

the sage grouse.

In order to maintain its prestigious ranking as one of the nation's top groups in the BLM's Partners in Public Spirit program, the group is continuing to cooperate with BLM and other agencies. In the future, they intend to further improve the range condition; enhance livestock forage; sustain and stabilize vegetative production; sustain or

improve watershed conditions; improve wildlife and waterfowl habitat; and provide high quality riparian areas. Through cooperation and various grazing techniques, the C & B district has made, and will continue to make, a commendable effort to improve the land for its resource, wildlife and recreational values.

## Ranchers and Resources Reaping Benefits of CRM

Norman R. McClure

Individuals concerned about the management of our nation's publicly and privately owned lands should be pleased to hear that Coordinated Resource Management (CRM) is "alive and well" in Washington and other Northwest states. Coordinated Resource Management Plans (CRMP's) are developed by landowners, public land managers and land users who come together to resolve conflicts. A second and equally important goal is to bring about a high level of sustained-yield productivity for all renewable resources present on the management unit involved (small watershed, livestock grazing system, etc.).

The *Washington Farmer-Stockman* has provided excellent coverage of CRM in recent years and months. Two articles about specific CRMP's conveyed a highly favorable picture of this planning process. A third article raised serious questions about participating in CRMP's, especially when initiated by federal agencies. These apparent contradictions have understandably led to some confusion and concern on the part of Washington ranchers.

**The following information sheds light** on these contradictions and also reports on exciting and positive happenings regarding CRM in Washington and throughout the West.

A cover story in the August 1989 issue of the *Washington Farmer-Stockman* entitled "CRM Working on Lick Creek" reported one of many such success stories in Washington State. Through the application of this CRMP in Asotin County, ranchers, Forest Service, and Department of Wildlife personnel were able to develop a grazing system for domestic livestock which significantly improved grazing for elk. This was possible because the more "fastidious" elk avoid coarse forage and actually prefer to graze areas where this less palatable material has been removed by cattle.

More recently (November 1991), the *Farmer-Stockman* featured the Stokes & Stokes CRMP in Okanogan County.

In this Methow Valley plan, water developments and changes in stocking rates and season-of-use on a series of pastures have increased the amount of forage available for livestock. These elements of the plan also resulted in significant improvement of critical spring and winter range for mule deer on both rancher-owned and Department of Wildlife lands. Such an increase in benefits accruable to the private landowner involved *and* to the public is typical of what can be accomplished when all parties with interest in a particular area agree to participate in the development and implementation of a CRMP.

**The third article noted above** appeared in the June 1991 issue of the *Washington Farmer-Stockman* and the *Farmer-Stockman* magazines of many other western states. It painted a very different and less favorable picture of Coordinated Planning. In that article entitled *Ranchers Grazing Plans Influenced by Non-Ranchers*, Cheyenne, Wyoming, Attorney Karen Budd cautioned livestock permittees to be "wary of the CRM process and its use in planning efforts initiated by public agencies." She asserted that the Forest Service is using the process to allow persons "not directly affected" and having "little or no expertise in resource or forage management to write and/or revise" Allotment Management Plans (AMP's). Ms. Budd also stated that additional problems are created because livestock grazing permittees are "ordered to submit to the process" and are "exposed to potential liability" from other participants who bear no responsibility for implementing the resulting plan.

Through an exchange of letters with Ms. Budd and follow-up calls to some of her clients, it was possible to confirm the validity of her concerns. There clearly have been instances in which overzealous agency personnel, with their own agendas to promote, have misused the CRMP process. One case of note which occurred in Montrose, Colorado, resulted in a significant setback for coordinated planning in both Colorado and Wyoming. Problems have also surfaced with a plan being developed under BLM auspices in Southern Idaho. Range management professionals in the region are working hard to

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resolve these situations and to prevent similar abuses from occurring.

Fortunately, the problems noted in the Budd article are not characteristic of the process by which CRMP's are developed and applied in the state of Washington and other Northwest states. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for CRM in Washington, which is signed by heads of cooperating agencies and the Washington Rangeland Committee, closely follows the National MOU and clearly stresses "cooperative efforts" with no element of coercion involved.

E. William Anderson, certified range consultant and former SCS State Range Conservationist in Oregon, who originated the idea of CRM in 1949, has clearly stated that CRM does not require land owners and managers to "abrogate their authority and responsibility to make final decisions and that consensus...is a fundamental element of CRMP." Rex Cleary of Genoa, Nevada, who assumed chairmanship of the Society for Range Management CRM Committee at the Society's February meeting in Spokane, is also adamant on this point. Rex states that no action should be taken under a CRMP without the endorsement of all participants and that the idea of a vote is totally foreign to the process.

**In light of such clarifying statements,** it is not surprising that ranchers and agency personnel in many parts of the West are excited about the significant benefits being

achieved through coordinated planning. Rancher response in Washington has been so favorable that applications for such plans exceed the number that can be developed by the amount of technical expertise available for this task. The Washington Cattlemen's Association also has a long-standing record of support for CRM.

Ranchers in Washington and other western states may be indebted to Ms. Budd for bringing the potential for abuse of CRM to their attention. And to her further credit, in her August letter, Ms. Budd clearly affirmed her support for CRM in Washington where "the process is voluntary and working well."

More recently, Ms. Budd met with the Wyoming Executive Committee for CRM and following the meeting accepted an invitation to become a member of the Committee. In doing so, she stated her belief that the Wyoming "CRM program has the potential of becoming a model program and can... be used to benefit the management of both federal and private lands." We applaud this decision on her part to become a constructive participant and proponent of CRM properly done. Clearly Washington ranchers, public land management personnel, and range professionals can take pride in the fact that they are already "doing it right" and that the people *and* renewable resources of our state continue to "reap the benefits" of Coordinated Resource Management and Planning.

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