

Recreational Effects on Livestock Production
Systems:
Management of Multiple Uses

By:

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Abstract:

Grazing of livestock on public lands has become a very debatable subject in recent years. Opponents of grazing on Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands often feel that this is an inappropriate and inadequate use of public lands. Improper grazing practices can raise some ecological concerns, and it is the opinion of some people that fees paid by permittees to graze livestock on public lands should be more comparable to those paid on private lands.

Both the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management allow grazing management on rangelands today. There is a lot of public concern about management of livestock on federal lands. Gaining the understanding and cooperation of everyone involved in grazing management improves the chances for a successful program. This includes landowners, land managers, users, universities, corresponding agencies, and the public.

Rangeland management has had a burdened history of conflict and debate. The 1900's brought multiple use mandates allowing other uses, like recreation to compete with livestock production, resulting in an increase in conflicts on public lands. Range managers face numerous current and future challenges and will have to alter their practices to continue production in an urbanized environment. Undoubtedly, there will be shifts in recreational use, as well as the public opinion.

Even though there have been some inappropriate and inadequate uses of public lands, the general public's lack of knowledge concerning livestock grazing

blinds them from the positive impacts grazing brings, such as supporting healthy watersheds, carbon sequestration, and allowing ruminants to be able to convert forage into a profit generating product. With proper management, grazing can contribute to properly managed plant ecosystems.

Introduction:

Livestock grazing on federal rangelands has been haunted by a burden of controversy and conflict. Following settlement by European man, the dominant historical use of western rangelands has been livestock production. However, degradation of rangelands has occurred over time as a result of philosophical factors, lack of research, and climate change, as well as poor land management. “During the turn of the 20th century, several laws came into existence that fundamentally changed the management of public lands, including the scope and intensity of management on rangelands” (Giroux 1). The rangelands must be able to provide for both consumptive and non-consumptive use, thus including wildlife, water, and recreation.

Ranching has always had some type of opposition associated with it and the multiple use mandate allowed many other uses to be able to compete with livestock production. The past few decades have seen a large increase in land use by recreationists, many of these areas, which have never seen recreation activity at all. “The increased recreational use of rangelands has led to several conflicts on the landscape, both between user groups and between management agencies and users. Some of the greatest issues of concern revolve around urbanization and public opinion” (Giroux 2).

To enhance our understanding of the conflicts facing livestock production on western rangelands, it is essential to focus on the history of range management, the laws which affect management of public lands, and some of the changes in ideology that have occurred with the public. Numerous factors building in combination have resulted in the current situation and will only continue drive changes in the management of rangelands in the future. It is important to define rangeland while providing an understanding of its many uses within the United States.

Defining and Understanding Rangelands:

Over the years rangelands have been defined in several different ways, although they are more easily characterized rather than defined.

“Those areas of the world, which by reason of physical limitations-low and erratic precipitation, rough topography, poor drainage, or cold temperatures-are unsuited to cultivation and which are a source of forage for free-ranging native and domestic animals, as well as a source of wood products, water and wildlife (Stoddart, 1975).”

This particular definition encompasses the components of rangelands including a description of the particular type of land, while identifying its uses.

Rangelands are typically dominated by native grasses, forbs, and shrubs, and management of these areas is focused on maintaining natural ecosystems. Note that rangelands are found on almost every continent in the world, including approximately fifty percent of the Earth’s surface (Vallentine, 2001). Examples of North American rangelands include the grasslands of the Great Plains, Alaska and northern Canada tundra, as well as the Mexican deserts. “It is also important to emphasize that grazing is a natural use of many rangelands, not only an imposed human condition” (Giroux 3).

Over forty percent of the land in the United States is made up of grazing areas. These areas provide vital grazing lands for both livestock and wildlife. Not only do rangelands provide grazing, but they also supply a source of clean air, open spaces, and high quality water. Rangelands also provide societal needs towards recreation while providing economic stability within rural communities.

“Societal perceptions and public policy play a pivotal role in determining the management priorities for public rangelands in the United States. While supporting several uses, rangelands in the West have a long-standing history with grazing and livestock production, which in turn influenced and continues to influence tensions and conflicts on public lands” (Giroux 3).

History of Public Lands Grazing in the United States:

“While indigenous societies and Spanish settlers following Cortez used rangelands prior to the American expansion, the end of the Civil War signaled the beginning of the livestock industry in the West” (Giroux 3-4). Between 1865 and 1900 the U.S. experienced a large increase in the numbers of livestock moving west. There were early conflicts on the rangelands, as less mobile cattle ranchers were competing with highly mobile trail-herding sheepmen. The matter focused around the classic “commons” situation: “that every range user had an incentive to get the grass before someone else did, and the resulting overgrazing severely harmed the productivity of the rangelands (Glicksman, 2001).”

“A ranching permit system on public lands helped to diminish some of the impacts of the common use ideology, but it also led to the long-ingrained belief held by private ranchers that they gained permanent rights to a particular piece of public land and to their allowed grazing levels” (Giroux 4).

During the time period between 1900 and 1930, the U.S. government became involved in the rangeland grazing issues. A system was started by the Forest Service, which focused on grazing permits and forage allotments. Several grazing laws came

into effect thereafter. However, World War I brought on high beef prices, and a lack of manpower, consequently, regulation was slim, resulting in an increase in grazing use between 1915 and 1920 (Holechek, 2004). Seeking to address the issues of range abuse and deterioration, range management came into being as a discipline.

Between 1930 and 1960, the United States finally has to confront the consequences of a history of range abuse and exploitation. Society was forced by a severe drought and the Dust Bowl to face the cost of years of unsustainable land management.

“A national conservation ethic formed during this period, demonstrated by the formation of the Soil Conservation Service, which addressed erosion issues, the creation of the Taylor Grazing Act, which, while not effective at preventing degradation, at least set the stage for rangeland allotments, and the establishment of the Society for Range Management, leading to a set of range management ethics and rigorous scientific research” (Giroux 5).

“The period that began in the 1960’s and continues today is characterized by a large philosophical and policy shift, greatly impacting the way in which grazing lands are managed. With the American frontier officially gone, and movements to “get back to nature” and embrace the rural past emerging in mainstream culture, the importance of preserving natural resources has taken hold as a priority. The connection between American independence and the perception of wilderness plays an integral role in how public lands are managed. In addition, both disposable income and leisure time have increased tremendously, leading to increased recreational use” (Giroux 5).

The new laws like the Multiple Use Sustained Yield Act for Forests, Federal Land Policy Management Act for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and the National Environmental Policy Act only led to a required change in management for multiple uses on rangelands, including water, wildlife, energy, and recreation.

