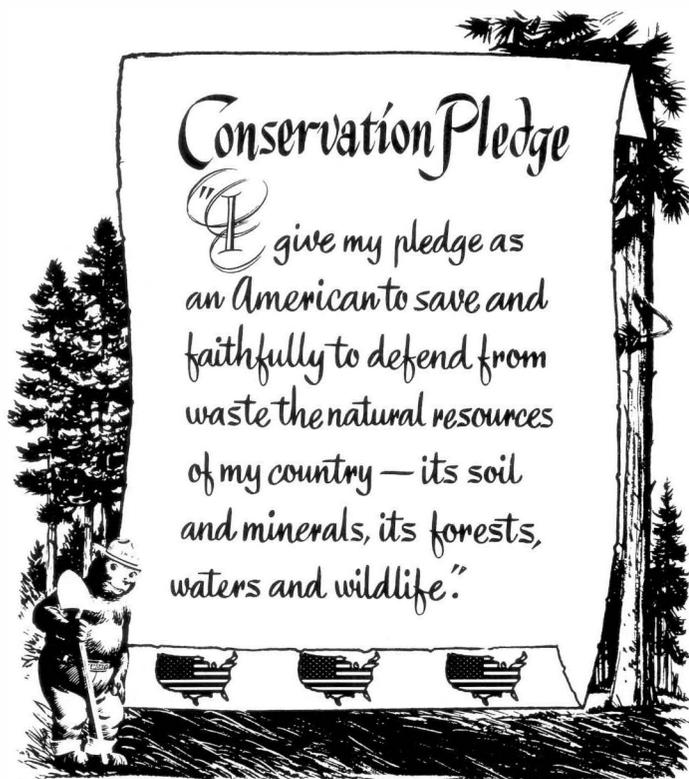


# Chapter XIV

## GET INVOLVED



*Time was solutions to many of our problems were a bit simpler. A Winchester, a hard fist, or hard work went a long way when it came to protecting your own [public lands ranching operation]. Today, things aren't that simple.*

--from Idaho Cattle Association promotion literature

*If the public wants to assert ownership of its land, it will have to take it away from ranchers. That won't be easy. Nobody wants to take on John Wayne. . . . But that's the way the game is played. That's how the West must be won -- again.*

--David Brown, author, wildlife biologist, former Chief of Game, Arizona Game & Fish Department

**S**tockmen have more power over the rural West and its people than any other group. The elite 30,000 public lands ranchers -- so used to getting their way for so long -- cannot be expected to release their century-long stranglehold on the public and its land voluntarily. And we cannot expect our ranching-oriented government to force them to.

Limited reforms have been made by small contingents of ranching victims, conservationists, animal rightists, hunters and fishers, as well as tax, political, and social reform advocates. However, fundamental and lasting changes require

increased public awareness and involvement, and, ultimately, much more widespread re-establishment with Nature. These are the main goals of this book.

Unfortunately, we have a long way to go. The American public suffers from unawareness, apathy, sheep-like behavior, a near-fanatic cowboy/Western obsession, and an increasing withdrawal from Nature. This, combined with worsening environmental conditions, affirms that we must begin making major changes soon.

Prerequisite, of course, is enough concern to spark a willingness to make those changes. The explosive movements for civil, women's, gay, and animal rights, and anti-war, anti-nuclear, health, and selected environmental issues in recent decades indicates that some of the American public is concerned and willing to get involved once it recognizes a need for change.

*I've been amazed at how little attention public lands ranching gets, especially from environmentalists. Overgrazing may be America's least-known big environmental problem.*

--Denis Jones, Hoboken, New Jersey

Therein lies the main hindrance. Many times I have been asked, "What's a BLM, anyway?" A surprising number of Americans don't realize that public lands even exist; still more don't understand what they are, where they are, or how they are abused. Easterners especially are amazed to learn that cattle and sheep graze public land, and that livestock developments are built there. Others think that cattle and sheep are indigenous Western animals. And, while probably most people are vaguely aware of public lands ranching, only a tiny percentage even begin to understand its repercussions. The average American probably knows more about Dolly Parton's hairdo than about the major land abuse of the West!

The situation is understandable, however. While the 11 Western states cover about 40% of the contiguous US, only 20% of Americans live there. In other words, Easterners comprise 80% of public land owners. If so inclined, they could easily overpower the Western ranching establishment and end public lands ranching. But Easterners remain even less informed -- thus uninformed -- than Westerners on this issue. And, almost wholly separated from the reality of the Western range, Easterners are even more likely than Westerners to idealize ranching.

In the West, more than 4/5 of the people live in urban areas, insulated and isolated from happenings "out there" on the rural 99%. For most, contact with rural areas is limited to vacations to popular (usually ungrazed) tourist areas, highway driving, and travel stops in small towns. Moreover, Americans spend an average of more than 90% of their time indoors, and little of that remaining 10% meaningfully connected with Nature. Our prevailing culture

provides us with little impetus to concern ourselves with the natural environment.

*Anyone who goes beyond the city limits of almost any Western town can see for himself that the land is overgrazed.*

--Edward Abbey (Abbey 1986)

*You don't need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows.*

--Bob Dylan

The best education is direct experience. Only in this way can one sufficiently understand ranching's environmental, economic, social, and political impact on the West -- something only partially communicated in a book. So, *get out there on the range!* Travel any direction from nearly any Western settlement and usually you will soon be "in the heart of ranching country."

Visit many locales and diverse terrain -- not just the popular parks and recreation areas, which usually are kept ungrazed to protect the land or for public relations purposes. These tourist areas cover less than 5% of Western public land but receive over 95% of the visitation. They are packed with people, while the remaining lands see only an occasional hiker or hunter and, of course, the local rancher. BLM land encompasses much more of the West than does Forest Service land, yet it receives less than 1/20 as many visitors. There is also state, FWS, Bureau of Reclamation, Department of Defense, Indian, county, municipal, and private range, the vast bulk of it open to the public or by request, most of it infrequently visited. Time on this land may be freer, more interesting, and more enjoyable than a closely supervised session of gawking at spectacular panoramas amidst throngs of tourists. And this is where you will begin to see what ranching has done to 70% of the West.

[Ranching critics are] *arm chair, desk bound, self ordained experts . . . [who] see a few cow chips and determine the [sic] livestock is devastating the range.*

--Hubert Lauzon, Arizona public lands rancher

Travel slowly through the rural West; you can't learn much from a vehicle at 60 mph. Use back roads, dirt roads, rough roads, no roads. Stop often; stop anywhere. Chances are better than 50-50 that you will stop on some kind of public land; chances are more than 7 out of 10 that you will be on rangeland. Chances are that you will have to climb over a barbed wire fence. . . .

Now that you are on the land, in the open air, close to the Earth, relax! Take time . . . Shed the human-made world. Allow yourself to become part of your surroundings. In time, your mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical senses re-emerge, realign, and reunite into a new, heightened, and expanded awareness.

Use this awareness to experience and learn about this place. What is here, in this ecosystem? What entities, processes, cycles, systems? Why? How do they function? What is not here? Why? What should be here? Why isn't it? Try to imagine what the area might have been like 200 years ago. By now, you should be starting to see some of the ways in which ranching has influenced this place.

Consider the vegetation -- species, health, density, composition, distribution, the way it changes from place to place. Can you find wild animals or their signs? How has the area's soil been affected? Churned up? Compacted? Excessive erosion? How much bare dirt? Cutbanks? Cryptogams? How much organic litter? What is it composed of? Is it intact? Running water? Should there be? If there is, is it polluted? Cattle? Note their brands, hoof prints, bleating and bawling, fly-covered splats.

Notice the dirt ranching roads and where they lead. What effect are they having on the area? What do recent tire tracks indicate? Are there signs of off-road vehicle use? Observe stock tanks and how they are constructed. How much could that one have cost? What kind of machinery was used to build it, with what impact? Are there signs of woodcutting, excavation, arson, trapping? With your eyes, follow fences across the landscape. What purposes do they serve? How many gates? Where are they located? What access do they provide? Girdled trees? Note the variations in vegetation from ranching practices, especially fenceline contrasts (however, usually much damage occurs even where a contrast is not obvious or even evident). What have ranchers and range managers done to cause these changes? Try to spot sacrifice areas and discern why they have become degraded.

When you feel you know the area, leave and find a nearby, comparable *unranching* area -- perhaps a National Park or Monument, or a natural or scenic area. Walk out away from the roads, developments, and tourists and immerse yourself in the surroundings. Then compare notes. In most cases, the contrast will be impressive, if not remarkable.

Look at the land with new eyes. With experience, you will begin to see ranching's impact nearly everywhere, even in forms not mentioned in this book. Areas that previously seemed unspoiled will reveal surprising degradation. This may be a rude awakening but no problem ever disappeared by looking the other way.

*What does "Free Our Public Lands!, stop destructive welfare ranching, end public lands livestock grazing" actually mean? How is welfare ranching so destructive? I don't understand. How could cows eating grass be so bad?*

--J. Siciliano, Stamford, Connecticut, personal correspondence

Although direct experience is best, there are other ways to learn about public lands ranching. Libraries and book stores carry hundreds of publications that touch upon the subject. Some contain useful information. As mentioned, however, the vast majority are of, by, and for the ranching establishment, and separating information from misinformation and irrelevance may not be easy.

You can write government agencies and request pertinent information. In return you may receive stacks of promo handouts and pro-ranching form letters -- if anything. In conducting research for this book, I sent requests to 14 federal and state agencies involved in public lands ranching. Each letter was individually typed and specifically requested any available information on the agency's involvement with public lands ranching, including breakdowns on funding, responsibilities, and organizational structure. Each was politely and succinctly worded, requesting billing

if there was a charge. Of the 14 agencies contacted, only 8 even bothered to respond; only 5 of those provided useful information, while none of them provided nearly the material requested. Follow-up letters yielded little more. Dozens of other requests over the years have produced similar results.

To get pertinent information from government agencies, you must: (1) possess infinite patience and persistence; (2) break into their files late at night; or (3) invoke the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act. In the last case you are required to submit a letter to the relevant agency requesting specified information under authority of the Act, allow weeks or months for research, and pay all related costs, often amounting to hundreds or thousands of dollars. (Public interest groups sometimes can obtain a waiver on costs. For more information on Freedom of Information requests, visit a library or contact the ACLU or other legal aid organization.)

You can phone agency officials, but this is even more like pulling teeth. I have rarely reached an intended official with less than a couple of long-distance calls. You can leave messages, but they usually don't return your calls. Most of those you do reach act more like stockmen than public servants.

*Bureaucracy . . . they "forget" that you requested this information or that. Or they may forget that you were interested in this decision or that. Or they seem to ignore you. Or they seem intent on wearing you down. Or they seem to want to make you feel like you don't know what you are talking about. Or they try to intimidate you either overtly or covertly. Or they may try to coopt you. Or they may ridicule you or your efforts.*

--Leslie Glustrom, *Participating in Livestock Grazing Decisions on the National Forests* (Glustrom 1991)

You can visit these people in their offices. They may be polite, bewildered, or hostile, but few will speak openly of what is really going on. To discourage you, they may pretend that you are the only oddball ever to question them about public lands ranching, or act like you are wasting valuable government time. They may perform a standard song-and-dance about ranching mandates, sustained yield, multiple use, responsible management, and how the range is now "better than ever." Most agency officials (whether they realize it or not) are professional PR men who defend the ranching imperative; that is largely how they made the grade. I can say without hesitation that many of them will intentionally mislead you if they get the chance.

You can talk with independent range consultants and range professionals at agricultural colleges, but they likewise are integral components of the ranching establishment. These "experts" juggle statistics and use convincing, rehearsed arguments. They may know 147 different grasses, but everything they know is structured to promote ranching. It's their job.

