



Watersheds Messenger

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Working to protect and restore Idaho watersheds

Lessons from the West

by George Wuerthner

Many wish to see the wolf restored to provide for recovery of an endangered species. Certainly that is what is legally driving the wolf recovery efforts across the country since the animal was listed under the Endangered Species Act in 1973. But I hasten to add that we should also be advocating for wolf recovery because wolves are an essential evolutionary force that has shaped wild ungulate populations and influenced many other species like competing carnivores such as coyotes throughout time. By definition biodiversity preservation means we preserve the elements that create and shape biodiversity evolution. The wolf, as top predator throughout most of North America, is analogous to fire in its interaction with vegetative communities. We cannot accept the idea of restoring a few token wolf packs in a few select areas. We need to restore wolves across the landscape to restore a major evolutionary force — the wolf. Biologically there is no reason why this can't be achieved.

Right now there are many hailing wolf restoration efforts in the Rockies, Southwest and Southeast as a "success." Success by what definition? They are dispersing and exploring new areas. In a limited way one can call this restoration effort a success. But in my mind, the effort to restore wolves will never be a real success until we find a way to restore the wolf across much of the landscape it formerly inhabited.

Under that kind of definition, the wolf restoration efforts have been anything but a success. The only places where wolves in the Rockies and Southwest are not experiencing excessive mortality due to human control efforts is in designated wilderness or park areas. Yes wolves are doing well inside the boundaries of Yellowstone Park. They are surviving in Central Idaho's Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness. But outside of these few protected zones, wolf recovery is not proceeding as desired.

In the tri-state area of Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming, 79% of all known wolf mortalities are due to humans, primarily "legal" control by "Wildlife Services" at the request of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Indeed, control efforts may jeopardize any wolf recovery and delisting, and certainly has significantly slowed wolf recovery in the region.

To delist wolves in the northern Rockies-Northwest Montana (includes Glacier NP), Greater Yellowstone, and Central Idaho - a population of 10 breeding pairs of wolves in all three recovery areas for three consequent years must be achieved. Though there is substantial output of pups, recovery goals are not being achieved due to excessive control efforts to

appease livestock interests in the region.

Yet the livestock losses are insignificant. For example, in Montana, livestock producers lose well over 200,000 animals a year to all causes - disease, eating poison plants, weather and other factors. Of these losses, wolves account for no more than a dozen or so on average a year. By comparison, domestic dogs kill an average of 1,500 livestock in Montana annually. Despite these minuscule losses, the entire success of the wolf restoration project is held captive by this tiny minority that for too long have controlled western politics. Even most regional and national environmental groups are

afraid to condemn the livestock industry and in my view are equally culpable for the death of wolves by their very silence. While the losses to



ranchers are almost statistically irrelevant, the losses of wolves and its implications for wolf recovery are significant. For example, in Northwest Montana where wolves originally recolonized on their own from Canada and where wolf recovery has been going on for more than 15 years, there were only five known breeding packs in 1999. That was partly the result of the killing of 27 wolves (more than a third of the known population at the time) by Wildlife Services in one year due to conflicts with a few livestock producers. These control efforts were done illegally since the Northwest Montana wolves are considered "endangered" under the ESA and technically protected. But no voice was raised in objection to this kind of killing. This killing was

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done on top of a major prey die-off due to high winter mortality of deer. Is this how we “recover” an endangered species?

We continually hear about “problem” wolves. Even wolf supporters have bought into this pejorative use of the term. There are no “problem” wolves. The problem exists with how we humans define restoration. In nearly all instances, the reason wolves are killed is due to predation by wolves upon domestic livestock. Yet research and experience have demonstrated that proper animal husbandry practices that include swift removal of carcasses, the use of herders and guard dogs and penning of animals at night result in livestock that are far less vulnerable to predator losses. Yet no one, not the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or even most pro-wolf organizations are demanding that such practices be implemented in order to minimize conflicts.

It is irresponsible ranchers, not wolves, that are causing problems and livestock “conflicts.” Caring properly for livestock is and should be one of the costs of doing business. Right now ranchers have successfully “externalized” one of their costs - proper livestock husbandry - on to the public upon the backs of wolves and other predators.

Indeed, the entire focus of research and support appears to be towards changing the wolves’ behavior. Research on the use of sound devices, shock collars, taste avoidance, and other manipulation raises real questions about whether we are going to recover “wild” wolves or merely have “token” animals that look but don’t act like wolves running around the landscape.

Worse yet, and more dangerous, is the status of the other wolf recovery areas in the Rockies. Wolves in Central Idaho and Greater Yellowstone are considered “experimental and nonessential.” This status allows for even greater manipulation and control of the animals. Wolf supporters in other regions such as the Northeast should be wary of accepting wolf restoration under these terms. Apparently once an experimental wolf, always an experimental wolf - even for your descendants.

When a wolf from Idaho dispersed into Oregon last March, she was captured and relocated to Idaho because she was a “descendant” of a wolf pack that was part of the experimental nonessential population. Ordinarily, a wolf dispersing into Oregon would have full protection under the Endangered Species Act and would not be removed or manipulated. “Experimental nonessential population” status allowed the Fish and Wildlife Service to yank this wolf out of the wild even though she had not had any conflicts with irresponsible ranchers.

Under experimental and nonessential status, the FWS was able to avoid advocating any changes in federal land management or even livestock practices. As a result lethal control has also taken its toll on wolves in the other recovery areas. In the past year, for instance, three wolf packs in a 150-mile swath of Central Idaho were destroyed - again due to livestock conflicts.

A number of wolf packs in the Greater Yellowstone area also experienced lethal control to the detriment of the pack organization. For example, the Sheep Mountain pack whose territory extended just north of Yellowstone National Park

experienced the loss of 6 members this past year due to lethal control.

The Sheep Mountain losses exemplify what is wrong with our entire approach to wolf restoration. These wolves had established a den site and later a rendezvous site on an elk winter range and calving ground on Forest Service land that also happened to be used as a summer livestock grazing allotment. Even though the wolves were still actively using the area, the FS and FWS allowed the rancher to place his cattle on the allotment. This operator left dead animals on the allotment, and was not required to herd or otherwise protect his animals. About a week before the rancher was supposed to pull his cows off the public lands, the wolves found and fed upon a dead cow carcass. A few days later, they attacked a calf and killed it. The FWS immediately flew in and killed four wolves. This was an entirely avoidable situation. Yet no one, not the FWS, not the FS, not even most environmental organizations questioned the policy of allowing livestock and wolves to overlap.

There is not a wolf pack that I am aware of in the West that has the majority of its territory overlapping with livestock that hasn’t wound up preying upon livestock at some point in time. Maybe not every generation, maybe not every wolf, but sooner or later, wolves give in to the opportunities presented by sloppy livestock operations, and consequently suffer some kind of response - whether removal or lethal control.

