

# Renewable Resources Extension Act of 1978

Jeanne W. Edwards

My incredible, absolutely perfect, 20/20 hindsight provides the expertise required to comment on Public Law 95-306, the Framework Plan, and the Funding Request.

My remarks will be limited to the "Rangelands" portion, for it is on rangelands that I live and have my being.

We are 20 years behind our needs. We, today, are no longer speaking in terms of "good" or "helpful." We are talking about the survival of multiple use; the survival of the range-based cattle industry; the renewableness of our renewable resources.

At one time the private rangeland owner was concerned with domestic AUM allowances and wildlife habitat requirements. But no more. Today, in many rangeland states the private landowner is facing a new pressure—the rapidly increasing mining operations. As large open-pit mines begin their vast operations, we on the adjacent lands are forced to make quick management decisions that will affect our personal futures and the future of our natural resources. . . and, for many of us, those two futures are interactive and inseparable. With our endangered position in mind, I would stress five specific points:

- ★ Because of the primacy of the Western livestock industry and its relationship to the economy and the use of both private and public rangelands, it is *essential* that Extension Service become a catalyst in the future of coordinated plans.

- ★ As the pressure from multiple-use demands increases, the private landowner will be able to fulfill his stewardship obligations and his credit obligations *only* with sound, up-to-date range management techniques. We look to the Extension Service for this continuing education. Extension must be prepared to look "down-the-road," anticipate future needs in education. It appears that the individual landowner is so busy dealing with daily necessities that he often lets tomorrow "take care of itself."

- ★ To implement a long-range plan for transferring renewable resource technology to the landowner, the Extension Program at the local level will require a strong support program at the State level. This proposed plan has evolved on a path from States up to the national plan. Because of this evolution it is totally different from other plans. It is through the State and county programs that the landowner receives support, and therefore, I would hope that Science and Education Administration (SEA) would design and coordinate federal programs to develop the applied research—and package it in such a manner that State Extension could transfer it to the landowner in a timely manner.

- ★ Rangeland renewable resources do not become instantly "healed"—or "highly productive"—not in 1 year—or even 5

years. The range user needs continuing support from Extension in how to apply new technology, how to adjust to new unexpected pressures. The season-by-season expertise in livestock husbandry, wildlife concerns, nutritional range forage quality and quantity encompassed by sound range management practices requires the latest knowledge in a useable form for the rancher. This proposed plan provides a stepped-up program to extend this type of expertise. However, I would hope that it would endure over 20 to 50 years—not just 5 years.

- ★ The "Potential" and "need" of an individual state must not be calculated by a formula based on the number of acres held in private ownership.

Eighty-seven percent of the State of Nevada is owned and managed by the federal government. The Nevada rancher is forced to produce under conditions that make it difficult to stay in business—let alone have room for "multiple-use" concerns. We, the Nevadans in the red meat industry, are the *day-to-day* on-the-ground stewards of all the lands utilized by our operations. If anything, the public rangeland states should receive *more* assistance, not *less*! I can assure you that with sound, scientific range information, I will be a better steward of all the land on which I operate. More assistance to the private land owner in a public-land dominated state will serve the national interest, the multiple use concept, and the resource itself!

With these five points stressed, the Renewable Resources Extension Act, properly funded, is one positive step toward answering the challenges of multiple use and increased demands for goods and services from our rangelands.

The Introduction of the Program explains that the expanded program will focus on five major areas. One of the programs will be "Rangeland Management." For years I have had the thought that our federal agencies concerned with natural resource management have applied the term "professional range managers" to anyone from a botanist from Maine to a zoologist from Brooklyn. In a survey conducted in 1974, Dr. C. Wayne Cook of Colorado found that 42% of the Classified Range Conservationists did not have a degree in range science. In view of recent trends and polarization of interests, the problem is more serious today than it was in 1974.

Those of us in range operations need expertise from range science experts: those professionals who are aware of the "whole resource," who have knowledge of the resource capabilities, limitations, and consequences. In our resource treatment plan we must be able to calculate the consequences of the second and third order—not just the obvious, the immediate. We must have the professionals who are aware of the "whole"—not just a discipline within the "whole."