You can request relevant information from stockmen's associations. This usually results in more public relations brochures and form letters, or nothing. For instance, my request (under an assumed name) to the National Cattlemen's Association for information on their organization and its official policy on public lands ranching was answered 2 months later with this:

*The information you have requested is for the most part available to members, and since NCA is a membership organization owned by members, I cannot provide you with the information you requested.*

You can talk with ranchers themselves, but by virtue of their upbringing, conditioning, peer pressure, and vested interest, most are incapable of realistic dialogue. They may provide some interesting stories, but little reliable information. Tall tales and self-serving interpretations of reality are traditional within the ranching community. Also customary between ranchmen is an unwritten compact to never openly criticize another's ranching practices, even if abuse is severe and they hate each other's guts (sometimes making for humorous situations). They portray an image of folksy cowboy comraderie to the outside world, even if there is none. This blanket reciprocal support is an established means ranchers employ to help reaffirm their self-worth, protect the industry's favorable public image, and maintain cohesion of the power establishment.

The more perceptive modern stockman will want to maintain healthy public relations. He may invite you to his ranch for lunch and a tour. You'll meet the wife, eat barbecued hamburgers, and hear all about the many hardships of running a public lands ranch. You'll be shuttled about the allotment in his 4-wheel drive, visit the most impressive spots, take in the most successful range developments, and be dazzled by his range savvy all the while. To convince you of his sincerity and environmental commitment, you may be privy to a special range problem he's been having and his special efforts to solve it.

Unfortunately, we cowboy-crazed Americans, urban dwellers especially, are primed to believe nearly anything a rancher tells us. How are we to know differently? And, when a living legend speaks, you listen.

Consider this typical encounter. John and Jane Average-Middle-Class-American Jones have their annual 2-week summer vacations coming up. They want to do something really different this year, so they load the kids into the RV, leave the city behind, and head out for the beautiful badlands of southern Utah.

Their fourth day out, feeling adventurous, on a whim they turn off the main highway, bump over the cattle guard onto a small dirt road, and follow its twisting course along an arroyo and over a hill to a small creek. There being several large shade trees here, the Joneses decide to have a picnic. They pile out with their stuff, walk up the creek a few yards, and suddenly, there, wrapping barbed wire around an old cottonwood, is . . . a cowboy!

The Joneses have never seen an in-the-flesh cowboy at work before, and are nervous but excited.

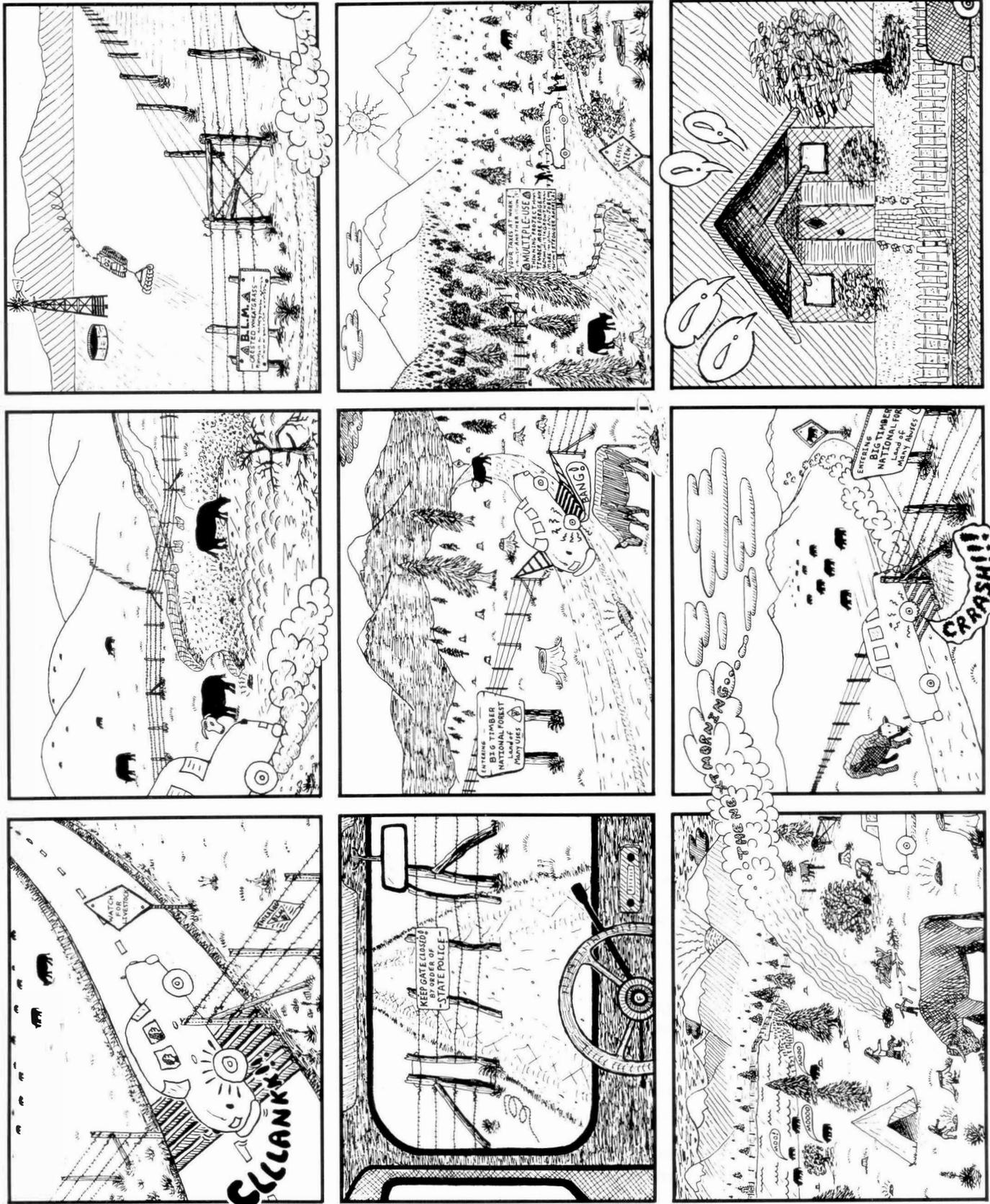
Little Jimmy calls out, "Hey, are you a *real* cowboy!?"

A suitably rustic voice replies, "That's right, son. Been workin' this ranch 25 years."

Upon hearing this, Dad begins to worry. "I . . . I'm sorry. We didn't know where this road went. Is this private property?"

The rancher, wanting to sound sociable but maintain his authority, answers coolly, "Well, no not really -- BLM grazing land. Where're you folks from?"

Seizing this opportunity, Dad introduces himself, though rather self-consciously in his citified, pressed Levi look-alikes and jogging shoes. The two settle into a conversation,



**THE JONES FAMILY SETS OUT ONE DAY TO EXPERIENCE THE WILD WEST.**

the rancher doing most of the talking, responding to John's queries about ranch life, while the family listens intently.

The stockman talks about the fence he's building, how it'll help keep better track of the cattle and how it needs to be stretched tight across this creek between these 2 trees so's it won't wash away in the next flood. He talks of what a hard time ranchers are having making a living these days, and of the many things working against them -- high prices; floods and droughts; the feds and their regulations; outsiders coming in and throwing trash around and leaving gates open and just not respecting the land and his livelihood; and predators, especially the coyotes that've killed 85 of his calves in the last few years.

"People just don't understand those damned coyotes," he declares. "If you don't keep them down, they'll just keep multiplying like rabbits and eat every animal around, *including all the wildlife!*" The cowboy tilts his hat up, fixes Dad with a serious look, and states dramatically, "Ever seen coyotes kill a calf?" Before Dad can answer, he continues, "Well, it ain't a pretty sight. In a big pack they come right up behind a running calf and just start bitin' off chunks of its tail. Just playing, not really wanting to kill the animal -- yet. They tire of that after awhile and start tearing into the rear legs, crippling the animal so's it can't walk or hardly move. Then they get the blood lust and just start ripping into the calf's belly and asshole -- while the calf just lays there struggling and bawling the whole time! No sir, it ain't a pretty sight!"

The rancher pulls his hat down at an angle across his eyes, indicating that the conversation is closing, and resolutely proclaims, "I've killed hundreds of coyotes, and they're still thick! These city people wantin' to tell us what to do and save every single damned predator just don't know what goes on out here. Well, what're they gonna eat when they close down the livestock producers, anyway -- *soy-ya burgers?!*"

John Jones, now feeling more citified, naive, and self-conscious than ever, ponders all this as he awkwardly shakes the cowboy's hand and allows him to return to his obviously important work. As John walks away, he's thinking, "Gosh, I've just talked with a *real* cowboy, a rugged outdoorsman who lives way out here and works this land and knows what he's talking about."

The average American understands little about actual ranching, to the great benefit of the industry. A compelling yet intimidating aura of mystery shrouds the celebrated stockman. We tend to fear and magnify what we don't understand. Thus, the Western rancher, already an exalted hero, becomes an almost overwhelming authority figure.

More reliable sources of public lands ranching information are scientific, conservation, and environmental organizations. They have already done the dirty work and are less biased by a profit/power motive. Many have been to some extent involved in the issue for decades and are happy to share their knowledge.

Some of the best sources are common folks who live near or spend much time on public land but are not so bound by ranching ties. Talk with rural residents, hunters, fishers, campers, hikers, backpackers, and naturalists.

*People come out to look at the situation and they fall in love with these cowboys. It's the myth of the American West. The cowboys come off as the paragon of great American values. Now we're saying that they're destroying public lands.*

--Tom France, National Wildlife Federation (Royte 1990)

*The level of outrage on the part of the American people is not high enough. This is due to massive ignorance of the problem. This situation has not been helped much by various elements of the environmental community who have bent over backwards in placating the cowboys out of some half-assed romantic notion that cowboys represent a free lifestyle that is the cultural equivalent of wilderness.*

--Public ranching critic

*The cowboy and Mickey Mouse are the two greatest American heroes.*

--Dr. William H. Goetzman, TV documentary *The West of the Imagination*

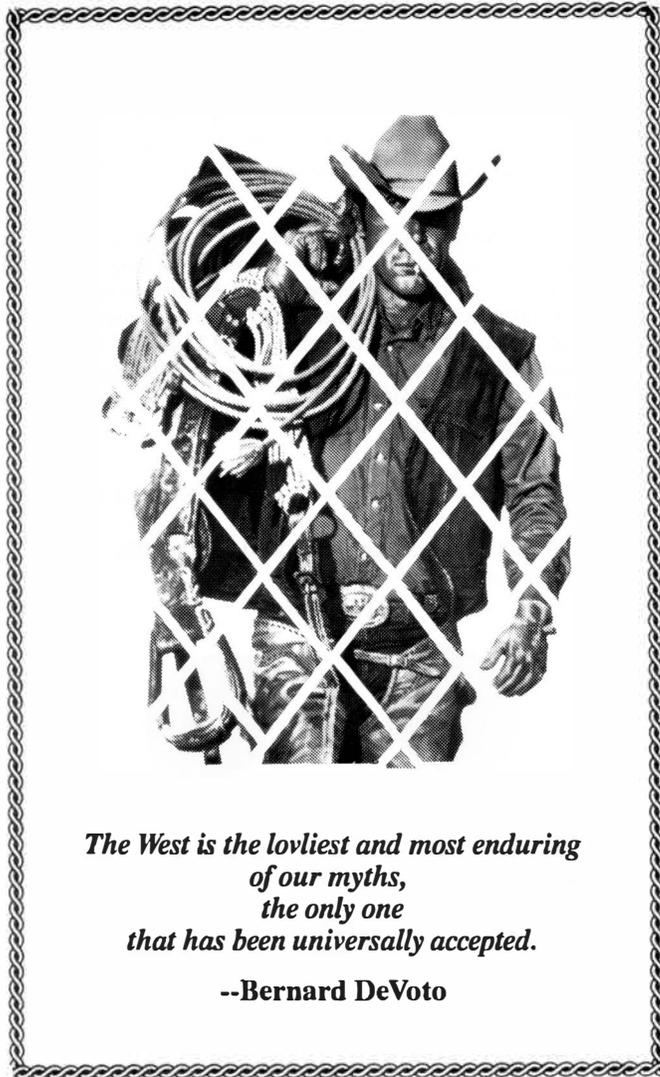


Learning the issue is crucial, but only one of several major hurdles. We also need to overcome -- or at least redirect -- our national obsession with the sacred cow and sacred cowboy. One conservationist writes,

*We must begin goring the sacred cow, treating the myth of the cowboy with the contempt it deserves. Shake the bastards' confidence that they are universally envied and adored.*

In short, we must dismember the Marlboro Man.