Ironically, few wolf supporters have questioned this use of lethal control with regard to wolves, yet this is highly unusual in our approach to endangered species recovery. Yes the killing of a cow causes an economic loss to the rancher, but such losses can be compensated, or more importantly, avoided if proper husbandry practices were mandatory. Moreover, we don’t allow logging companies to shoot spotted owls because they remove trees from the timber base available for cutting, despite a far greater economic impact upon timber companies and communities. Nor do we allow commercial fishermen to kill bald eagles or marine mammals that are eating salmon or other fish. Yet far too many accept the notion that ranchers have a right to kill wolves for livestock depredation.

Even if we could win some concessions from livestock operators to minimize predator opportunity through herders and nighttime penning and other measures, it’s important to recognize that the mere presence of livestock still creates conflicts. Many prey species like elk avoid areas actively being grazed by domestic livestock, and are displaced. When wolves are tied down with pups they cannot follow displaced prey easily, creating a hardship upon wolves attempting to feed their young - and indirectly creating a situation that may lead to livestock depredation. Thus even so called “predator friendly” livestock operations pose a problem for predators like wolves even if the predators are not directly killed.

Without changing livestock operations, I have serious doubts that substantive wolf recovery across the landscape can or will occur. Unless livestock are removed from a large part of the land base (such as eliminating them from all public lands) or at a minimum demanding a change in the way livestock operations are conducted, I find it difficult to imagine a future where wolves are commonplace across the country. Currently livestock producers are externalizing one of the real costs of

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their operations - preventing predator opportunity. This cost is being borne by the rest of us that want wolves, and more importantly, upon the land that needs and requires that we restore wolf predation as a major evolutionary force.

We may need to rethink wolf restoration. The wolf is a highly adaptive animal. The assumption that they require wilderness is false. They have been relegated to these areas because humans have refused to change their behavior to allow for wolf coexistence. Indeed, wolves survive fairly well in close proximity to humans in Europe and elsewhere. Give them some protection from persecution; as long as there is sufficient prey, they can live among us.

Indeed, I think wolf recovery might be more successful if we focused more on bringing wolves back to the edges of our cities rather than putting them among rural communities. After all there is far more support for wolves - hence tolerance - among urban dwellers than among rural residents. I'm not suggesting that wolves be placed in Central Park, but within a reasonable distance of our major urban areas there is an abundance of prey, and enough woodlands and forest to provide some habitat - fragmented though it

may be. I believe wolves might prosper better in western Massachusetts than in northern Maine. Right now in Massachusetts, there are few farms, and deer are so plentiful that hunters can kill a dozen or more a year.

Similar situations exist in many other parts of the country. They may well do better in southern New York than in the Adirondacks. Maybe they should be restored to the national forest lands outside of Portland and Denver rather than in the "wilder" parts of these states like Oregon's Blue Mountains or Colorado's San Juan Mountains. The real factor that seems to determine wolf success is not roads per square mile, but rednecks/cows per square mile. With few farms and ranches, and fewer rednecks, maybe wolves will experience a higher survival rate in our more urbanized regions than they do now in rural areas. Give wolves half a chance, and we can restore them as a major evolutionary force - but only if we are willing to challenge the assumptions and attitudes that are jeopardizing wolf recovery today. If we are going to recover the wolf, we need to learn how to live with the wolf, not merely relegate it to a few "reservations" we call national parks.

George Wuerthner is a writer, photographer and biologist *living in Eugene, Oregon.*

News Briefs

Seven Year Battle Ends with Victory for Idaho Watersheds Project

On Tuesday morning July 11, 2000, the Idaho Land Board, by a 3-2 vote, awarded Idaho Watersheds Project a ten year grazing lease for a 640 acre parcel of Idaho school endowment land on Lake Creek in Custer County, Idaho after the third auction won by IWP for this lease was appealed by rancher Gary Ingram, the low bidder (Ingram had bid \$100 to IWP's bid of \$2,000).

This lease is the very first grazing lease applied for by Idaho Watersheds Project in September of 1993 and it includes over one mile of Lake Creek, an important rearing stream for chinook salmon and steelhead trout both of which are listed under the Endangered Species Act. Lake Creek may also provide habitat for bull trout another listed fish species. In past years the stream had been very seriously damaged by abusive livestock mismanagement.

Over the last seven years IWP has been denied this lease twice before by the Land Board. In one case rancher Will Ingram refused to bid against IWP (which won the lease with a bid of \$30.00) but was awarded the lease anyway and after the Supreme Court of Idaho ordered another auction, rancher Gary Ingram (Will's son) bid \$10. to IWP's \$2,000. but was still awarded the lease. In each case IWP had pursued legal action and in the process won unanimous precedent setting decisions from the Idaho Supreme Court which established once and for all that the Idaho Land Board cannot establish a preference for ranchers in the leasing of school trust lands.

IWP looks forward to protecting this important fishery and wildlife habitat area for the next ten years!

The votes for IWP on the Land Board came from State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Marilyn Howard; Idaho Attorney-General Al Lance, and State Controller J.D.

Williams; in opposition were Secretary of State, Pete T. Cenarrusa, a sheep rancher and Acting Governor (currently Lieutenant Governor and a Congressional candidate this year) C.L. "Butch" Otter who was formerly married to a daughter of J.R. Simplot who is the largest public lands rancher in the United States. Readers might care to contact "Butch" through his web site: <http://www.otter4idaho.com/> to inquire how his vote comports with his long-term free-market libertarianism!

IWP was ably represented at the Land Board hearing by Board member Gene E. Bray.

Rancher Judge Blows Off the BLM

On Wednesday May 31, 2000, United States District Judge Edward J. Lodge for the District of Idaho issued a Temporary Restraining Order stopping the implementation of a decision to cut grazing on the Cliffs Allotment by 53% in the Owyhee Resource Area of the BLM in Owyhee County, Idaho.

Judge Lodge acted without any court hearing whatsoever and acted solely on the basis of information provided by three public land ranching permittees provided three days before the Order. He restored both the numbers of livestock and the season of use in place in previous years without regard for the impacts and identified irreparable harm to public resources caused by the permittees' cattle on this extraordinarily degraded BLM allotment. The three ranchers in question had chosen not to appeal the BLM's final decision of this past winter through the arcane process of the Department of the Interior's Office of Hearings and Appeals (OHA).