Research in range management also broadened in scope, encompassing research not only on grazing, but also on non-consumptive uses. During the time between

1960 and 1992, livestock grazing on federal ranges dropped nearly 25%, with a larger focus being placed on management for fire, water, and recreation concerns (Holechek, 2004). Land recovery is a slow process even though there has been progress in range improvements. "Future challenges for range managers will involve creating new partnerships and remaining flexible to the changing demands of society on the resource" (Giroux 5).

History and Laws Affecting Rangeland Management:

During the homesteading era, Western public rangelands were often overgrazed due to policies designed to promote settlement of the West and a lack of understanding of the arid ecosystems. As a response to requests from Western ranchers, Congress had passed the Taylor Grazing Act of 1934, which led to the development of grazing districts in which grazing use was apportioned and regulated. Under the newly established act, the first grazing district Wyoming Grazing District Number 1, was established in 1935. Harold Ickes, Secretary of the Interior created a Division of Grazing within the department to administer grazing districts. "In 1946, as a result of a government reorganization by the Truman Administration, the Grazing Service was merged with the General Land Office to become the Bureau of Land Management" (Gorey 1).

Due to the unregulated grazing that had taken place before enactment of the Taylor Grazing Act, it had caused unintended damage was caused to the soils, plants, streams, and springs. As a result of this degradation, grazing management was initially designed to enhance productivity and reduce soil erosion by controlling

grazing through both fencing and water projects and conducting forage surveys to balance the forage demands in relation to the land's productivity.

“These initial improvements in livestock management, which arrested the degradation of public rangelands while improving watersheds, were appropriate for the times. But by the 1960s and 1970s, public appreciation for public lands and expectations for their management rose to a new level, as made clear by congressional passage of such laws as the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, the Endangered Species Act of 1973, and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976” (Gorey 1).

Consequently, the BLM moved from managing grazing to better management or protection of specific rangeland resources, such as riparian areas, endangered or threatened species, and sensitive plant species. “Consistent with this enhanced role, the Bureau developed or modified the terms and conditions of grazing permits and leases and implemented new range improvement projects to address these specific resource issues, promoting continued improvement of public rangeland conditions” (Gorey 1).

Why the Forest Service Permits Livestock Grazing:

The U.S. Forest Service supports livestock grazing on their lands (National Forests and Grasslands). The organization strongly believes that “livestock grazing on these lands, if responsibly done, provides a valuable resource to the livestock owners as well as the American people” (USDA 1).

Forest Reserves were originally established to protect timberlands and watersheds, but it was recognized early in the history of the Forest Service that livestock grazing was a legitimate use. “In 1897, the newly formed Forest Service was authorized by Congress to regulate grazing and permit it as long as it did not injure forest growth” (USDA 1). The agency was able to control permits, herd size,

allotments, and season of use. These controls were mainly attempts to help protect the resources and prevent monopolization by large outfits.

Since the early days of the agency, the Forest Service has supported controlled livestock grazing. The earliest version of published policy stated:

"The Forest Service will allow the use of the forage crop of the reserves as fully as the proper care and protection of the forests and the water supply permits. In new forest reserves where the livestock industry is of special importance, full grazing privileges will be given at first, and if reduction in number is afterwards found necessary, stockmen will be given ample opportunity to adjust their business to the new conditions. Every effort will be made to assist the stockowners to a satisfactory distribution of stock on the range in order to secure greater harmony among citizens, to reduce the waste of forage by tramping in unnecessary movement of stock, and to obtain a more permanent, judicious, and profitable use of the range. The leading objects of the grazing regulations are:

1. The protection and conservative use of all forest reserve land adapted for grazing.
2. The best permanent good of the live-stock industry through proper care and improvement of the grazing lands.
3. The protection of the settler and home builder against unfair competition in the use of the range" (USDA 1).

In the 1936 edition of the policies, it was recognized that both the cattle and sheep which had been grazed in the national forests were significantly related to the supply of beef and mutton in the country, while representing important industries for established homes and forest officers would make every effort to promote the fullest likely use of grazing resources.

Even though the relationship between National Forests and the United States beef and mutton (and lamb) supply declined in the later half of the 20th century, livestock grazing has remained a significant and valid utilization of our national forests. According to the Multiple Use Sustained-Yield Act of 1960, "It is the policy of the Congress that the National Forests are established and shall be administered for

outdoor recreation, range, timber, watershed, and wildlife and fish purposes” (USDA

1). The current objectives of the United States Forest Service for range management

include:

1. “To manage range vegetation to protect basic soil and water resources, provide for ecological diversity, improve or maintain environmental quality, and meet public needs for interrelated resource uses.
2. To integrate management of range vegetation with other resource programs to achieve multiple use objectives contained in Forestland and resource management plans.
3. To provide for livestock forage, wildlife food and habitat, outdoor recreation, and other resource values dependent on range vegetation.
4. To contribute to the economic and social well being of people by providing opportunities for economic diversity and by promoting stability for communities that depends on range resources for their livelihood.
5. To provide expertise on range ecology, botany, and management of grazing animals” (USDA 1).

Congress never intended that all of the uses would occur on all areas.

“Individual forests determine what uses are feasible and appropriate for different areas through the development and revision of the Land and Resource Management Plans” (USDA 1). Grazing is planned and managed once it has been determined that grazing is feasible and appropriate for the area, taking into consideration all other possible uses.

While the cattle and sheep industries declined after grazing restrictions in the early part of the 20th century, much of the rural culture is still tied to ranching. There are numerous rural communities that continue to be dependent upon ranching for their economic livelihood and most of these ranches rely on public lands grazing, either on National Forests or BLM managed lands.

The goal of the Forest Service is “to conserve the rich resources of the National Forests and Grasslands while supporting communities greatly

dependent upon these very same resources” (USDA 1). As grazing is an important use, the Forest Service continues to be progressive with managing water, vegetation, and soil.

Current Management of Grazing on BLM Lands:

Today the BLM manages livestock grazing in an approach aimed to achieve and maintain public land health. To achieve the optimal desired conditions, the BLM uses rangeland health standards and guidelines, which were developed by them in the 1990's with the input from citizen-based Resource Advisory Councils across the West. The standards simply describe the specific conditions that are needed for public land health, such as adequate canopy and ground cover. Guidelines are the management tools designed to achieve and/or maintain healthy public lands. “These techniques include such methods as seed dissemination and periodic rest or deferment from grazing in specific allotments during critical growth periods” (Gorey 1).