*The West is the loveliest and most enduring  
of our myths,  
the only one  
that has been universally accepted.*

--Bernard DeVoto

But dismembering the Marlboro Man won't be easy. As discussed, cowboyism permeates our culture. Questioning this institutionalized reality is like denouncing Christmas. Who would declare our mythological Western Hero not only mortal, but also the West's greatest despoiler? Fear of rejection keeps us from seeing clearly, making rational decisions, and acting appropriately.

*There is, moreover, a small but monied "cowboy establishment" that deals in the preservation of the cowboy myth, linking it with the nebulous concept of western heritage, and arguing, in effect, that the cowboy is the last sentinel on the parapet of Americanism. Any research that results in information to the contrary is immediately suspect.*

--William W. Savage, Jr., *The Cowboy Hero* (Savage 1979)

We need to separate fantasy from reality. For example, from early childhood we are conditioned to equate ranching with the great outdoors, with Nature. Few of us pull out of this mind-set long enough to realize that more than any other influence ranching has made the West *unnatural*. While we are shocked at the obvious destruction wrought by a bulldozing developer, we welcome the rancher, his livestock and developments (even *his* bulldozer!) as natural

parts of the Western scene, even if they do far more overall damage. While we imagine it the antipode, ranching is actually an integral component of Western development, its vanguard and promoter.



**WE CAN KEEP THE ROMANTIC FANTASY  
AND GET RID OF THE COWS.**

(Greg Pentkowski)

Likewise, we unthinkingly ordain the ranchman our exemplary rural inhabitant, even though ranchers comprise only a tiny fraction of the rural populace. We adoringly declare him the folksiest of folks, even though other rural groups live generally more earthy lives. We idealize ranching as the epitome of simple, natural living, even though, as we have seen, it is based on a highly complex, consumptive, exploitive infrastructure. Actually, many city apartment dwellers live simpler, more natural lives.

Yet, what 8 to 5, city-bound reader can resist romantic prose like this from the January 1989 *National Geographic*:

*Somewhere else, I suppose, people are traffic jamming to offices and factories.*

*Not Steve Madsen. He's over by the Idaho-Nevada line, working alone on a ranch that runs for 37 miles across the headwaters of the Bruneau River. Most of the day he'll rassle with a horse named Blutcher. This sorrel is big and ornery enough to carry you straight up any canyon side, but you sure don't want to hammer horseshoes on the son of a gun by yourself . . .*

One purpose of the cowboy myth is to vicariously fulfill our longings for everything missing from our routinized, bureaucratized, civilized lives. Ranching romanticism has for a century held immense appeal to Americans. But today the lure to escape to the popularized ranching lifestyle has become almost irresistible. Commercial interests now wage fierce competition to sell the American public their brand of Western fantasy. Their agents prowl the backcountry West, searching out the folksiest or toughest or most colorful cowhands, who are then set up, filmed, and offered to the public as representative of ranching in general. Other (most) promotions are fabricated with professional models, such as the Marlboro Man.

One popular TV commercial urges its audience to "live the legend!" *Imagine yourself in his cowboy boots!* As modern America grows, so does the ranching lure. Ironically, though each year the illusions, exaggerations, and deceptions grow more outlandish, the yearning to believe them grows stronger.

*What we're really talking about here is the big lonesome heart of the West. Our culture has carried on such an epic romance here that the rest of the world tends to see all Americans as part cowboys. Maybe we are.*

--Douglas H. Chadwick, "Sagebrush Country: America's Outback"



Rustic images promote public support for public lands ranching. But look at the land.

Why, really, is ranching so romantically appealing? Do Americans dream of stringing barbed wire, burning calves with hot irons, and driving about the landscape dumping salt blocks from pickups? No. What they really yearn for is a satisfying life in the wide open Western spaces. They want escape, relaxation, simplicity, contentment, security, independence, excitement, opportunity, wealth, status, power, and all the myriad nebulous things ranching rightly or wrongly represents -- not ranching.

Yet the public lands rancher, through association, uses their Western romanticism to make a clean sweep of their sympathies. The reality of ranching is minimized, the fantasy maximized. In a Western movie, when a couple of cowboys pull a bawling calf from quicksand, the event is a great humanitarian deed. On the real range, you can bet those two cowboys are a hell of a lot more concerned about the animal's dollar potential than the animal itself. Indeed, the things they do to animals would turn many people's stomachs.

To the American public, ranching represents the best of the West. Yet most people if they more fully understood ranching would find it offensive or repulsive.

Romanticism/nostalgia is one of the strongest human emotions. Nevertheless, if we realize that our sentimentality toward public lands ranching is *misdirected* as a result of lifelong, massive doses of cowboy romance, we may begin to overcome or redirect it. We don't have to embrace anything and everything "Western." Public lands ranching is a hard-nosed business, not a sentimental journey.



Under the symbol of the West, most of the West suffers.

*Thanks to a barrage of "Western" motion pictures and TV dramas that were presented during their formative years, George and Martha Middle America sincerely believe they will never ever have a backyard hamburger barbecue if the Marlboro Man is not permitted to keep a'ridin' on public range. . . . The fact that the vast bulk of America's livestock is raised back East without a lot of yelling, hollering, horseback riding, and wearing of picturesque costumes is somewhat disappointing from a romantic point of view, but it is a fact that may lead to a more rational discussion of public land use.*

--P.J. Ryan, editor of *Thunderbear*

And there are still more obstacles to overcome. Upon those who would challenge public lands ranching, various psychological pressures are brought to bear.

For example, as concerned persons become aware of the problem, many of them call for vast livestock reductions. But when confronted with a sob story of hard-workin', financially strapped cowpokes, they become guilt-ridden and back down. A vague but overpowering cowboy sentimentality wells up inside them, and suddenly potential activists are suggesting timid reforms or tax-sponsored range "improvements," rather than the needed stock reductions or removals. Meanwhile, these same ranchers chide "bleeding heart environmentalists" for trying to save Endangered species.

*Want to avoid confrontation?*

*--Sit on a fence.*

*Wanna play it safe?*

*--Sit on a fence.*

*Don't care what happens?*

*--Keep sittin' on that barbed-wire fence.*

*The voice of moderation and compromise*

*While the Earth goes to hell*

*--Anonymous*

*As I reflect upon this situation, I see that values based upon an unpopular ethic are a luxury many people cannot afford to conceptualize, let alone embrace.*

--Donald J. Barnes in *A Matter of Change* from *In Defense of Animals*

Stop-ranching advocates are castigated as closed-minded and selfish. Yet, all components of the ranching establishment are geared toward perpetuating ranching and their involvement in it. Detached, scientific objectivity is a myth used to quell opposition. Activists convinced to withdraw to extrinsic non-involvement are nullified as agents of change.

If you object to public lands ranching, you will likewise be scorned a fault-finder, a detractor -- someone with a negative attitude who only works *against* something. If you were a "constructive" person, they insist, you would be working to "improve" the grazing industry, not "tear it down." Being in the position of attacking the status quo puts you at a distinct disadvantage. In a recent local newspaper editorial, letters to the editor disputing public lands ranching were termed "a blast at ranchers and the rural West," while those from ranchers were portrayed as constructive comments by working folks trying to protect their livelihood and our Western saga.

If, understandably, you display emotion -- anger, sadness, etc. -- at ranching's environmental plunder, tax ripoff, social or political oppression, you are unlikely to be taken seriously. Meanwhile, public lands ranchers are *expected* to show anger, sadness, etc. because they are "personally involved" in protecting "their" interests.

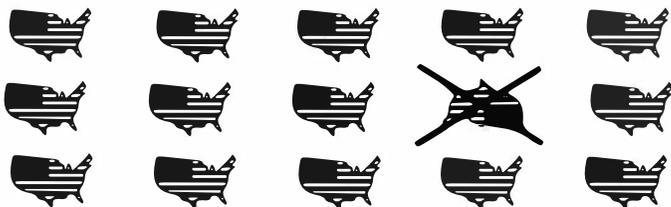
*What is right has always been called radical by those with a stake in things that are wrong.*

--George McGovern, 1972

You allegedly promote a wild fantasy by an elite special interest group. You are a radical, escapist, malcontent, troublemaker, cow or cowboy hater. Your self-worth and validity are stripped away by a society that does not respect you or take you seriously unless you embrace its cowboy reality.

Pressures you never knew existed, pressures you cannot consciously comprehend, gradually dampen your spirit and erode your will to resist. As did a couple of "thought criminals" in George Orwell's 1984, you may come to understand the overwhelming influence cultural reality has over each of us. Or you may never realize why your emotions seem at odds with what you think.

*Culture is the creator of our reality,  
and a steamroller over nonconformity.*



Thus, people who feel comfortable tackling other issues often cannot stand the stress associated with the ranching issue -- perhaps most of all, the *self-imposed* pressure to support and promote ranching that compels each of us deep inside. This, combined with a lack of understanding of the issue, keep most potential stop-ranching activists from getting involved. According to Colorado activist Eric Holle,

*Environmentalists can usually get folks riled about clearcutting strip mining, dolphin slaughters, or toxic dumps. The more radical groups put their bodies in front of bulldozers, whalers' harpoons, or shipments of nuclear waste, and some even dangle 80 feet up in redwoods to save the last old growth forests. Yet even the most daring of the Earth-savers seem reluctant to take on the single greatest threat to our Western public lands: the cow.*

Indeed, if even a fraction as many people had worked as long and hard on public lands ranching as most of these other issues, it would probably have been ended long ago.

*It is one thing to pull on your Tony Lamas in the morning; it is another to feel a cowboy boot crash into your face.*

--Tom Wolf, "'Wyoming' Is Dead -- Long Live 'Wyoming'" (Wolf 1988)

People's hesitancy to get involved is understandable, though, in light of other possible consequences. The ranching industry radically differs from all others in organization and distribution of power. Though comparatively not numerous, public lands ranches are so widely and strategically dispersed and effectively located throughout nearly all of the rural West that the arrangement would do any army general proud. They accommodate an extensive network of powerful -- *and well-armed* -- individuals and groups, capable of exerting not only economic, social, and political pressure, but physical force against whoever threatens the status quo.

Stockmen are used to getting their way -- so much so that they feel persecuted if they don't. They see violence as a legitimate, traditional means of defending their business interests and "their" territory from "outsiders." Meanwhile, the worshipping public supports violence as a rustic -- even admirable -- part of cowboy character. After all, John Wayne and the cowboy good guys were always justified in using force; weren't they always in the right?

