



Stewardship

Providing Leadership for the stewardship
of rangelands based on sound ecological
principles

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(Photo by Jim Thorpe)

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The Editor's Corner

This issue of *Stewardship* begins a new year. All those involved with the initiation of *Stewardship* last year are very pleased with the response received from the readers. We hope there is something of interest for everyone, and we are always looking for articles to fit that interest. This is a chance to have “your say.”

If you do something or see something that promotes the stewardship of the land and resources, write it down. I guarantee there will be others interested.

Articles should be written in a non-technical format and, ideally, should be less than 500 words with a couple of photos. Don't worry about writing a perfect document; we'll help you find the “right words.”

Please let me know about your interest and concerns.

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OUT ON THE LAND

We want to remind everyone to watch RFD TV' show ***Out on the Land*** created by ***Stewardship's*** sponsor Dr. Larry Butler. An upcoming episode will have a segment highlighting SRM.

This show can be seen on Tuesday February 25 at 7pm ET, 6pm CT, 5pm MT, and 4pm PT on the RFD-TV channel, then re-runs on May 27 at the same times. It will also air on Wednesday February 26 at 9am ET, 8am CT, 7am MT, and 6am PT on FamilyNet & Rural TV channels, then re-runs there on May 28. With 4 airings, it is anticipated the shows will be seen by close to 1 million viewers. Don't forget to watch! Tell all your friends and neighbors.

Past episodes of ***Out on the Land*** can also be seen at www.outontheland.com/category/episodes . Contact Larry if you have an idea for a show feature at www.outontheland.com.

Authors of articles in ***Stewardship*** will receive specially designed t-shirts . . . sponsored by ***Out on the Land***. The only way to get one is to write, so get out your pencils and submit your stewardship story to SRM's newest publication! Your story will reach audiences well beyond SRM, from city folks and rangeland enthusiasts to our own brethren, with each issue. Join in the fun and you'll be wearing a smart new t-shirt!

Gary Frasier, ***Stewardship*** Editor

Jenny Pluhar, SRM President

A high mountain ranch in Central Colorado that is being considered for development into Ranchettes.

(Photo by Barbara East)



Collaborative Efforts to Manage Erosion in Wickiup Draw

By: Sara Amina Sena, Red Rock Ranger District Hydrologist, Coconino National Forest

Doug Tolleson, Asst. Ext. Specialist/Research Scientist, University of Arizona V Bar V Ranch Experiment Station

David W. Schafer (PhD), Resident Director, University of Arizona V Bar V Ranch Ag. Experiment Station

Janie Agyagos, Wildlife Biologist, Red Rock Ranger District, Coconino National Forest

The University of Arizona,
College of Agriculture and
Life Sciences' V Bar V
Ranch Agricultural
Experiment Station operates
on the Walker Basin
Allotment within the
Coconino National Forest

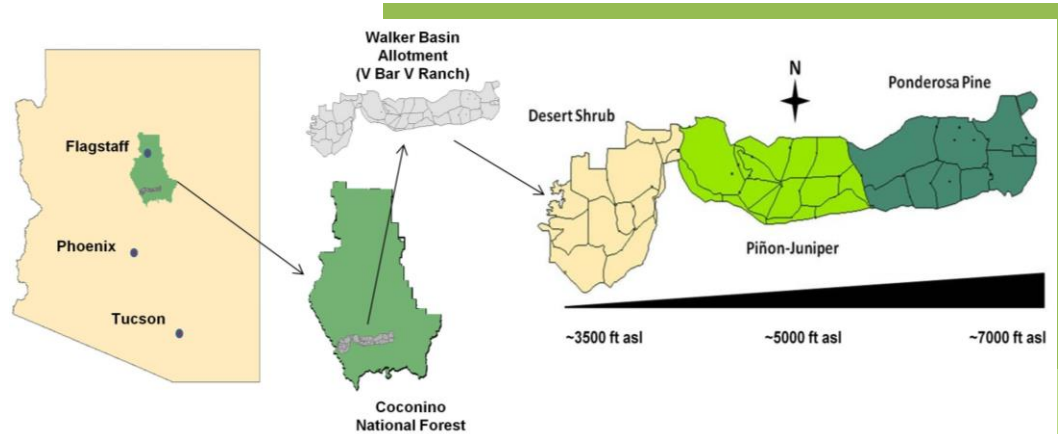


Figure 1: Location, vegetation types and elevation of V Bar V Ranch-Walker Basin Allotment. (Map by Doug Tolleson)

