

Cooperative Range Management: Fact and Fiction

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The first major rangeland legislation—The Taylor Grazing Act—was passed 50 years ago. When this first major conservation legislation for the public lands was born, the public grazing lands were in poor shape, the livestock industry needed help, we were a rural economy, and we were an expanding nation with lots of room. Its avowed purpose was to stabilize the livestock industry and to provide for management of the public lands “pending their ultimate disposal.” The Grazing Service and its successor, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), took on the task of administering the law that has shaped the history of the public lands in the intervening 50 years.

Many changes have occurred during the past 50 years, but perhaps none have been as dramatic as the current attempt to change a “confrontation process” to a “negotiation process.”

In the early days, range policy was concerned with carrying capacities and allotment boundaries. Adjustments of carrying capacities were based on three types of range surveys developed by various universities and state experiment stations. These were: (1) the ocular reconnaissance method, (2) the square foot density method, and (3) the weight estimate method. Unfortunately, the various components within the methods were never agreed upon by agencies, the university system, and the livestock industry. Other interest groups were generally silent, contenting themselves with comments on the overall condition of the rangelands or of their own special interest. The land management agency then produced the range survey and issued a grazing decision. The operators protested or appealed it if they disagreed. If any negotiation occurred, it was informal and was often during the appeals process. Therefore, the policy was “reduce first-talk later.”

In the years prior to 1976, BLM had been trying to implement long-term planning. Many groups did not believe that the Bureau was willing or able to use the information being presented and were firmly convinced the Bureau would not make meaningful range decisions. Also, about 10 years of meetings had left the public burned out. Public participation started to drop and the BLM was finding it increasingly difficult to obtain participation of all groups in the planning process.

With the passage of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) in 1976, public land development entered a new phase. For the first time, there was a mandate for long-term management. Rangeland use decisions were to be

a part of overall land use decisions based on a multiple use concept. With the passage of the Public Rangeland Improvement Act (PRIA), an additional dimension was added. PRIA directed the Bureau of Land Management to engage in “Consultation,” “Coordination,” and “Cooperation” (CCC) to reach its range decisions. This policy was already inherent in the Advisory Board System and the planning process, but now it had the power of legislation behind it.

There had been a long period of agency-user conflict. It is unfortunate that our system of “adverse rights” often gets us into the courtroom before it gets us into the negotiating room. All groups involved in proper management of the public lands are striving for the same goal. They only differ in the approach to a solution. The ranch operator is obviously concerned because his livelihood is at stake. Agencies are concerned because of recent Congressional direction to manage for the long term. Constituent groups are concerned because they want progress faster than it is occurring. The public wants a larger voice.

Congressional direction changed and the stage was now set for agency change. The result was a shifting of policy towards involving those groups who have a stake in the well-being of the range resource: the agency, the operator, the conservationist, the environmentalist, and the general public.

These changes became the first official efforts to start a “talk first-reduce later” policy. Part of the process was to stratify rangeland allotments into categories. Categories had to meet some general criteria, but the specifics were to be determined at the local level on the basis of local conditions. This was known as “Selective Management.” It was also the first attempt to stratify the BLM workload. Basically, most work would be applied in those allotments categorized “Improve” (“I”). Much less work would be needed in the “Maintain” (“M”) category, because the allotments would already be in a good condition and be managed in a satisfactory manner. Least BLM effort would be needed in the “Custodial” (“C”) category, since these lands have little potential to respond to improvement initiatives (usually because of soil limitations or a limited Federal land ownership pattern).

The Cooperative Management Agreement (CMA) process was developed for use on the “M” category allotments, based on the premise that these allotments are the best rangelands, are in good condition, and are not involved in any form of difficult resource conflict as defined in the land use planning process. Under this program, the local operator enters into a 10-year agreement with the Bureau of Land Management, under the land use plan, and works toward mutually agreed upon goals. Once an agreement has been entered into, the

Bureau's presence is not as imperative as on other allotment categories. The agreement calls for a monitoring program of on-site examinations to be reported to the Bureau. As a minimum, the Bureau will make its own verification examination at the 5-year mark of the agreement. If all is satisfactory and objectives are being reached, the agreement would be extended for another 10 years.