Remarkably enough, Judge Lodge was, until recently, a public lands grazing permittee himself on the well-named Lodge Allotment on the Malheur Resource Area of the

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Hart Mountain Refuge - A Vision for Idaho's Grasslands

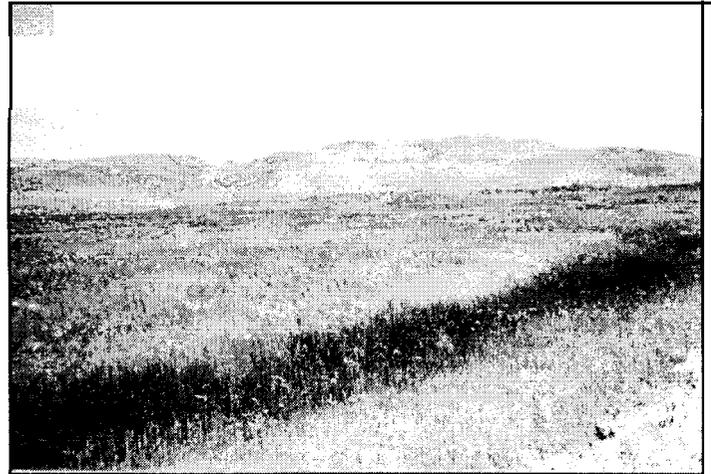
by Debra Ellen and Dale Grooms

Imagine waist-high bunchgrasses stretching for miles. Clear streams running, with level, verdant willow-lined banks. Meadows untrammelled, dotted with blue, yellow, pink and white wildflowers. The wistful musing of an IWP member subjected to yet another stomped out creek bed littered with cowpies? No, a grazing-free chunk of high desert Great Basin habitat that lies in remote Southeastern Oregon at Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge. While not part of any Idaho watershed, Hart Mountain is of interest to IWP members for the ongoing lesson it provides about land recovery after livestock grazing ends.

Hart Mountain Refuge is a 240,000 acre wildlife refuge established in 1936 to preserve pronghorn habitat. Primarily high elevation grasslands, the land ranges from 4,500-8,000 feet. Numerous springs feed several perennial creeks. These features made the area a magnet for ranchers seeking summer forage for their livestock. Before federal protection, at times more than 10,000 cattle and 50,000 sheep grazed this land. Even after federal grazing management plans were implemented, up to 4,000 cattle grazed it. The combination of decades of heavy grazing and the drought of the late 1980s led to disastrous conditions, such as degraded streambeds, dried up springs, and diminished numbers of wildlife, including pronghorns, bighorn sheep and songbirds.

The manager of Hart Mountain Refuge at the time, Barry Reiswig, brought in biologists to assess the damage. Based on the biologists' findings of severe degradation and pressured from environmental groups' lawsuits, regional Fish and Wildlife Service Director Marvin Plenert decided in July 1994 to remove cattle completely from the Refuge for fifteen years. Local ranchers and Lake County politicians were outraged, and engaged in typical Sagebrush Rebellion antics such as threatening to cut off access to the Refuge by the county road. Not surprisingly, Manager Reiswig moved on. But the ban on grazing stuck.

Now cow-free for the better part of a decade, the land shows significant recovery. Banks have stabilized, and the streams flow in narrow channels. New aspens are sprouting. Fescues and bunchgrasses grow profusely. Ground nesting



A recovering meadow at Hart Mountain

birds such as sage grouse and short-eared owls are evident. Viewing this comeback from devastation is encouraging for anyone who cares about our public lands.

Apart from its scientific interest, though, the Hart Mountain landscape sings of beauty. Open and vast, the grasslands roll away against the blue Western sky. Warner and Hart Mountains crest on the Refuge's western horizon with pockets of snow and aspens on their hillsides. Old growth ponderosa pines grow in higher parts of the Refuge, such as the Blue Sky area to the south and DeGarmo Canyon to the west. Pothole lakes form in wet years in the Warner Basin at the Refuge's western boundary. At sunset, these lakes blaze in a maze of red and gold.

All is not perfect at Hart Mountain Refuge, though. Although the land looks pristine to observers accustomed to grazing damage as the norm, its overgrazed past is still evident. The aspens are all either elderly or young; there are no middle-aged trees. Seasonal creek beds still show wide banks from trampling. Water tables in most riparian areas have not risen to the same point as that around the one stream not grazed in decades.

Perhaps most troubling is that the pronghorn numbers have been diminishing. No one knows the reason for the decline. Speculation as to the cause ranges from an increase in predation from coyotes to a natural cycle in its down trend. A prior manager proposed that coyotes be hunted aerially just prior to fawning season. Faced with howls of protest from the environmental community, this proposal was never implemented.

Additionally, the management plan effective in 1994 calls for a fifteen year respite from grazing, but not a permanent ban. Thus, the cattle could return in 2009. Environmental organizations are working to restore the Refuge, with the hope to keep it free from domestic livestock grazing in perpetuity. For example, hundreds of miles of barbed wire fencing remain in the Refuge. Pronghorns and barbed wire do not mix, as pronghorns refuse to jump fences. A number of organizations engage in fence removal projects each spring and summer. Removing fences furthers the dual goals of enhancing the



Fence removal volunteers at Hart Mountain.

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pronghorns' environment, and lessening the likelihood of livestock returning. Environmental groups with fence removal projects at Hart Mountain Refuge include Wilderness Volunteers (www.wildernessvolunteers.org), Sierra Club (www.sierraclub.org) and Oregon Natural Desert Association (www.onda.org). Participating in one of these service trips provides a good introduction to the area. It also benefits the participant (ripping out fences outdoors beats a gym workout), the land (aesthetics significantly enhanced by the absence of fences) and its wildlife (pronghorns and mule deer not having their movements thwarted or getting their young entangled in barbed wire).

Whether visited with a group or individually, Hart Mountain Refuge is a little-known gem of a destination. From an IWP member's perspective, the Refuge illustrates what splendor the Owyhees or other high elevation grasslands in Idaho would be without domestic livestock grazing. It's a vision worth fighting for.

Sources: High County News, November 24, 1997 (Vol. 29, No. 22) "Restoring a Refuge: Cows Depart, but Can Antelope Recover?"

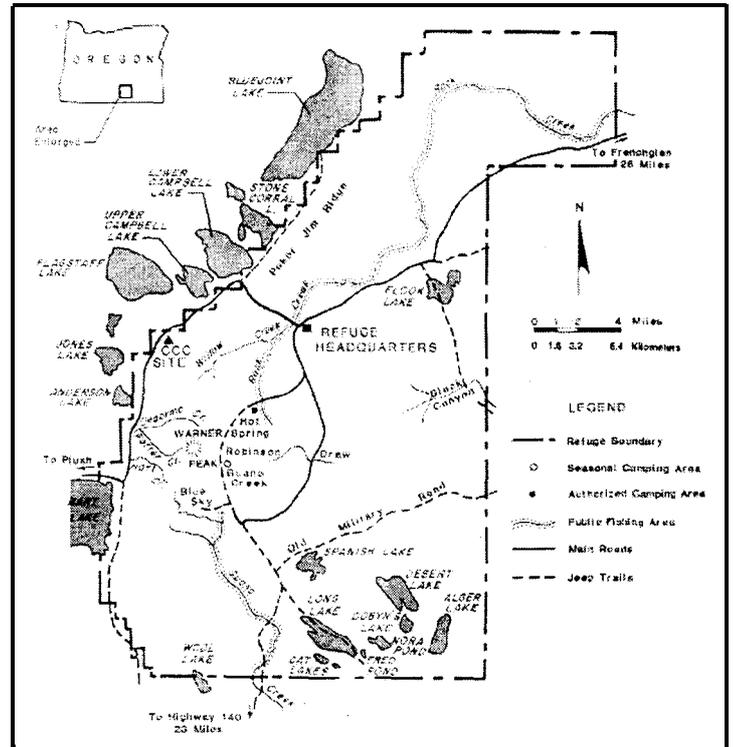
Getting there: To get to Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge from Idaho, the closest route is via I-84 west to Ontario, OR. Take US 20 to Burns, Oregon to Oregon State Hwy. 205 south, which is the road to Malheur National Wildlife Refuge and Steens Mountain. Continue south past the Steens Mountain Road and Frenchglen. A few miles south of Frenchglen, take the gravel road west to Hart Mountain Refuge Headquarters. Family sedans are generally fine for this drive from May-Oct., although count on dust and washboard.

