



By Gary Frasier

# Frasier's Philosophy

As a young college student, more years ago than I like to admit, I remember driving between Denver and Fort Collins and seeing the wide-open spaces and open country of the rangelands of eastern Colorado. After college, I moved to the Phoenix, Arizona, area, where in the Salt River Valley, there were large cotton and alfalfa fields. Today, both of these places are covered with housing developments, suburban ranchettes, and freeways, moving people at high speed (unless it is rush hour when it all slows to a crawl).

How many of the people in these areas have a feeling for the land or care what is happening to it around them? I would suspect that very few ever think about the land and what it was like 50 years ago before the mass migrations to the areas. They want easy and close access to the large shopping centers and malls. They want the high-salary jobs in the cities and high-speed freeways so they can rush home from work and watch the "reality" shows on TV.

Some of these people see the remaining open spaces as a place to visit on vacations. They never think about what it takes to manage these areas. They get upset if there is some activity on the lands that affects their pleasure, such as cattle grazing in a meadow. There are anglers who want access to all streams and large catchable fish, yet they never think of the management of the watershed that provides the water for the stream. There are hunters who want large trophy animals yet are not concerned about what it takes to manage the resource. There are people who want the land returned to a "pristine" wilderness as it was before the advent of the European settlers.

What has happened? We have a changed landscape. It can never revert back to the past. We still have some open spaces, but they are looked at with a different perspective.

Management of these areas today is quite different than management of the land in the past. Many of the open spaces are a mixture of private and public lands. No single entity has control of the areas. It requires people with different backgrounds and visions working together to develop plans that accommodate the new paradigm.

We are fortunate that we have a few people who are concerned about how we can manage these lands under the changing use perspective. These people are willing to compromise in a give-and-take atmosphere for the betterment of the land. They are wildlife managers, environmentalists, ranchers, rangeland management specialists, and even a few urbanites, all with a deep desire to manage the land resources in a sustainable manner for the present and future.

This issue of *Rangelands* presents a description of a few of the efforts at managing these changing landscapes. These efforts are just a start. Some of the approaches are working better than others. We are learning. No one has given up. This is the future of natural resource management. We must be the Trail Boss of the effort and show the way. ♦