When the program was first introduced in 1983, there was extensive criticism from many quarters that the proposal was flawed. Following are some of the concerns as expressed by various groups.

1. The Concern is:

—The Cooperative Management Agreement (CMA) program will reduce the Federal presence on the range, allowing the industry to take advantage of the situation and overuse the range, resulting in a decline in range condition and wild-life populations.

The Fact is:

—The livestock industry is not wholly supportive of the CMA program either. Scrutiny will be intense on those allotments selected for CMAs. Operators may have more visits and complications from a reduced Federal presence than a normal one. In any event, the innuendo about over using the range will be offset by the willingness of operators to attempt to prove they can do a better, cheaper job than the government. In addition, a monitoring program will be designed to gather data to evaluate each CMA.

2. The Concern is:

—Allowing livestock operators to conduct monitoring activities is inappropriate. Operators are not skilled in proper measurements to provide accurate data. Besides, they will not report accurately.

The Fact is:

—Many monitoring activities can be properly conducted by livestock operators as well as other properly trained people. Selection of "who does what" kind of work on the monitoring scheme will be a function of the data collected. Also, more and more livestock operators are college and university graduates with range management degrees. This means that the capabilities of operators to conduct monitoring activities is higher than generally perceived.

As far as accuracy is concerned, the operators have more at stake than anyone else. They know that the world is looking over their shoulder and the Bureau will be there at the 5-year checkpoint. They have everything to lose and nothing to gain by not cooperating in the monitoring effort.

3. The Concern is:

—The Bureau is showing favoritism to the livestock industry by engaging in a practice not available to other groups.

The Fact is:

—The CMA program is available to other groups which have a program amenable to such a strategy. For example, an agreement already exists for a private group to manage a waterfowl area. Agreements already exist for state agencies to manage wildlife benefits. We expect that as the concept is better understood, there will be more opportunities for other users to participate.

4. The Concern is:

—Too many lands will be covered by CMAs. BLM will not

be able to carry its legal mandate to manage the public lands.

The Fact is:

—BLM expects only a small number of allotments to be covered by CMAs. Initially, the program is limited to those allotments in the "M" category, and only a small number of these will be included in agreements. On a percentage basis, the number will probably be less than 10% of all allotments.

5. The Concern is:

—BLM is not carrying out its mandate to manage the public lands as stated in FLPMA and PRIA.

The Fact is:

—The BLM is actively pursuing management of the public lands under both FLPMA and PRIA. Land use planning is the basis for long-term management as stated in FLPMA. The Consultation-Coordination-Cooperation and public participation processes highlighted in both FLPMA and PRIA are inherent in the process described. The goal now is long-term management, with objectives and methods arrived at by a negotiated process.

Developing these new policies has created some contradicting effects. One of the most positive is the cooperative effort in Idaho between the Bureau of Land Management, the University of Idaho, the ranch operators, the Fish and Game Departments, the Forest Service, other agencies, and the conservation organizations to establish minimum monitoring standards for all allotments. Most significant in the effort is the cross section of interested parties engaged in the negotiations. The process will most likely be supported by all groups once it is finalized. This negotiated process is the most effective way to realize positive solutions to complex resource management issues.

On the negative side, there is a great hesitancy by many groups to endorse the concept of negotiated solutions. Perhaps this is a function of the rapid and drastic change from traditional approaches. These new approaches may have been coming too fast. They are quite different. They propose a "people oriented" approach rather than a scientific approach. It is very easy to be an advocate—to cry out when something is not to your liking. It is much more difficult to be a participant—to share in the trials of negotiation and the satisfaction of a successful solution.

To succeed in this effort, increased participation from all users of the public lands will be needed. Historically, solutions have been hammered out on a one-on-one basis. Those methods will no longer work. We must emphasize the trend toward group problem solving. Taking a polar position and holding to it will lead only to further confrontation.

