

Watersheds Messenger

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Western Watersheds Project

**Working to
protect
and restore
western
watersheds**



Hooved Locusts and Bovine Bulldozers: An Ecologist's View of Public Lands in the West

by John Carter

Once upon a time I was a happy consulting ecologist interested in camping, hiking, bow-hunting and fishing in my local national forest, which I had always bypassed for more exotic locations. As I began to explore the Wasatch-Cache National Forest in northern Utah I discovered a dysfunctional landscape with denuded and eroding watersheds; trampled, eroding and silted streams; and dry, barren, dusty forest understory lacking green vegetation.

All the springs and seeps that I scouted for spots to set up a stand were trampled into mud holes. Every aspen grove or forested area I scoped out for a campsite was barren of grass and littered with cow dung or sheep dung, or both. In the summer, the feedlot smell obliterated all others, but then, there were no wildflowers to smell in any event.

And there were the flies, millions of flies. Flies in your face, on your lunch, in your cup, freshly hatched from the vast piles of cow dung that lay everywhere. Flies: the Australian national bird, as the late Ed Abbey called them. Perhaps Utah should consider them its state bird.

My last campsite was in an old, dried-out, barren clearcut far from water and seemingly safe from livestock intrusion. Wrong! Early into the first morning of hunting, a cattle truck backed up in front of our camp and unloaded a truckload of cattle. They tore up our tent camp, defecated on everything in sight and

generally had a ball. They finished off the two bales of straw we used for a target as an aperitif! We packed up and went home, never to hunt again.



From that day forward, I decided the only way to enjoy our national forests was to document the degradation caused by livestock and work to get rid of these hooved locusts on public lands. I set up a monitoring program to collect data on watershed condition and photograph the damage. Surely, I thought, when the U.S. Forest Service sees this information, they will do something about it.

Setting up monitoring locations was difficult, because there were no large ungrazed areas for comparison. Diligent searching located a few small places that were inaccessible to livestock because of topography or were in fenced, highway rights-of-way. These ungrazed spots would serve as controls.

Our data showed that grazed areas were mostly bare ground and eroding, while the ungrazed areas had almost 100 percent vegetative ground cover. This compelling evidence, documented by hundreds of photographs of destroyed streams, springs and wetlands and weed-infested uplands, would surely effect change. Or so I believed.

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Other ecologists and I presented our case to the Forest Service through numerous letters and reports. Meetings were held in which we were told we didn't know the difference between use and abuse. Tours with district rangers and range conservationists (the term itself an oxymoron) led to denial. The damage, they said, owed to that long-ago era when "there were too many cows." I thought: When was this, last summer? Or they blamed wildlife. "The damage was caused by elk," always with the empty reassurance that "we are on an improving trend towards desired future condition."

Then, too, there were the ranchers who claimed that "we take half and leave half" and "we love, respect and understand the land and its wildlife; we are the true conservationists." Yes, they take the half that's above the ground.

Thousands of hours of monitoring, reading and talking with experts taught me what agency scientists had learned but conveniently forgot or ignored. Range management texts talked about stocking rates based on the amount of vegetation present while allowing for wildlife and watershed protection. They noted how allowances must be made for reduced vegetative production during dry years. They cited unstable soils, damage to riparian areas, the effects of water location, the unsuitability of grazing on steep slopes and so on.

This knowledge is apparently considered a tool of the devil, like Galileo's telescope. We who insist on consideration of these principles are subversives; since 9/11 we have been called terrorists by many in the ranching community.

The agencies say they don't have the staff or budget to monitor public lands intensively. Freedom of Information Act requests showed me that they had apparently lacked the budget or staff to monitor since the early 1960s. Determinations of stocking rates had never been made. The livestock were still there and the resource was on an "improving trend" even though the forest ecologist related that nearly two feet of topsoil had been lost due to livestock. But he's a scientist, not a range con, so his knowledge doesn't matter.

And what range con in his right mind is going to admit that, under his watch, the range is on a downward trend? So the self-protecting, unchecked bias of range cons leads to claims that the resource is on a "stable" or an "improving trend." Improving toward what? A desert?

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Perhaps this is how the Sahel, Sahara and San Rafael deserts found their destiny.

Tell that to the goshawk, lynx, sage grouse, pygmy rabbit, cutthroat trout, owl, neotropical migrant bird and other wildlife who depend on public lands for food and habitat. Tell it to the irrigators and dam builders whose works are filling with silt from eroding watersheds -- a just fate in my view. Tell it to the public water suppliers who have to filter and treat to remove sediment and bacteria.

I decided that in order to make a difference, I needed to establish a nonprofit group to obtain funding and do this full time. In 1996, Willow Creek Ecology was established to use science and our research to educate local environmental organizations and the public.

Needless to say, more monitoring, more thousands of hours and more public involvement by the groups we educated led to the same response by the Forest Service. We didn't know the difference between use and abuse, and there are less livestock now than at the turn of the century and so on. Today, the Forest Service in the Intermountain Region has "dumbed down" ecological interpretations in our area to include cows and sheep as part of the ecosystem so they no longer must be addressed as causing damage.



In 1998, the Logan Ranger District of the Wasatch-Cache National Forest released an EA for the Bear Hodges Analysis Area. This is an area in the critical wildlife corridor in the Bear River Range that connects the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem to the southern Rockies sometimes known as the "Utah Gap." The Forest Service claimed that, decades of logging, livestock grazing and fire suppression had degraded and fragmented the forest to a point where resiliency and sustainability were threatened. They then arrived at a decision that refused to address livestock grazing and fire suppression. Instead they would clearcut and selectively log 2,000 acres of mature lodgepole and old growth fir to save them from insects and fire.

This "solution" was passed off as "research" into silvicultural methods and a "forest health treatment." The

7 million board feet to be logged were not addressed as a timber sale or any economic analysis performed. The timber was just an incidental benefit derived from “saving the forest.”

We have seen dozens of these “forest health treatments” come out in the Intermountain Region to deal with fire hysteria. Claims of dysfunctional forest and sagebrush habitat condition are used to justify prescribed fire and timber sales without addressing the true causes of this degradation: livestock.

Other examples of agency denial and obfuscation come from Western Watersheds Project’s recent appeals of livestock grazing permit renewals on more than 1.5 million acres of BLM land in northern Utah and northwestern Colorado. In the Utah example, the BLM claimed that of the 208 springs and 16 streams on BLM land in Box Elder County, 124 springs and all 16 streams were damaged, degraded and in danger of being dewatered and lost due to livestock grazing and trampling. Sixteen years later, in 2001, numerous EAs were released that claimed there would be no significant impact from reissuing the permits. Nor did the EAs address the degraded condition of these riparian and wetland areas. Water quality in all three counties addressed in our appeal of these 176 permits was claimed by BLM to meet “Beneficial Use Standards” because the streams were not on the state’s 303(d) list. No monitoring data was presented to justify this conclusion and these streams are not monitored by the state.

Here, BLM used the absence of any data as evidence that the water is not polluted. This in the face of BLM admissions that livestock degrade water quality and destroy springs and streams. Go figure. Of course, the evidence is clearly seen in feces-laden springs and streams, siltation, destroyed stream banks, erosion and lack of riparian vegetation.

