



Opinion from America's Outback

MORE DEFENDERS

As an active-duty member of the U.S. Marine Corps and a son of generations of farmers and ranchers, I find nothing more important to defend than our way of life and especially our rural heritage.

ADAM ROSS WRITER
FEDERAL WAY, WASHINGTON

I read *RANGE* from cover to cover. We sell it at our shop. I send the leftover magazines to our military and have a good response.

ROGER BAHLS, VERNDALE, MINNESOTA

RANGE is the best publication about the western way of life and its people published today and truthful to boot.

BOB HAMANN, MEDICAL LAKE, WASHINGTON

IT'S FINGER-POINTING TIME

Western rangelands are leveled, trashed beneath a tidal wave of monster fires, choking smoke, swarms of aircraft and firefighters surging over graze and forest. Once familiar vistas will not within a lifetime again seem familiar. For generations of old ranches and families, the red-meat survivors, the fires have been personal. For many, too close and too personal. For some, it's the end of time. So now, it's finger-pointing time. Yet again. I could point at perceived fault makers starting with the icon of forest fires "Smokey the Bear," the Center for Biological Diversity, the Sierra Club, logging and anti-logging, thinning and no thinning, lawyers and, as always, the federal government in its various shapes and uniforms, always misguided or heavy-handed or inept or simply mindless. Somewhere, lost beneath screams of those with intractable views is the voice of a middle ground that must somehow fashion agreement, or at least a workable, forward-looking truce. Maybe Smokey was right all along. Only you can prevent forest fires.

AL TOPPING, TUBAC, ARIZONA

I'm afraid *RANGE* has gone a bit too "girlie" for me.

RANDY CAMPBELL, COJO RANCH
LOMPOC, CALIFORNIA

I don't always agree with the editorial stances taken by *RANGE* but no one can dispute that you picked the correct picture ["Challenge issued at the Hoodoo" by Jeff Duncan of Cody, Wyo.] as the best in show for the 2011



Outback Roundup. It's creative, well composed and, above all, unique. And when the hell are you going to start doing real dropheads in your articles? You're almost defying the audience to begin reading any article.

BOB BROWN, PORTLAND, OREGON
Brown's my former boss at Car & Driver and Sports Illustrated in New York City. He's talented, has a big heart, and still watches over

me—even though a few years back he called me a "right-wing Nazi."—Ed. P.S. I'll try.

NEW FAN

Recently while visiting Dr. Nelson's office in Spearfish, S.D., I picked up the Fall 2010 issue of *RANGE*. After my appointment the doctor told me I was welcome to take it home with me. I did! After reading it cover to cover, I'm a new fan. If all your issues are as interesting, I sure want to be on your mailing list. I believe the average American (meaning people who actually work and pay taxes) is frustrated with politics and our government. I for one feel helpless against the giant that is "supposed" to be representing the will of the people. How to make a difference? That is the question!

RON ACHTZIGER
SUNDANCE, WYOMING

I read an amazing fact and quote I thought I'd share with you. "Years of helping people have taught me that ignorance does not block learning, egos and knowledge do." What an astounding spot-on statement from Allan Savory's Spring 2011 article!

DUANE BENNETCH, FLEETWOOD, PENN.

(Continued on page 11)

NO SUCH THING AS "NATIVE" WILD HORSES

Those lovers and would-be protectors of wild horses are at it again—this time in the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals. They want the Bureau of Land Management to grant "native species" status to the 30,000 or so horses that graze—and overgraze—public lands in western states. Science, they say, is on their side. However, common sense and documented history are not.

On his second voyage, Columbus brought the first livestock to the New World. From Hispaniola (now the Dominican Republic) Spanish cattle and horses were eventually transported to the mainland (now Mexico). Cortez also brought a few head of cattle and horses with him in his conquest a few years later. Over time, some of the stock strayed and multiplied on their own. The Spanish cattle became the Texas longhorn—today a registered breed. The bands of free-ranging horses were called "mustangs."

With the settlement of the American West, both cattle and horses took on monetary value—and were systematically rounded up and utilized on ranches or shipped east. Consequently, by the end of the 19th century, virtually none of these feral cattle and horses were left on the open range. And the horses still running loose had interbred with the more recent European imports to the point of no longer resembling the wild bands of earlier years.

