

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Sidney rancher, Bozeman NRCS employee honored with Range Leader awards**

**HELENA, Mont.** – The Governor’s Rangeland Resources Executive Committee (RREC) announced today that rancher Duane Ullman of Sidney and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) employee Matt Ricketts of Bozeman have been chosen as recipients of the 2014 Range Leader of the Year awards.

“Duane Ullman and Matt Ricketts are genuine leaders in the field of range management,” said Les Gilman, Rangeland Resources Executive Committee Chairman from Alder, Mont. “Their commitment to education and the principles of stewardship represents the best of Montana agriculture.”

Mr. Ullman was a supervisor on the Richland County Conservation District board for 15 years and was nominated to this award for his progressive style of managing his family farm and ranch near Sidney, Mont.

Duane has made many improvements to his ranch including seeding farmland to pasture, cross fencing, stock water pipelines and stock tanks, and a prescribed grazing plan. He has worked with both the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks to make improvements on his ranch. Those improvements are beneficial to the cattle, land and wildlife.

Duane has also opened up his ranch to public tours, pasture walks and demonstrations. He has showcased his grazing plan, rangeland chiseling project, equipment and monitoring sites.

Matt Ricketts is currently the Rangeland Management Specialist in the Bozeman Area Office and has over 32 years of service with the NRCS and is a life member of the Society for Range Management. He was nominated for his dedication to rangeland across Montana.

Matt has many accomplishments in the field of range science and has worked with multiple ranchers in the state. He has worked on many range inventories and other data collections. He has done extensive work on grazing management in sage grouse habitat areas and assists producers with the Nutrient Balance program. He has also assisted in ecological site descriptions.

Matt is also very passionate about teaching. He has taught at the Wheatland County Range Ride and Montana Range Days for many years. He has conducted many workshops for producers and also teaches at NRCS personnel courses. Matt continues to improve himself by continually researching and publishing papers.

Duane Ullman and Matt Ricketts received their awards last week in Billings during the 2015 Winter Grazing Seminar sponsored by the Yellowstone Conservation District, Rangeland Resources Executive Committee and the Montana DNRC.

For more information on the Rangeland Resources Program, the Range Leader of the Year Award, or other grazing and range management efforts sponsored by DNRC, contact Heidi Crum at (406) 444-6619, or visit the DNRC Web site at <http://dnrc.mt.gov/cardd/consdist/rangelandmangement.asp> or the Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/MontanaRangeProgram](http://www.facebook.com/MontanaRangeProgram).

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