Then there is the Colorado example. Range surveys in the early 1980s documented that the BLM lands in Moffatt County were overstocked with livestock. This was followed by a range management plan that emphasized the need for monitoring and adjustment of livestock numbers.

In 2001, nearly 20 years later, an EA was issued to renew the permits that affect the headwaters of three rivers occupied by several threatened or endangered species of fish. Eroding watersheds, silt-laden waters and salinity problems were described. Livestock were considered a threat to archeological resources. In fact, they were considered to constitute an irreversible and irretrievable commitment of archeological resources.

Yet, the EA found no significant impacts and justified the decision to reauthorize grazing based on future monitoring proposed to correct and adjust livestock management. No description was provided of the monitoring, its goals and corrective actions. The same was

promised in the range management plan more than a decade earlier.

We all remember the great Rangeland Reform movement in the early 1990s. What started with a bang of increased grazing fees ended with nearly free grazing and regulations requiring BLM to emphasize watershed protection, water quality, riparian function and native species.



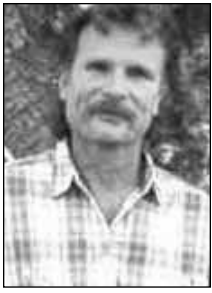
When problems are identified, they must be corrected by management changes prior to the next grazing season. BLM has figured out how to work around these regulations. If they don’t monitor, no problems are identified, so no changes need be made. So far what we see coming from Rangeland Reform are proposed solutions to livestock grazing problems that themselves have been the cause of much grazing damage. Water developments that destroy springs or fences that fragment wildlife habitat are trumpeted; common-sense requirements that ranchers “manage” their livestock are not. The result of rangeland reform has been prostituted by BLM to mean little more than a change from brown cows to white cows.

The bottom line is that the Forest Service and the BLM are unwilling to address the ecological and economic impacts of livestock grazing. They engage in denial and obfuscation, claiming they will do better in the future -- in essence, fiddling while Rome burns.

The entire basis of consensus as used by the agencies involves that trap for the uninformed and naive, baited with the promise they will be accepted by the ranchers and all will be well if they just “trust us” and keep quiet. The clear evidence is that these agencies lack the will to enforce standards. It is clear the only way to save our public lands from this pestilence is to remove livestock permanently.

Dr. John Carter is Utah director of operations for Western Watersheds Project. He also serves on WWP’s board of directors.





Livestock Grazing Contributes to Fire Hazard

by George Wuerthner

Severe wildfires continue to scorch the West, as they have in recent years. Congress has reacted by creating a National Fire Plan that attempts to address some of the factors contributing to the increasing costs of fire-fighting and loss of life and property. Included in the plan are funds for increased fire-fighting capacity, homeowner education and prescribed burning to reduce fuels.

The contribution of livestock to fire hazard is often overlooked, and livestock production continues unabated on public and private lands in the West. While climatic conditions such as extreme drought and high winds are key ingredients in any large blaze, past land management practices, including logging, fire suppression and livestock grazing, have exacerbated the situation by creating densely stocked timber stands that may be more vulnerable to high-intensity fires.

WWP Prevails Again Over Land Board

Western Watersheds Project in May won another court victory over the Idaho Land Board in the conservation group's ongoing effort to lease state lands for conservation purposes.

Judge Deborah Bail of the 4th Judicial District Court in Boise upheld WWP's challenge, ruling that the State Board of Land Commissioners violated Idaho law when it awarded two leases for more than 20,000 acres of state lands to ranchers who bid less than WWP at auction for the leases.

The court ruled that the Land Board was required to grant WWP contested case hearings before an administrative law judge about the facts of the leases and merits of the competing lease applications before awarding the leases.

WWP submitted a high bid of \$8,000 for a 10-year lease of 16,300 acres in Lacey Meadows near Weippe in Clearwater County. The group also submitted a high bid of \$14,000 for a 10-year lease of 5,050 acres at Robinson Hole near Oakley in Cassia County.

Two lower bidders, the Lacey Meadows Grazing Association and Pickett Ranch and Sheep Co., appealed the Lacey Meadows and Robinson Hole auctions, respectively. After an informal hearing, the Land Board awarded the leases to the lower bidders.

"The Land Board has consistently violated Idaho law in favoring public lands ranchers over conservation groups that are working to improve the land while paying more money to Idaho's schools," said Jon Marvel, executive director of WWP. "It's too bad the Land Board has to be dragged into court to follow the law."

Historically throughout lower-elevation forest and grass ecosystems of the West, fires frequently burned stands with low-intensity blazes, although high-intensity fires may have existed prior to the intervention of white settlers.

Young seedlings and saplings of common tree species such as juniper and ponderosa pine are extremely vulnerable even to moderate levels of heat. As a consequence, low-intensity blazes tended to thin forest stands to create open timber stands dominated by a few widely spaced large trees.

Livestock grazing is frequently overlooked as a significant factor in changing forest stand condition and fire regimes. There is a substantial body of scientific literature that identifies livestock grazing as a major contributor to the alteration of historic fire regimes and a factor in fire hazard.

First, livestock grazing removes the grasses that compete with tree seedlings for water and nutrients. This favors the establishment of deep rooted trees and allows them to dominate the site.

Second, most tree species require bare soil for successful germination. Heavy grazing that removes the grassy understory of many forest sites and creates bare, disturbed soil sites that favor tree establishment has led to greater tree-stocking density.

Third, grazing removes the fine fuels such as grasses that help carry the low-intensity fires that once burned at regular intervals throughout much of the lower-elevation forest ecosystems of the West. This has permitted young saplings and trees to become established and recruited into the forest stand.

Fourth, by permitting a large number of small saplings to become established, competition for water among existing living trees is increased, making trees more vulnerable to insects and other pathogens. Under extreme drought, such trees are actually more flammable than dead trees since internal water content is often less than kiln-dried lumber, yet due to the flammable resins found in living trees, drought-stressed trees often explode into flames upon contact with a fire.

Fifth, by contributing to the spread and persistence of fire-prone weedy species such as cheatgrass, livestock production has created far more acres of highly flammable plant communities in many parts of the West.

Despite the contribution of livestock grazing to the growing fire hazard in the West, livestock production on public lands continues unabated and is seldom altered to reduce the incidence or intensity of fires. Wildfires are yet another price to pay for livestock grazing in the West.

George Wuerthner is a Western Watersheds Project advisory board member who lives in Eugene, Ore.



Major Victory for Idaho's Wolves in Sawtooth National Recreation Area Decision

Western Watersheds Project and the Idaho Conservation League won a major victory in June in their efforts to protect Idaho's wolf populations when a federal District Court judge ruled that the 1972 law which established the Sawtooth National Recreation Area gives wolves and all other wildlife precedence over livestock.

U.S. District Judge Lynn Winmill also ruled that the U.S. Forest Service, which manages the SNRA, is in violation of the federal Rescissions Act, passed by Congress in 1995 to force the agency to establish a schedule to conduct environmental analyses of every grazing allotment in the National Forest System.

Furthermore, Winmill ruled that the Forest Service violated the Organic Act which created the SNRA by failing to consider whether livestock grazing is "substantially impairing" wolf populations in the area. He also determined that the Organic Act does not include grazing as a "historic" or "pastoral" value.