Federal Grazing Fee:

“The Federal grazing fee, which applies to Federal lands in 16 Western states on public lands managed by the BLM and the U.S. Forest Service, is adjusted annually and is calculated by using a formula originally set by Congress in the Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978” (Gorey 1). Under this formula, as modified by presidential Executive Order issued in 1986, the grazing fee cannot fall below \$1.35 per animal unit month (AUM); also any fee fluctuation (increase or decrease) cannot exceed 25 percent of the previous year's level. An AUM is the amount of forage needed to sustain one cow and her calf, one horse, or five goats or sheep for a given month. As of 2012 the grazing fee per AUM was \$1.35, the same level as in 2011.

The Federal grazing fee is calculated by using a base value from 1966 of \$1.23 per AUM for livestock grazing on public lands in Western states. The number is then adjusted every year according to three factors – current private grazing lease rates, beef cattle prices, and the cost of livestock production. As a result, the fee will rise, fall or go unchanged based on market conditions, with livestock operators paying more when conditions are better, and less when conditions have weakened.

Number of Livestock on BLM-managed Lands:

The BLM does not take an annual count that graze on their lands because the actual number varies throughout the year and the livestock are typically moved among grazing allotments. So essentially an aggregate head count would provide very limited information on overall livestock use. As an alternative, the BLM compiles information on the number of AUM's used each year, which takes into account both the number of livestock and the duration they spend on the public lands. Over time, there has been a decrease in the amount of grazing that takes place on BLM-managed lands, and the trend only continues today.

“Grazing use on public lands has declined from 18.2 million AUMs in 1954 to 8.3 million AUMs (for BLM lands) in 2011. In most years, the actual use of forage is less than the amount authorized because forage amounts and demands depend on several factors, such as drought, wildfire, and market conditions, as noted earlier regarding annual public land grazing levels” (Gorey 1).

Grazing Permit System:

Any United States citizen or validly licensed business has the ability to apply for a BLM grazing permit or lease. In order to obtain a permit, one must either:

- Buy or control private property (known as “base property”) that has been legally recognized by the BLM as having preference for the use of public land grazing

- privileges,
- Or acquire property that has the capability to serve as base property and then apply to the BLM to transfer the preference for grazing privileges from an existing base property to the acquired property (which would become the new “base property”).

The first alternative when a private ranch (base property) is sold or leased to a new individual or business; the buyer or lessee will then apply with the BLM for the use of grazing privileges associated with the given property. A second alternative would occur if a rancher wanted to transfer existing public land grazing privileges to another party while keeping the private ranch property. Before leasing or buying ranch property, it is advised to contact the local BLM office that administers grazing in the area of the base property, including any conditions of the associated grazing permits or leases that authorize the use of those privileges. All applicants must meet the qualifications for public land grazing specified by the BLM’s regulations.

On the other hand, the U.S. Forest Service can issue three different types of grazing permits to producers: Temporary Grazing Permits, Livestock Use Permits, and Term Grazing Permits.

- **Temporary Grazing Permits** are generally issued for a short period of time to handle special circumstances. They are often issued to allow livestock to remain on the National Forest land, while a Term Grazing Permit is being processed for issuance to a newly qualified applicant. Temporary Grazing Permits are issued based on the needs of the Forest Service. They are not available to the public upon request.
- **Livestock Use Permits** are issued for incidental use and are not intended to authorize commercial livestock production on National Forest lands. Livestock Use Permits can be issued for up to a one-year period, but are generally issued for a much shorter period. A common situation for issuing a Livestock Use Permit is to authorize Guide/Outfitter's stock during the period they are operating on the National Forest. In cases where there is a proven need for some type of incidental livestock use on National Forest lands, a Livestock Use Permit can be obtained by submitting an application.

- **Term Grazing Permits** are issued for up to ten years and are the type of permit issued to livestock producers throughout the West. The eligibility and qualification requirements and most common way to acquire a Term Grazing Permit are discussed below” (USDA 1).

In order to acquire a Forest Service Grazing Permit, several eligibility and qualification requirements must be met. The applicant must own both livestock and base property in order to qualify for a Term Grazing Permit. The basic requirements needed to obtain a Term Permit are as follows:

1. Individuals: Must be a citizen of the United States or an alien who has demonstrated intent to become a citizen by having filed petition for naturalization with the clerk of the U.S. District Court.
2. Legal Entity (corporations or partnerships): U.S. citizens must own at least 80 percent of the capital stock.
3. Applicants must be of legal age in the state of residence” (USDA).

The easiest way for an individual to acquire a Term Grazing Permit is through the purchase of existing base property that is recognized under an existing Term Grazing Permit, which is the most common way the base property ownership requirement is met. On occasion individuals or businesses will inherit, obtain through a foreclosure, or become owners of base properties which allow them to become qualified applicants once all of the legal requirements are met.

The only other way of acquiring a Term Grazing Permit without purchase or acquiring base property, is to purchase permitted livestock and then provide a parcel of land that meets base property requirements. “In either case, the current holder of the Term Grazing Permit who sold either base property or permitted livestock must waive their permit to the Forest Service in favor of the purchaser (applicant)” (USDA 1).

It is on rare occasions that granting of unused forage will occur. This is because existing permittees have the first priority to use the surplus forage. It is rare that a person will obtain a grazing permit through a grant process.

Acquiring a grazing permit on National Forest land is by no means a simple process. Most of the Forest Service lands that are eligible to be grazed by livestock are already obligated under an existing permit.

The Role of Livestock Grazing on Public Lands Today:

“Grazing, which was one of the earliest uses of public lands when the West was settled, continues to be an important use of those same lands today. Livestock grazing now competes with more uses than it did in the past, as other industries and the general public look to the public lands as sources of both conventional and renewable energy and as places for outdoor recreational opportunities, including off-highway vehicle use. Among the key issues that face public land managers today are global climate change, severe wildfires, invasive plant species, and dramatic population increases, including the associated rural residential development that is occurring throughout the West” (Gorey 1).

Livestock grazing can result in various impacts on public land resources, but grazing can provide numerous environmental benefits as well if properly managed. For example, while livestock can lead to increases in some invasive species, well-managed grazing can be utilized to properly manage plant ecosystems. Intensively managed “targeted” grazing is a method, which can be used to control some invasive plant species or reduce the fuels that contribute to wildfires (Gorey 1). “Besides providing such traditional products as meat and fiber, well-managed rangelands and other private ranch lands support healthy watersheds, carbon sequestration, recreational opportunities, and wildlife habitat” (Gorey 1). By allowing livestock to

graze public lands it helps maintain the private ranches, which in turn, preserve the open spaces that have aided in writing the history of the West.

Public Perception of Environmental Impacts of Livestock Grazing:

Grazing by domestic livestock, mainly cattle, is permitted on over 90 percent of the land under the BLM's jurisdiction. "The cumulative environmental impacts of livestock grazing on BLM lands over the last century have been devastating" (Feller 560).