Groups must learn how to communicate and reach compromise solutions—we must learn how to negotiate. We are proposing that the real focal point is a transition from a technical approach to a social/participative approach to problem solving. We can then use technical/scientific methods to confirm the solution. As we move through the '80s and '90s, we must change our way of doing things as professional land administrators. We must change some of our institutions. It means a great challenge to the range profession. It also means there are some new opportunities out there. An exciting new avenue for professional growth is opening. As our public land frontiers close even further in the next 50

years, the need to communicate and negotiate solutions between groups will become one of our most important skills.

We must pick up from here and devise methods that will succeed in the future. For our profession to survive as we

know it, we must change with the times—and this is one of the greatest periods of change we have witnessed. It remains to be seen whether our range professionals can see through the smoke of transition and gear up for the next 50 years. But history tells us we are up to the challenge. ●

Viewpoint: A Management Perspective on Development Assistance

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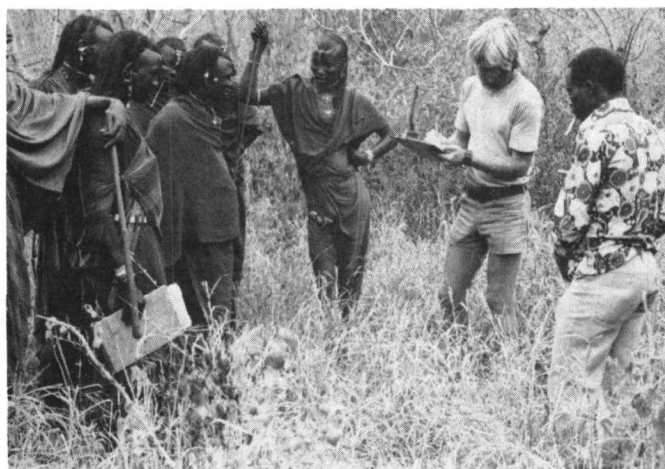
International range development assistance work and knowledge are evolving rapidly. Methods described by Ray Anderson (1982) are unworkable and were outdated long ago. Our purposes here are to: (1) stand as informed opposition to the school of thought exemplified by the *Rangelands* article, "Grassland Revegetation in the Pastoral Countries—The Technical, Economic, and Social 'How To'" (Anderson 1982), (2) describe technical and social circumstances associated with range livestock production in pastoral systems, and (3) provide guidance to other range management specialists working in developing countries.

Building On What's There

Irrespective of the place, a range or livestock management advisor should first understand what the producers are doing right and then determine if there exist areas where he/she can provide assistance. They should use their technical knowledge to help both the range and the producers without sacrificing one for the other. It is exceptional to find a situation where technology can be directly transferred from one region of the world to another. Values, expectations, needs and management objectives for livestock husbandry differ from place to place. Development projects are most likely to be beneficial where the recipients recognize the need and are willing to change. (Livingston 1977). Unless technology is introduced with the willing cooperation of beneficiaries, "improvements" will be allowed to deteriorate and become unusable in the long run.

Development assistance can be provided in ways that are compatible with the goals and economic capabilities of developing countries, as well as technologically suitable at the village level. The building and strengthening of extension services, formal educational and research institutions are

effective means of development assistance. Physical development of rangeland resources is another, though less effective, means of development assistance. More detailed discussion of this approach can be found in the papers by Atherton (1984), Dickie and O'Rourke (1984), Little (1984), and Stryker (1984).



Maasailand, Tanzania Kijungu Ranching Association David Peterson takes notes on current management practices during reconnaissance survey. He is assisted by Godfrey Mkumbo (on right). The group on the left are Maasai warriors who were very helpful to the government technicians. Photo is by Alex Dickie, 1977, range management advisor on the USAID Maasai Range Livestock Development Project.

We view the methods recommended by Anderson as "reclamation management." The "how to" of the reclamation management approach offered by Anderson is very inadequate. Fencing, land imprinting machines, and government (military) control of communal grazing lands are poor offerings to people faced not only with the failure of their herds but the collapse of their traditional society.

Anderson has stated that establishing a system and means of management comes *after* revegetation. We disagree. Agricultural (pastoralist) societies have evolved effective

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