(Figure 1). Elevations range from approximately 3,200 to 7,000 feet and vegetation types range from desert scrub

and piñon-juniper transition zones to ponderosa pine. The allotment is approximately 70,652 acres and is divided into over 30 main grazing pastures. There has been a collection of natural resource data on the Walker Basin Allotment to meet federal environmental regulations such as those defined in the National Environmental Policy Act. As legally required, an Environmental Assessment for the Walker Basin Allotment Rangeland



Figure 2: Historic view of Wickiup Draw and current example of head cutting. (Photo by Doug Tolleson)

Management was completed in 2010 to re-authorize livestock grazing for the next 10 years.

One of the issues addressed during this process was

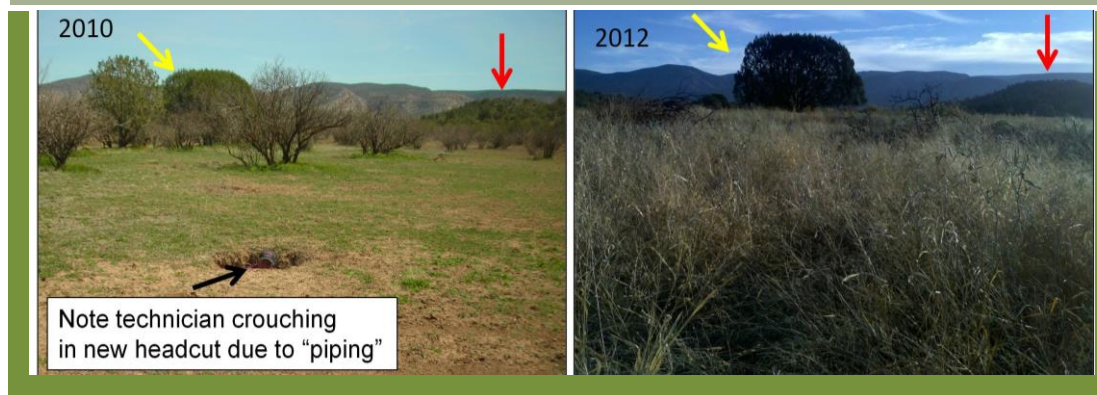
erosion in the Wickiup watershed (Figure 2). The environmental concerns in the Wickiup pastures (as worded in the biological assessment) included, “...*active head cut gully erosion, highly erosive soils, and unsatisfactory soil conditions consisting of compacted soils, lack of vegetative litter and basal area (too much bare soil), and poor vegetation composition (lack of diversity).*”

Both the V Bar V Ranch and the USFS agreed that the conditions in Wickiup were a source of concern. Contributing factors include: 1) historical grazing was heavy in this area due to proximity to Fort Verde and surrounding settlements, 2) area has been heavily traveled for centuries and travel corridors are now gullies, 3) need to continue improving range management strategies with an emphasis on adaptive management to continue to improve rangeland condition and 4) the “piping” nature of the soils.

Subsequent collaboration resulted in a contracted third party survey to identify root cause and effect and suggest possible remediation activities for watershed restoration. Results of the survey indicated that mechanical practices such as re-grading hillslopes, realigning roads and channel grade stabilization techniques should be implemented. It was also noted that juniper thinning and grazing management strategies should be used to improve perennial vegetation cover across the watershed.

The USFS has been able to secure funds to employ Coconino Rural Environment Corps hand crews to cut small juniper and strategically distribute the slash in areas of bare ground. Implementation of lop and scatter on juniper within the watershed has somewhat discouraged ATV use in these areas and helped reduce competition and has increased water availability for perennial native grasses (Figure 3). Implementing these lop and scatter projects in addition to using an adaptive management approach in regards to grazing management in the Wickiup watershed has shown, in some areas, an apparent improvement in litter and perennial basal cover and a decrease in bare ground between 2008 and

Figure 3: Ground level view of one section of Wickiup Draw in 2010, prior to timely precipitation, deferment, and “lop and scatter” treatment, and 2012 after these events. (Photo by Doug Tolleson)



2012. Ongoing monitoring efforts are aimed at tracking the exact improvement in areas that have been treated and comparing them to control plots where possible.