Livestock grazing and the environmental effect that has received the most attention is the depletion of the native perennial vegetative species that are palatable to livestock. When preferred perennial grasses and shrubs are defoliated too heavily or too often by grazing, they lose vigor, fail to reproduce, and will eventually die. Grazing gives an ecological advantage to annual species, to plants that are unattractive or unpalatable to livestock, and also to plants that are grazing-tolerant. Heavy grazing can reduce or eliminate perennial grasses and can potentially replace them with relatively unpalatable woody species such as juniper, snakeweed, rabbitbrush, and cacti, and other annual weeds such as tumbleweed and cheatgrass. Besides being relatively unpalatable to livestock and wildlife, these replacement species generally do a poor job of stabilizing soils against erosion by wind and water.

A major focus of range management is the concept of carrying capacity. Carrying capacity simply depends on the types and quantities of available vegetation and the degree of utilization that each species of vegetation can withstand while continuing to grow and reproduce (i.e. must be sustainable). The

theory behind this concept is that if the number of livestock is kept within carrying capacity, then detrimental changes in vegetation will not occur. Lands grazed in excess of carrying capacity are considered overgrazed.

Holding numbers of livestock within carrying capacity, however, does not guarantee that grazing will not have significant unfavorable environmental effects. Changes in vegetative composition can be one of many potential impacts of grazing. Removal of plant material, even within limits that protect the health of individual grazed plants, has the potential to decrease the ground cover necessary to prevent any excessive erosion of soils by wind and water. A decrease in standing plant cover as well as litter, will also decrease the ability of the land to absorb and hold water thus causing accelerated surface runoff, increased flooding, and transformation of perennial streams into intermittent ones. "Trampling by livestock may destroy cryptogamic crusts and compact soils, decreasing infiltration by water and suppressing plant growth and further accelerating surface runoff" (Feller 562). Manure and urine from cattle or sheep, as well as soil erosion, have the potential to pollute lakes, rivers, and streams. "Livestock may compete with wildlife for water and forage, and the mere presence of livestock may keep some species of wildlife away from water sources and breeding and forage areas" (Feller 562).

Limitation of livestock to numbers within carrying capacity also does not ensure protection of riparian or streamside areas. These areas, which are extremely important for wildlife, recreation, water quality, and streamflow regulation, are as attractive to livestock as they are to people and wildlife. Even when livestock numbers are not excessive, they congregate in riparian areas, removing the

vegetative cover necessary to slow and spread floodwaters and stabilize streambanks against erosion. As a result, stream channels are eroded against arroyos, water tables will fall, and riparian meadows are transformed into dry, less productive uplands.

Another concern not encompassed in the concept of grazing capacity is the impact of livestock on aesthetics, on scenic beauty, and on recreational users of the public lands. Its debatable about whether or not the recreational value of BLM lands far exceeds their livestock production value, but these potential effects must be taken seriously. "Even grazing that may be moderate from the standpoint of range management can turn a beautiful grassland into a moonscape of stubble, defoliated shrubs, and trampled vegetation" (Feller 562). Simply put, this is not a form of proper grazing management. Flies, dust, and manure only add to the aesthetic degradation.

FLPMA and PRIA:

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) and the Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978 (PRIA) offer explicit direction for the BLM to manage the land for purposes beyond livestock production. As a matter of congressional policy, the basis for FLPMA is as follows:

"The public lands be managed in a manner that will protect the quality of scientific, scenic, historical, ecological, environmental, air and atmospheric, water, resource, and archaeological values; that where appropriate, will preserve and protect certain public lands in their natural condition; that will provide food and habitat for fish and wildlife and domestic animals; and that will provide for outdoor recreation and human occupancy and use" (Feller 564).

The concept of multiple use is FLPMA's guidance for balancing the conflicting objectives and uses on the public lands. Multiple use can be defined as:

“Management of the public lands and their various resource values so that they are utilized in the combination that will best meet the present and future needs of the American people;...the use of some land for less than all of the resources; a combination of balanced and diverse resource uses that takes into account the long-term needs of future generations for renewable and nonrenewable resources, including, but not limited to, recreation, range, timber, minerals, watershed, wildlife and fish, and natural scenic, scientific and historical values;...without permanent impairment of the productivity of the land and the quality of the environment with consideration being given to the relative values of the resources” (Feller 564-5).

Resource Management Plans (RMPs) are required by FLPMA to guide the BLM in management of lands under their charge. These plans “... provide by tracts or areas for the use of the public lands” (Feller 565). Generally, each of these plans covers a single resource area. On average a resource area will cover about 1 million acres of BLM land while including on the order of one hundred grazing allotments.

In 1978, Congress developed the multiple-use mandate of FLPMA, which is relevant to all of the resource management on BLM lands, with direction specific to range management found in PRIA. PRIA declared a “national policy and commitment” to “manage, maintain and improve the condition of the public rangelands so that they become as productive as feasible for all rangeland values” (Feller 565). Rangeland values noted by PRIA encompass livestock forage, wildlife habitat, recreation, and water and soil conservation benefits. PRIA goes on to provide: the goal of such management shall be to enhance the range conditions of the public rangelands so that they become productive and feasible. Range condition defined by PRIA refers to the wildlife habitat, forage production, soil quality, and watershed and plant communities.

Authority to Graze on Selected Areas:

The BLM is not required by PRIA and FLPMA to permit livestock grazing on all of their lands. FLPMA's definition of multiple-use includes specifically "the use of some land for less than all of the resources, "as PRIA refers to the BLM's authority to discontinue grazing on selected lands either permanently or temporarily. Within the definition of multiple use it is stated that the combination of uses that will best meet the present and future needs of the American people, but to also give consideration to the relative values of the resources. This suggests that grazing permitted by the BLM should only take place where it makes a positive net contribution to meeting the public needs; where the economic, social, and environmental benefits of grazing will exceed the harms.

Land use planning is an ideal tool for determining which lands grazing is in the public's interest and which allotments are not, the land use planning is an ideal tool to use. FLPMA states that as a condition of grazing permit renewal permitted lands "remain available for domestic livestock grazing in accordance with land use plans" (Feller 567). In the land use planning process there are requirements used to consider potential and present land uses, to consider alternative means and sites, and to weight long-term benefits against short-term. These all indicate that the land use planning process should be used to weigh and balance any pros or cons towards grazing when permits are up for renewal on BLM land.

Livestock Grazing and Recreation on Public Lands:

Livestock grazing on public lands has come under scrutiny in recent years. Opponents of grazing on Forest Service and BLM lands believe that it is an

inappropriate use of the public lands. Although improper grazing still occurs today, much of the ecological degradation that they base their opinions on occurred historically. Many also believe that the fees paid by the permittees should be comparable to those paid through private agreements.

