can be economically fenced.

Providing insulation for all wires provides two benefits. The location of ground or hot wires can be changed if all are insulated. The performance of the energizer is improved when all wires are insulated. The performance of the energizer is improved when all wires are insulated.

In areas of extreme hot and cold where wire tension is a problem, or where it is necessary to lay fences down during the winter, the inline wire strainer (serves as a stretcher for later taking up wire slack), is a valuable tool. On some wire strainers, a small tool or crescent wrench is all that is required to adjust wire tension. Tension springs can also be added to maintain wire tension, but are more costly, and not necessary in all situations.

Flexibility in grazing management can be maximized when numerous pastures or paddocks are created through fencing. Specific improvements through labor saving, improved forage quality and production, protection of newly seeded areas, improved animal husbandry, fewer hunter-livestock related problems, and even increased watershed protection can be a few of the benefits derived as a result of economical fencing. Fencing may well be one of the few effective, proven, and economical techological tools available to the resource manager in today's troubled economy.

Long-Lived Grazing Study Becomes an Idaho Tradition

George Savage

Editor's Note: Readers may wish to read the article "Experimental Area Renamed for Idaho Range Professor" which appeared in the February 1985 issue of *Rangelands* 7(1):46.

A grazing study begun over 32 years ago in southern Idaho's Raft River country may well be one of the longest-running research projects now extant anywhere. Over those three decades-plus, the study has developed and provided rangeland management strategies currently used throughout the Intermountain region. But what's special about this project is not just its results, not just its longevity, but the fact that few research projects have so immediately and intimately united a university, public agencies, and private citizens in working toward a common goal.

The study's origin lies in halogeton—a poisonous weed that moved into western rangelands in the '30s and '40s, threatening their viability for grazing. The study's subject is crested wheatgrass—a hardy perennial imported from Asia in the 1890s. The study's keystone is Lee A. Sharp, a University of Idaho range resources professor and faculty member since 1949.

The study story begins in the early '50s, when the Bureau of Land Management seeded some 200,000 acres of Western rangelands with crested wheatgrass. The bureau's idea was to control the poisonous annual weed by putting it up against a tougher competitor. As Sharp explains, "The best way to control halogeton is to put in a perennial grass that will out-compete it, not spray it with poison."

The crested wheatgrass took, and it did contain the halogeton. That question was answered. But others remained. What to do with the crested wheatgrass? How was it to be managed for grazing?

Enter Lee Sharp. Through the early '50s, Sharp, then a young assistant professor of range resources, gravitated among academia, cattle country, and the federal government, selling the need for a long-term study of crested wheatgrass. He was persuasive. In 1954, a union of the University of Idaho, southern Idaho cattlemen, and the Bureau of Land Management established the Point Springs Range Experimental Area—960 acres of depleted, halogeton-infested sagebrush range dedicated to answering the crested wheatgrass questions.

The University provided the science, the ranchers provided the cattle, the BLM provided the land, and everybody provided the plain hard word necessary to carry out the project: sagebrush to be cleared; wheatgrass to be planted, clipped and sampled; cattle to be weighed. Sharp provided the research acumen, the tenacity, and the spirit.

As the years passed and the research continued, the relationship among the cattlemen, range scientists, and BLM personnel was cemented through a common goal, shared work, and mutual respect. The yearly "weigh-off" of the cattle, necessary to the research, became an annual tradition in the Raft River country, a much anticipated reunion of old friends. And those original 960 acres have now grown to 7,000 as more and more ranchers have become supporters of the crested wheatgrass project.

Over those years, too, Lee Sharp—now senior faculty member of the UI College of Forestry, Wildlife and Range Sciences and former head of the Department of Range Resources—has become synonymous with crested wheatgrass and Point Springs. In 1984—on the occasion of the area's 30th birthday—that synonymity was made official. The Point Springs Experimental Area was renamed the Lee A. Sharp Experimental Area.

On that occasion, too, Sharp's work was lauded by BLM Director Robert Burford, who also presented Sharp with a letter of appreciation from Interior Secretary William Clark, citing his "outstanding contributions to grazing management practices on public lands."

