

Rangeland Ecosystem Science (M.S.)

Plan B - Professional Paper

It is critical to define the intended audience. The audience for the professional paper is those engaged in a particular calling, occupation or discipline vs self improvement or personal, value-added knowledge. The professional paper should advance the collective understanding of those working in the arena of Rangeland Ecology.

The word *professional* implies a critical mass of people with like interests - or at least enough common ground - to advance a cause or agree on issues.

The word *professional* implies some degree of feedback that shapes acceptable approaches or paradigms for investigation - someone has to be the keeper of rules for investigation and analysis.

The word *professional* implies a common language; everybody understands the meaning of words.

The word *professional* implies a special set of skills or experience relative to an activity, i.e., a specialist.

A *professional* is something more than a highly skilled practitioner; although, professionals often also are skilled practitioners.

The word *professional* implies a common set of rules for describing variability.

The word *professional* implies common training.

What are the attributes of a professional paper?

The professional paper:

1. Addresses an issue in rangeland ecology (i.e., any functional or structural relationship among ecosystem elements, attributes or components; biotic/abiotic interactions; natural-resource decision-making)
2. Provides a rationale, including such things as the situation, the urgency, the consequences of doing nothing, the risk of change, the possibility of change, the cost/benefit of change or lack of change, value-added information or understanding, etc.
3. Targets the audience of the profession or a sub-set of the profession.
4. Is peer reviewed.
5. Is published and made available to everyone in the profession or the sub-set.
6. Meets the standards for excellence set by the profession.
7. Follows the rules for evidence-gathering set by the profession.
8. Uses the language of peers to communicate.
9. Addresses the practical vs the theoretical; but the theoretical might be invoked to set the framework for investigation.