One of the biggest conflicts with grazing public lands is with recreationists. People find it upsetting to be walking along and unexpectedly step in a cow pie and the flies among the cattle can be bothersome. It can be equally perturbing to be hiking in the wilderness and be confronted by a large sheep dog protecting the flock.

“To recreationists, it may seem as though there is an indefinite number of cattle and sheep on the National Forest and they are just allowed to graze where they will” (Sandoval 1). It’s quite the opposite, as grazing on public lands is strictly regulated. The BLM and Forest Service lands are broken up into allotments, which are then usually broken down into various pastures. Carrying capacity is set for each allotment. These numbers are usually conservative to be able to withstand a worst-case scenario. Each of these pastures will be grazed during a specific time of the season.

“Many of the conflicts with recreationists may merely arise from timing. A strategy rangeland managers use to promote biodiversity of forage species is using different pastures at different times of the grazing season every year” (Sandoval 1). For a given allotment, there are schedules or rotations for livestock to be at certain places during the grazing season. Therefore, conflicts could be minimized if some planning of recreationists did some advanced planning. “Before making a recreational trip to public lands, it would be a good idea to call the public lands center office to determine if there

will be livestock at the location and the time you plan to make a visit” (Sandoval 1).

Permittees should also be considerate and keep livestock away from heavily used recreational areas.

However, it is not always possible for permittees to avoid recreationists. Often times the only permits available for livestock grazing are in heavily populated recreational areas. This creates conflict, between both permittees and public land users. The permittees run their livestock as best they can to avoid recreational traffic; range riders will typically move with the cattle and keep daily tabs on their locations while managing the rangelands. However, permittees are not able to keep track of all livestock on the permits. There can be hundreds or thousands of acres that livestock have access to, and it is typical for some to wander into areas they shouldn't be. Managing livestock on the open range can be difficult, but recreational users are not always loyal to the multiple use mandate. Yes, there are trails for mountain bikers, trail riders, dirt bikers and hikers, but not all of the public participants utilize these trails or respect the permittees. To be more specific, permittees often find gates left open, bikers using cattle trails and not the designated ones for public use, or even witnessing recreationists dogs chasing livestock. It can be argued that these are public multiple use lands, but where is the line drawn? Do permittees simply sit back and bite the bullet as their livestock is harassed or do they speak up and try to build a relationship with recreational users? Do recreationists need to become more educated to understand the livestock grazing system, or do they continue to look the other way and do what is in their best interest and convenience at the time?

Occasionally, there are reports concerning aggressive guard dogs. A popular breed of guard dog is the Great Pyrenees Sheep Dog. These dogs are often raised with

and by the sheep. They actually think they are part of the flock. Their job is to protect the flock from predators such as coyotes and black bears. When they approach humans in an aggressive manner, they are doing what they are supposed to do (protect the flock).

“The best advice for hikers is to avoid flocks of sheep as much as possible, but sometimes that is not possible. Guard dogs should respect humans; therefore, when confronted with a less than friendly guard dog, a person should remain calm and talk to the dog to show the dog you are in fact a human and not a predator. It is never a good idea to taunt these dogs and running away could actually trigger a more aggressive response in the dog. There should be a herder nearby who could aid in the situation. If a guard dog is overly aggressive, which is rare, it should be reported immediately to the district office. An overly aggressive dog could be a menace to the public and should be removed from public lands” (Sandoval 1).

Bear in mind that Forest Service and BLM lands are managed for multiple uses, and recreation and livestock grazing are only a few of those uses. Just as there are locals who make a living from catering to folks recreating on public lands, “there are also local ranchers that make a living grazing their livestock on public lands for parts of the year. So really it is in the best interest of all users of public lands to figure out how to get along” (Sandoval 1).

Forest Service Rangeland Recreation:

Federally managed rangelands in particular are continuing to draw public attention from the American people as a place for a multitude of recreational opportunities in what is considered vast open space. A majority of the rangelands are located at lower elevations and are accessible to more National Forest and Grasslands visitors than mountain and forest areas.

Along with the various opportunities that rangelands provide such as camping, hiking, fishing, hunting, mountain biking, or simply a Sunday drive, come impacts. Rangelands can and are being impacted by people. “Just as livestock impact

riparian areas, people can also impact them if they are not managed correctly” (USDA 1). If trails are not maintained on a regular basis or they are continually abused by the general public, then not only are the rangelands abused, but the principle of multiple-use requires another assessment.

Recreational Uses and Conflict:

There has been a shift in ideas and attitudes towards natural resources and public lands management ushering in the “Age of Preservation,” with many Americans wanting to recapture their heritage and roots. Over the past twenty years, the population of the United States has become more urbanized with more disposable income, which has created a boom for recreation in the West. As a result, there has been one significant consequence, heavy recreational use of rangelands that had previously seen very little activity, if any other use besides livestock grazing. The nations four main federal landowning agencies provided approximately 1.2 billion visitor days of recreation back in 1997(Loomis, 2002). “Anytime several people with different goals meet on the same landscape, conflicts can occur, and on rangelands, the conflicts most definitely occur” (Giroux).

Recreational conflict has been defined as "goal interference attributed to another's behavior" (Jacob and Schreyer, 1980). There are numerous types of recreation that take place on rangelands, therefore it is fairly common to expect one individual or group's pursuit of activities to interfere with others. Not only does conflict hover over rangelands, but the recreational opportunities available on the range create different levels of impact. “The activities that are considered to have minimal impact include hiking, fishing, camping, and bird watching while the

activities considered to have major impacts include hunting, off-road vehicle use, horseback riding, and home building” (Giroux). Many of the conflicts that encompass the use of rangelands simply revolve around the impacts of urban development and public perceptions towards rangelands (CISEPS, 1997).

Subdivisions and the Urban Interface

One “hot topic” revolves around the sale of private rangelands for home building and further development of the landscape (Hot Topics, 2004). Giroux stated that “the sale of homes has created the most severe impact on rangelands by leading to behavioral effects on livestock, increased fire risk, huge recreational use in areas not previously seen, and potentially negative effects on wildlife and big game due to subdivision, which did not occur with the land as a ranch. In fact, recent research has shown that ranches provide critical habitat for wildlife species” (Holechek, 2004).

Ex-urban development has the potential to greatly conflict with the other uses on rangelands, specifically on the urban-wildland interface, thus leading to conflicts between public land managers and homeowners, including disagreements over how and what uses the land is being managed and the potential threats. “The huge recreation increases and urbanization bring additional negative conflicts in the form of feral dog and cat populations, vandalism, and cut fences, leading to animosity on the part of ranchers against perceived ‘yuppie’ invaders” (Giroux). Therefore the “invaders” feel that ranching only creates a more negative impact on the land rather than their homes and recreational uses. The conflict is very current, extremely animated, and will require compromise and the acknowledgement that differing

viewpoints exist.