Winmill's ruling forces the Forest Service to complete National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) analyses of all SNRA allotments for which analyses have not been conducted.

Even where NEPA analyses have been done, the judge ruled that the Forest Service must revisit the allotments to conduct Organic Act analyses for significant impairment of wildlife, fisheries and recreation.

"Under the law which created the SNRA and in the forest plan for the Sawtooth National Forest, wildlife, fisheries and recreation must be protected and have higher priorities for management than livestock grazing," said Jon Marvel, executive director of WWP.

Last August WWP and ICL sued the Forest Service for its failure to protect gray wolves.

The lawsuit followed the killing by government gunners on June 29, 2001 of two radio-collared wolves from the Whitehawk pack in the SNRA, part of the Sawtooth National Forest near Sun Valley, Idaho.

The lawsuit charged that the Forest Service failed in its duty to keep sheep and cattle that graze on public lands away from known wolf pack denning and rendezvous sites.

At least 27 wolves in the past three years have been killed or removed from areas in or near the SNRA due to conflicts with livestock.

In April 2002 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service agents killed the entire Whitehawk pack of 11 wolves near the SNRA. Similarly, the White Cloud and Stanley Basin wolf packs were eliminated in 2000 and 2001.



photo©Rick Hobson

Despite the known presence of wolves in the SNRA, some 4,470 sheep and 2,500 cattle are allowed to graze on 28 Forest Service allotments in the area.

WWP and ICL have long contended that management of livestock in the SNRA has significantly impaired wolves and other wildlife as well as fisheries and recreation.

"The law is clear. Wildlife takes precedence over livestock in the SNRA," said William Eddie of the Land and Water Fund of the Rockies, attorney for WWP and ICL.

"The next time the government looks at shooting up a wolf pack in the SNRA, as it did last year, it better consider the legality of such an action," said ICL Conservation Director McCarthy.



DOA Suspends Control Plan

Faced with a lawsuit filed by WWP and three other conservation groups, the U.S. Department of Agriculture agreed to postpone a plan to kill wildlife species in southern Idaho.

WWP, The Committee for Idaho's High Desert, Defenders of Wildlife and the Idaho Conservation League challenged a federal program that aims to kill predators throughout southern Idaho.

The groups sought a restraining order to prevent the DOA's Wildlife Services from implementing the newest part of its program: the elimination of animals alleged to prey on sage grouse.

Lawyers for the DOA subsequently agreed to postpone the program for at least one year.

"This action will allow our challenges to Wildlife Services' overall predator killing operations in southern Idaho to be heard without our having to worry that local populations of predators are being wiped out in the meantime," said Todd Tucci, staff attorney with the Land and Water Fund of the Rockies in Boise representing the plaintiffs.

The conservation action marks the second consecutive year that the wildlife killing plan has been stopped through legal challenges.

WWP, Conservation Partners Propose Voluntary Buyout to 26,000 Public Lands Ranchers

From Yuma, Ariz., to Malta, Mont., 26,000 public lands ranchers recently were put on notice by conservationists.

But the notice they received is anything but punitive. In a letter from the National Public Lands Grazing Campaign, federal grazing permittees across the country learned of a voluntary compensation proposal that could save them from a losing occupation and a vanishing way of life.

The NPLGC proposes that Congress establish a buyout program to compensate grazing permittees who voluntarily relinquish their public lands leases. The plan is endorsed by more than 100 conservation groups nationwide.

"I've often thought the livestock industry would be better served without public-lands grazing," said a former grazing permittee who spoke on condition of anonymity. "Whenever you subsidize an industry, as in the case of livestock grazing on federal lands, you create inefficiency. You paint a false picture of demand for the product."

The NPLGC proposal would pay federal permittees at three times market rate to relinquish their grazing permits. The average market value in the West of a federal animal unit month (AUM) is \$40. The new proposal would compensate permittees at a fixed price of \$175 per AUM.

Under the plan, a permittee with 300 cow/calf pairs that graze public lands for five months of the year would receive upwards of \$262,000.

"To protect endangered species and protect water quality on public lands, the federal government encourages citizens to sue violators, even the government itself," said Andy Kerr, director of the NPLGC and a leader of the successful spotted-owl campaign. "The 'stick' approach is important, but environmentalists also want the government to implement the 'carrot' approach."

The NPLGC proposal would effectively retire a federal welfare program that costs American taxpayers about \$500 million annually to subsidize public lands ranching operations. It would also diminish decades of environmental destruction wrought by livestock grazing.

"An awful lot of demands have been put on our public lands, and grazing might be the biggest," said Idaho cattleman Jerry Scheid, who supports the voluntary buyout proposal. "It's time we gave these lands some consideration."

Scientific studies show that livestock grazing is the most pervasive and destructive use of federal lands in the West. Livestock grazing threatens native species, reduces water quality, spreads noxious weeds, alters natural fire regimes and accelerates soil erosion, destroying streamside and upland ecosystems.

About 80 percent of all streams and riparian ecosystems in the arid West are severely degraded by livestock grazing. Some 175 plant and animal species, from sage grouse to grizzly bears, are threatened or endangered, all or in part, by grazing on federal rangelands. In 1999 alone, 95,862 wild animals were killed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services in predator control programs to protect livestock.

In its Global 2000 report, the Council on Environmental Quality noted that "improvident grazing. . . has been the most potent desertification force, in terms of total acreage (351,562 square miles) within the United States."

The economic picture for grazing permittees on public lands is no rosier. A recent study cited in the Journal of Range Management concludes that ranching operations "had a return rate that ranged from negative to 1 or 2 percent . . ." Beef produced from federal rangelands accounts for less than 3 percent of total production in the United States. Imported beef and inherently low productivity from public lands grazing are putting a financial squeeze on federal permittees across the country.

The Bureau of Land Management's report "Rangeland Reform" (1994) notes that only 3 percent of livestock producers in the United States hold federal grazing permits. As recently as 1999, public lands ranching accounted for a scant .04 percent of all income and .06 percent of all employment in the West. This amounts to only few months of typical growth of income and employment.

And yet public lands grazing costs American taxpayers upwards of half a billion dollars every year in direct program costs. Related expenses for emergency feed, drought and flood relief, predator control and other costs to support grazing or mitigate its impacts are not included in this figure.

Federal grazing lands comprise 257 million acres in the U.S. Under current law, public lands permittees are not compensated when allotments are closed to protect natural resources. No property rights are vested in federal grazing permits; the permits are revocable privileges.

"On federal lands . . . a rancher can graze a cow and calf for a full month for the price of a can of dog food," noted Los Angeles Times columnist John Balzar in a recent editorial. "Despite these bargain rates, or maybe because of them, too much of their range land has been mistreated, overgrazed, beaten down and polluted . . . Reform of the vast grazing program is long overdue."

Under the NPLGC proposal, compensating all federal grazing permittees at a rate of \$175 per AUM would initially cost taxpayers about \$3.3 billion. But the net savings of the program would be between \$5.5 billion and \$11 billion.

In the NPLGC proposal, conservation-minded grazing permittees see a practical solution to an impractical occupation and unsustainable way of life.

"Over the years I've felt we'd see an end to public lands grazing sooner rather than later," said Scheid. "It's time to face the fact that the old West is a thing of the past."

