Introduction

Colonel William Catesby Rogers (Figure 1) bequeathed his Triple R Ranch in the north Laramie Mountains, southeast Wyoming, to the University of Wyoming in 2002. The approximately 320-acre property passed to the UW College of Agriculture and Natural Resources by 2005, and it has since been under management of the Wyoming Agricultural Experiment Station (WAES). The property officially became known as the Rogers Research Site (RRS).

In his will, Colonel Rogers stated that the land should be used by UW and others, in part, to conduct research relating to the improvement of forestry and wildlife resources. RRS is near the prominent Laramie Peak, and at the time UW received the gift the site was predominately covered by ponderosa pine. The area is home to a rich array of resident and migratory wildlife species.

In summer 2012, during a significant drought, the lightning-caused Arapaho Fire burned nearly 100,000 acres in the Laramie Mountains, including RRS lands. The blaze killed nearly 95% of the ponderosa pine on the site.

Objectives

The overall objective is to conduct research at RRS that honors the wishes of Colonel Rogers. Among the specific objectives are to conduct research relating to the improvement of forestry and wildlife resources at the site and on surrounding lands in the Laramie Mountains, which are predominately composed of U.S. Forest Service, private, and State of Wyoming lands.

Materials and Methods

A variety of materials and methods have been used to conduct several completed and ongoing projects at the site, including vegetation mapping, ponderosa pine restoration and erosion control following a high-severity fire, and pre- and post-fire soils research. A summary of some of that research is contained in the three papers that follow this Introduction, and details will be presented in several RRS bulletins that are on-track to be completed this year.

Bulletin 1, which was nearing completion by July 1, gives an overview of RRS. It will include a chapter about the most interesting Colonel Rogers and his life. The bulletin will also cover early planning and the potential for research, teaching, and extension, including collaboration between UW students, faculty, staff, and others.

Results and Discussion

Fortunately for current and future researchers, much baseline data were compiled prior to the 2012 Arapaho Fire, including vegetation and soils mapping.

A great deal of planning has also taken place both before and after the fire. This has included a formal survey of 50 people who attended a field day at RRS in 2005, informal comments submitted by participants of another field day in 2009, work of the RRS Management Committee in 2010 and 2011, a forest audit conducted at RRS in 2011, and work of an ad hoc committee that formed in 2012 following the wildfire.
Starting in 2016, WAES devoted funding to publish bulletins relating to planning, research, extension, and teaching at RRS. Once complete, bulletins in the series will be posted at www.uwyo.edu/uwexpstn/centers/sarec/ (click on the “Rogers Research Site” link).

Acknowledgments

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Figure 1. This is an official U.S. Army photo (circa 1951) of William Catesby Rogers when he was a lieutenant colonel in the Army. By 1955 he had been promoted to colonel. After retiring, he spent much time on his beloved property in Wyoming’s Laramie Mountains as well as in Mexico and on a farm in Nebraska. (U.S. Army photo courtesy Mary Laura Kludy, Preston Library, Virginia Military Institute)

Figure 2. A variety of research has and is taking place at RRS, including a post-fire ponderosa pine restoration study. Here, summer intern James Harkin prepares to plant a seedling in July 2015. (Photo by Mollie Herget)

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