Scenic Beauty and Public Opinion

Over the last fifty years the public has displayed increased sensitivity to the environmental conditions, which has played a larger role in the decision-making process governing use of public lands. “Because of the increased awareness, the impact of range management practices on scenic beauty in the United States has been a major concern in recent years” (Giroux).

Studies have shown that the impacts of range management practices and livestock on the scenic beauty varies based upon type of recreational use (Sanderson et al., 1986).

Giroux stated “fishermen, didn’t like livestock overall compared to other groups, but they like fences more than others, a measure to keep cattle away from riparian areas. Hunters didn’t mind anything except for restricted access and campers felt livestock was acceptable in open space, not in forestlands or near forests. The study in Colorado found that 34% of campers thought that the presence of livestock improved their stay” (Mitchell et al., 1996).

Furthermore, another study showed that the type of land designation plays a role in the way livestock grazing is perceived. Visitors more likely attracted to a designation of national monument will be “least likely to support traditional range management activities” (Brunson and Gilbert, 2003).

Research has indicated that perception depends on recreation users, knowledge of livestock, and their exposure to ranching, but there is little objection to livestock if they are kept away from campsites and riparian areas used for fishing.

“Basically, recreation visitors like environmental scenes where livestock were grazed but range management practices were least visible, which can lead to conflicts because some of the more visible forms of management such as watering points also lead to the best dispersion of livestock across a landscape, and therefore the least impact” (Giroux).

One important factor in range management with an increased tie to the growth in urbanization and population in the West is public opinion.

“Urban and rural constituencies hold very different attitudes regarding livestock grazing on public lands, which could create a political loss to rangeland production interests in the future (Brunson and Steel, 1996). A survey revealed that U.S residents place little confidence in livestock production and other extractive uses and believe that more protection should be given to wildlife” (Brunson and Steel, 1994).

The general public has very little to no knowledge in regards to range management practices and principles and they will typically make judgments based upon their personal beliefs rather than informed knowledge (Sanderson et al., 1986). “There seems to be a dichotomy; people tend to believe that either rangeland conditions are declining and need protection or that rangeland conditions are improving and are uniformly good” (Holechek, 2004). Essentially, public education about range management practices could lead to increased confidence and improved public perception concerning management of federal rangelands.

Ranching and Recreation Opportunities

Despite the public’s misunderstanding of range management, the increased recreational use on rangelands has created a tourism market for experiencing the “rugged” outdoors and “Wild West”. “A basic idea that could prove profitable for ranchers in these areas is that intelligent range management practices can lead to increased economic returns” (Jameson, 1974). Those ranchers who are willing to diversify their enterprise and expand beyond production livestock have the ability to be involved in urban expansion.

“Several possibilities exist for services that ranches can provide in the

realm of recreation, including but not limited to fee hunting, packing trips, horse-back riding, sight-seeing trips, fishing in stock ponds, and cabin rentals. Another popular activity is a stay at a Dude Ranch, where people pay for the “cowboy” experience, and either help clean stalls and ride fences or possibly participate in a cattle drive. The potential for working ranches to fill this void in demand are high, who have both access to public lands and a working knowledge of the area” (Giroux).

There are several benefits gained when providing services to recreationists.

“The local economy benefits by providing services for which there is a demand and the local community has the opportunity to educate the broader public on management issues important to the area” (Giroux). Many recreation opportunities provide increased impetus to preserve wildlands (Power, 2000). The activities taking place would simply capitalize on the existing ranch infrastructure, while providing increased cash flow come years end.

Learning about Public Perceptions of Cattle Grazing:

A common question among public land managers and livestock operators is whether or not rangeland objectives, including public access for recreation are compatible with livestock grazing. Public land managers have begun to limit or restrain their grazing use on federal lands due to the public concerns of environmental degradation and the fear of conflict.

“For example in 2009, officials from the City of Walnut Creek decided to end grazing in two parks based on park users’ complaints of cattle trampling trails and “increases in attacks by cattle on dogs and people. Cattle had grazed these parks for decades for weed abatement and the decision came after years of public outcry” (Barry).

Perceptions of livestock use of public lands have been shown to be associated with the type of recreational interest, land classification, environmental beliefs, and demographics. “Sanderson et al. 1986 found that the more experience recreationists

had on grazed lands the less likely they had negative perceptions of grazing” (Barry). It has also been shown that hikers were more apt to have a negative feeling towards livestock as apposed to hunters.

“Research has also shown rural and urban divide in attitudes and beliefs, especially when the rural economy depends on rangelands. Little is known about the attitudes of the urban public recreating on grazed park lands. In particular how widespread is fear, how is fear dealt with, and how do they feel about “natural landscapes” managed with grazing cattle” (Barry).

Land managers are increasingly recognizing the true value of grazing as a tool to use for land management. These land managers must also be able to address public concerns where there is public access. It is vital for managers to have adequate information about views the recreationists have with respect to cattle grazing on rangelands. Managers will be more equipped to address the future grazing / recreation conflicts and educate the public if they have a grasp of the concerns involved.

“While park managers have implemented some strategies to reduce public/cattle conflict including signage and timing of grazing, there are undoubtedly opportunities for improved public outreach. Park visitors would benefit from not only understanding the biological value of managed grazing programs but also from better information on livestock behavior and how to interact with livestock they may encounter. Continued education of our urban audience will be essential if livestock grazing is going to continue to be a viable tool for managing open space lands” (Barry).

Understanding Multiple Use of National Forests and BLM Lands:

Concentrated in the lower 48 states and Alaska, the U.S. Forest Service manages 191 million acres while the BLM manages 265 million acres. Even though the statutory regimes differ, the National Forests are administered under the National Forest Management Act, whereas the BLM lands are under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act. “Both statutes borrow from the Multiple Use

Sustained Yield Act in their emphasis on striking a balance in land use planning among the competing values of recreation, grazing, timber, watershed protection, wildlife and fish, and wilderness” (Dept. of Justice 1). Therefore they are not considered “parks”.

“For historical reasons, the statutorily sanctioned timber and grazing uses of these lands have resulted not only in the expectation by ranchers and the timber industry that these uses will continue unabated, but similar expectations in communities whose livelihood depends on the persistence of these uses. At the same time, the National Forests and the Public Lands represent significant, and in some cases, the only large scale refuges for certain wildlife, and have nationally recognized ecological significance. Recreational uses may conflict with both of the above interests, and there may be conflict within the neighboring community between the economic value of consumptive and recreational uses and preservation values. As can be expected, the use allocations made by the agencies often do not sit well with one or the other of these constituents. The result is litigation” (Dept. of Justice 1).