Accommodations: A drive in campground (free, no permit required) is located about 4 miles south of the Headquarters. The campground nestles pleasantly in an aspen grove by Rock Creek (a trout stream open to fishing in accordance with Oregon regulations). It also boasts a hot spring. Backpacking is allowed (free, permit required), but may be restricted during pronghorn calving season or for other management purposes. It is also possible to vehicle camp, backpack or canoe camp around the pothole lakes outside the Refuge, which are located on BLM land (where, needless to say, grazing is still permitted, making bovine encounters or evidence likely).

Accommodations and services outside the Refuge are limited. Plush, Ore, pop. 25 or so, has gas and a general store. Lakeview, Oregon is the closest sizeable town with motels, restaurants and grocery stores, but is 65 miles from the Refuge. It's best to plan on being self sufficient while visiting the Refuge.

For further information, contact Refuge Manager, Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge, PO. Box 111, Lakeview, OR 97630 (503) 947-3315.

Debra Ellers and Dale Grooms are IWP members from Boise, Idaho.



Hart Mountain National Wildlife Refuge

News Briefs (continued from page 3)

BLM's infamous Vale District in eastern Oregon. His brother, Norman "Tubbo" Lodge, may still be a grazing permittee on the Schnable Allotment in the same Malheur Resource Area with over 1200 AUMs of welfare handout AUMs.

With the assistance of the Boise office of the Land and Water Fund of the Rockies, Idaho Watersheds Project will file a motion for **intervenor** status in this lawsuit. IWP's participation will make it possible, perhaps once and for all, for a federal court determination (albeit at the Ninth Circuit level) that will make absolutely clear that holding a grazing permit that is reduced or eliminated because of the ongoing destruction of public land streams and critical wildlife habitat does not give some compensable right to public land ranchers: the destroyers of public lands.

Endangered Species Listing Petition Filed for Mountain Quail, a "Most Butifull Bird"

On Thursday, March 16, 2000 Idaho Watersheds Project, the Committee for Idaho's High Desert, the Spokane Audubon Society and Rob Kavanaugh, a determined citizen from Olympia, Washington, have filed a petition with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to list the mountain quail under the Endangered Species Act.

The mountain quail is the only quail native to Idaho, northern Nevada, Washington and Oregon. It has virtually disappeared from all portions of this vast interior landscape. Destruction of diverse riparian shrub plant communities has caused its decline. Livestock grazing, dams, cheatgrass, weeds, and brush clearing are the reasons for the catastrophic decline in these populations of mountain quail.

The petitioners have proposed listing of the mountain

The Embattled Sage Grouse

by: Mark Salvo

The stately sage grouse has experienced an unnatural decline for decades, mostly due to habitat degradation. Many factors are to blame for diminished sage grouse populations with livestock grazing among the most culpable.

Sage grouse have inhabited the western United States and southern Canada since the Pleistocene epoch (Wetmore 1951). The sage grouse was discovered by Lewis and Clark in 1806 and was given its scientific name, *Centrocercus urophasianus* (Latin for "spiny-tailed pheasant"), in 1831 (Patterson 1952). Huge flocks of sage grouse were reported to "blacken the sky" before the turn of the century (Patterson 1952; Bent 1932). Prior to the arrival of white settlers, American Indians utilized the sage grouse for food and created dances and costumes to mimic their strutting behavior (Autenrieth 1981). Their historic range closely conformed to the distribution of tall and short sagebrush on the prairie sagebrush steppe covering what became sixteen western states and three Canadian provinces. However, since 1900 the distribution of sage grouse has been reduced with extirpation of populations at the periphery of their range. Sage grouse no longer occur in Arizona, British Columbia, Kansas, Nebraska, New Mexico, and Oklahoma (Braun 1999).

The sage grouse is a beautiful, charismatic bird. Both males and females are a mottled, brownish-gray with only subtle differences between the sexes during nonbreeding periods, except that males weigh up to six pounds while females weigh fifty percent less. White chest feathers and specialized head feathers distinguish cocks during the March-through-May breeding season. Cocks also sport long black tail feathers with white tips, while female tail feathers are mottled black, brown, and white.

The sage grouse mating ritual is fascinating to observe. In the early spring, the more colorful males congregate each dawn at "leks," ancestral strutting grounds that are clear of large sagebrush and tall debris. Leks vary in size from one to forty acres (Scott 1942) and may be located up to fifty miles from wintering areas (Pyrah 1954). To attract a hen, cocks strut, fan their tail feathers and swell their breasts to reveal bright yellow air sacs. The progression of wing movements and inflating and deflating air sacs elicits an acoustic "swish-swish-coo-oo-poink!" Sage grouse often gather at leks again in the evening and cocks will strut throughout the night when the noon is bright. Altogether, the sage grouse mating ritual is among the most stirring and colorful natural history pageants in the West.

Sage grouse are a sagebrush obligate and an indicator species for the sagebrush steppe. The bird derives not only its name, but food, shelter and cover from the shrub. Sage grouse prefer different seasonal habitats throughout the year consisting of sagebrush, grasses, forbs, and other desert flora. Ideal nesting habitat has two components: a sagebrush overstory and a thick grass/forb understory (Gregg 1992; Wakkinen 1990; Roberson 1984; Autenrieth 1981; Braun, et al. 1977). Both the over- and understory provide food, shelter from the wind and sun, and cover from ground predators and raptors (DeLong, et al. 1995; Webb 1993; Gregg 1992). Newly

hatched chicks also feed on abundant insects found in the grasses and forbs (Johnson and Boyce 1990). As chicks grow, they follow their mothers to summer range consisting of an interspersed sagebrush stands and forb-rich areas, including wet meadows and riparian areas (Connelly 1999).

Good winter range will provide sage grouse with access to sagebrush under all snow conditions as the grouse eat only sagebrush during the winter. During the year sage grouse will range widely between leks, loafing and feeding areas, brood rearing areas, wintering habitat, wet meadows and riparian zones, sometimes covering over one hundred miles of terrain (Hulet, et al. 1984). Subsequently, vast expanses of healthy sagebrush habitat and functioning hydrologic systems are necessary to support sage grouse.