Ranchers have used property damage, threats, harassment, and bodily harm to suppress opposition. Fortunately, however, when it comes to physical assault contemporary ranchers seem to be more vocalization than action. They talk tough to intimidate opposition and build self-confidence, especially when grouped together at meetings or in cowboy bars. But they rarely follow through with their threats, relying instead on their traditional macho image to keep people in line. While stockmen are famous for using force to get their way, few are the fearless rangeland gladiators they pretend to be. Like most bullies, they usually back down when confronted alone by those they seek to terrorize. Of the score of hate letters I have received in the past few years, most and by far the most hostile were from public lands "ranchers' wives" (as they almost invariably describe themselves).

This is not, however, to belittle the potential for violence. A gun or a can of gasoline and a match can make anyone a

serious threat. In my years of involvement, I have heard (mostly second-hand) many threats against me personally. However, I have yet to be physically assaulted (other than having lug nuts on my vehicle loosened twice -- nearly causing high-speed wheel losses involving me, my two children, and friends -- and having a placard jerked from my hands at an otherwise peaceful demonstration). *Livestock Market Digest* Executive Editor Lee Pitts states that "there is a group of cowboys on public lands in the West who would like to string Jacobs up." I take that threat seriously -- but not too seriously. Those who take reasonable precautions should have little to fear. And as involvement in this effort grows, threats to individuals will decrease.

Fear remains prevalent, however. Over the years, scores of potential activists have confided to me that they would like to become openly involved, but are afraid due to ranchers' penchant for physical violence.

The widely dispersed nature of public lands ranching and its impacts likewise makes it extremely difficult to pin down and combat. Whereas activists usually can see definite progress (or definite lack of it) on most other issues, their efforts to reform or eliminate public lands ranching instead seem to disappear into some kind of black hole. Changes occur in small, often imperceptible increments and cannot be gauged by common standards of measurement. There is little central focus to hold one's attention and involvement, little evident progress or reward for one's efforts. In these contemporary times of instant gratification and jaded sensibilities, this may be discouraging, frustrating, or infuriating. It is easy to throw up your hands and quit, as many stop-public-ranching activists eventually do.

On the other hand, public graziers have a veritable catalogue of justifications for maintaining their power establishment. Any of these, and numerous other clever diversions, can be and often are employed to make sure potential opponents don't see the forest for the trees. With this issue, as perhaps no other, it is easy to lose oneself in trivialities. Keep the perspective. Don't let the vested interests obscure your vision with irrelevant obstacles.

The ranching establishment has yet another overwhelming but subtle means of maintaining the status quo -- assimilation. We are offered participation in grazing allotment and land management plans, a chance to speak at public hearings, memberships on boards and committees, invitations to meetings and conferences, visits to public lands ranches . . . . While all of these are potentially worthwhile pursuits, they are as well integral components of, and calculated to perpetuate, the status quo. They solicit minor modifications but reject and neglect any possibility of fundamental change. They cause one to become lost in a maze of trivialities and to lose commitment to the overall problem. And they are all based on the presumption that ranching should and will continue indefinitely at or near traditional levels.

In being allowed participation in this system, we come to believe that we can make a difference; when in fact the inherent structure of the system prohibits us from making any real difference. Through personal involvement in this

system we come to feel part of it and in the long run to protect and promote it, regardless of original intent. By being integrated into and absorbed by the very system we need to change we are co-opted and neutralized as agents of real change.



If you are like me, you may strongly disagree with much of what someone does, or with what the group s/he represents does, but still like that person as an individual. Most of our imagined enemies become friends if we spend enough time with them.

For this reason, some perceptive public lands ranchers and their advocacy groups deliberately foster relationships between ranchers and those who oppose or might oppose public lands ranching. It is an ancient strategy -- a form of cooption. When an activist or potential activist becomes emotionally involved with a permittee, that person is much less likely to *feel* like opposing her new-found friend's ranching operation, or public lands ranching in general. Few of us are willing to invite rejection by a friend, especially when that friend warns that our potential actions would cause them hardship.

An example of this situation is the "6-6 Club" in Arizona. Six representatives each from the conservation and public lands ranching communities meet regularly in a social setting, allegedly to foster communication and cooperation between the two. This all sounds nice, but what has actually happened is that the stockmen maintain -- as always -- that their livestock operations shall never be significantly reduced, while some of the conservationists have been neutralized as agents of real change. Through cooptive socialization, the former activists are becoming decreasingly effective, and they now function primarily to *promote* their new comrades' public lands ranching operations by proposing various ineffectual mitigation techniques and disparaging stop-ranching advocates. These 6-6 members now enjoy the widespread social and political approval they never had with an "anti-cowboy" image.

Many stockmen do not, of course, purposefully misuse their relationships with those who might oppose public lands ranching, but generally friendships between stockmen and activists strongly favor the status quo. Most times when a rancher suddenly wants to be your friend, he has more than friendship in mind.

This is merely to discourage deceitful relationships and cooption and to encourage honest friendships and effective activism.



Natural existence has an elegant beauty, amazingly interactive diversity, and profound intelligence that beckons us home.

*"This flower you want to save," asked the rancher testily, "is it good for anything?"*

*"We don't know yet. But if you see a bolt on the ground, do you throw it away?"*

*"Course not. I might need it some day."*

*"We feel the same way," said the botanist, "about the prairie carnation."*

--from "Quietly Conserving Nature," *National Geographic* (Dec 1988)

Finally, while most Americans enjoy the great outdoors, few show much real connection to their surroundings. For most, Nature is merely a setting for "outdoor sports." Like most ranchers, they think of the environment as a collection of "natural resources" put here for human use or pleasure. Even the botanist quoted above seems compelled to justify the prairie carnation's existence with a claim of potential human use.



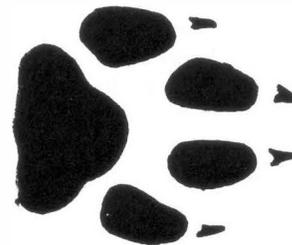
We must abandon these anthropocentric notions. Without a fundamental change in our relationship with Nature, there is little hope for long-term environmental health, or our own survival. We need to *reconnect* with the Earth, or we will ultimately ruin it (unless, of course, we destroy ourselves first -- a fair possibility). In the long run, this planet can only sustain itself -- including us -- if we allow it to return to a more natural existence by returning ourselves to a more natural existence.

Fortunately, this is entirely possible. Despite our seemingly irreconcilable split from Nature, each of us retains deep within the instinct to live naturally (though generally it fades more each year). Regardless of the artificial reality we create, we remain of, by, and for this planet. Ultimately, we may save the Earth only by *rejoining* it.

Meanwhile, we must act to neutralize the most serious environmental threats. Ranching, as the most harmful and least justifiable use of Western public land, needs our immediate attention.

Recreationist; hunter, fisher, or animal rightist; sightseer, picnicker, hiker, equestrian, biker, camper, or backpacker; vegetarian or meat-eater; environmentalist, conservationist, or affected consumptive user; naturalist, scientist, or archaeologist; social justice or political reform advocate; back-to-the-lander; watershed user, farmer, or private lands rancher; rural motorist or resident; taxpayer; Nature-ist; concerned Earth-dweller -- all have good reason to get involved. And, while such diverse interests can't always work together, in this case they may work for the same goal.

**Having read this book, you know why public lands ranching must be stopped. The following section offers ideas on what you can do to help stop it. Choose something that interests you and suits you, then do it. Whatever you do, keep involved in some way. Good intentions are fine, but action is what matters most.**



**\*\*\* Note: Please make copies of any or all of the following pages and distribute. (The Public Lands Ripoff page would go well on the reverse side of the petition.) Pages are standard 8 1/2" X 11" for easy copying.**

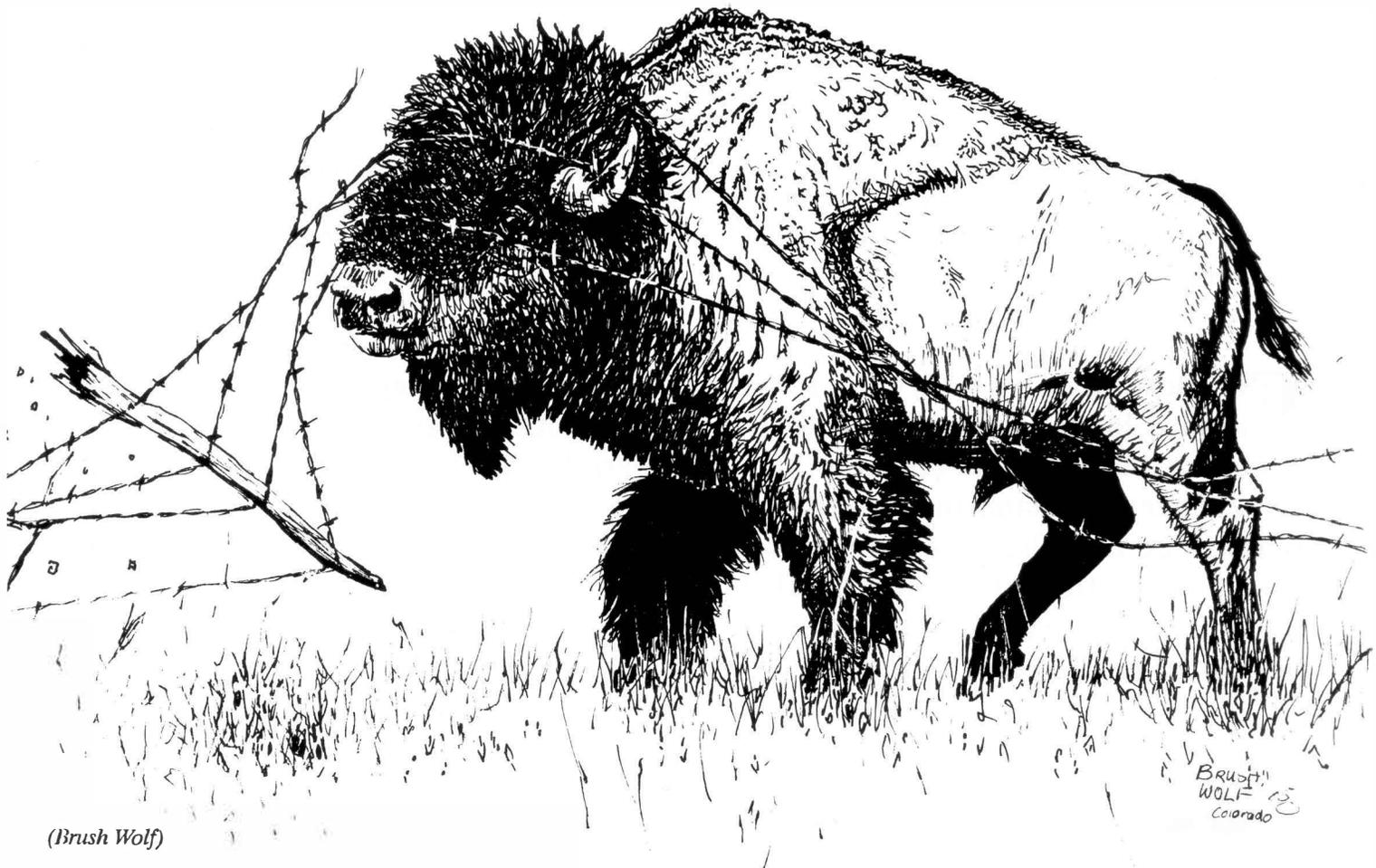
*The single most significant issue we face, that of massive overgrazing of our public lands, is virtually being ignored. . . .*

*After years of fruitlessly trying to convince the national groups to help us, and months of personal soul searching, I have resigned my position as Northwest Director of the National Wildlife Federation. There is no doubt in my mind that if we are to end the senseless destruction of our public lands, we will have to do the job ourselves. . . .*