Last year, at a ceremony held at Point Springs on June 25, in conjunction with the annual "weigh off," the Lee A. Sharp Experimental Area was dedicated by University of Idaho President Richard Gibb as the University's southernmost Idaho research station.

And more commendations for the study came from those in a good position to know—southern Idaho ranchers and study cooperators. "We wouldn't have cattle here anymore without it," said Glenn Parks. Lindy Neddo echoed the sentiment: "We wouldn't be in the cattle business anymore without this operation." Dale Pierce added that the range's grazing capacity has doubled because of the study.

Delmar Vail, state director of the BLM and Sharp's former student, reminisced about his one-time mentor and summarized his accomplishment. "We had crested wheatgrass then," (he said), "but we didn't know how to manage it. Lee came in and showed us how with his experiments. Now the research is more valuable than ever and the BLM is proud to cooperate by providing land for the experimental area."

have been seeded to crested wheatgrass, and the work of Sharp and his colleagues—really friends—has contributed and will continue to contribute to the management strategies on those rangelands, and to the rehabilitation of deteriorating lands.

Collaterally, but certainly not least in importance, is the fact that the Lee A. Sharp Experimental Area provides a unique facility where, said John C. Hendee, dean of the University of Idaho College of Forestry, Wildlife and Range Sciences, "we can train range managers who have practical knowledge as well as book and classroom learning. It adds to the kind of field-oriented program we like to emphasize in our college."

UI President Richard Gibb's opinion is that "this is the kind of service, education, and cooperation that land-grant universities were established to do, and we need to do more of it."

In the meantime, the work goes on at the Lee A. Sharp Experimental Area—not just on crested wheatgrass, but on other range plant species, on breeding to improve species, on combating sagebrush re-invasion, and in other range management areas. The coalition that Sharp built continues, still directed by Lee Sharp, as not just a grazing study project, but as a southern Idaho tradition whose activities affect the whole Intermountain region.

Wildlife on Rangeland

What: Many kinds of birds and animals live on rangeland. A management plan should consider practices that improve conditions for wildlife. Different kinds of wildlife have different needs. Your local Soil Conservation Service can assist in identifying these needs and selecting the kinds of management necessary.

Kinds of Wildlife: Identifying the kinds of wildlife is necessary because management will differ for different species. Deer, for example, need browse, forbs, and grasses for food and timber or brushy areas for cover. Quail feed on weed seed, nuts such as acorns, and seeds of certain grasses and shrubs. They prefer a mixture of wooded and open areas with small plots of low shrubs or vines for cover. Normally management will be for several different kinds of birds and animals and the needs of each will have to be met.

Management: *Grazing Systems.* For proper use of vegetation, develop a grazing system that allows livestock and wildlife to harvest the forage without overgrazing. This protects the quality of the forages, provides wildlife cover, and prevents erosion. Grazing systems where livestock are concentrated and rotated between pastures reduces some of the competion with wildlife.

Revegetation. Some grasslands do not have adequate plants to meet the needs of livestock, wildlife, or erosion control. These areas need to be reseeded. When reseeding, consider including plants that have special value for wildlife.

Water. Water is as important to wildlife as it is to livestock. Reliable and well distributed supplies of water should be provided and maintained.

Brush Management. Controlling brush can help improve grasslands for livestock and wildlife. But it must be done properly and in harmony with other conservation practices. If poorly planned and not followed with good grassland management, it can harm the habitat for wildlife. One method of brush control is prescribed burning. If this method is used, a burning plan should be developed to meet the objectives of the rancher. Patterned brush control or leaving strips or mottes of brush in pastures increases the edge effect and enhances wildlife habitat for many species.

Summary: Wildlife can exist in harmony with livestock operations on rangelands if wildlife needs and species are inventoried and included in the management plan.

Where to Get Help: For more information on range management, contact the local office of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Soil Conservation Service.—from Fact Sheet, USDA, SCS, January 1985.