The NPLGC includes steering committee members American Lands Alliance, Center for Biological Diversity, Committee for Idaho's High Desert, Forest Guardians, Oregon Natural Desert Association and Western Watersheds Project.

For more information about the National Public Lands Grazing Campaign, visit www.publiclandsranching.org





Economics 101: Ranching Is a Losing Proposition

by Keith Raether

“Rather than rural economies relying on ranching, it’s ranching that is relying on the non-ranching rural economy.”

*Thomas Michael Power, chairman, Department of Economics,
University of Montana*

Time magazine estimates that 328,000 ranchers and farmers will lose their jobs in this decade alone. Phone operators, a distant second on the casualty list, are expected to decline by 60,000.

Despite this forecast, western papers such as the *Denver Post* and the *Idaho Statesman* continue to sell western mythology to their readers, waxing delusional in defense of the ranching industry. In a recent editorial, the *Idaho Statesman* went so far as to assert that it is “our” responsibility to commute the fate of an industry whose days of dominion are numbered.

Why? Because ranching “contributes to . . . our western feel.”

The presumption in this cliché is absurd. We live in the 21st century, not in the era of Ben Cartwright. The western “feel” that draws people to the interior West or keeps them here has less and less to do with ranching and more and more to do with technology and telecommuting; hiking and biking; hunting, camping, kayaking and fly-fishing.

The West in 2002 isn’t defined by ranching; it’s scarred by it. The western feel of public lands that have long suffered the abuses of ranching is just another word for dewatered streams, endangered species, denuded watersheds and cow pies as far as the eye can see.

The *Post’s* editorial was confounded and confounding. The headline, “Be Stewards of Our Land,” suggested that the paper intended a heart-to-heart with ranchers, the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Forest Service and maybe even Gail Norton at the top of the U.S. Department of the Interior. Instead, the *Post* chided conservationists, declaring that ranching helps maintain “wildlife habitat and other ecological values.”

This, of course, explains why conservation groups routinely invoke the Endangered Species Act to litigate against ranchers, the BLM and the Forest Service for the toll ranching has taken on wildlife habitat and other ecological values.

The *Statesman’s* solution to ranching’s affliction is no less misguided. “As the ranching industry fights for its

survival, it shouldn’t be fighting on its own,” the paper maintained.

The truth, of course, is that it isn’t. American taxpayers subsidize public lands ranching in excess of \$500 million annually. Should taxpayers sweeten the welfare pot for an industry that’s already cashing in its chips?

The American public knows better, or else we wouldn’t be eating less beef, contributing more to conservation causes and taking more action against abuses of public lands.

The demise of ranching is hardly a death knell for rural communities, a panic button the *Statesman* pushed in its plea. In Idaho, for example, public lands ranchers account for only one-sixth of 1 percent of all jobs. Their dilemma is no different than that of loggers in Oregon and Washington, miners in Montana or dot.comers in California who’ve lost their jobs. The future is theirs to see; they just need to look.

Six conservation groups, including Western Watersheds Project, have proposed a free-market solution that would help greatly in this transition. The National Public Lands Grazing Campaign, endorsed by more than 100 conservation organizations and supported by an increasing number of forward-thinking ranchers, is lobbying Congress to enact a voluntary grazing retirement program for all public lands permittees.

The program would pay federal public lands ranchers more than three times market value to relinquish their grazing permits. A permittee with 300 cow/calf pairs that graze public lands for five months of the year would receive \$262,000.

Such compensation would allow a rancher to learn a new trade, start a community business, consolidate his ranching operations, buy more private land, send his kids to college or retire and go fishing. Ranchers win. Conservationists win. And the ecological values of the West return to health.

In its rallying cry for ranching, the *Statesman* insisted Idaho “can’t afford to lose its ranching industry.”

The bottom line of the industry and the streambanks of public lands in the West insist otherwise.

They tell us that this is the 21st century, not the era of manifest destiny.

They tell us Ben Cartwright’s bonanza was as real as a Hollywood script.

They tell all of us in the stunning but suffering West to look beyond the hummocks and hard times of ranching -- for the “feel” of the West and the good of everyone’s kin.

Keith Raether is director of public information for Western Watersheds Project and public information coordinator for the National Public Lands Grazing Campaign.

THE COLD JOBS

Some occupations with the largest projected losses, or smallest growth, 2000-2010

Farmers and Ranchers	-328,000
Phone-Switchboard Operators	-60,000
Bank Tellers	-59,000
Insurance-Claims Clerks	-58,000
Word Processors/Typists	-57,000
Sewing-Machine Operators	-51,000
Butchers	-13,000
Meter Readers	-13,000
Parts Salespeople	-12,000
Procurement Clerks	-9,000
Movie Projectionists	-3,000
Proofreaders	-2,000
Loggers	-2,000
Funeral Directors	+1,000
Insurance Underwriters	+2,000
Travel Agents	+4,000

Bureau of Labor Statistics





The Truth About Land Use in the United States

by George Wuertlmer

Misunderstanding abounds about land use in the United States.

By far the greatest impact on the American landscape comes not from urbanization but rather from agriculture. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, farming and ranching are responsible for 68 percent of all species endangerment in the United States.

Agriculture is the largest consumer of water, particularly in the West. Most water developments would not exist were it not for the demand created by irrigated agriculture.

If ultimate causes and not proximate causes for species extinction are considered, agricultural impacts would even be higher. Yet scant attention is paid by academicians, environmentalists, recreationists and the general public to agriculture's role in habitat fragmentation, species endangerment and declining water quality.

The ironic aspect of this head-in-the-sand approach to land use is that most agriculture is completely unnecessary to feed the nation. The great bulk of agricultural production goes toward forage production used primarily by livestock. A small shift in our diet away from meat could have a tremendous impact on the ground in terms of freeing up lands for restoration and wildlife habitat. It would also reduce the poisoning of our streams and groundwater with pesticides and other residue of modern agricultural practices.

Most of the information in the following summary is available from the USDA Economic Research Service publication "Major Uses of Land in the United States 1997." (To order, call 1-800-999-6779). The numbers do not change appreciably from year to year. Overview of Land Use in the United States- The U.S. has 2.3 billion acres of land. However, 375 million acres are in Alaska and not suitable for agricultural production. The land area of the lower 48 states is approximately 1.9 billion acres.

To put things in perspective, keep in mind that California is 103 million acres, Montana 94 million acres, Oregon 60 million acres and Maine 20 million acres.

Developed Land- Despite all the hand-wringing over sprawl and urbanization, only 66 million acres are considered developed lands. This amounts to 3 percent of the land area in the U.S., yet this small land base is home to 75 percent of the population. In general, urban lands are nearly useless for biodiversity preservation. Furthermore, urbanized lands, once converted, usually do not shift to another use.

Rural Residential Land- This category comprises nearly all sprawl and subdivisions along with farmhouses scattered across the country. The total acreage for rural residential is 73 million acres. Of this total, 44 million acres are lots of 10 or more acres.

Developed and rural residential make up 139 million acres, or 6.1 percent of total land area in the U.S. This amount of land is not insignificant until you consider that we planted more than 80 million acres of feeder corn and another 75 million acres of soybeans (95 percent of which are consumed by livestock, not tofu eaters) last

year alone. These two crops affect more of the land area of the U.S. than all the urbanization, rural residential, highways, railroads, commercial centers, malls, industrial parks and golf courses combined.