Human activities in sagebrush habitat have decimated sage grouse populations in the past decades. Livestock grazing, agricultural and urban conversion, herbicides and pesticides, fire (natural and prescribed), oil and gas development, and offroad vehicle use have fragmented, degraded and eliminated sage grouse habitat throughout its range. Sage grouse are also hunted in nine states. Since 1980 sage grouse population declines are estimated to be between thirty-five to eighty percent (Braun 1999). The present size of the breeding population is estimated at 140,000 individuals scattered in two Canadian provinces and eleven western states (Braun 1999). A second species of sage grouse, the Gunnison sage grouse (*Centrocercus minimus*), has also declined throughout its relatively small range in Colorado and southeastern Utah.

Although some wildlife biologists seem loathe to admit it, livestock grazing harms sage grouse. Livestock eat and trample the grasses and forbs around sagebrush which can degrade or eliminate nesting habitat (Webb 1993; Gregg and Crawford 1991). Nests that are exposed to the wind, sun and predators are less productive than nests in healthy habitat. Without the forbs, insects are also less prolific, an important food source for sage grouse chicks (Pyle and Crawford 1991; Johnson and Boyce 1990). Thirsty livestock often severely overgraze riparian areas and meadows (Belsky 1999) that are important to sage grouse. Livestock also eat and trample sagebrush (Owens and Norton 1992), the sole food source for sage grouse during the winter. Wandering livestock can stress sage grouse and other wildlife, and their grazing opens the vegetative cover, exposing sage grouse to predators. Livestock grazing also introduces and spreads unpalatable weeds into an area (Bedunah 1992; Lacey 1987), reducing food sources for all wildlife.

Range developments harm sage grouse as well. Raptors



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perch on fence posts and telephone poles to spy sage grouse. Water developments may artificially increase predators or competitors for sage grouse. And the conversion of sagebrush to crested wheatgrass or other forage for cattle eliminates sage grouse habitat (Autenrieth 1981).

Despite its immense size, the sagebrush steppe is often referred to as the "forgotten ecosystem." Historically, western developers and extractive industries have enjoyed little governmental oversight in their use of these lands. Neither the public land management agencies nor conservation groups have spent enough resources to adequately protect them. The resulting degradation of millions of acres of sagebrush habitat and the plight of the sage grouse serve as notice that past policies have failed and that changes are in order.

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Mark Salvo is the Grasslands Advocate with American Lands in Portland, Oregon

** American Lands is leading a campaign to conserve sage grouse and restore their habitat throughout the West. IWP is a partner organization with American Lands in this effort.*

Time To Renew Your Membership

A hot, smoky and very dry summer has come to the high country of Idaho and we at IWP are very busy. We have five new staff members and we are instituting our first ever internship program to monitor degradation on allotments in the Challis-Salmon National Forests. We continue to win significant legal decisions and recent court victories point to a light at the end of the tunnel, ending the destruction of public lands by grazing and the saving of Idaho's wild watersheds. As a member of IWP you know you can stay informed about our activities on the website: www.idahowatersheds.org. We invite you to take a look. It's a great site to visit.

Thank you for your generous support of Idaho Watersheds Project in the past. We are over 1,000 members strong and your interest has helped us move nearer to our long range goals. IWP is known throughout the Inter-Mountain West as a small organization making a big difference! This is why I am encouraging you to renew your IWP membership today. We need you at whatever level you can join. It is important that we demonstrate to our funding sources, the government, the media, legislators and the public at large, that IWP enjoys a strong base of citizen support. Your membership and those of your friends bring us credibility and respect for the job we need to do. At our Annual Membership Meeting and Party in March we asked members to think about friends of theirs who share similar environmental values. Please let us know who these folks are so we can send them a newsletter and ask them to join IWP.

WHAT YOUR DOLLARS ARE SUPPORTING

By renewing your membership you will continue to receive our quarterly newsletter as well as invitations to membership gatherings and special events. During the next 12 months we plan to expand our legal challenges to affect change in public lands management, use the power of the Endangered Species Act to demand habitat protection, fund our in-the-field biologists as they monitor the health of our watersheds, and launch a media campaign to increase public awareness of environmental issues such as the current controversy over the interaction of wolves and livestock on public lands.

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Those members who are interested in making a contribution beyond the basic level are invited to participate in our Sponsorship Program. A tax deductible donation of \$250 or more may go in support of one or more of the following projects. Sponsors will also be invited to a special party in November where you will be the first to learn about the successes of the summer/fall seasons and IWP's plans for the year ahead.

Opportunity # 1 Monitor Program

Supports our monitors in the field documenting degradation of riparian ecosystems and critical wildlife habitat due to grazing.

- 1) Central Idaho: Wolves, Salmon, Bull trout
- 2) Cassia and Twin Falls Counties: Mountain Quail, Redband Trout, Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout, Black-footed Ferrets

Opportunity # 2 Summer Internships

Supports college students doing field work for IWP and learning about water and grazing issues in the West.

- 1) North-Central Idaho: White Cloud, Lemhi and Pahsimeroi Mountains
- 2) South-Central Idaho: Pioneer, Lost River and White Knob Mountains

Opportunity # 3 Grazing Lease Program

Helps pay for the leases IWP has won to keep them cow-free.

- 1) Lime Creek Lease - Bull Trout
- 2) Cottonwood Creek Lease - Near Boise, Urban Recreation
- 3) Utah Leases - Bear Lake Views, Ciscos
- 4) Poison Creek Lease - Rattlesnakes, Scorpions, Water Quality Issues
- 5) Lake Creek - Chinook Salmon, Steelhead

Opportunity #4 Biologists and Litigation Efforts

Supports the research, writing and probable litigation of Endangered Species Listing Petitions for:

- 1) Mountain Quail - Largest quail in North America
- 2) Lynx - Endemic to all counties in Idaho
- 3) Columbia Spotted Frog - Indicator species threatened by cows
- 4) Redband Trout - Tough desert survivor
- 5) Sage Grouse - Capstone species of the sage-steppe ecosystem

To all those who have contributed thank-you for your past support. We would not be where we are today without you behind us. We look forward to having you on board for another productive and exciting year of accomplishment.

Wish List

IWP Offices

iMac to upgrade our administrative system capabilities
Portable cassette/CD stereo with cable radio port
Shelving to better organize agency materials
Microwave, coffee maker, water cooler for staff

Monitoring and Fieldwork

New/used q-wheel drive SUV
GPS system
Compaction tool
35mm camera and tripod

News Briefs (continued from Page 5)

quail east of the Cascade Crest in Oregon, Washington and into Idaho and Nevada as a Distinct Population Segment. In these areas, mountain quail survival is tied to riparian shrub thickets and interfacing big sagebrush and their numbers have plummeted. In contrast, mountain quail in California and coastal Oregon inhabit broad bands of continuous habitat, and populations are not in trouble.

The mountain quail is a different species than the non-native California quail often seen in southern Idaho. Mountain Quail was first collected and described by the Lewis and Clark expedition which called it a "most butifull bird".

"The loss of mountain quail from the rugged canyons and foothills of Idaho is inexcusable" said Katie Fite, biologist for IWP and CIHD and principal author of the petition, "Agencies have known for decades that these populations were disappearing, yet they have failed to act." In the 1950s, mountain quail were described as common in the Owyhee foothills. By 1979, Ted Trueblood, noted Idaho outdoor writer, lamented their declining numbers.