As previously discussed, the BLM’s definition of multiple use is a big charge, and a challenging one.

“The public lands must be managed in a manner that protects the quality of scientific, scenic, historical, ecological, environmental, air and atmospheric, water resource, and archaeological values; that, where appropriate, will preserve and protect certain public lands in their natural condition; that will provide food and habitat for fish and wildlife and domestic animals; and that will provide for outdoor recreation and human occupancy and use by encouraging collaboration and public participation throughout the planning process. In addition, the public lands must be managed in a manner that recognizes the Nation’s need for domestic sources of minerals, food, timber, and fiber from the public lands” (BLM 1).

This can be an easy task in certain places. In some instances, areas suitable for livestock grazing are not attractive routes for recreational use, or areas with mineral resources not suitable habitats for wildlife, or areas attractive for solitude are topographically isolated from other activities. In such cases, management for multiple use is relatively simple. The sheer nature of the natural resources aids in

avoiding conflicts between uses. Everywhere there are choices to make and accommodations to be made in managing for multiple uses of public lands.

Management Tools for Multiple Use:

Uses of public lands can generally be viewed as extractive, scientific, or recreational. Each of these general types of uses requires a different management technique, as the interactions of each resource, the purpose for management, and the impacts of these activities are all dissimilar.

- “Extractive uses might include mining for mineral resources, harvest of vegetative resources and utilization of forage for livestock. These uses are important to local economies, regional and even national energy supplies, and management of vegetative communities for the health of the ecosystem, including wildlife and wildfires, and are also important in preserving the heritage of the American West with the ranching, homesteading and mining histories.
- Scientific uses might include exploring geologic features for an enhanced understanding of the earth and its history. Paleontologic resources can be studied to deepen understanding of prehistoric life and the continued evolution of the planet. Study of cultural and historic resources can augment our understanding of human interactions with nature, and one another.
- Recreation uses might include modern human interaction with the natural resources for pleasure and life-balance. Recreation takes different forms unique to each individual, and can vary from riding motorized off-highway vehicles through a desert canyon, to hiking a canyon rim, to paddling a canoe down Desolation Canyon, or riding a horse up the San Rafael Canyon in hopes of seeing some bighorn sheep, to touring the area in a motor-home. Each person seeking recreation on public lands has a different need and expectation for the setting”(BLM 2).

Management is generally defined as “guiding human behavior in a way that helps to achieve a desired outcome” (BLM 2). The BLM governs and authorizes multiple use activities as directed by Congress with management of public lands.

Management actions are intended to guide human interaction and behavior in ways that influence and allow for multiple use. There are programs within the BLM designed to manage livestock grazing on public lands, and for recreational

activities. If it can be done on public lands there is a program available for it. Certain management techniques are applied based on the specific resource, as specialized programs are implemented.

In order to fully understand the management tools presented, it is important to grasp how they work. Each aspect of multiple use draws on a manual, which is designed to manage for specific resources and uses. The manuals go into detail and explain the resource, how it is used, and what decisions can be made about the resource.

“One generally common element of each program is that management of the resource and resource use are central for the BLM. Each program will apply certain management decisions on specific pieces of land” (BLM 2). Consequently, each program will usually classify or identify lands throughout the entire Field Office into one or more management areas. Such divisions can be based on topographical characteristics such as streams or ridgelines. Often times, they are based on county boundaries (political division). Other times, they can be based on other recognizable features like roads or fence lines. “These management areas however, are usually based upon the specific use or program” (BLM 3).

To help explain this concept is an example:

“These multiple-use lands, where livestock grazing is taking place, wildlife are present, and there are sub-surface minerals; recreation is also taking place. The Price Field Office draws people to the area for the beauty of the desert, the backdrop of the canyons, and a variety of recreation experiences that go with the environment. People come to the area in motor homes for camping, tents for camping, and others backpack into areas more isolated, away from roads. Still others ride horses in the canyons, boat down the rivers, or ride off-highway vehicles on designated trails. In order to provide for quality recreation activities and recreation management, dispersed camping areas are identified, developed campgrounds are constructed, trails

are designated for various uses, and facilities are provided to service river based recreation. These areas are not developed based upon grazing allotments, or wildlife herd units, or mineral designations, but instead are developed based on the topography of the land and the recreation needs associated with those lands” (BLM 3).

There are countless resources and resource uses. The Resource Management Plan contains numerous decisions, which are designed to manage the uses in ways that are complementary to each other, while attempting to resolve conflicts in areas where there is multiple use. “Since not all of the multiple uses are totally compatible with one another, in some locations, one use will be given favor in relation to another use. One example of this is a range improvement such as a water facility for livestock instead of a developed campground” (BLM 3). Bottom line is not all uses can take place at the same time on the same ground.

Multiple Use Conflict Resolution Act:

The Multiple Use Conflict Resolution Act was introduced by Congress in 2005 to provide compensation to ranchers who would voluntarily relinquish a federal grazing permit or lease on public lands where conflicts with other multiple uses render livestock grazing impractical. The bill would pay the federal grazing permittees/lessees approximately \$175 per animal unit month (AUM) to permanently retire their permit or lease.

The Conflict Resolution Act developed by Congress under the following findings. The Act states the environmental, economic, fiscal, and social policy reasons for enacting the legislation.

(1) “The use of Federal lands by grazing permittees and lessees for commercial livestock grazing is increasingly difficult due to growing conflicts with other legitimate multiple uses of the lands, such as environmental protection and burgeoning recreational use, and with congressionally mandated goals of wildlife

and habitat protection and improved water quality and quantity.

(2) The recreational use of Federal lands often leads to conflicts with commercial livestock grazing on the same lands because some recreational users of the lands cause damage to range developments or disturb livestock, which renders many grazing operations on Federal lands uneconomical.

(3) A combination of sustained drought, foreign competition, changing domestic markets, industry restructuring, and individual ranch situations has resulted in Federal grazing permits and leases becoming stranded investments for many permittees and lessees.

(4) Attempts to resolve grazing conflicts with other multiple uses often require extensive range developments, intensive herd management, and continuous monitoring that greatly increases costs to both permittees and lessees and taxpayers, far out of proportion to the benefit received.

(5) Certain grazing allotments on Federal lands have, or are likely to become, unsuitable for commercial livestock production as a result of the combined effect of the factors referred to in paragraphs (1) through (4) and other factors.

(6) The cost of the Federal grazing program greatly exceeds revenues to the Federal treasury from grazing receipts.

(7) Many permittees and lessees have indicated their willingness to end their commercial livestock grazing on Federal lands in exchange for a one-time payment to reasonably compensate them for the effort and investment that they have made in a grazing allotment.