Cropland- About 349 million acres in the U.S. are planted for crops. This is the equivalent of about four states the size of Montana. Four crops -- feeder corn (80 million acres), soybeans (75 million acres), alfalfa hay (61 million acres) and wheat (62 million acres) -- make up 80 percent of total crop acreage. All but wheat are primarily used to feed livestock.

The amount of land used to produce all vegetables in the U.S. is less than 3 million acres.

Range and Pasture Land- Some 788 million acres, or 41.4 percent of the U.S. excluding Alaska, are grazed by livestock. This is an area the size of 8.3 states the size of Montana. Grazed lands include rangeland, pasture and cropland pasture. More than 309 million acres of federal, state and other public lands are grazed by domestic livestock. Another 140 million acres are forested lands that are grazed.

Forest Land- Forest lands comprise 747 million acres. Of these lands, some 501 million acres are primarily forest (minus lands used for grazed forest and other special categories).

The USDA report concludes that urbanization and rural residences (subdivisions) "do not threaten the U.S. cropland base or the level of agricultural production." This does not mean sprawl doesn't have impacts where it occurs. But the notion that sprawl is the greatest threat to biodiversity is absolutely false.

Conclusions that place sprawl ahead of agriculture in terms of biodiversity impacts are due to faulty accounting methods and a general bias that favors agriculture as a "good" use of the land.

Furthermore, there are viable means of controlling sprawl. They include land-use planning, zoning, fee purchase and conservation easements.

Despite acreage being paved over, malled over or overbuilt with condos, developed land is generally concentrated in and near cities. The loss of farm or ranch land is insignificant compared to the total acreage available in the U.S.

The real message here is that we can afford to restore hundreds of millions of acres in the U.S. if we simply shift our diets away from meat. Many organizations spend their time fighting sprawl and championing agriculture as a benign use of the land. If a similar amount of effort were directed toward reducing agricultural production, we would produce far greater protection and restoration for declining species, endangered ecosystems and ecological processes.

When critics suggest that we don't have the money to buy land for wildlands restoration, they are forgetting agricultural subsidies, which amount to hundreds of billions of dollars. For what we spend to prop up marginal agricultural producers, we could easily buy most of the private farm and ranch land in the country. This would be a far more effective way to contain sprawl, restore wildlands, bring back endangered species, clean up water, slow the spread of exotic species and reduce soil erosion.





Subsidized Federal Grazing Won't Prevent Sprawl

by Andy Kerr

Sprawl is swallowing parts of the West, and people should be concerned. But too many public officials, editorialists and conservationists fail to address the fundamental cause of sprawl to agricultural lands.

Instead, they fall back on myth: If only American taxpayers would subsidize public lands ranching (more than we already do). Ranchers wouldn't be forced to sell out to developers. Open space and wildlife habitat would be preserved forever. All would be well in the West.

This line of reasoning sidesteps the cause of sprawl. Population growth, coupled with the desire for bigger houses and greater acreage, propels sprawl. Sprawl is driven by the demand for such housing, not the supply of land available for it. The Dakotas have lots of unprofitable farmland for sale, but sprawl isn't a problem in either state.

Government policies can limit sprawl. Land-use planning, as demonstrated in Oregon, can slow sprawl. Government can change policies that now favor large families and wasteful consumption. If people are worried about sprawl, they can insist that state government stop subsidizing people and businesses to move to their part of the world. Growth does not pay for itself. Taxes go up. Government services go down. Quality of life and quality of the environment are compromised.

The federal government can't subsidize agriculture enough to make it profitable. Witness the recent Farm Bill with its tens of billions of dollars in new subsidies. If crop farming in places such as the highly productive Imperial and Willamette valleys is losing out to sprawl, how can high-elevation grazing land in the arid West remain immune to sprawl?

If it is in the public interest to have private ranch lands and farmlands provide the public values of wildlife habitat and open space, then the public will have to pay for it. The question is how.

Below-market federal grazing fees, tax breaks (including property, income and sales taxes), direct crop payments, wildlife killing services and other taxpayer-funded subsidies have failed to keep agriculture viable, open space protected and wildlife habitat preserved. This "coincidental conservation," which relies on landowners who want to remain in agriculture despite its increasingly dismal economics, is destined to be short-lived.

Ranchers remain in the ranching business only as long as they perceive themselves rich enough to continue their lifestyle. When conditions change -- a rancher goes broke,

retires or passes away-- the new landowners will often determine that they aren't rich (or interested) enough to continue the ranching lifestyle. If a private ranch has development potential, that's when development will occur.

Rather than give unconditional (and increasing) subsidies to ranchers in hopes that it will keep them in agriculture and make them resistant to the huge money to be made by selling out to developers, the federal government should expend conditional payments such as non-development and conservation easements.

In exchange for fair compensation, a deed restriction is placed on the property that prevents development and/or requires management for wildlife habitat. This intentional conservation is cost-effective and has a proven track record.

The proposal that the federal government establish a voluntary grazing permit buyout program --an idea already endorsed by more than 100 conservation groups-- can slow the conversion of the 20 percent of cattle ranches in the West that have federal grazing permits. Permittees who sell their grazing permits can use the cash to retire and remain on their base (private) property, or continue to ranch on private lands, which tend to be more productive. Today, in the absence of a permit buyout program, the only way to recover the economic value associated with federal grazing permits is to sell the entire ranch.

Most grazing operations on federal lands are unprofitable due to declining beef prices, foreign competition and more efficient domestic operations in the East. Thus, even a modest reduction in federal grazing levels can turn a ranching operation that was merely unprofitable to untenable.

A voluntary federal grazing permit buyout program is economically rational, fiscally prudent, ecologically imperative, socially just and politically pragmatic. Putting an end to public lands grazing subsidies would yield vast tax savings -- savings that could be directed to acquire easements designed to prevent development of private lands.

Andy Kerr is director of the National Public Lands Grazing Campaign (www.publiclandsranching.org).



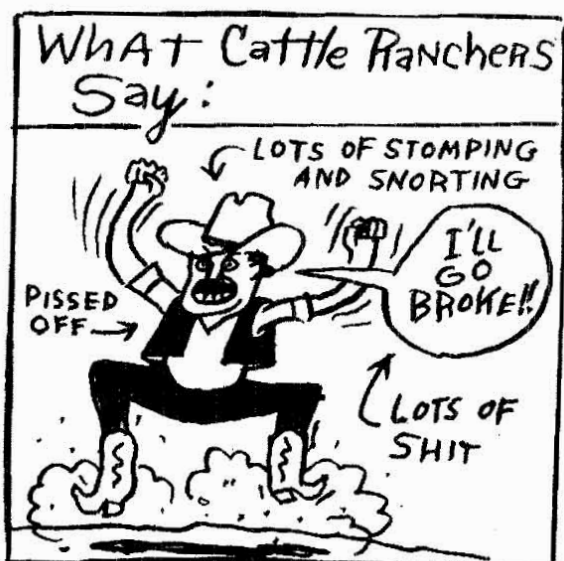
BLM Cuts Idaho Grazing

The Idaho Conservation League and WWP have settled a lawsuit with the Bureau of Land Management, reaching an agreement that will reduce livestock numbers by nearly 20 percent this year on the Pleasantview grazing allotment in southeastern Idaho.