We have firsthand accounts to substantiate this history—and dispel the myth that wild horses and burros have some special right to the forage and water on public lands. James H. Cook, frontier cowboy, hunter and rancher (1857-1942), wrote that in the 1870s, "there were thousands of these inbred, beautiful little horses living on the ranges of the West. . . . They were true mustangs." He describes them as weighing about 800 pounds, and mostly cream, buckskin and mouse colored. However, writing in 1923, Cook stated that "in a few places so-called 'wild horses' may be found, but they are not the original breed of mustangs. They are bands of range-bred horses gone wild. . . . but they must not be confused with mustangs."

Today, a great deal of emotion is fueling the campaign to preserve the wild horses. At a minimum, we ought to call them what they are—"stray horses." But this accurate label does not lend itself to emotional fund-raising appeals, which is why some will refuse to acknowledge what ranchers in the West have known for a long time.

STAN SEARLE, SEARLE RANCH, MONUMENT, COLORADO

NO BENEFIT IN REDISTRIBUTION

In *RANGE*'s Summer 2011 issue, Christopher Burkett ["My Inconvenient Garden"] wrote: "It's extremely dangerous to think that when individuals are harmed through bureaucratic depredation, society in general can benefit. If individuals are harmed, society is harmed." I spent many years as a graduate student in the Czech Republic where I learned two major reasons that taking individual property and redistributing it does not benefit society.

The first problem is that redistribution overlooks the hidden values of relationships. In the Czech Republic, I saw family homes that had been taken and converted to libraries. Perhaps if the community had saved and planned, it would have valued its library. However, it was nothing but an arbitrary gift from the state. Even a dollar bill has added value for a person who has worked to earn it. Redistribution severs those relationships and society loses that added value. The loss will never show up on a financial statement but, taken across an entire society, it can be staggering.

The second problem is that you can always justify redistributing anything. That is the fear that haunts a Communist society. Once people realize that anything they hold dear can be taken and portioned out, the result is insecurity, unhappiness, cynicism, and fear of commitment to work or property. *RANGE* readers instinctively know that the government cannot promote the common good by taking property from individuals. These are some of the reasons behind that gut feeling.

SIERRA DAWN STONEBERG HOLT, PH.D.
HINSDALE, MONTANA

ECOTERRORISTS?

While battling the Forest Service over access and closing of roads in 2008, I came up with this definition of those driving the decisions. Ecoterrorist: An individual or organization that uses lies, lobbying, and/or litigation to promote policies that ultimately prove to be detrimental to the environment.

STEVE JENNINGS, DILLON, MONTANA

Thanks for the information on the slaughter of horses ["Indian Horses" by Rod McQueary, Summer 2011]. I really had no idea what impact [slaughterhouse] closings had on the horse industry. This was a subject that I didn't like to talk about. I just couldn't see the sense of killing such a beautiful animal. I know why we kill cattle. I was raised on a small ranch in East Texas. That's just what cows are for—you eat them. I never thought about why people would kill horses. My horses were my best friends, my pets. I didn't have the information for an intelligent viewpoint. So thank you for

the education. This was the first time I saw your magazine. I picked it up and read it cover to cover. *I loved it!* My favorite part was the beef eaters. I would sit for hours and ask my grandparents questions about the old days. I really enjoyed their stories. Such a wonderful magazine!

JODIE ROBINSON, VIA EMAIL

Jodie: Check www.rangemagazine.com and go to the shopping cart. In the books' section, consider "The Red Meat Survivors," which includes more than 100 stories about these great old-timers. I think you'll love it!—Ed.

CALL TO ACTION!

Dave Skinner is a genius! Please keep the articles coming from him. "Where The Wild Lands Are" [Summer 2011] was a very interesting read that will help many fight causes in their areas throughout the West. I personally plan to take action in Arizona with our local- and state-level BLM representatives, using this article as my main resource.

ANDREA MARTINEZ, YUMA, ARIZONA
Check out Dave's "Wild Wild Wet," p. 14, and "Howling Insanity," p. 58.—Ed.

