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RANGE (ISSN #1093-3670), published quarterly for \$19.95 per year U.S. (\$28/yr Canada, \$45/yr all other countries, U.S. funds only) by Purple Coyote Corp., 106 East Adams St., Ste. 201, Carson City, NV 89706. Periodicals postage rate paid at Carson City, NV, and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Address changes to:

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RANGE is an award-winning quarterly devoted to the issues that threaten the West, its people, lifestyles, lands and wildlife. No stranger to controversy, RANGE is a leading forum for opposing viewpoints in the search for solutions that will halt the depletion of a national resource—the American cowboy.

RANGE CONSERVATION FOUNDATION Grants to the nonprofit 501(c)(3) RCF to assist with RANGE's mission are appreciated. Mail to RCF, Attn.: Ed Depaoli, P.O. Box 1595, Carson City, NV 89702. 775-884-2206.

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## Up Front

*Nefarious feds.*

By C.J. Hadley



**D**angerous? Yes. Inspiring? Yes. The ranchers knew they had to do something, so they took a stand and rode horseback across the United States to share their grievances against the Bureau of Land Management with members of Congress. (See "The Grass March," page 56.)

It was a tough time to go—late September is a busy time—but their plight was serious and no one in Nevada was going to help. Eddyann Filippini and Lynn Tomera joined the ride.

*"Eddyann is riding,"* Janice Clegg wrote in her diary. *"Thunder and lightning: it's too dangerous to ride. We are over halfway to Washington. Clouds are low after the rain as we cross the Missouri River."*

Ranchers are out on the ground every day when bureaucrats are usually in the office. One former BLM area manager says: "They are on different planets. BLM looks for small areas that look bad. Ranchers see

grass that's going to burn if cows don't eat it. How do they bridge that gap?"

*"Oct. 13: On the trot again at 4:30 a.m.,"* Bruce Clegg wrote on Facebook. *"We are on a winding road headed for Huntington, W.V. Sign says 'No trailers' and here we are anyway. The horses sink in the grass and slide on the road. Lynn is riding her black-and-white paint. He is not happy with all the cars; it's a lot different than herding cows in sagebrush country."*

This story is about ranch families' livelihoods threatened by bureaucrats in the Battle Mountain District of the Bureau of Land Management. The boss there, Doug Furtado, is known as "nice and personable" by the *Battle Mountain Bugle*, but out on the range he's an arrogant bully.

One example: Furtado refused to meet with Eureka County rancher Kevin Borba for three years. When they finally spoke on the phone, Furtado told Borba: "Kevin, you have to understand I am an educated man. I could have been at a very high paying job other than BLM but I chose this job. I am going to put it to you in a way that you can understand. Say, Kevin, if I was a shoe salesman and I sold the best shoes in the country and everybody loved my shoes and everybody bought them—are you following me?—and someone else came along and designed a different type of shoe that everybody wanted and they weren't buying mine anymore...being as I'm educated, you know what I'd do? I'd find another line of work."

During a recent 200-horse gather on Borba's allotment, the mares were shot with PZP to prevent pregnancy for about two years. The BLM was already 400 horses above Appropriate Management Levels and the ranchers went to court to prevent them from being returned to the range. The ranchers lost. Borba had already supplied water from his own pumps and wells for two years for the horses, even though his cows were not allowed on his own range.

Furtado's assistant field manager, Mike Vermeys, told Borba in Eureka: "You know why I'm here? I'm Furtado's bulldozer and I get s--- done."

Neil Kornze, national BLM director, is scheduled to visit Nevada in May to tour several ranches including the Argenta allotment (page 63). You might remember that it was Kornze who sent the shock troops with automatic weapons and tasers to take down Cliven Bundy ([www.rangemagazine.com](http://www.rangemagazine.com), Back Issues, Fall 2014). You might remember that he worked in former Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid's office for years. And you might also remember that Harry Reid said angrily on Vegas TV after Bundy's cattle were given back to him last April, "This isn't over!" We will see if Kornze listens to these good food producers and looks at the ground or if he still works for the power-hungry Harry. ■



Washington, D.C. Eddyann Filippini (left) and Lynn Tomera in front of a monument to Oveta Culp Hobby (1905-1995), the first secretary of the U.S. Department of Health, Education & Welfare, first director of the Women's Army Corps, and chairperson of the board of the Houston Post. They are all women to emulate.