In the settlement, the BLM agreed to rescind a June 2001 grazing decision that the agency's own studies showed would continue to damage streams and plants on the allotment.

COWS
finally
Kicked Off
PUBLIC
Lands
Streams!

©RAND CARLSON/TUCSON WEEKLY



Welfare Ranching Set for September Publication

Picture this: 300 million acres in the American West, an area as large as the entire eastern seaboard, converted into a sprawling stockyard.

Creeks and rivers are polluted and depleted of their flow. Vegetation and soil are trampled and stripped. Native wildlife has vanished, driven off by livestock that destroy their habitat. The dry land is made drier by grazing. Precious rainfall runs off the denuded landscape.

This bleak scenario is your tax dollars at work in 2002. It's also the subject of a new book edited by conservationists George Wuerthner and Mollie Matteson.

FWS Settles Peppergrass Lawsuit

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has settled a lawsuit filed by WWP and the Committee for Idaho's High Desert for its failure to list the slickspot peppergrass under the Endangered Species Act. The FWS noted in 1999 that this plant qualified as a "candidate species" for ESA listing. The agency stated that the rate of disappearance of slickspot peppergrass is "the highest known of any Idaho rare plant species."

The FWS must issue a proposed listing rule this summer. This will be published in the Federal Register, and comments will be taken for up to a year from publication. The FWS must issue a final decision by July 15, 2003.

"This settlement ensures that the Fish and Wildlife Service will determine whether slickspot peppergrass is endangered based on science and not on political interference," said Todd Tucci, staff attorney with the Land and Water Fund of the Rockies.

Unique to Idaho, the slickspot peppergrass is threatened by non-native weeds, livestock trampling and road construction in plains, plateaus and hills of southwestern Idaho.

Welfare Ranching: The Subsidized Destruction of the American West reveals the practices that continue to destroy the ecological fabric of the arid West, where subsidized livestock grazing occurs on nearly 300 million acres of public lands.

The book, slated for publication on Sept. 23, offers a graphic look at the consequences of livestock grazing on public lands, which has turned the West into a giant feedlot for cattle and sheep. Streams are dewatered, soil eroded, habitat ravaged. And the list of endangered species grows and grows.

Welfare Ranching comprises essays from leading environmentalists, scientists, historians and economic experts, including Edward Abbey, Joy Belsky, Carl Bock, John Carter, Thomas Fleischner, Terrence Frest, T.H. Watkins and George Wuerthner. The book dispels with hard science and straight economics the popular myths surrounding the Old West that continue to influence the ways of the New West.

The book features more than 150 photographs that serve as testimony to America's ravaged public lands, but that also illustrate the natural values of lands that have been protected or restored.

Welfare Ranching offers plain evidence of a patent truth: Livestock production adversely affects everyone and everything that attempts to walk or merely live in its path: hikers, hunters, anglers, campers, kayakers, birders, mountain bikers, mountain lions, elk, moose, bighorn sheep, bullhead trout, salmon, sage grouse and soil.

Editors Wuerthner and Matteson live with their family in Eugene, Ore. Wuerthner is an ecologist, writer, photographer, wildlands advocate, university instructor and natural history guide. Matteson is a writer, editor and wildlands advocate.

Welfare Ranching is published by the Foundation for Deep Ecology and distributed by Island Press.





Home on the Holistic Range

by Keith Raether

Allan Savory's leap of holistic faith in matters of range management and livestock grazing belies an entire body of range science. His is a quasi-religious world laced with proverbs and prophecies – a world in which the messiah is Savory himself.

Savory is the founder of the Allan Savory Center for Holistic Management, which promotes, among other strategies, the Savory method of livestock grazing to federal agencies and ranching communities. The method is predicated on the notion that rangelands are in poor condition because they are undergrazed, not overgrazed.

Savory blames the wholesale degradation of watersheds in the Rocky Mountain West on “biological decay” and “too few animals” on the watersheds that feed rivers. In the world according to Savory, domestic livestock are a means to “land reclamation.”

It goes without saying that livestock grazing has severely depleted vegetative cover and production on public lands in the West. What needs to be said in holistic management workshops is that sufficient forage no longer exists in most of the West to support the large herds on which Savory's grazing system depends.

Also overlooked is the role of livestock grazing in the replacement of native vegetation with weeds across millions of acres of the West.

Individual ranchers have reported some success with Savory's holistic management plan. Why? For one, ranchers who buy into the plan are usually in the hummocks looking up. The promise of a cure-all appears and, presto, everybody's on good behavior. When public lands permittees suddenly go from absentee stewardship to hands-on animal husbandry, any result is bound to be positive.

When Savory argues that centuries of large-herd grazing in the West maintained healthy grasslands, he reinvents history. Until domestic livestock were introduced to the region some 150 years ago, the Great Basin and the desert Southwest were not heavily grazed for 5,000 to 10,000 years.

Savory also fails to mention that, prior to the introduction of livestock, 400,000 miles of barbed-wire fencing didn't cut off migratory corridors. Before rangelands were fenced, wildlife herds were able to roam for hundreds of miles without competition for forage.

In a recent letter to the publication *Rangelands*, Savory wrote positively of the only scientific grazing research trial that he has conducted in 30 years of consultation with ranchers. All three authors who published papers on the trial reported the opposite result. Savory's method, the authors concluded, failed to improve ranch profits, failed to improve range conditions and failed to increase financial returns per head of cattle.

Experimental studies dating from 1984 by range and soil scientists conclude that Savory's principles of range management reduce water infiltration into the soil; increase erosion; reduce forage production, soil organic matter and mineral cycling; and increase soil bulk density.

The late, eminent range ecologist Joy Belsky challenged Savory's claims about livestock management widely and often. In a paper entitled “Allan Savory's Holistic Management: Scientific Misinformation on Grazed Ecosystems,” she cites a grazing study on a ranch in Zimbabwe where Savory's recommendations were applied to improve range condition and increase livestock productivity.

Neither outcome occurred. Increased production only happened during periods of heavy rainfall. In periods of normal rainfall, stocking rates prescribed by Savory stifled production and severely damaged the range.

Contrary to Savory, scientific studies show that bunchgrasses in arid environments such as the Rocky Mountain West are more likely to die if they are grazed. Contrary to Savory, “overrest” of grasslands does not cause deterioration. As one of several examples, Belsky cites Dutchwoman Butte in central Arizona, a fertile, stable territory where grazing by livestock has never occurred.

“Published comparisons of grazed and ungrazed lands in the western United States have found that rested (protected) sites had larger and denser grasses, fewer weedy herbs and shrubs, higher biodiversity, higher productivity, less bare ground, and better water infiltration than nearby grazed areas,” Belsky writes.

And yet, the U.S. Forest Service is currently collaborating with Savory to establish a “national learning site” in central Idaho to “heal the land.” This leap of faith for Savory's services will cost American taxpayers \$1 million over four years.

The price to pay for livestock grazing on public lands, of course, is greater still. Public lands ranching threatens native species, reduces water quality, spreads noxious weeds, alters natural fire regimes and accelerates soil erosion, destroying streamside and upland ecosystems.