*Since leaving the NWF, I have joined with other activists to set up a west-wide, grass-roots organization whose main function is to, quite simply, end public-lands welfare ranching. We are not interested in charging higher fees for the destruction of our public lands. We are not interested in expanding or maintaining grazing under the so-called "better management" scenario. The plain truth is, you can not manage livestock on fragile, arid public lands. We are no longer willing to spend days, months, or even years touring our ravaged lands with BLM employees and the cattle industry, listening to one excuse after another about why nothing can be done. . . .*

*Please join with us.*

--Bruce Apple, Executive Director, Rest the West

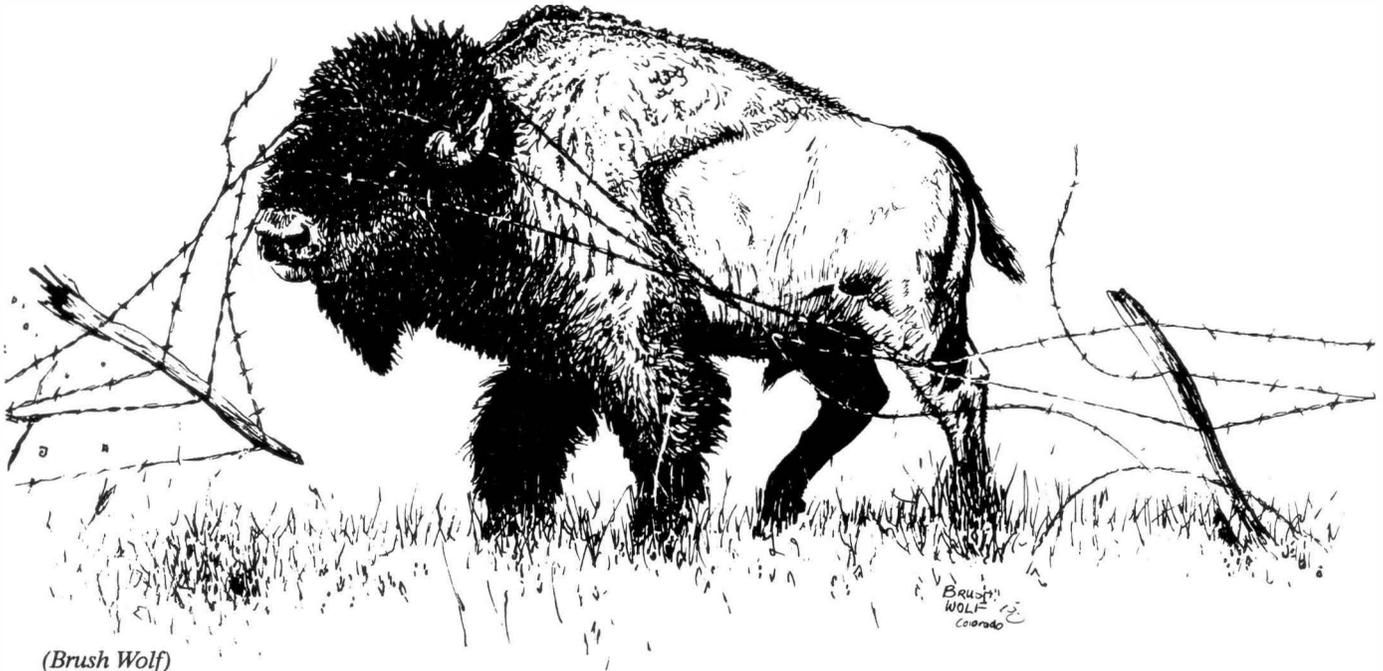


(Brush Wolf)

**\*\*\* WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP \*\*\***

**\*\*\* WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP \*\*\***

*(Please copy and distribute this and the following pages.)*



*(Brush Wolf)*

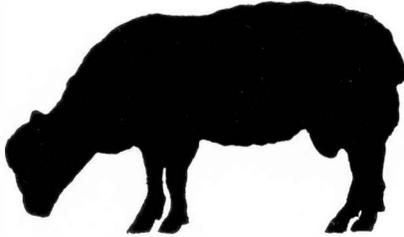
*Protecting something as wide as this planet is still an abstraction for many. Yet I see the day in our lifetime that reverence for the natural systems -- the oceans, the rain forests, the soil, the grasslands, and all other living things -- will be so strong that no narrow ideology based upon politics or economics will overcome it.*

**--California Governor Jerry Brown**

**F**or more than a century the ranching industry has chomped, stomped, fenced, roaded, bladed, burned, churned, chained, poisoned, and generally trashed the West -- more so than any other land user. Yet, the Imperial Graziers -- using about 300 million acres of our public land and about 2 billion tax and private dollars annually -- relentlessly continue their business-as-usual. Reform is useless. One hundred years is long enough! If you think it is time to break their social and political grip over the rural West, if you want to save billions of dollars, if you want to restore public land to more natural health, then take action to stop public lands ranching.

**FREE OUR PUBLIC LANDS!**

- **Be informed.** Through the various means discussed in this book and other sources, learn about public lands and public lands ranching.
- **Communicate with others what you have learned.** Spread the real story of welfare ranching; arouse the sleeping masses.



- **Submit written comments or speak at public hearings on Bureau of Land Management, Forest Service, and other public land use plans.** Though "the planning process" largely is a game designed to promote traditional commercial interests, your input may help.

Two guides for public participation in ranching decisions in land use planning are available. One is for the Forest Service:

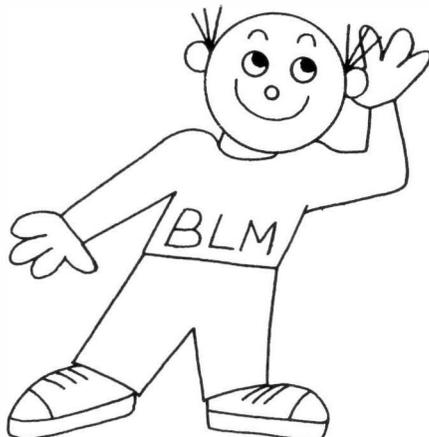
*\*Participating in Livestock Grazing Decisions on the National Forests: A Citizen's Handbook*, 1025 Clubhouse Dr., Prescott, AZ 86303.

Another is for the BLM:

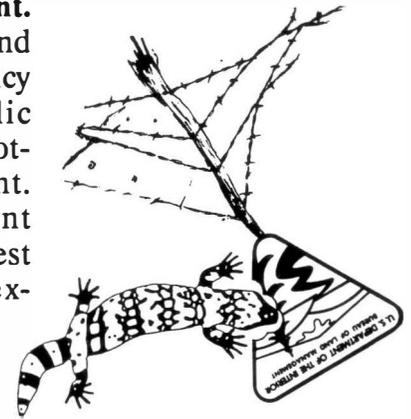
*\*How Not To Be Cowed: An Owners' Manual for the Public Lands*, Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, 436 Alameda, Salt Lake City, UT 84111.

Both are very worthwhile publications. Send a few dollars or whatever you can afford to cover costs.

BLM according to BLM.



- **Adopt an allotment.** BLM regulations and Forest Service policy provide for public participation in allotment management. Write the relevant local BLM or Forest Service office explaining how you are affected by ranching (it degrades your hiking, fishing, birding, swimming, aesthetic enjoyment, and/or whatever) in a certain area and request that you be designated an *affected interest* with respect to the grazing allotment(s) in that area. Once you are so designated, the agencies should consult with you whenever they formulate or amend an allotment management plan(s) or adjust livestock numbers on the allotment(s) in that area. Insist that they do. (See Feller 1990 in bibliography for details.)



- **Write, phone, or visit elected representatives and others with power to make changes.** Ask them to do whatever necessary to stop public lands ranching. (Particularly, ask your political representatives to introduce legislation to ban it.) Take your stand and do not compromise.

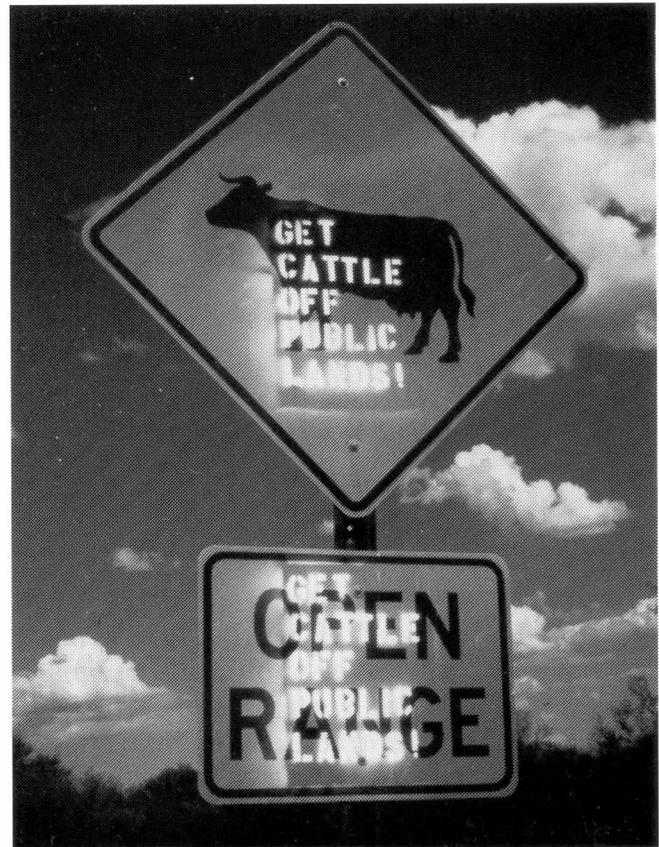
Many politicians and other powers-that-be are as uninformed on this issue as the average citizen. Explain or demonstrate the ranching problem for them; provide statistics and visual aids if possible. Ask them what they plan to do about the problem, and then follow up later. Pursue the issue until they cannot ignore it.

They will have a hard time ignoring it if they see what you are talking about with their own eyes. Getting "VIPs" out on the range to experience ranching effects firsthand could be invaluable.

Letters generally carry more clout than phone calls, telegrams, and such, and are one of the best means of influencing policy decisions. They are most effective when expressed in your own words, handwritten or individually typed. Be brief, sensible, and to the point; tell them what you think and how you feel. Ask them exactly where they stand on the issue, and if they don't give you a decent answer, hound them until they do. Don't be intimidated by their aloofness or self-importance; they are *supposed* to represent you.

Make contact today, especially with:

- **The President:** 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20500, (202) 456-1414
  - **US Senators:** Senator \_\_\_\_\_, United States Senate, Washington, DC 20510, (202) 224-2115
  - **US Representatives:** Representative \_\_\_\_\_, United States House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515, (202) 225-7000
  - **The Secretary of the Interior:** Secretary, US Dept. of the Interior, 18th & "C" Sts., NW, Washington, DC 20240, (202) 343-7351
  - **The Director of the Bureau of Land Management:** Director, BLM, Dept. of the Interior, Washington, DC 20240, (202) 343-3801
  - **The Secretary of the Department of Agriculture:** Secretary, US Dept. of Agriculture, 14th St. & Jefferson Dr., SW, Washington, DC 20250, (202) 447-3631
  - **The Chief of the United States Forest Service:** Chief, US Forest Service, USDA, P.O. Box 2417, Washington, DC 20013, (202) 447-6661
  - **The Director of the United States Fish & Wildlife Service:** Director, US Fish & Wildlife Service, Interior Bldg., 18th & C Sts., NW, Washington, DC 20240, (202) 343-4717
  - **The Director of the Environmental Protection Agency:** Director, US Environmental Protection Agency, 401 "M" St., SW, Washington, DC 20460, (202) 382-2090
  - **Other Important Targets:** State governors, senators, and representatives; state land departments and other agencies; county commissioners; public land user organizations; and any other entities with the clout to change land use policy.
- **Contribute time, energy, and money to organizations that work to reduce or eliminate public lands ranching.** (A partial list follows this section.) But don't just join and then expect the group to do the work for you; *your individual action* makes the difference! Most of these organizations need a good push to give them the courage to more effectively confront the ranching establishment.
  - **Try to draw other groups into the stop-public-ranching effort.** Many diverse organizations don't yet realize that it is in their best interest to oppose public lands ranching. Inform them. Form coalitions.