Erosion issues in Wickiup have been documented for the past 100 years. Some contributing factors remain but current grazing management and collaborative restoration projects are influencing environmental conditions in a positive direction.

Passing on the Farm; - Not Everyone Wants it

By: Kay Ledbetter

Note: Reprinted from the Texas SRM Section January – February, 2014, Volume 66 Number – 1. with permission of the author.

While tax laws may have made it easier to pass the farm from one generation to the next, changing times have some families looking at the end of a way of life, according to a 30-year veteran of agricultural estate planning.



Ranch Headquarters in New Mexico (Photo by Jim Thorpe)

Dr. Wayne Hayenga, a Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service economist and professor emeritus from College Station, addresses a crowd of more than 80 people during the recent estate planning workshop in Randall County.

Dr. Hayenga, has traveled throughout Texas for three decades trying to help people pass their agricultural estates on to the next generation.

Hayenga was in the High Plains recently for seven farm and ranch estate planning workshops which attracted about 300 people, most with the same goal in mind.

“Every time there are changes to the tax laws, we see more demand for these workshops,” he said. “But the people basically just want to figure out how to keep the business going for one or two of the children and make sure all the rest are still taken care of.”

Hayenga said estate tax laws have made that easier over the years. Forty years ago, a person could only pass on \$60,000 worth of property tax free and now that’s up to \$5.3 million. Also, even if the property increased in value either because of inflation or demand, he said, “we don’t have to pay any capital gains tax on it now when someone dies.”

However, the continually changing tax laws and the dynamics of the agriculture industry itself are making estate planning anything but a one-size-fits-all deal, said the agricultural economist and attorney.

The content and information of each piece is solely a reflection of the author and is in no way an official position for the Society for Range Management.

“Thirty years ago, I could throw something out to 10 farmers that seven or more of them would understand and be able to utilize. Now as farming operations have gotten bigger and different, if you have the same 10 farmers, I could throw out something and maybe only three have the business design that could utilize that idea. The other seven we have to come up with a different plan.”

Hayenga likened it to the medical world. “When I was a kid we had the family doctor and he took care of you from your scalp to your toenails. Today we have the eye doctor, throat doctor, heart doctor, diabetes doctor, foot doctor and dermatologist. Everything is specialized these days.”

And just as the operations have changed, so have the families. More often there may be no one interested in running the family farm, he said.

“You may have a 1,000 acres at Dumas and you live there and know the tenants and suppliers and everything there. But if you die and give it to three kids, one in Chicago, one in Houston and one who knows where, they don’t know people who can properly take care of it for them. So they worry about that. That asset of yours becomes a worry or a liability for them.”

Economies of scale for agriculture also have changed the picture, Hayenga said. Farming was a very labor intensive operation in the 1860s when the Homestead Act was passed.

“For a family with a couple mules and some kids, it was a big job to take care of 160 acres of land and raise corn, cotton, oats or whatever. Now with the machinery, equipment, chemical applications and the irrigation systems required, for a lot of farmers, I’d say, it is hard to make a living if you don’t have 4,000 or 5,000 acres of land and some may have 15,000 to 25,000 acres.

“And rather than using a 40 horsepower Farmall M, the most recent tractor we bought had 485 horsepower, which is 10 times bigger. We can plant 300 acres a day; whereas back when I was a child, my father could plant 15 acres on a really good day.”

Farms have had to consolidate to stay in business, and as a result, there are not always those one or two children who want to take over such a major operation, Hayenga said.

“The agricultural ladder I learned about back in college was: you start out farming as a hired man working for a parent or neighbor, then you leased the land, then you bought the land and were an owner or operator, and finally you retired to town and leased to a tenant or let one of your kids take over,” he said.

“We don’t have that anymore, because particularly in the 70s, a lot of farmers were doing well and they educated their kids – sent them off to college and they got a professional degree. When they were ready to come back in the 80s, it was a terrible economic time in agriculture. And the question became ‘Why give up a good job in Dallas to take a terrible job back on the farm?’”

Also, Hayenga said, as more of the farm youth moved away and married someone from the big city, it wasn’t as easy to get everyone to agree they wanted to move back to the farm.

“We want our kids to want what we give them, but that doesn’t always work,” he said. “What I have seen lately is the heirs have started to squabble – they just can’t seem to agree. Instead of having land in Dumas, they may prefer a larger retirement plan or to increase the size of their home, and prefer to just sell off the farm.