In its Global 2000 report, the Council on Environmental Quality noted that “improvident grazing . . . has been the most potent desertification force, in terms of total acreage (351,562 square miles), within the United States.”

“We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us,” Aldo Leopold once wrote. “When we begin to see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.”

When and where human dominion over the land ends, healing begins. Holistic management starts here.





Report From Greenfire

by Stew Churchwell

The large numbers of elk, deer and horses that spent the fall, winter and early spring here at Greenfire are gone. The elk have moved to higher country. I see yearling deer occasionally, but the does have moved to solitary places to give birth. The bucks have moved up on the ridges.

photo©Teresa Tamura



Wildlife sightings at Greenfire these days consists primarily of birds and predators. For most of winter and all of spring, I watched coyotes take advantage of our previous summer irrigation project. The abundant, ungrazed grasses created tremendous habitat for meadow voles, and they multiplied rapidly. Then came the coyotes, kestrels and northern harriers to capitalize on the exploding rodent populations.

The coyotes would hunt in the fields all day. Through our new spotting scope (generously donated by WWP board secretary-treasurer Gene Bray) I observed their successes. The coyotes would capture a mouse or vole about every 10 minutes, even through a blanket of snow. Once the snow had melted, the captures increased to every 45 seconds.

The act of hunting, capture and consumption was fascinating to observe. When a coyote detected a vole, it suddenly stopped short, cocked its head slowly from side to side, then forward and back, while focusing intently on one point in the snow-covered grass.

I imagined the coyote using some sort of auditory triangulation to pinpoint the precise location of the scurrying noises under the snow. Suddenly, the wily predator would leap into the air and come down hard on its forepaws, muzzle close to the ground, frozen at the ready. Then, like a flash of lightning, it would jam its snout into the snow and grass and come up with a little brown ball of fur.

The morsel wasn't consumed right away. Instead, the rodent was tossed into the air, plucked from the ground and tossed again. This ritual was repeated several times

before the little critter became the coyote's lunch.

I have heard it said that animals such as coyotes and wolves like to play with their prey before they kill it. Patience may look like a game, but it probably has more to do with common sense. Coyotes are probably capable of chomping voles out of their misery rather quickly -- but with an element of risk. A dying vole is probably capable of sinking its teeth into a coyote's lip in one last-ditch effort to escape.

Though it may appear to be a game, I doubt that tossing rodents into the air represents a kind of torture or a case of predator playing with its food. The coyote may simply be trying to avoid unnecessary pain. Wolves probably experience similar situations when they bring down elk or even bovines -- animals that could inflict serious pain and injury to a predator equipped to kill only with its teeth.

In addition to the more common predators observed at Greenfire, we have documented a nesting pair of peregrine falcons. A week before WWP's annual board meeting at the preserve, I spotted a large bird on the fence south of the main house. It was early in the morning -- just before daylight -- and difficult to see well. But the moment I saw the raptor, I thought peregrine.

Before I could train the spotting scope on the bird, it took flight. A couple of days later, I saw three birds that I thought were peregrines. However, they were flying very high and were difficult to see. Two of the birds seemed to be evicting the third from the area, and they seemed to be successful.

On the day of the board meeting, a group of us saw a bird on the cliffs east of the main house. This bird also looked like a peregrine. It perched on a rock ledge to pick apart and eat a rock dove. There was no doubt; it was a peregrine.



Everyone present had several opportunities to observe the bird from many angles, and a positive identification was made. Over the course of the weekend we saw the birds many times, and Gene thought he identified the location of the aerie.

The following week, I contacted Jim Johnston of the Idaho Department of Fish and Game. He came out to the preserve and confirmed that the birds are indeed peregrines.

He also confirmed the aerie that Gene discovered.

The aerie, one of only about 20 in Idaho, is a promising sign of the ongoing recovery of this once-endangered species. (For a good photo of a peregrine falcon go to: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/~tull/falcon/>)

Various neotropical migrants have returned to Greenfire to nest. At the main house, the old homestead and along the river, I have observed many species, including western tanagers, yellow warblers, kingbirds and bluebirds. Western wood pewees are back, and along the river I often see blue herons, American dippers and mergansers.

Stew Churchwell is Greenfire Manager and Central Idaho Director of WWP.



Bats: Diminutive Navigators of the Night Skies

by *Miriam L. Austin*

The unwitting subject of many a myth, bats occur throughout a wide variety of North American habitats. Idaho's 14 bat species include the silver-haired bat, hoary bat, fringed myotis, big brown bat, Yuma myotis, western pipistrelle, long-legged myotis, California myotis, long-eared myotis, pallid bat, western small-footed myotis, spotted bat, little brown myotis and Townsend's big-eared bat.

With the exception of the big brown bat, all of Idaho's species are considered to be state-sensitive species or species of special concern by Idaho's Department of Fish and Game. Townsend's big-eared bats have been petitioned for TES listing throughout the United States.

All Idaho bat species are insectivorous and provide valuable, natural pest control for agricultural crops, rangelands, forests and our own backyards. A little brown myotis can consume up to 1,200 insects per hour. A nursing mother bat will consume more than her body weight in a single night -- up to 4,500 insects such as mosquitoes.

A population of 150 big brown bats can consume enough cucumber beetles in a summer to protect farmer's crops from more than 33 million of the beetle's larvae. Loss of bats destabilizes ecosystems and economies, and increases man's reliance on chemical alternatives -- an additional threat to ecosystems as well as human health.

A spotted bat, one of Idaho's rarest species, was documented at WWP's Greenfire Ranch on May 11 by the author. Spotted bats typically roost alone, but may hibernate in small clusters. Spotted bats are believed to maintain exclusive foraging areas ranging from three to six miles from their day roost site from approximately an hour after sunset to an hour before sunrise. Spotted bats prey primarily on noctuid

moths. Females produce a single pup early to mid-summer.

Overall distribution of bats is based on the availability of quality foraging and roosting habitat. A loss of natural roost sites has occurred throughout the U.S. due to harvest of large-diameter and cavity-containing trees, commercial and recreational use of natural caves, surface mining and the flooding of natural cave sites by large water impoundments. Foraging habitats have been severely threatened by wildfire, prescribed fire, human development, domestic livestock grazing and the overall conversion of native plant communities to exotic species and noxious weeds. A loss of native plant communities results in losses of the native insect prey base not only for bats but also for many birds and other wildlife species. More than half of North America's 54 bat species are now threatened or in severe decline.

Bats have few behavioral defenses against predation or disturbances. Natural predation of bats is mostly limited to owls, snakes and occasionally other bats. The most devastating predation or loss of bats is directly due to humans and their activities, including the introduction of house cats and rats into native habitats.

Species such as the Townsend's big-eared bat often form



The Spotted bat: One of Idaho's rarest bat species and a resident at Greenfire Preserve.

photo©John Hopkins University

large groups in caves or mines during either the maternity or the winter hibernation season. Entire populations can be killed by thoughtless vandals or entombed through improper closure of abandoned mines or other facilities. Disturbance during hibernation can also lead to starvation (due to energy loss), while disturbances during the maternity season can lead to the abandonment of flightless young. Bats tend to have very low reproductive rates; in most species, females do not reproduce until two years of age and in many instances only one pup is born per year to a reproducing female. Once bats are subjected to disturbances of the reproductive cycle, populations can take many years to recover.