EQUAL ACCESS TO JUSTICE ACT

Chance Gowan's is the best and most comprehensive article describing the devastation of the family ranch in my area that I have read due to EAJA ["Frivolous Lawsuits," Summer 2011]. I met Chance when he was range specialist at the Malheur Forest in Grant County. He does know firsthand the issues faced by our ranchers fighting a number of frivolous lawsuits that are still ongoing and have resulted in the loss of many thousands of acres of grazing for ranchers who depend upon allotments for their survival. As he says, the reasons cited in these suits are bordering upon stupid (my word) and use ESA and NEPA in a focus so narrow as to eliminate virtually any use of resources. Rules made by NOAA, whose focus upon high desert streams escapes me, are impossible to meet, since they require standards that are not met naturally even without grazing. There were about half the cattle grazing in 2010 than there were 20 years ago, yet range conditions, and indeed fish numbers, have changed very little. We are now experiencing near-record high water runoff, which causes and is still causing serious bank damage, extremely muddy water, downfall in streams and forests, land sloughs and rock slides, and loss of habitat for waterfowl nesting on stream banks. And yet they rule that a few cow tracks in a creek crossing cause irreparable damage!

The judges, or in our case one judge every time, know absolutely nothing about the natural climate, geography and geology of our area, and appear to be judging a contest to award

the most glib lawyer or back the most popular environmentally protective philosophy. (Green is a word that has a meaning of its own in our state.)

As Gowan states, the perpetrators of these lawsuits have gained millions of public dollars while the ranchers have been bankrupted in many cases, and seriously hurt in most. In my opinion there are relatively few of these anti-use extremists litigating endlessly, but they have the pocketbooks of thousands of unwitting citizens who fund the nonprofit environmental protection groups, thinking they are saving the world. Then their lawyers get compensated by the courts under the EAJA.

Yes, I could go on and on, but mainly I only wish this information and this article would be published in major magazines, newspapers, and mass media where the uninformed public could be made aware.

MARY MACARTHUR, DAYVILLE, OREGON

BLESSED

"No Makeup, Lots of Dust," by Jolyn Laubacher was a nice story [*RANGE*, Summer 2011]. Jolyn was blessed to be tutored by the Van Normans.

JIM KEEN, AUTHOR/PHOTOGRAPHER OF
"GREAT RANCHES OF THE WEST," VIA EMAIL

Greetings from the wilds of Wyoming! Your magazine is one of America's greatest treasures. I have a quick suggestion—sign up on Twitter. The world of Facebook is O.K., but Twitter is perfect for hardworking folks like ranchers, cowboys and American West lovers. Quick-to-the-point tweets that point out articles and issues to all those throughout your magazine's community and beyond.

Give it a shot—it's an amazing, simple way to energize your base. Thanks for all your excellent efforts and work.

WYATT JOHNSON, STAR VALLEY, WYOMING
Wyatt: Great idea but we're overloaded. Can you and other readers help pass the word? Much can be found at www.rangemagazine.com.—Ed.

Photo below shows twin sisters Olivia and Julia Silvera ready to ride in the Fourth of July parade last year. The theme was "Remember the Constitution," and Olivia came up with



the slogan you see pinned to the saddle, which made me think of *RANGE*. Julia and Olivia are sixth-generation Californians who live in Los Molinos, population around 1,250.

Although Mom and Dad are down to one cow, the girls will take their first market lambs to the Tehama District Fair in September.

SUE MYLIN SILVERA
LOS MOLINOS, CALIFORNIA

BRING A WITNESS

In addition to the suggestions by Richard Hamilton [”Promise & Betrayal” by Joan Chevalier, Summer 2011], I would like to offer a couple more to all those dealing with any government official, whether it is federal, state or local: (1) Never allow any of those mentioned above to participate in any conversation concerning your business without an appointment; (2) Never have a conversation with any of the above without a witness (I suggest a county commissioner since most of this is an economic issue at the very least); (3) Never assume any of these officials are your friends or here to help, so to speak; (4) Never agree to anything without a legal opinion from your attorney; and (5) Forget feeding them, it won’t help.