- **Drive a wedge between private lands ranchers and their unfair competition -- public lands ranchers.** Communicate with private lands live-stock organizations and individuals, enlightening them and asking them to withdraw their support for welfare ranchers.

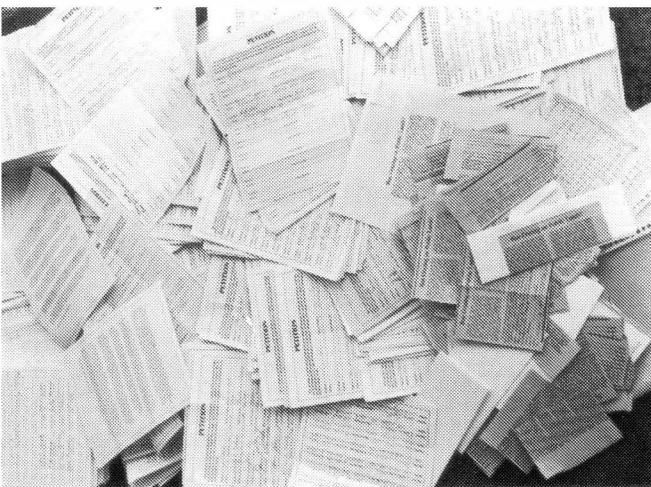
*Don't take yourself too seriously; recognize that your adversaries are not necessarily driven by evil; demonstrate a sense of humor; and don't try to con anybody.*

--Brant Calkin, long-time environmental advocate

- **Dismember the Marlboro Man.** Promote the novel concept that cowboys and ranchers are mere mortals after all and do not warrant extra-special treatment.
- **Eat less beef.** This need not entail vegetarianism. Eating cow from nearly any source is relatively wasteful and destructive. Reducing our collective consumption of cow by 3% would make up the difference for what is produced on all public land. Any reduction in cow consumption will help the land, our health, and our economic well-being.



- **Boycott public-lands-raised meat.** Though usually it is very difficult to trace where a dead cow (or sheep) spent its life by the time it reaches a fast-food counter or supermarket shelf, it is possible in some cases. (If in doubt, don't buy.) Tell people why you choose to lessen beef consumption or boycott beef. (To support the national beef boycott, write: Fergusons, Star Route, Bates, OR 97817.)
- **Refuse to ranch.** Buy or rent a ranch and stop ranching. Obtain a public grazing permit and refuse to graze.
- **Organize locally.** Seek like-minded others in your area. Plan a protest, conference, endangered species fair, press release, or other action to educate people about the issue.
- **Canvass door to door.** Carry information and petitions; garner support; raise money.



Stop-public-lands-ranching petitions.

- **Organize a fund raiser.** A concert, video showing, bake sale, raffle, or whatever will raise money and draw attention to the issue.



A shopper eating lunch reads a free handout on public lands ranching she picked up in the store.

- **Use the power of the press.** Design and distribute stop-ranching bumperstickers, petitions, flyers, and such. (Ideas and source materials can be obtained from some of the organizations listed in the next section.) Make copies of worthwhile articles on public lands ranching and spread them around. *Make copies of these pages as a handout and spread them!*

Bulk printing can be surprisingly inexpensive. A 1-page fact sheet can be printed in bulk for less than a penny per sheet. *Free Our Public Lands!*, a 48-page, newspaper-sized tabloid I self-published in 1986, cost only 15 cents per copy to print 100,000 copies. Bumperstickers can be produced for less than 10 cents apiece.

Compile, borrow, or rent lists of concerned individuals and do bulk mailings. Mail literature to influential organizations, politicians, and others.

Printed matter can also be passed out on street corners, at parks and malls, and left on vehicles in parking lots. Information tables can be set up at fairs, outside stores, on campuses, etc. To reach public land users more effectively, hand out literature at public campgrounds, recreation areas, popular tourist spots, hunting or hiking club meetings, and the like. Go directly to the agencies and distribute materials to employees in BLM, Forest Service, state land, and other government offices. For true adventure, pass out your stop-ranching material at livestock association meetings.

## IDEAS FOR STICKERS, POSTERS, ETC.

- \*BEEF: BAD FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, ECONOMY, HEALTH
- \*BOYCOTT PUBLIC LANDS BEEF
- \*COWS OFF PUBLIC LANDS
- \*DON'T WASTE PUBLIC LAND WITH CATTLE
- \*END OPEN RANGE
- \*END PUBLIC LANDS RANCHING
- \*GET LIVESTOCK OFF PUBLIC LANDS
- \*GET RANCHERS OFF PUBLIC LANDS
- \*LIVESTOCK DON'T BELONG ON PUBLIC LANDS
- \*LIVESTOCK GRAZING KILLS FISH & WILDLIFE
- \*NO MORE WELFARE COWBOYS
- \*NO MORE WELFARE RANCHING

- \*PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT: STOP PUBLIC LANDS RANCHING
- \*PUBLIC LANDS DON'T BELONG TO RANCHERS
- \*PUBLIC LANDS GRAZING = WELFARE RANCHING
- \*PUBLIC LANDS RANCHING RIPOFF
- \*PUBLIC WILDLIFE, NOT PRIVATE LIVESTOCK
- \*RANCHING RUINS PUBLIC LAND
- \*RANCHING RUINS SOIL, WATER, WILDLIFE
- \*RECLAIM PUBLIC LANDS: STOP WELFARE RANCHING
- \*STOP PUBLIC LANDS RANCHING
- \*STOP WELFARE RANCHING
- \*WASTE OF THE WEST: RANCHING
- \*WELFARE RANCHING = PUBLIC LANDS RIPOFF

- **Use the media.** Write letters to the editors of newspapers and periodicals. This is an easy way for anyone to express an opinion and expose the issue. Submit articles, photos, and graphics. Or, once you learn the issue, go on a radio or TV talk show. Urge the media to publicize the issue; provide them informative material; visit their offices and talk with them face to face. Anticipate, however, that they will glorify cowboyism at every opportunity -- and at your expense.

Or produce your own stop-ranching message and run it in the various media. Conversely, complain about and discredit misleading or inaccurate pro-ranching media disseminations.

- **Develop a stop-ranching educational program.** Present it to a school, church, special interest group, conservation or environmental organization, civic group, or the general public. Give a talk, concert, video or slide show, photo or other visual exhibit, or whatever. All these can be produced even by amateurs, and some organizations offer financial and technical help. Photo and various audio/visual exhibits can be displayed at fairs, museums, banks, and other public places.
- **Organize a stop-public-lands-ranching demonstration.** Many have already taken place around the West. They have been effective in reaching the public, and with increasing numbers of demonstrations (and therefore, increasing public awareness) the government is beginning to get a message it cannot ignore.

Demonstrations are a form of expression and communication. They can be as small and simple as a couple of people with signs walking up and down a sidewalk or as large and complex as you want to make them. Convey your message to as many people (and as many *influential* people) as possible, with the minimum expense and effort necessary to do so. Contact television, radio, and newspapers in advance, and make your demonstration offer something memorable to their viewers, listeners, and readers.



(Lynne Bohi)

Because public lands ranching occurs in every part of every Western state, possible locations for demonstrations are practically limitless. Any BLM, Forest Service, or state land office is good, as are many offices of federal or state fish and game departments, pro-welfare-ranching politicians, ADC, APHIS, SCS, ASCS, and county and state agricultural extensions are possibilities, as are colleges of range science, agriculture, and natural resources and livestock

boards, agricultural committees, and stockmen's associations. Highly visible events, such as hearings, conferences, and conventions, are among the best targets for demonstrations. Other possibilities include parades, rodeos, and county fairs. Best of all, but perhaps most difficult to attract media to, is public land itself; stage an event or outing.



Romantic cowboy images parade below as protestors illegally hang a stop-public-lands-ranching banner high above. (Mike Stabler)

● **Consider planning a "non-violent direct action."**

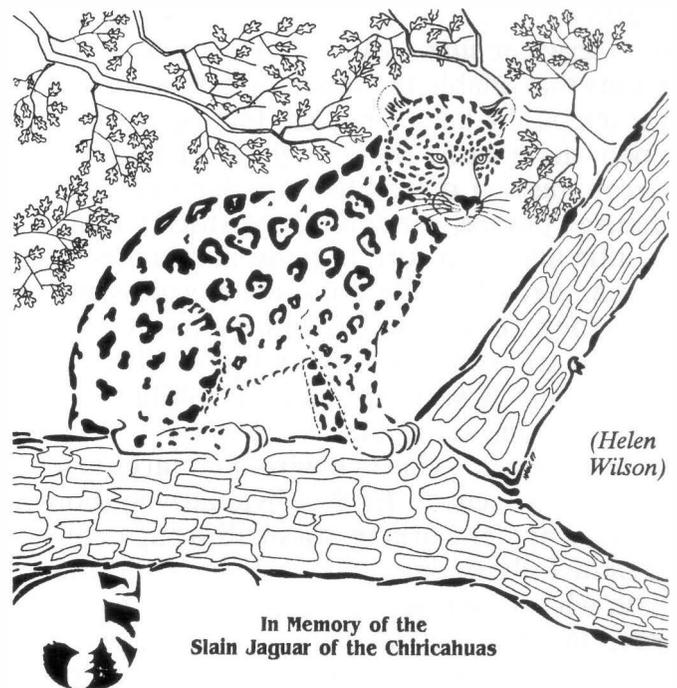
Civil disobedience or CD, is a symbolic, yet sometimes functional, illegal action. Protesters in these actions prepare for arrest, hoping that, whether they are arrested or not, more attention will be drawn to the issue. The plan might be to refuse cops' orders to disperse, physically block a roadway, occupy a government office, drive a cow off public land and into a nearby BLM office, or any of an infinite number of graphic possibilities.

Non-violent direct actions generally should be planned well in advance with the help of experienced protesters. Participants need to be honest, committed, and creative, and should understand what chances they are taking and be willing to accept the consequences. Direct actions involve an element of risk, but the results can be well worth it.

● **Consider legal action.** When (mis)management agencies are not protecting the land and politicians hardly listen, legal action is one possible alternative. Over the years, various public lands ranching-related lawsuits have been filed, though mostly with limited success. However, many legal avenues, some with great potential, have yet to be explored.

In fact, if existing environmental, pollution, land use, public welfare, and other laws were strictly enforced, public ranching operations would be shut down throughout nearly all of the West. National Environmental Policy Act; Clean Water Act; Endangered Species Act; Federal Land Policy and Management Act; Public Rangelands Improvement Act; agency failures to enforce grazing regulations; BLM and Forest Service policy directives requiring resource protection, true multiple use, and sustained yield; public participation in agency land management planning; legislation requiring fair market value for sale or lease of publicly owned resources; antiquated state open range laws; deficit state lands grazing -- all these and much more afford opportunities for legal action.

Public lands ranching is rife with indefensible practices. The public is beginning to reject the ranching imperative, and the courts eventually will have to uphold legal mandates. With a little time, effort, and money, important legal precedents could be set.





- **Take The Bull by the horns.** A growing number of people are disillusioned with a ranching-bound government that refuses to protect the public and its land. Their years of efforts and appeals to reform public lands ranching have yielded little substantive change, and our governments apparently do not intend to *ever* significantly curtail ranching (in fact, quite the opposite). A diversity of interests are tired of trying in vain to change the situation through culturally sanctioned means. They question a system that promotes the waste of the West, and that considers the implements of that destruction sacred.