Our vast rangelands are not producing at "full potential." We, for years, have treated individual problems by individual

The author is administrator of the Saval Ranching Company, Elko, Nevada 89801.

*Editor's Note:* This article was developed from the speaking notes of a talk presented by the author at the National Workshop on Renewable Resources as related to Extension Education held at Arlington, Va., in January, 1980.

disciplines or interests, and the result is—and will continue to be—the decline of our resource.

A particular case of this can be found in our riparian zones. In Nevada we constantly find "experts" from diverse disciplines demanding treatment based on individual interests—each wasting time and effort in blame-fixing situations, when in fact, no one is blameless. The result of this tunnel vision is the less-than-full production of these valuable resources. Without scientific answers that have come from credible research and evaluation packaged in understandable, economically feasible form brought together by a range scientist for the range user, these resources will continue their "down-hill" course. We may, for a short time, save a few more deer, a few more fish—or a few more domestic AUM's; but in the long haul, we *all* will lose.

Under the heading of "Environmental Management & Public Policy", the plan states that the maintenance of a quality environment is largely a process of awareness and understanding. . . . I would add that we live in a "media" age. Most people do not trust their own experiences or judgements. They believe what they read in print or see on television. A good movie is defined by Judith Crist, a good car by "Consumer Report," a good wine by Robert Finigan. A fact seems to become true by being in the media. With this in mind, Extension Service could well serve the renewable resources of this nation by expanding its "media" educational programs. I suspect that a very small portion of Massachusetts residents has *any* concept of the value of rangelands—and a very few Nevadans understand the worth of the beautiful and fragile shoreline of New England. We must educate the "whole"—bring understanding and respect. In the past, what little has been done was accomplished by special interest groups.

Under the Renewable Resources Extension Act, the

Extension Service, deeply rooted in academics and practical application, is the ideal vehicle to prepare and deliver these vital educational programs and articles—programs and articles presented to the general public in a package that will whet their appetites for more renewable resource information.

The public is being asked to make serious choices in natural resource arenas. The consequences of these choices are not fully understood by many. I would hope that SEA through the Renewable Resources Extension Act, could—and would—give the factual, scientific data on which a thinking citizen would then base his decisions and choices.

I have, up to this point, described what we need. May I close with what I think we *don't* need.

I, as a meat producer, I, as a private land owner, and certainly I—private U.S. citizen—do not need one more Bill, one more Act, one more plan promised and eagerly anticipated then quietly shelved or pushed to the "back burner"—due to insufficient funding.

There can be no question in anyone's mind as to the importance of our renewable resources.

Through the years, both Congress and the Administrations have verbalized their concerns and listed natural renewable resources as a high priority. Yet when funding time rolls around, priorities seem to change. Range improvements and range research are two items of listed concerns that fall into "back burner" status.

Public Law 95-306 has the *potential* to mitigate many of the harmful effects of years of neglect.

No one agency, no one Department, no one interest group can, standing alone, do the job. *Together we can* be good stewards of God's most gracious gift to us—our renewable resources.

## *Call for Volunteer Papers S.R.M. Annual Meeting—1981, Tulsa, Oklahoma*

**August 15** is the deadline to submit a preliminary title for each volunteer paper you propose to present at Tulsa. We will accommodate all worthy volunteer papers within the policy guidelines established in our initial announcement.

The following calendar details the procedures for volunteer papers:

- 1) *Preliminary Titles:* Deadline, August 15. Indicate general program category. Send titles to *W.D. McCully, Texas Transportation Institute, College Station, Texas 77843*. You may submit more than one title per category, but you will be called on later to prioritize these to guide us if we have to be selective during program synthesis (see program policy).
- 2) *Abstracts and Finished Titles:* These will be submitted on blue-line forms which we will send you after we get your preliminary title(s).

Wayne D. McCully, Program Chairman  
J.E. Stubbendieck, Assistant Chairman