JOHN E. RADOSEVICH, WHEATLAND, WYO.

REALITY SUCKS

”Indian Horses” by Rod McQueary [Summer 2011] was very enlightening to me. It has been a long time since I was in the Navajo Nation high country. It should not have come as a surprise, as anything negative about what is happening on the reservations rarely appears in the media.

McQueary wrote: ”Excess horses will eat the white sage in Nevada, prairie grasses in Wyoming and high desert forage in Arizona. They will starve out the deer, elk, antelope and sage grouse in Washington. They will destroy salmon habitat and sacred ceremonial plants, all before they destroy themselves. When they do, what will be left?” No one could have said it better. I believe that there are at least 10,000 wild burros in Arizona’s Mohave County alone. The wild burros will finally starve out the feral horses, and the jackrabbits even.

I have had many conversations with my friend, Bill Dubois, who lives in Wilcox, Ariz., about how reading *RANGE* is often depressing. I guess sometimes reality really sucks but we both always read it cover to cover.

VERN FULLER, MESA, ARIZONA

PHEW! JUST IN TIME!

I just wanted to tell you that I was seriously considering not renewing my subscription to *RANGE* because I often didn’t get it read. So I decided to read the last issue and pretty soon I was wrapped up in the stories and studying

the pictures. The rancher is the epitome of self-direction and living off the land, and who better knows how to treat the land they rely on for their living? I love the stories. I’m reupping for two years. Thank you.

CHRIS OLSON, MILFORD, CALIFORNIA

You’re needed now more than ever!

SUSAN YAGER, DURANGO, COLORADO

YOU’RE ASKING FOR WHAT?

Wouldn’t it be great if we were allowed to think on our own? Just think how we could fix and repair things without having to get permission from some official. We could make things right here in this country and not rely on China for the basic things that we need.

We have a president who is no help when we Americans decide to accomplish something. He is the first one to say that in order to ”protect” us we have to get an O.K. from the government. I think that Louis L’Amour said it best and I quote: ”Folks can’t seem to realize that it isn’t a smooth talker we need in there, but a steady man with judgment. Any medicine-show man can spout words if they are written for him. It takes no genius to sound well. To act right and at the right time is something else again.” God Bless America.

BOB COVEY, HOTCHKISS, COLORADO

Wake up America, stop electing New World Order politicians such as Obama, Bush One, Bush Two and Clinton who see only world problems instead of American problems and American solutions. If the above politicians want to be presidents of the world, let them go to the United Nations and leave America to the Americans.

THOMAS JEFFERSON, ELKO, NEVADA

How come the government workers drive new vehicles when we have to lie underneath ours and patch them together to keep ’em runnin’?

DAVE LORD, COTOPAXI, COLORADO

WE LOVE YOU, TOO

My father who’s 90 and just lost his wife of 69 years now lives alone. I started bringing him *RANGE* and he loves it. He just wishes you would print it every month. My dad is one of the few survivors of the 741st Tank Battalion that landed on Omaha Beach on D-day (most tanks sank on the landing). He also fought in the Battle of the Bulge. He said he’s glad to see a magazine that tells what America is really about—and the people. He loves the ”Red Meat Survivors.” Thank you for all you do.

MICHAEL KULICK, AHWAHNEE, CALIFORNIA

SWEET

My son Kyle wrote this about our ranch and surroundings in far northwestern Nevada. He

has since graduated from high school and served six years in the U.S. Navy, on the USS Augusta and USS Toledo nuclear submarines. He now lives and works in Idaho.

Springs of Laughter

By Kyle Bruinsma

I am the spring

Giving water to the sun-scorched desert

I am the chaotic dust devil

Bouncing around looking for fun

I am the comforting breeze of the afternoon

Bringing relief and comfort from the

Blazing morning sun

I am the fire pit

Illuminating the darkness and

Destroying the evil with bliss

Memories of the valley lie in the dry lakebed

For I am the lakebed

The memory of my laughter and kindness

Will last for all eternity

I am the mountains

I will never be forgotten.

Kyle was 16 when he wrote that.

RICHARD BRUINSMA, BIG PINE, CALIFORNIA