Remnant populations of mountain quail persist in the Riggins area and a few other locations in Idaho, Wallawa County, Oregon and eastern Washington.

The listing petition also directs the Fish and Wildlife Service to designate critical habitat in southwestern and south central Idaho, northern Nevada, eastern Oregon, and southeastern Washington including all of the Grand Ronde, Malheur, Owyhee, Bruneau, Salmon Falls, and Lower Salmon River watersheds and the Goose Creek watershed in Oregon, Nevada, Utah and Idaho.

Wyoming Ranchers Match Grazing Bids by IWP and Must Pay Double!

Idaho Watersheds Project learned from the Wyoming Office of State Lands that in all the cases of grazing lease applications made by IWP on March 1, 2000 which were accepted (4,500 acres located in Lincoln and Teton Counties), the ranchers in question who formerly held the leases matched IWP's high bid of \$7.00 per AUM and thereby doubled their payments for the leases. In one of those cases the current leaseholder had to match an even higher bid of \$9.15 per AUM made by a third party- another rancher. Under Wyoming statutes, ranchers currently holding grazing leases on school trust lands have an absolute preference to keep their leases by matching any higher bids.

On the one grazing lease application made by IWP which was denied (a 640 acre lease near Evanston, Wyoming in Uinta County). The Office of State Lands denied IWP's application because the lease had \$287,000 of building improvements on the land which IWP had failed to identify and provide compensation for. IWP has learned that the current leaseholder, Urroz Brothers, of that lease do not pay an annual rent for the use of that Wyoming school trust land for use as building sites!

With this action, IWP has shown that these Wyoming ranchers are willing to pay double what the Wyoming grazing fee formula requires and almost six times the federal grazing fee of \$1.35 per AUM.

Westslope Cutthroat Trout Petition Denied

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has issued a decision stating that the listing of the westslope cutthroat trout under the Endangered Species Act is "not warranted". Idaho Watersheds Project was a co-petitioner in 1997 with several groups including the lead group, American Wildlands of Bozeman, Montana to list this native trout which is the state fish of Montana and Idaho. The process of getting to this denial required two successful lawsuits to be filed by the co-petitioner: to force the Fish and Wildlife Service to obey the law in considering the petition. While acknowledging that the remaining healthy populations of the trout are mostly limited to fragmented and isolated headwater areas (especially in Montana), the Service's rule states that the fish is present in over 20,000 miles of stream habitat in the U.S.A. and Canada and therefore, does not warrant listing. IWP and the other petitioners led by American Wildlands will consider further legal action after more fully reviewing the denial of this petition.

Another Federal Court Win for IWP!

In another remarkable victory for IWP in the arcane world of BLM public lands ranching administration, Idaho Federal District Court Judge B. Lynn Winmill issued a ruling July 13 which denied in all respects the Owyhee County, Idaho Cliffs Allotment grazing permittee's request for a preliminary injunction to halt the new grazing permit/system, which requires them to remove cattle by July 15th.

First, the Court granted Idaho Watersheds Project and the Committee for Idaho's High Desert intervention in the case, which the permittees had opposed.

Second, the Court rejected BLM's argument that the permittees could not even be in federal court because they did not file an appeal or stay request with the Interior Board of Land Appeals (IBLA). IWP had joined with the permittees on this argument, because IWP wishes to be able to sidestep IBLA when necessary to get prompt judicial relief.

Third, the Court had a good discussion of the Fundamentals of Rangeland Health and IWP's 9th Circuit decision last year; and emphasized that the BLM had to follow the requirement that grazing be changed before the next grazing season after finding FRH violations. It also noted how this case was part of IWP's and CIHD's injunction ordering BLM to take a hard look at the problem allotments in the Owyhee Resource Area and come up with new permits.

Fourth, the Court granted IWP's and CIHD's motion to dismiss the permittee's claims that BLM violated NEPA, because (under 9th Circuit authority) economic interests do not give standing under NEPA.

Fifth, the Court found that the weighing of "hardships" (which is required in an injunction) did not favor the permittees, who claim they will go out business) because of the many years of environmental degradation and public interests in protecting the environment, and thus "livestock grazing must be reduced."

Sixth, the Court cited the recent U.S. Supreme Court case
please turn to Page 10

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(Public Lands Council v. Babbitt) and rejected the permittees' claim that their grazing permits were property rights.

Seventh, the Court found it was very unlikely they would show BLM acted "arbitrarily and capriciously" here, because it had an EA tied to the EIS, did the Standards & Guidelines assessment, had lots of public meetings and comments. etc. As part of this the Court rejected the permittees' whining that BLM did not adequately consult with them.

The Court denied the ranchers' injunction request.

IWP and CIHD were represented with aplomb by the premier public lands conservation attorney in the United States, Laird Lucas of the Land and Water Fund of the Rockies Boise Office along with the capable assistance of staff attorneys Mindy Harm and Bill Eddie.

Idaho Watersheds Project Awarded Grazing Permit By The Utah School and Institutional Trust Land Administration (SITLA)

IWP has been awarded a 15 year grazing permit for a 160 acre parcel of Utah school trust lands located on the Left-hand Fork of Garden City Canyon Creek in Rich County, Utah approximately one and one half miles west of Garden City, Utah and Bear Lake.

The prior grazing permit for this land had been cancelled for non-payment, and IWP was the only applicant. In IWP's application the listed desired use of the land was for rest with no livestock use to occur on the permitted lands. Even though IWP applied for only a ten year permit for these lands, SITLA has awarded IWP a 15 year permit which states that the "season of use" for livestock is "Non-applicable" in this case.

This is only the second time a non-governmental entity has acquired a grazing permit in Utah for the express reason of preventing the grazing of domestic livestock! The other case was a lease acquired for a wild horse and mustang association.

The award of this grazing permit for non-grazing purposes reestablishes and confirms the ability of conservation organizations or individuals to compete with public land ranchers for the use (or non-use) of these trust lands in Utah and sends a clear message to other states seeking to block such competition.

Utah Ranchers Match IWP's Bids for Utah School Trust Land Grazing Leases

Idaho Watersheds Project's premium bids of \$2,500. to lease two parcels totaling 4,300 acres of Utah school trust land grazing leases on the east side of Bear Lake in Rich County, Utah were matched by two Utah Ranchers thereby securing them the renewal of those leases. The payment of the additional money benefits the Utah public schools and again illustrates that public land ranchers are willing and able to pay significantly more for grazing than currently required to. The current Utah State grazing fee is \$2.10 per AUM (a cow and calf for one month) as compared to Idaho's \$4.95 per AUM and the federal government's giveaway fee of \$1.35 per AUM.

IWP Files For a Record Number of Acres of Grazing Leases

On Friday April 28, 2000, Idaho Watersheds Project filed eleven applications for over 41,000 acres of expiring Idaho school endowment land grazing leases.