(8) Compensating permittees and lessees who relinquish their grazing permit or lease and end commercial livestock grazing on Federal lands would help recapitalize an ailing sector of rural America, by providing economic options to permittees and lessees that do not presently exist and allowing them to restructure their ranch operations, start new businesses, or retire with security.

(9) Reasonable compensation for the relinquishment of a grazing permit or lease will help alleviate the need for permittees and lessees to sell or subdivide their private lands.

(10) The cost of compensating permittees and lessees for voluntarily waiving permits and leases is significantly less than the cost to the taxpayers of continuing to administer, monitor, assess, and mitigate for the environmental and other impacts of commercial livestock grazing on Federal lands” (Salvo 1).

The Multiple Use Conflict Resolution Program consists of numerous sections. Section 4 allows federal grazing permittees and lessees who graze domestic livestock (cattle, horses, sheep, or goats) on federal lands to waive their grazing permit or lease to the appropriate managing federal agency (BLM, Forest Service, etc.). Compensation for the permit can be authorized through Congress. This provision requires federal managing agencies to cancel grazing permits and leases that are waived. The associated federal lands grazing allotment(s) will be permanently closed to commercial livestock grazing. In the event that funds appropriated for the permit/lease compensation program are insufficient to meet the demand for permit/lease buyout, the listed factors will be used to prioritize permit/lease retirement authorized by this act. It is expected that the federal agencies charged with administering the permit/lease compensation program will establish their own rules, using all fifteen factors included in the waiver policy subsection under Multiple-Use Conflict Resolution Program as the basis for their prioritization system.

This provision explicitly states, to avoid any misinterpretation, that grazing permittees and lessees who opt not to participate in the grazing permit/lease compensation program may continue grazing pursuant to the terms and conditions of their grazing permit/lease, and may renew or transfer their permit/lease as provided under the Taylor Grazing Act and other applicable authority. That is, it's business as usual for permittees and lessees who choose not to retire their grazing permit/lease. They can continue grazing and/or transfer their permit/lease to their heirs or other ranchers under existing rules.

Section 5, under the Resolution Act, allows for compensation for waived grazing permit or lease. To be more specific, this provision entitles grazing permittees and lessees who waive their permit or lease to compensation at a rate of \$175 per animal unit month based on the formula described in the provision. Grazing permittees and lessees are also relieved from paying grazing fees for grazing permits/leases waived. To avoid speculation and profiteering, grazing permittees and lessees who seek to retire a grazing permit or lease for a grazing allotment that was vacant on the date of introduction of this legislation will not be eligible for compensation. The purpose of this provision is to discourage people from attempting to profit from the permit/lease compensation program by acquiring permits and leases for grazing allotments after this legislation was introduced simply to cash them in for a quick payout. This legislation does not affect in any way the federal government's authority to continue managing grazing permits/leases pursuant to existing law and regulations. The permit/lease compensation program authorized by this legislation does not create a new property right in federal grazing permits/leases.

Another section under the act is Section 6, donation of grazing permit or lease. Rather than waive their permit or lease for compensation under section 4, this provision allows grazing permittees and lessees who graze domestic livestock (cattle, horses, sheep, or goats) on federal lands to simply donate their grazing permit or lease to the appropriate managing federal agency. Grazing permittees and lessees who donate their permit or lease to the federal government are relieved of paying grazing fees under the permit/lease.

Section 7, effect of waiver or donation of grazing permit or lease. In regards to the effects on range development, permittees and lessees who waive their permit or lease for compensation under section 4, or donate their lease under section 6, also waive any rights they may have in range improvements on the associated federal lands grazing allotment(s). To secure retired allotments against unauthorized use, "the Secretary shall ensure that grazing allotments retired from grazing under this Act are rendered reasonably secure from trespass grazing by domestic livestock" (Salvo 2).

Section 8, retirement of grazing allotments for which no valid grazing permit or lease exists. To avoid speculation and profiteering, this provision prohibits federal agencies from issuing grazing permits/leases for grazing allotments that are vacant as of the date of enactment of this legislation, and permanently retires those allotments from commercial grazing use.

Section 9, effect of nonuse or reduced use. This provision allows federal grazing permittees and lessees to choose not to graze their allotments for any period of years and still retain their grazing permit or lease for the duration of its term, regardless of any other law or regulation that might otherwise require the permit or lease to be re-assigned to another permittee or lessee. In other words, no permittee/lessee will lose their grazing permit/lease simply because they decide not to graze their allotment for any number of years due to any reason (drought, fire, financial or logistical considerations, etc.).

County transition payments are discussed in Section 10. This section would provide economic transition funds to counties where grazing permits/leases are

retired by this legislation at a rate of \$10/AUM based on a formula. The purpose of this provision is to assist rural counties that experience economic challenges due, in part, to grazing permit retirement.

Finally, Section 11, authorization of appropriation.

“There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretaries \$100,000,000, to remain available until expended, to provide compensation to permittees and lessees under section 5 and to make transition payments to counties under section 10. None of the funds appropriated pursuant to this section shall be used by any Federal agency for administrative costs related to the purposes of this Act” (Salvo 2).

Looking Forward

When trying to move forward conflict resolution is a critical component to prevent conflict and bring a fair ending to existing conflicts. One way to enhance the impact of conflict resolution is through the use of Coordinated Resource Management Planning (CRMP). This plan, which “brings together public interests to bargain and compromise regarding multiple use and land management conflicts, has been extremely effective” (Holechek). There is a growing importance for people who are involved in multiple uses and sustainable ecosystems to form a partnership. These people include but are not limited to the following: scientists, ecologists, economists, policy and legal experts, environmental advocates, sociologists, and the public and private rangeland managers (Giroux).

With respect to protecting the future, one popular method is the use of conservation easements. “A conservation easement is a voluntary, legally binding agreement that limits certain types of uses or prevents development from taking place on a piece of property now and in the future, while protecting the property’s

ecological or open-space values” (Conserving 1). The critical point here is to make sure to include all of the stakeholders in the decision-making from the beginning, making sure to address the issues as they appear, and not waiting for conflicts to occur (Eyre).

Rangelands in the United States will only continue to see an increased demand for both wildlife and recreation needs, while still providing traditional use practices. “Some large challenges in the modern era will include ensuring sustainable traditional livestock production systems in a period of low beef prices and high environmental sensitivity” (Giroux). Range managers in the future will be forced to recon he questions about viability, sustainability, open space, and education. Cooperation and the inclusion of all interested parties will be key to the future of sustainable rangelands. There needs to be a willingness to identify common goals for the land, which can lead to a steady foundation for management practices and improve rangeland resources locally. It is necessary to have a firm foundation of mutual respect, a common goal of increased rangeland health and vitality, and a determination to work through differences in opinion to find realistic solutions for all stakeholders.

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