Some of these people have begun sabotaging -- *monkeywrenching* -- the machinery and developments that enable the ranching establishment to ravage public land. They cut fences; leave gates open; drive cattle onto neighboring allotments; decommission destructive ranching machinery; damage pumps, windmills, and stock tanks; dismantle and burn corrals, pens, and ramps; close ranching roads; leave stop-ranching messages on livestock road signs; dispose of salt blocks; remove traps and poisons; and generally do what they can to thwart the industry's ability to continue business-as-usual.

To pursue this kind of environmental defense is a personal decision. Each individual who chooses to act, whether working in a small group or alone, should fully understand and feel comfortable with what s/he is doing. All participants should keep in mind that what they are doing is highly illegal, and that the consequences of arrest could

be substantial. Monkeywrenching is a form of *non-violent* direct action; that is, it should never endanger the physical safety of anyone. The job should be done as simply, safely, and effectively as possible.

[The author neither advocates nor disadvocates the above, but recommends the book *Ecodefense* (Foreman 1986) for those interested in such activity.]

- **Visit public land often.** Take the time to know it. While there watch for signs of overgrazing or overstocking, as well as permit violations, unauthorized developments, obsolete roads and fences, and other destructive range situations. If you see anything of the sort, report it to the appropriate government agency personnel (and perhaps the media). Whatever they say, demand that corrective action be taken, then follow up to see that they have done it.
- **Other possibilities for effective action are as unlimited as your imagination.** Here are 3 novel examples: (1) In Arizona one man is currently organizing a united year-long fast. Participants in the fast may commit themselves to abstaining from solid food for 1 week at a time as a symbolic protest against public lands ranching. (2) Activists in Colorado dumped 200 pounds of cow pies in front of a Forest Service district ranger office to protest destructive ranching in the nearby National Forest. (3) Many people have suggested as a symbolic protest mailing public land cow pies to the directors of government land managing agencies and selected politicians.

*The concerned individual carefully considers many options. S/he chooses those that feel right, are fun and most effective. The important thing is to get involved and stay involved in some way, however small.*



# CONTACTS

*The following entities work to eliminate or reform public lands ranching; the first 6 advocate more or less total cessation, while the remainder thus far recommend various degrees of reform:*

- **Free Our Public Lands!**, Lynn Jacobs (contact), P.O. Box 5784, Tucson, Arizona 85703, (602) 578-3173. Contact for information, literature, stickers, referral, and other help. Correspondence, questions, suggestions, support: all are welcome.
- **Public Lands Action Network**, P.O. Box 5631, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87502, (505) 984-1428. Publishes *PLAN* newsletter quarterly (dedicated solely to the public lands ranching issue).
- **Earth First!**, P.O. Box 5176, Missoula, MT 59806, (406) 728-8114. (*EF! Journal* office; EF! has no headquarters.) Publishes *Earth First! Journal* 8 times yearly. Loans a stop-public-lands-ranching slide-show.
- **Wild Earth**, P.O.Box 492, Canton, NY 13617, (315)379-9940. Quarterly journal focusing on wilderness, wildlife, habitat, and biodiversity.
- **Ranching Task Force**, Linda Wells (contact), P.O. Box 41652, Tucson, AZ 85717, (602) 327-9973. Contact for information, literature, stop-public-lands-ranching slide-show, T-shirts, etc.
- **Rest the West**, Bruce Apple (contact), P.O. Box 68345, Portland, OR 97268, (503) 645-6293, 653-9781.
- **Natural Resources Defense Council**, 71 Stevenson St., #1825, San Francisco, CA 94105, (415) 777-0220. National NRDC publishes *Newsline* newsletter 6 times yearly and *The Amicus Journal* 4 times yearly; both available from 122 East 42nd Street, New York, NY 10168, (212) 949-0049.
- **Defenders of Wildlife**, 1244 19th St., NW, Washington, DC 20036, (202) 659-9510. Publishes *Activist Network News* newsletter bimonthly and *Defenders* magazine bimonthly.
- **National Audubon Society**, 950 Third Ave., New York, NY 10022, (212) 832-3200. Publishes *Audubon Activist* newsletter and *Audubon* magazine, both bimonthly.
- **Sierra Club Public Lands Committee**, P.O. Box 8409, Reno, NV 89507, (702) 747-4237. Publishes *Public Lands* quarterly, available from Sierra Club Public Lands Committee, C/O J. Hopkins, 3316 Cutter Place, Davis, CA 95616.
- **Sierra Club**, 730 Polk St., San Francisco, CA 94109, (415) 776-2211. Publishes *Sierra* magazine bimonthly.
- **The Animals' Agenda**, P.O. Box 6809, Syracuse, NY 13217 (subscriptions); P.O.Box 5234, Westport, CT 06881, (203) 226-8826 (other). Bimonthly animal rights magazine that takes public lands ranching seriously.
- **High Country News**, P.O. Box 1090, Paonia, CO 81428, (303) 527-4898. Biweekly journal focusing on Western land use issues; much on ranching.
- **Earth Island Institute**, 300 Broadway, Suite 28, San Francisco, California 94133, (415) 788-3666. Publishes *Earth Island Journal* quarterly.
- **The Wilderness Society**, 900 17th St., NW, #400, Washington, DC 20006, (202)842-3400. Publishes *Wilderness* magazine quarterly.
- **Environmental Defense Fund**, 257 Park Ave. South, New York, NY 10010, (212) 686-4191.
- **National Wildlife Federation**, 1412 Sixteenth Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036, (202) 637-3700. Publishes *National Wildlife* magazine bimonthly.
- **Wildlife Management Institute**, Suite 725, 1101 14th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005, (202) 371-1808. Publishes *Outdoor News Bulletin* biweekly.
- **Association of Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics**, P.O. Box 11615, Eugene, OR 97440. (503) 484-2692. Publishes *Inner Voice* newsletter quarterly.
- **The Nature Conservancy**, 1815 N. Lynn St., Arlington, VA 22209, (703) 841-5300. Publishes *Nature Conservancy* magazine bimonthly; for political reasons usually does not publicly advocate cessation of ranching, but its actions often speak that language.
- **Wildlife Damage Review**, P.O.Box 2541, Tucson, AZ 85702. (602) 882-4218. A quarterly newsletter: "Our goal is the elimination of the Animal Damage Control program as it currently operates."

# PUBLIC LANDS RANCHING ROUNDUP

*According to government and private sources, livestock ranching on our Western public land:*

- Utilizes roughly **75%** of Western federal, state, and local publicly owned land -- **41% of the West.**
- Has destroyed more **native vegetation** than any other land use.
- Has destroyed more **wildlife and wildlife habitat** than any other land use.
- Has caused more **soil erosion and soil damage** than any other land use.
- Has destroyed more **riparian area** than any other land use.
- Has destroyed, depleted, and polluted more **natural water sources** than any other land use.
- Has caused more ruinous **flooding** than any other land use.
- Has caused more invasions of **animal pests and non-native vegetation** than any other land use.
- Has eliminated more beneficial **natural fire** than any other land use.
- Has been the cause of more developments on public land and **environmental damage from developments** thereon than any other land use.
- Produces only **3% of US beef.**
- Includes roughly 30,000 permittees -- only **16%** of Western stockmen and only **2%** of US stockmen.
- Costs federal permittees only **\$1.81/AUM\*** in 1990 (a high year) -- about **1/5 fair market value**, causing an average annual loss of about \$50 million to the US Treasury.
- Causes a total net federal, state, and local **tax loss of roughly \$1 billion annually**, if all impacts from public lands ranching are considered.
- Causes a total net **private economic loss of roughly \$1 billion annually.**
- Causes **untold hardship** to rural residents, motorists, and visitors.
- Produces an estimated **\$550 million in livestock annually** -- far less than what taxpayers spend on the industry.
- Rarely contributes more than **5%** gross to rural economies and probably **detracts from most local economies** if lost recreation opportunities, depleted natural resources, wasted local tax monies, damages to private property, etc. are considered.
- **Detracts more from other uses of public land** than any other land use.
- Has caused **more political and social problems** associated with Western public land than any other land use.

\*AUM: Animal Unit Month or roughly the food required by a cow for 1 month

# PETITION

**We consider commercial livestock production on public/government land to be economically, socially, politically, and environmentally destructive and unjustifiable. We ask the President, Congress, Bureau of Land Management, Forest Service, states, counties, and other relevant government entities to take all measures necessary to eliminate all commercial livestock production on all public/government land.**

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Name(printed) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

*\*Please make copies and send to: your Senator, Representative, or other chosen relevant government entity.*

# PUBLIC LANDS RANCHING

## \* STATISTICS \*

for the

### ELEVEN WESTERN STATES

(Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming)

#### RANCHING AND LAND OWNERSHIP

(Figures are based on 1986-87 USDA, USDI, and other federal publications. Figures are approximate and vary little yearly.)

● % of West administered by BLM (177 million acres)	24%
● % of BLM-administered Western land used for ranching (163 million acres)	92%
● % of West ranched on BLM land (163 million acres)	22%
● % of West administered by Forest Service (141 million acres)	19%
● % of Western Forest Service System land used for ranching (97 million acres)	69%
● % of West ranched on Forest Service System land (97 million acres)	13%
● % of West administered by BLM and Forest Service (318 million acres)	42%
● % of Western BLM and Forest Service System land ranched (260 million acres)	82%
● % of West ranched on BLM and Forest Service land (260 million acres)	35%
● % of West ranched on other federal land (5 million acres)	1%
● % of West federal land (360 million acres)	48%
● % of Western federal land ranched (265 million acres)	74%
● % of West ranched on state land (36 million acres)	5%
● % of West ranched on county, city, and miscellaneous government land (5 million acres)	1%
● % of West publicly owned (418 million acres)	56%
● % of Western publicly owned land ranched (306 million acres)	73%
● % of West ranched on publicly owned land (306 million acres)	41%
● % of West ranched on Indian reservation land (35 million acres)	5%
● % of West privately owned (295 million acres)	39%
● % of West not-ranching private land (106 million acres)*	14%
● % of West ranching on private land (184 million acres)	25%
● % of West ranching (525 million acres)	70%
● % of ranching West public land (306 million acres)	58%
● Total land area of 11 Western states	750 million acres

\* Includes urban land, 12 million acres of livestock pasture, and 66 million acres of cropland, much of which is planted with livestock feed.

# PUBLIC LANDS RANCHING \* STATISTICS \*

## for the ELEVEN WESTERN STATES

(Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming)

### GRAZING PERMITTEES

(Figures are based on 1986-87 USDA and USDI publications. Figures vary little yearly.)

● Number of cattle and sheep permittees authorized to graze Western BLM land	19,146
● Number of cattle and sheep leasees authorized to graze Eastern BLM land	578
● Total BLM graziers	19,724
● Number of Western Forest Service System permittees (all livestock)	11,952
● Number of Eastern Forest Service System permittees (all livestock)	2044
● Total Forest Service System graziers	13,996
● # of permittees, Western BLM & FS System land (adjusted for overlapping use)	<b>approx 22,000</b>
● # of permittees, all BLM and Forest Service System land (adjusted for overlapping use)	<b>approx 24,000</b>
● # of permittees, all Western publicly owned land (adjusted for overlapping use)	<b>roughly 30,000</b>
● Number of cattlemen in US	approx 1.60 million
● Number of cattlemen in West	approx 0.18 million
● % of US cattlemen in West	approx 11%
● % of US cattlemen in East	approx 89%
● % of Western cattlemen ranching Western BLM & Forest Service System land	<b>approx 12%</b>
● % of Western cattlemen ranching Western public land	<b>approx 16%</b>
● % of US cattlemen ranching Western BLM and Forest Service System land	approx 1.4%
● % of US cattlemen ranching all BLM and Forest Service System land	approx 1.5%
● % of US cattlemen ranching Western publicly owned land	approx 1.9%
● % of US population represented by Western public land permittees (1 of 8333 US citizens)	approx 0.012%
● % of Western population represented by Western public land permittees (1 of 2000 Western residents)	approx 0.05%
● Average size of BLM and Forest Service System allotment	8500 acres
● Average size of BLM & FS land used per Western permittee (includes overlap)	<b>11,818 acres</b>

# PUBLIC LANDS RANCHING

## \* STATISTICS \*

for the

### ELEVEN WESTERN STATES

(Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming)

#### LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION (cattle and sheep)

(Figures based on 1986-87 USDA and USDI publications. Figures are approximate and vary little yearly.)

