparing presentations/reports for all of the above.

Gail, now retired, always included liaising and knowledge sharing with local landscape users in her work. She was fortunate to work with Tibetan and Kazakh cadres and herders in Tibet and Xinjiang on CIDA funded projects for four and a half years after leaving the Ministry of Forests (1992-2002). As well, she worked on a World Bank project in Tajikistan doing a rangeland assessment and delivering training. She spent ten years of doing Wildlife Damage Assessments on private properties on

Vancouver Island and in the Columbia Valley. She currently lives in the Windermere area.

[Don Gayton](#), rangeland ecologist and writer (retired)

Don Gayton is a consulting ecologist and nature writer, based in Summerland. He has a lifelong passion for grasslands and dry forests, having worked in the western US, Saskatchewan and BC. His research interests include fire ecology, ecological restoration, range management and wetlands. Gayton's technical publications include ***Basic Concepts in Ecological Restoration***, and ***BC Grasslands: Monitoring Vegetation Change***. His popular publications include award-winning books of non-fiction: ***The Wheatgrass Mechanism, Man Facing West***, and ***Landscapes of the Interior, Okanagan Odyssey*** and his most recent book, ***The Sky and the Patio: An Ecology of Home***. Don has a Master's degree from the University of Saskatchewan. His current passion is connecting ecology to creative writing.

[Mark Hebblewhite](#), Ungulate Ecology Laboratory, University of Montana

Born in Montreal and raised in Ontario by British parents awed by Canada's wilderness, my childhood love of wildlife was kickstarted into a career by a lucky park ranger job in Hudson Bay when I was 18. I've conducted research on wildlife from songbirds to bears, focusing on wolves and their ungulate prey across Canada, the US, eastern Europe and Mongolia. My main research objectives are to always combine strong empirical approaches to the conservation of terrestrial wildlife and the systems in which they live. To me, large ungulates and their predators are good entry points to understanding ecosystems because of their important roles and their conservation and management relevance.

[Clayton Lamb](#), Wildlife Science Centre – Biodiversity Pathways

Local to Jaffery, Clayton Lamb is a wildlife scientist and postdoctoral Researcher with the University of British Columbia. He is working at the interface of population ecology, human-wildlife coexistence, and endangered species recovery. Clayton's research program is focused on generating evidence that makes a difference on the ground for people and wildlife.

[Darrell Smith](#), Rangeland Stewardship and Programs Manager, Government of Alberta

Darrell has enjoyed a career that has spanned across both Alberta and B.C. and started as a summer job with the Alberta Forest Service undertaking range inventories along Alberta's Eastern Slopes. That summer opportunity led to being the first Range Management Forester for the Rocky/Clearwater Region based out of Rocky Mountain House, Alberta. He later moved to B.C. and worked as the Range Officer for the BC Forest Service for the Invermere Forest District, then Program Manager for the Kootenay Conservation Program, and Regional Agrologist (Kootenay Region) for the BC Ministry of Agriculture. Back again to Alberta, Darrell now works for Alberta Forestry

and Parks as the Rangeland Stewardship and Programs Manager. Darrell continues to enjoy working alongside the ranching and agriculture community with the goal of balancing stewardship, economics and on the ground practicalities.

**Tiffany Traverse**, Indigenous Researcher, Land & Seed Steward, Braiding Knowledges Canada

Tiffany is a Secwépemc (Kenpesq't)/sémé7 land and seed steward, language learner, Indigenous researcher, and food sovereignty advocate. Her passion for feeding people and firm belief in the right to healthy, culturally-appropriate foods for all, drives her work. Tiffany has served as a volunteer Advisory Council member with the Community Seed Network, former Member at Large and Chair for Seed Change and former Board Member at Regeneration Canada. Currently, she sits on the Board of Directors of the Braiding Knowledges Canada, as well as their Research Management Committee, and is a board member for the Lakes Secwepémc Foodland Conservation Society. She participated in the Equity and Inclusion Advisory Committee for Farmers for Climate Solutions and is a Council member (Mountain Forests Biome), for Indigenous Climate Action's Indigenous-led decolonizing climate policy Advisory Council, as well as a newly-appointed National Steering Committee Member.

In some of her former emergency management 'day jobs', Tiffany engaged with stakeholders, partners, and community members to help present education around wildfire prevention, mitigation and cultural burning, as well as encourage autonomy for land stewardship within Indigenous communities. She now brings that knowledge and expertise to the Salish Firekeepers Society board, to serve Salishan communities. She is currently being consulted by Secwepemcúl'ecw Restoration & Stewardship Society to facilitate native seed collection classes in Secwepemcúl'ecw and beyond, focusing on culturally-significant plants, reintroduction of language and plant technologies, and developing/reviving 'in situ orchards' as a more sustainable stewardship practice. From this applied research will also come a book/resource that will bring all of these aspects of native seed stewardship a restoration together in one accessible place.

Her hope is to continue being a 'Weaver', advocating to create better access to resources and knowledge. With this, she dreams that this will increase our collective seed and food security and sovereignty and preparedness in the face of climate chaos.

**David Zender**, Rancher, Farmland Advantage

Dave Zehnder has a passion for both agriculture and ecology and has worked in B.C. and across the world on related projects. Operating the Zehnder Ranch (a sustainably raised local beef cattle ranch) in Invermere with his brothers, Dave sits on several boards including the Canadian Cattlemen's Beef Cattle Research Council and the BCCA (BC Cattlemen's Association) Research Committee.