Miriam Austin is a WWP field monitor and resource specialist



RangeNet 2002 in October

RangeNet 2002 is slated for Oct. 9-11 at Boise State University in Boise, Idaho. This year's conference, dedicated to the late ecologist Joy Belsky, is shaped on the theme of "Bovines or Biodiversity: The National Campaign to End Abusive Public Lands Ranching."

Two days of presentations and panel discussions will be capped by a keynote address by Thomas Michael Power, author of "Post-Cowboy Economics: Pay and Prosperity in the New West." George Wuertlner and Mollie Matteson will be on hand to discuss and sign their new book, "Welfare Ranching: The Subsidized Destruction of the American West."

After the conference, participants are invited to proceed to Western Watershed Project's 432-acre Greenfire Preserve on the East Fork of the Salmon River for the second annual Greenfire Revival Oct. 11-13. (Camping only on premises. Motels available in Stanley and Challis.)

The RangeNet 2002 agenda follows below. For more information and to register online, visit WWP's website.

Wednesday, Oct. 9, Boise Art Museum

7:00 p.m. Conference reception. No-host bar.

8:00 p.m. Slide presentation and book-signing
George Wuertlner and Mollie Matteson, editors of "Welfare Ranching: The Subsidized Destruction of the American West"

Thursday, Oct. 10, Boise State University

8:00 a.m. Conference registration and continental breakfast

9:00 a.m. "Conservation in Action: The Life and Work of Joy Belsky"
Elizabeth Painter, advisory board, Western Watersheds Project

9:15 a.m. "Welfare Ranching: The Subsidized Destruction of the American West" George Wuertlner and Mollie Matteson, National Public Lands Grazing Campaign

10:00 a.m. "Drawing for "Welfare Ranching" books

10:30 a.m. "Legal Frameworks for Public Lands Ranching"
Laird Lucas, attorney, Western Watersheds Project and Land and Water Fund of the Rockies, Boise
Paul Turcke, attorney, Moore Smith Buxton and Turcke, Boise
Alan Schroeder, attorney, Schroeder and Lezamiz, Boise (tentative)

Noon Lunch

1:30 p.m. "The Future of Public Lands Ranching: Mythology, Ecology, Sociology and Public Policy"
Jon Marvel, executive director, Western Watersheds Project
Ed Marston, publisher, High Country News

3:00 p.m. "Dollars and Sense: The National Public Lands Grazing Campaign"
Andy Kerr, director, National Public Lands Grazing Campaign
Mark Salvo, counselor, NPLGC
Gilly Lyons, eastern representative, NPLGC

4:30 p.m. Hospitality hour and No-host bar (University Inn)

6:00 p.m. Dinner

7:00 p.m. Keynote address: "Post-Cowboy Economics in the New West" Thomas Michael Power, author

8:30 p.m. Edward Abbey Memorial Hooved Locust Award
Recipient to be announced

9:00 p.m. Reception and no-host bar (University Inn)

Friday, Oct. 11, Boise State University

8:30 a.m. Continental breakfast

9:00 a.m. "Bovines vs. Biodiversity: A Scientific Almanac"
John Carter, Utah director, Western Watersheds Project
Elizabeth Painter, advisory board, Western Watersheds Project

10:00 a.m. "The Changing West"
Report From Utah Patrick Diehl and Tori Woodard, Escalante Wilderness Project

Report From New Mexico John Horning, Forest Guardians

Report From Arizona Jeff Burgess, BLM Rangeland Resource Team

Report From Oregon Bill Marlett, executive director, Oregon Natural Desert Association

Report From Montana Glenn Hockett, Gallatin Wildlife Association

Report From Colorado John Graham, SINAPU

Report From Idaho/Nevada Katie Fite, Committee for Idaho's High Desert

11:30 a.m. "How the West Will Be Won"

Andy Kerr, director, National Public Lands Grazing Campaign, NPLGC Steering Committee representatives: American Lands Alliance (Randi Spivak), Center for Biological Diversity (Martin Taylor), Committee for Idaho's High Desert (Katie Fite), Forest Guardians (John Horning), Oregon Natural Desert Association (Bill Marlett), Western Watersheds Project (Jon Marvel), Larry Walker, founder, RangeNet

Gifts, Grants and Thanks

WWP received a major grant from the Good Works Institute to support our legal efforts. The Sperling Foundation and the E. & H. Humbly Bumbly Foundation also awarded \$5,000 to WWP for general expenses.

WWP continues to receive funding through Community Shares of Idaho, a coalition of nonprofits that share donations pledged by Ada County, city of Boise and Boise/Meridian school district employees.

Finally, Idaho Conservation League contributed \$1,000 to WWP through the rental of our Greenfire Preserve property on the East Fork of the Salmon River.

Thanks to all for their generous support.

A volunteer crew of WWP board members and supporters dedicated their Memorial Day weekend to the Greenfire cause, working in tandem to repaint the exterior of the main house.

Dale Grooms led the effort, prepping and painting for four days. Board member Debra Ellers, friends Tom Sedgwick, Molly Connors and Bob Wagenknecht, and Grooms' daughter Jennifer Anderson formed the principal crew, working long hours for two days. Bob Dargatz, Pat and Katherine Olsson, Ginger Harmon, Sue Allison and Larry Crockett also rolled up their sleeves to help for a day.

The rewards for their efforts were good food and company, sightings of peregrine falcons and coyotes, and an evening of entertainment supplied by guitarist and Greenfire manager Stew Churchwell.

Many thanks to all who participated.

WWP extends special thanks to the following WWP supporters, each of whom contributed \$100 or more to our efforts since the publication of our previous newsletter:

Alliance Packaging

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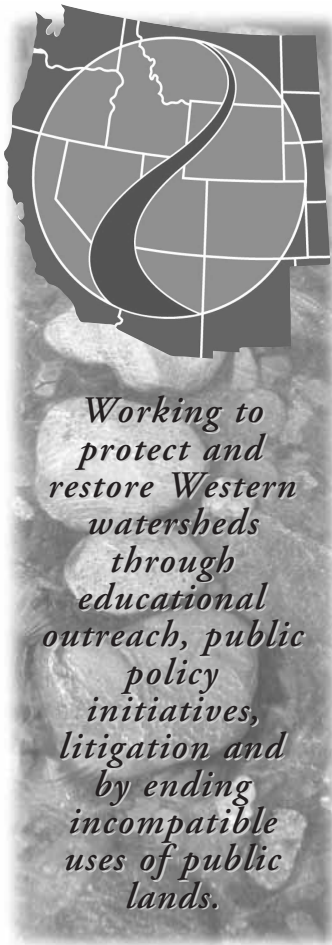
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WWP board and members after the annual board meeting May 11, 2002 at WWP's Greenfire Preserve on the East Fork of the Salmon River.

Back row (from left): Dick Kolbrener, Tom Blanchard, John Carter, Louise Wagenknecht, Debra Ellers, Stew Churchwell, Bob Wagenknecht, Kelley Weston, Jon Marvel

Front row (from left): Kaz the Giant Dog, Gene Bray, Suzanne Johnson, Judy Hall, Don Johnson, Stefanie Marvel, Irene Wright