- % of US livestock feed\* supplied by Western BLM and Forest Service System land 2%
- % of US livestock feed supplied by other Western public land 1%
- % of US livestock feed supplied by Eastern public land less than 0.25%
- % of US livestock feed supplied by all publicly owned land 3%
  
- % of US livestock feed supplied by private land in West (including Indian reservations) 18%
- % of US livestock feed supplied by private land in East 79%
- % of US livestock feed supplied by private land 97%
  
- % of US livestock feed supplied by West 21%
  
- % of US rangeland livestock herbage\*\* supplied by Western BLM & FS land 9%
- % of Western rangeland livestock herbage supplied by Western BLM & FS land 17%
- % of Western rangeland livestock herbage supplied by all Western public land 27%
  
- % of Western livestock feed supplied by Western BLM and Forest Service System land 11%
- % of Western livestock feed supplied by all Western publicly owned land 18%
  
- % of US sheep feed supplied by West 47%
- % of US sheep feed supplied by public land 15%
- % of US cattle feed supplied by public land 3%
- % of combined US sheep and cattle production represented by sheep (by weight) 2%
  
- % of US livestock production supplied by rangeland and pasture herbage roughly 50%
- % of US livestock production supplied by livestock crops roughly 50%

\* Livestock feed refers to livestock food of any kind.

\*\* Herbage refers to forage and browse.

# PUBLIC LANDS RANCHING \* STATISTICS \*

for the

## ELEVEN WESTERN STATES

(Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming)

### LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION (Continued)

(1987 figures)

- |                                                                                                                            |                                  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ● Herbage used by cattle on Western BLM land                                                                               | 9.6 million AUMs*                |
| ● Herbage used by sheep and goats on Western BLM land                                                                      | 1.5 million AUMs                 |
| ● Total                                                                                                                    | 11.1 million AUMs                |
| ● Herbage used by cattle on Western Forest Service System land                                                             | 6.2 million AUMs                 |
| ● Herbage used by sheep and goats on Western Forest Service System land                                                    | 0.9 million AUMs                 |
| ● Total                                                                                                                    | 7.1 million AUMs                 |
| ● <b>Herbage used by cattle and sheep on Western BLM &amp; FS land<br/>(equivalent to 1.5 million cattle yearlong)</b>     | <b>18.2 million AUMs</b>         |
| ● Herbage used by cattle on Western publicly owned land                                                                    | 27 million AUMs                  |
| ● Herbage used by sheep on Western publicly owned land                                                                     | 3 million AUMs                   |
| ● <b>Herbage used by cattle and sheep on Western public land<br/>(equivalent to 2.5 million cattle yearlong)</b>           | <b>roughly 30 million AUMs</b>   |
| ● <b>Cattle &amp; sheep production, Western private land (incl. Indian)<br/>(equivalent to 14 million cattle yearlong)</b> | <b>roughly 170 million AUMs</b>  |
| ● <b>Cattle and sheep production in US<br/>(equivalent to 83 million cattle yearlong)</b>                                  | <b>roughly 1000 million AUMs</b> |

\* An AUM (Animal Unit Month) is the amount of forage and/or browse (and/or other feed) required to feed a cow and her calf, a horse, or five sheep or goats for a month -- an average of about 900 pounds of herbage.

# STOP THE PUBLIC LANDS RIPOFF

# PUBLIC LANDS RANCHING \* STATISTICS \*

## for the ELEVEN WESTERN STATES

(Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming)

### ECONOMICS

(Figures based on 1986-88 USDA, USDI, and other government publications. Figures vary little yearly.)

- 1990 federal grazing fee \$1.81/AUM
- 1990 average private land grazing fee (calculated from USDA figures) approx \$10.00/AUM
- 1980-85 average private land grazing fee (USDA survey) \$7.50/AUM
- 1980-89 average federal grazing fee \$1.57/AUM
  
- % of fair market value represented by 1990 federal grazing fee 19%
- % of federal grazing fee revenue returned to public ranching industry more than 50%
- % of federal grazing fee revenue to US Treasury and parent states less than 50%
- Extracted 1990 federal grazing fee \$0.90/AUM
- % of fair market value represented by extracted 1989 federal grazing fee 9%
  
- 1987 BLM and Forest Service grazing fee revenue \$21.0 million
- 1987 BLM and Forest Service grazing fee revenue net to US Treasury \$6.5 million
- 1987 BLM and Forest Service direct expenditures on public lands ranching \$65.0 million
- Net loss to US Treasury in 1987 roughly \$50 million
  
- Annual BLM & FS direct and indirect expenditures, public ranching roughly \$160 million
- Annual tax loss to public lands ranching very roughly \$1 billion
- Annual private economic loss to public lands ranching very roughly \$1 billion
- Total annual economic loss to public lands ranching very roughly \$2 billion
  
- Annual value of Western BLM & Forest Service livestock production roughly \$390 million
- Annual value of Western public lands livestock production roughly \$550 million
- Annual value of US livestock production roughly \$21 billion

# STOP WELFARE RANCHING!



# QUOTATIONS

*Quotation confesses inferiority.*

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

---

*The wisdom of the wise, and the experience of ages, may be preserved by quotations.*

--Isaac D'Israeli

---

*O sovereign Lord! since it has pleased thee to endue man with power and pre-eminence here on earth,  
And establish his dominion over all creatures,  
May we look up to thee,  
That our understanding may be so illuminated with wisdom,  
And our hearts warmed and animated with due sense of charity,  
That we may be enabled to do thy will,  
And perform our duty towards those submitted to our service and protection,  
And be merciful to them,  
Even as we hope for mercy.  
Thus may we be worthy of the dignity and superiority of the high and distinguished station in which thou  
hast placed us here on earth.*

--William Bartram, *The Travels of William Bartram*, 1773

---

*Except as you, sons of the Earth, honor your birthright and cherish it well by human endeavor, you shall  
be cut down and perish in darkness . . . . Look you well, therefore, to yourselves in your posterity. Keep  
all close to the Earth, your feet upon the Earth, and your hands employed in the fruitfulness thereof.*

--Babylonian prophet

---

*The earth is very good in and of itself. It has abided by the celestial law, consequently we should not despise  
it, nor desire to leave it, but rather . . . strive to obey the same laws that the earth abides . . . .*

--Brigham Young

---

*And I brought you into a plentiful country to eat the fruit thereof and the goodness thereof; but when ye  
entered, ye defiled my land and made mine heritage an abomination.*

--The Bible

---

*He who spits on the Earth spits on himself.*

--Old Native American saying

*If we harm nature, we harm ourselves.*

--Raymond Dasmann, **Environmental Conservation**

---

*As man proceeds towards his announced conquest of Nature, he has written a depressing record of destruction, directed not only against the Earth he inhabits, but against the life that shares it with him.*

--Rachel Carson

---

*Increasingly, the world around us looks as if we hated it.*

--Alan Watts

---

*We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see the land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.*

--Aldo Leopold

---

*Our approach to Nature is to beat it into submission. We would stand a better chance of survival if we accommodated ourselves to this planet and viewed it appreciatively, instead of skeptically and dictatorially.*

--E.B. White

---

*The Earth is sacred. You cannot improve it. If you try to change it, you will ruin it. If you try to hold it, you will lose it.*

--Lao Tsu

---

*"This Earth, this world. For a warrior there can be no greater Love. Only if one loves this Earth with unbending passion can one release one's sadness," Don Juan said.*

*"A warrior is always joyful because his love is unalterable and his beloved, the Earth, embraces him and bestows upon him inconceivable gifts.*

*"The sadness belongs only to those who hate the very being that gives shelter to their beings." Don Juan again caressed the ground with tenderness. "This lovely being, which is alive to its last recesses and understands every feeling, soothed me -- it cured me of my pains; and finally, when I had fully understood my love for it, it taught me . . . freedom."*

--Carlos Castaneda, **Tales of Power**

---

*Biological diversity and integrity of organic evolution are where I take my stand.*

--Gary Snyder, Earth poet

*When the animals come to us, asking for help, will we know what they are saying? When the plants speak to us, in their delicate beautiful language, will we be able to answer them? When the planet herself sings to us in our dreams, will we be able to wake ourselves, and act?*

--Gary Lawless, Earth poet\activist

---

*Wilderness is an anchor to windward. Knowing it is there, we can also know that we are still a rich nation, tending to our resources as we should -- not a people in despair searching every last nook and cranny of our land for a board of lumber, a barrel of oil, or a blade of grass . . . .*

--Late Senator Clinton P. Anderson

---

*We are living in very strange times and they are likely to get a lot stranger before we bottom out.*

--Hunter S. Thompson

---

*Why disassociate ourselves from a single atom beneath our feet? What is the purpose of presuming for dignity's sake alone that human life is dearer than other forms of life in the Cosmic Whole? Can we not exalt all life without losing our own prestige? Are we not a constituent of the whole?*

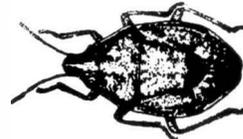
--Calvin Rutstrum

---

*Humankind is a strand in Nature's infinite web  
A single, short strand  
Shining in the sun  
Glowing with the web  
Spun together with all other forms of being  
With such delicate and effectual precision  
That when plucked upon  
The web trembles*

--LJ

---



*This we know. The earth does not belong to man; man belongs to the earth. This we know. All things are connected like the blood which unites one family. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons and daughters of earth. Man did not weave the web of life; he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself.*

--Chief Sealth, 1854

---

*Nature's object in making animals and plants might possibly be first of all the happiness of each one of them, not the creation of all for the happiness of one. Why ought man to value himself as more than an infinitely small composing unit of the one great unit of creation? . . . . The universe would be incomplete without man; but it would also be incomplete without the smallest transmicroscopic creature that dwells beyond our conceitful eyes and knowledge.*

--John Muir

*The real wealth of the world is the living richness of the biosphere itself.*

--Douglas C. Bowman, **Beyond the Modern Mind**

---

*It's doing so well on its own  
Won't you leave it alone?*

--Cecelia Ostrow, musician

---

*Can't the bastards leave anything alone?*

--Edward Abbey

---

*Let Nature take her own way; she understands her own affairs better than we.*

--from the documentary *Amazon, Land of the Flooded Forest*

---

*Whatever befalls in accordance with Nature should be accounted good.*

--Cicero

---

*Nature never did betray the heart that loved her.*

--William Blake

---

*Earth gives life and seeks the one  
who walks gently upon it.*

--Hopi Legend

**Restore the Earth  
Rejoin the Earth**



*Given that humanity already appropriates an estimated 40 percent of the earth's annual photosynthetic product on land, leaving only 60 percent for the millions of other species and for protecting basic ecosystem functions, the urgency of slowing the growth of human numbers and demands is obvious.*  
--Worldwatch Institute, *State of the World: 1990* (Worldwatch Institute 1990)