

APPLIED SUSTAINABLE RANCHING PROGRAM

TRU Ranching - July Update



Photos above: Bob Drinkwater, professional agrologist, presents to students at the invasive species field day. Students visited Onward Mission Ranch in Williams Lake, where they spent the day learning from Drinkwater about how to identify and manage invasive species in the area.

Photo left: Lee Hesketh (right) discusses watershed and riparian systems with students during one of the TRU Ranching Speaker Series.

Photo credit: Bella Johnson



With July coming to a close, so has the latest module in the TRU Applied Sustainable Ranching program. Students recently completed *ASUR 1030 Environmentally Sustainable Ranching* and have now started *ASUR 1040 Hands-on Skills and Diversification*.

Since May, students have been learning about soil health, biodiversity, range ecology and grazing management, invasive plant species, and ethnobotany and traditional use studies. Students are living and working on farms and ranches throughout B.C. and the Yukon during their studies, but they come together once a week to meet with their classmates and listen to guest speakers as part of the TRU Ranching Speaker Series.

The TRU Ranching Speaker Series is open to everyone and allows those in the agriculture industry, as well as the students, the opportunity to learn from experts in a variety of areas. Some of the speakers who have presented recently include: **Dr. Lauchlan Fraser**, **Allen Dobb** and **Dan Denesiuk**, who presented on range ecology and grazing management; **Lee Hesketh**, who presented on watershed and riparian systems; **Dr. Tom Dickinson**, who presented on biodiversity; master gardener **Elaine Sedgman**, who discussed native pollinators and beneficial insects; **Bob Drinkwater**, who hosted a field day on invasive species; and **Brenda Walkem**, **Verna Miller** and **Cecelia Derose**, who hosted a discussion on ethnobotany and traditional use sites.

The seminars are broken down into a morning presentation and an afternoon field day. Students and other attendees benefit from both the theoretical and practical experience of the presenters and often learn much more than they expected.

The speaker series is part of every module of the ranching program. Speakers are chosen based on the subject matter of the course. Coming up in August and September, some of the speakers include goat herder **Conrad Lindblom** to present on how goats can be used as a sustainable business enterprise to manage invasive species both on ranchlands, rangelands and in parks and municipal areas. **Keith Jones** will deliver a field day on best practices on barbed and page wire fence construction, **Kevin Grundy** will lead a field day on log and Russell fence construction, and **Clint Thompson** will host a field day on electric fencing. **Dr. John Church** will present on animal care, market relevance and low stress handling systems design. **Reg Steward** will mentor the students on developing an audit-ready health and safety program for their farm or ranch and **Kurt Pate** will provide a horsemanship and stockmanship clinic for the students at the Gang Ranch. To finish off the applied skills section, **Lynn Bonner** will lead the class on adopting best practices for maintenance and inspection on a wide variety of ranch equipment.

Applied Sustainable Ranching Program has a blog, follow along at ranching.sites.tru.ca