The leases are located in the following counties: Clearwater (24,855 acres near Weippe), Boise (5,516 acres near Banks on the Jerusalem allotment), Owyhee (4,975 acres along the Mud Flat Road), and Cassia (6,329 acres south-east of Oakley and on Robber's Gulch Creek south of Murtaugh).

The large areas in Clearwater County are located in the Weippe Prairie where the Lewis and Clark and Nez Perce National Historic trails intersect. Much of the land under lease there is cut-over timber land where livestock are acknowledged to be a major cause of the 303(d) stream pollution listing for Jim Ford Creek Hnd for which over \$200,000 in EPA 3 19 funds have been requested simply to fence cattle on these leases away from the creek. IWP's acquisition of the leases will eliminate the need for any fencing since livestock will be removed! IWP also looks forward to holding these leases during the Lewis and Clark Expedition's bicentennial celebration as they can serve as an educational tool for the thousands of Americans predicted to travel the Trail. One portion of the leases in Clearwater County includes segments of Lo10 Creek, a critical spawning tributary of the Clearwater River's threatened ocean run steelhead trout population.

If acquired by IWP and because of their sizes, the lease in Boise County and one of the leases (Robinson's Hole area) in Cassia County will result in the probable closure of the federal lands incorporated into the allotment with the state lands because the Idaho state endowment lands amount to 50-80% of the total lands in the allotments. A separate lease, included in these applications also located in Cassia County, is currently leased to Joe Tugaw, former President of the Idaho Cattle Association and a notorious violator of the terms and conditions of his Forest Service grazing permit whose Forest Service permit was reduced this year for those violations.

Auctions to determine the winner of these leases start August 22 for the North Idaho leases.

Huge Victory at the United States Supreme Court

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled May 14, 2000 in a unanimous decision that the appeal by the Public Lands Council and other groups of Bruce Babbitt's Range Reform Regulations of 1995 has no legal basis. The Court rejected all the arguments that ranchers on public lands have a vested grazing "right"!

This decision which eliminates virtually all claims to a property right for grazing on public lands may well signal the acceleration of the end of public lands ranching since banks will no longer accept grazing permits as collateral for loans and the value of permits will decline significantly because of the loss of any ability of ranchers to demand financial compensation when grazing is reduced or eliminated by the BLM

Hardworking staff of Idaho Watersheds Project (IWP) and our legal team from the Land and Water Fund of the Rockies (LAW) take a rare break to enjoy a July float trip on the Main Salmon. Left to right: Marc Brown and Bill Eddie (LAW), IWP intern Emily Howell and Executive Director Jon Marvel, LAW's Mindy Harm and Laird Lucas, IWP intern Brian Turner and IWP Board Member and Treasurer Gene Bray.



A Special Thank You To Members Who Made Significant Contributions This Spring

Bob Bartlett
 Dr. Frank Elliott
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 Charlie Hall & Gloria Carlton
 Joe & Trina McNeal
 Cindy Mueller & Michael Cohen
 Christel Nordhausen & Fred Tester
 Teresa Tamura & Keith Raether
 Peradam Foundation



Photo by Bill Corlett

Sandhill Crane

by Judy Hall

I know who you are. I can tell by your ringing, herald's call.
 It clangs over the evening prairie,
 above the ponds of sky blue lilies,
 delivering the news.

Here you come too, Camas Cassandra,
 high stepping through the May marsh
 while the low sun reaches across and polishes the pools
 into silver chimes and bronzed gongs to hang in the temple.

Now that you are here, I don't have to give the sermon
 You'll share your gift of wild prophecy
 with anyone who stops to listen,
 using your own language of urgency and desire.

Why sit inside and wait for someone else to do the preaching,
 or send epistles, postcards poems?
 Why not go out and walk among the bunch grass and the skyrockets
 with the phalaropes and black-necked stilts.

Slipping under and around and in
 and through and between their sounds.
 We can listen to the message they are bringing us
 from deer, inside the soul of the world.

Quiet Creatures

by Miriam L. Austin

There are many integral relationships within our natural ecosystems. Both the living and the nonliving are intertwined in a web of life that nurtures the continuance of a system. From the microscopic to the macro-vertebrate, the rangelands of Idaho host a myriad of life forms, both the seen and the "unseen."

Of the many "quiet creatures" that inhabit this region, *Coluber constrictor* (Racer) is a beautiful but less frequently seen reptile species. This slender snake is generally brown or an olive (occasionally blue-green) above. The Racer is light to bright yellow below. Juveniles do not display adult coloration until close to 18 inches in length. Adults may attain lengths up to 70 inches or more.

This fast-moving snake inhabits open areas - meadows, grasslands, shrub-steppe, and forest edges. The racer is not usually found at higher elevations. Racers mate in May and lay eggs in July. The young hatch in August. The Racer may hibernate in rocky hillside areas in large numbers, often with other species.

Racers are diurnal, hunting for insects, small mammals, and reptiles during daylight hours. While hunting, the Racer holds its head high and moves swiftly through cover. Prey is swallowed whole. Despite the scientific name, the Racer is not a constrictor.

Unfortunately, reptiles such as the Racer have been largely overlooked by land managers. Federal and state agencies have spent most of their time and money on commercially important species. Often the public is unaware of how vital these animals are within an ecosystem.

Reptiles and amphibians are excellent indicators of the health of aquatic, riparian, and terrestrial ecosystems. Relative amounts of microhabitats within a system can be measured by the presence and numbers of reptile or amphibian species. In riparian systems amphibian and reptile density may exceed the biomass of birds or small mammals, providing for a

majority of the energy flow and nutrient cycling in a system. Densities of reptiles or amphibians in healthy systems may range from 400 to 600 or more members of a single species per acre.

One of the main threats in Idaho to the Racer and similar species is livestock grazing. As most reptiles and amphibians are insectivorous and carnivorous they spend their active periods in shallow water or in vegetation. Any action that reduces the density of shrubs or other vegetation, decreases the insect mass, or damages the water resource has a negative impact on reptile and amphibian populations.

Studies of the density of reptiles show that there is a significant difference in population numbers between grazed and ungrazed lands. A study on riparian populations of *Thamnophis elegans* (Western Terrestrial Garter Snake) found that population numbers in ungrazed plots were five times the numbers found in grazed plots.

As a majority of public lands occupied by Racer and other reptile or amphibian species in Idaho are utilized for livestock grazing, impacts to their populations may be very high. It is hoped that as we become more aware of the values of our "quiet creatures" such as the Racer that we will take the time to encourage our public land managers to consider the needs of these valuable species along with their associated aquatic, riparian and upland habitats.

Miriam Austin works for IWP from her home South of Oakley, Idaho.

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**Habitat range of the Racer,
Coluber constrictor in Idaho**



Racer, *Coluber constrictor* Found and photographed by the author M. Austin near Goose Creek Idaho

The Token

by Miriam Austin

A bright spot of yellow, 'mid sedges and grass

I knelt to see, but oh! alas.

And in my hand held the body, broken

slim racer, left behind - mute token

Of heavy hooves, indiscriminate stride

Fled 'cross the meadow in a restless tide.