“We sometimes hear people say they had to sell the farm to pay the estate taxes. But, mostly that’s not true; just some people don’t want the farm.”

For those interested, Hayenga has five more workshops in Central Texas in the next two months. For more information, go to <http://bit.ly/1fnFSjp>.

Eliminating Grazing Won't Reduce Impact of Climate Change on Rangeland, Scientists Say

PRESS RELEASE; January 29, 2014

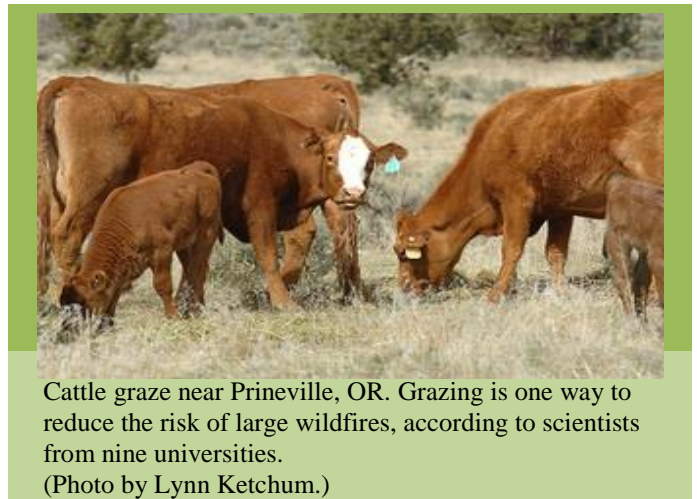
By: [Tiffany Woods](#)

Source: [David Bohnert](#), Director, Oregon State University's Eastern Oregon Agricultural Research Center, Burns OR
"Reprinted with permission for Oregon State University's Extension and Experiment Station Communications Department."

CORVALLIS, Ore. – Eliminating grazing won't reduce the impact of climate change on rangeland, according to nearly 30 scientists in the western United States.

The researchers, who work for nine universities and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, made this argument in a journal article in response to a debate over whether grazing on western public lands worsens ecological alterations caused by climate change.

"We dispute the notion that eliminating grazing will provide a solution to problems created by climate change," the 27 authors wrote in the peer-reviewed paper, which was a summary of scientific literature that was published online this month by the journal *Environmental Management*. "To cope with a changing climate, land managers will need access to all available vegetation management tools, including grazing."



Some scientists argue that livestock, deer, elk and wild horses and burros exacerbate the effects of climate change on vegetation, soils, water and wildlife on western rangelands. As a result, they claim that removing or reducing these animals would alleviate the problem.

In this latest paper, however, the authors argued that grazing can actually help mitigate some of the effects of climate change. Climate change, they said, is likely to increase the accumulation of flammable grasses and increase the chance of catastrophic wildfires unless those grasses are managed.



Animal Scientist Dave Bohnert works with Cattle at OSU's research center in Burns.
(Photo by Lynn Ketchum)

"Grazing is one of the few tools available to reduce the herbaceous vegetation that becomes fine fuel on rangelands," said co-author Dave Bohnert, the director of Oregon State University's Eastern Oregon Agricultural Research Center in Burns.

Globally, grazing is used for a variety of vegetation management objectives, in addition to fine fuel reduction, said lead author Tony Svejcar, a research leader at the USDA's office in Burns who also has a courtesy appointment in OSU's Animal and Rangeland Sciences Department.

The scientists also said that it's unclear how removing grazing would overcome the effects of large-scale climatic changes such as reduced snow packs.

The authors also pointed out that some criticism of grazing has been based on decades-old studies, when the scars of unfettered foraging were still fresh on the landscape. They added that in some places it's hard to tell if impacts from grazing are from current practices or if they are left over from the homesteading era when grazing was unregulated.

"Before the Taylor Grazing Act of 1934, it was a first-come, first-served competition, with the winners taking as much of the forage as they could because if they didn't someone else would," said Bohnert, who is a beef cattle specialist with the OSU Extension Service and a professor in OSU's College of Agricultural Sciences. "Since then, we've learned more about the ecology and management of rangelands. Ranchers are constantly looking at ways to be more sustainable in their grazing practices."

Collaborators on the paper are from OSU, the University of Arizona, Brigham Young University, the University of California-Davis, the University of Idaho, Montana State University, the University of Nevada-Reno, Utah State University, the University of Wyoming and the USDA's Agricultural Research Service.