While performing contract work for Idaho Watersheds Project, biologist Miriam Austin found a young racer trampled to death by cattle in a meadow on state land in Shoshone Basin. The accompanying article was inspired by her sense of loss.

News Briefs *(continued from Page 10)*

on public lands.

This is a truly great day for the recovery and restoration of damaged public lands across the west and for the people of the United States!

Conservation Groups File Lawsuit Against Secretary Babbitt Over Taylor Grazing Act

A coalition of conservation groups including IWP filed a lawsuit against Secretary of Interior Bruce Babbitt for failing to respond to a petition filed in 1998 requesting the Secretary to determine which public lands are chiefly valuable for livestock grazing as required under the Taylor Grazing Act. Over 177 million acres of public land in the western states are affected by the petition and are administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

Passed by Congress in 1934, the Taylor Grazing Act requires the Secretary to declare lands "chiefly valuable for grazing" before being included within grazing districts. According to conservation groups, the Secretary never made the required findings. After Congress passed the Act, the Secretary, bowing to strong grazing interests in the West, allowed ranchers to decide which lands to include in districts, even putting a former stockman in charge of overseeing its implementation. Predictably, lands not "chiefly valuable for grazing" were included in grazing districts.

Conservationists want the Secretary to recognize that in the intervening 66 years since the Taylor Grazing Act was passed, much of the public lands are no longer chiefly valuable for livestock grazing, but are more valuable for wilderness, fish and wildlife habitat, recreation and other similar values.

"The American public values its public lands more for clean water, wildlife and wilderness than it does as forage for livestock," said Bill Marlett, Executive Director of the Oregon Natural Desert Association. "We merely want Secretary Babbitt to acknowledge this fact as the law requires."

Congress passed the Taylor Grazing Act to reverse the ecological destruction that uncontrolled grazing had caused throughout the Western at the beginning of the 20th century. Grazing had so severely denuded the land of vegetation that wind storms from the west rained soil upon our nation's capital while Congress debated passage of the Act.

Conservationists contend that the Secretary's failure to abide by the Act has contributed to the continued degradation of our public lands. Further, it has limited BLM's ability to manage the public's land, which now includes national monuments, national conservation areas, wild and scenic rivers, wilderness areas, research natural areas, areas of critical environmental concern, riparian areas, and critical habitat for endangered and threatened species. Despite the obvious fact that these special places are not chiefly valuable for livestock grazing, the BLM continues to include them within grazing districts.

Lead by the Oregon Natural Desert Association, plain-

tiffs include the Committee for Idaho's High Desert, Forest Guardians, Center for Biological Diversity, Hells Canyon Preservation Council, Oregon Natural Resources Council, Idaho Watersheds Project, and the American Lands Alliance.

The complaint can be viewed at www.onda.org.

BPA Funds Idaho Grazing Acquisition to Protect Fish

The conflicts between cattle and Columbia Basin fish and wildlife restoration were removed in at least one Idaho watershed with the announcement this week that the Bonneville Power Administration paid \$145,000 to compensate a grazing permittee for giving up grazing privileges on 48,000 acres of federal range land.

The BPA and the Northwest Power Planning Council on Tuesday announced consummation of the deal on U.S. Forest Service land along Elk Creek in Bear Valley, Idaho. The Shoshone-Bannock Tribe and Idaho Department of Fish and Game proposed the mitigation project to protect threatened and endangered spring/summer chinook salmon, steelhead and bull trout.

Elk Creek provides drainage for the Bear Valley Basin in central Idaho. The area provides spawning and rearing habitat for a major population of endangered native spring chinook salmon as well as threatened steelhead and bull trout. The stream also supports westslope cutthroat trout.

Elk Creek has particular significance for chinook salmon recovery. During the past 10 years, it has produced more than one third of the Middle Fork Salmon River's annual population of salmon, according to a BPA press release. The Middle Fork Salmon River contains the only remaining stock of wild spring chinook, unaltered by hatchery supplementation, in the entire Snake River Basin.

Idaho Fish and Game and the Shoshone-Bannock Tribe in 1999 proposed the project in which BPA would compensate livestock permittees for retiring or giving up their grazing permits. The Northwest Power Planning Council recommended the project as a high priority for funding. After rigorous review, their Independent Scientific Review Panel said the project "is an excellent proposal. It emphasizes the protection and passive restoration of habitat and supports its points with data."

With the forfeit of the grazing privileges, the Forest Service can close the area to future grazing. The amount of this compensation was based on a qualified appraisal of the value that the federal grazing permits add to the ranching operations. The land will continue to be held by the federal government.

IWP looks forward to participating in the retirement by purchase or donation of other grazing allotments on Idaho watersheds in the near future.

Please Give Us your E-Mail Address

Give IWP your e-mail address in order to be part of our e-mail newlist and receive regular updates. Send your address to idwp@idahowatersheds.org.
Thanks!



Watersheds Messenger

Editor: Faus Geiger

Watersheds Messenger is published periodically for members, friends, and supporters of Idaho Watersheds Project. Changes of address, renewals, new subscriptions, undelivered copies, and ideas for articles should be sent to IWP, PO. Box 1602, Hailey, Idaho 83333, or call (208) 788-2290. Fax (208) 788-2298. Please note our e-mail address:

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Emily Howell, Patrick Casey, Brian Turner ~ Year **2000** Interns

Mission Statement

Idaho Watersheds Project is a nonprofit 501(c)3 membership corporation committed to the restoration of the ecological integrity of all public lands on Idaho watersheds.

IWP works for the elimination of inappropriate public land uses by increasing public awareness and education and through legal advocacy.

Intern Program

The summer of 2000 is a busy one for IWP’s three college interns, Brian Turner from Grinnell College (Iowa), Stanford’s Emily Howell, and Patrick Casey from the University of Utah. All three students have a special interest in environmental issues and were thrilled to have the opportunity to work in the field interacting with public lands agencies and our legal team, monitoring grazing allotments to provide photo documentation and baseline measurements of utilization, and getting paid to hike the backcountry! Their efforts were concentrated in the Lost River Ranger District, Salmon-Challis National Forest, the Challis Field Office of the BLM and the Sawtooth National Recreation Area. The college intern program is a great opportunity for IWP member sponsorship, and with your support, we hope to grow the program to include more students in 2001. Special wish list items: 35mm cameras, new or used 4-wheel drive vehicles, donated housing for summer 2001 interns, transportation costs from college to Idaho and back.



Did you know that you can support Idaho Watersheds Project through your workplace giving program? IWP is a member of Community Shares of Idaho, a nonprofit fund-raising effort. Community Shares participates side-by-side with United Way in various workplace giving programs.

Please Join Us or Renew Your Membership Now

YES, I want to renew my membership in Idaho Watersheds Project and help protect and restore streams, wildlife, plants and ecosystems. Enclosed is my tax deductible annual membership:

Living Lightly: \$10.00 Individual: \$25.00 Family: \$35.00 Sponsor: \$500.00 Other \$ _____
Advocate: \$100 Patron: \$250

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