

ranching community, academic egos, government policies that only change when public opinion changes, increasing pressures as people and environmental organizations begin to comprehend that what we are doing is not working, and increasing scientific and lay voices calling for a more holistic approach.

After years of observing costly failures to deal with desertification and its associated social breakdown, poverty and violence, the USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance has (as noted in next story) granted the Africa Centre for Holistic Management and its Dimbangombe Ranch \$4.8 million to scale up and spread the knowledge in Southern Africa. Much as I appreciate this as a Zimbabwean, I see the far greater need for similar investment in the United States itself. Only pro-science public opinion demanding and supporting visionary leadership by politicians can do what is required. We have all the money in the world but do not enjoy the luxury of time.

Many years ago on a large Texas ranch, I met a highly respected American wildlifer who had worked in Africa. He made a strange statement that stuck in my mind: "Either you are wrong, Allan, and they will not be able to dig a hole deep enough to bury you in, or you are right and they will not be able to build a monument high enough." I responded that I would be happy with a shallow grave and asked what he thought. He replied that he was sitting on the fence.

Over 30 years have passed with not one scientist pointing out any scientific flaw in the Holistic Management or holistic planned grazing process, while a dwindling number of academics have stated that it is all smoke and mirrors, snake oil, more religion than science, and damaging to wildlife. Not much in the way humans respond to new knowledge has changed in the 500 years since Copernicus and Galileo pointed out that the world was not the centre of the universe. It is time for all who love the land and wildlife and value western culture to get off the fence before it is only preserved in old copies of *RANGE*, faded pictures and cowboy poetry. ■

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Saving the Culture

While solving humanity's most pressing problems. By Jody Butterfield

Livestock cultures everywhere are under threat, not just here in the American West. In the Middle East—Asia and Africa especially—pastoral, livestock-dependent people are being encouraged (or forced) to give up their way of life due to the belief that cattle, sheep and goats are destroying the environment. In many places, standard developmental policy is to reduce livestock numbers, and move the remaining animals off the range and into pens next to settlements that soon have the appearance of slums. In Kenya, where Masai pastoralists have been subjected to such policies, the suicide rate has skyrocketed.

That's not to say that cattle, sheep and goats haven't caused damage. They have, but due to the way they are managed, not merely from their presence. In the Horn of Africa (Ethiopia, Somalia and northern Kenya) where water and grass are rapidly diminishing and competition for the resources that remain is fierce and often violent, pastoralists are herding cattle with AK rifles. Elsewhere, including Asia and the Middle East, the story is similar. Imagine, then, how pastoralists in these regions prick up their ears when they hear that the deterioration can be reversed—

with the help of livestock, and while increasing, rather than decreasing, their numbers.

Nowhere is this more hopeful than in Zimbabwe where the Africa Centre for Holistic Management, founded by myself and my husband, Allan Savory, has been working to translate the experience of U.S. and Southern African ranchers into lessons that apply to communal agro-pastoralists who are living on the edge of starvation. The Africa Centre's Dimbangombe Ranch serves as a learning site where ideas are tested before introducing them to communities, and where community trainers receive education in Holistic Management and planned grazing and practical skills they then take back to their communities to implement.

A key skill that people come to Dimbangombe to master is herding, which even in Africa is becoming a lost art. We brought Americans over to teach Africa Centre herders low-stress herding and handling techniques and the Dimbangombe herders now help train others. Some come from as far away as Kenya and Namibia to relearn what they once knew and to benefit from the knowledge of animal-handling innovators

such as Bud Williams and Temple Grandin.

In January 2010, the Africa Centre received a three-year grant of \$4.8 million from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance to scale up the whole training effort. This included training staffs of other nongovernment organizations in Southern Africa so they could implement their own land restoration through livestock programs. The awarding of the grant was an enormous accomplishment for the Africa Centre, which had struggled for some years to convince weary donors that Holistic Management could achieve results that many were beginning to think were impossible to reach by any means. The results on the Africa Centre's Dimbangombe Ranch (see Allan's story, page 44) provided proof of concept: it really is possible to restore land and water resources with livestock. The challenge now is to translate this success to entire communities—and the early results are promising.

In June 2010, Allan Savory and the Africa Centre won the Buckminster Fuller Challenge Award. Up against 350 projects worldwide, their win came with a prize of \$100,000. It was not only a tribute to the Africa Centre's efforts, but, of course, to Allan Savory and his work of more than four decades, which I have been honored to share for 30 years. The Buckminster Fuller Institute awards this prize each year "to support the development and implementation of a strategy that has significant potential to solve humanity's most pressing problems."

Although I'm obviously and deeply biased, it is an award richly deserved by a team and a leader that has succeeded against incredible odds. It is also a much-longed-for recognition of the fact that the deterioration of our land and water resources is one of humanity's most pressing problems, and that it can be overcome while preserving the rich and vital heritage of pastoral peoples everywhere. ■

Jody Butterfield is program director for the Africa Centre's Land, Water & Livelihoods Restoration Project (funded by USAID) and director of the Savory Institute's Southern Africa Programs. A former journalist specializing in agricultural and environmental issues, she has worked with husband Allan Savory since 1980 to advance the worldwide development of Holistic Management. She can be reached at jbutterfield@savoryinstitute.com.

PHOTOS COURTESY AFRICA CENTRE FOR HOLISTIC MANAGEMENT



The Dimbangombe herd shortly after animals have been let out of the lion-proof night enclosure. Herders are in front to keep animals from moving out too quickly, and keep the herd bunched due to the presence of predators (lion, cheetah, leopard and hyena).



ABOVE: The Buckminster Fuller Challenge Award was presented in June 2010 at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. The Centre took first place amongst 350 projects considered worldwide. The money, according to Allan Savory, is going to be spent "from the bottom up." Pictured from left to right and representing the Savory Institute (SI) and/or the Africa Centre (ACHM): Jim Howell (SI), Daniela Howell (SI), Jody Butterfield SI/ACHM, Allan Savory (SI/ACHM), Laurie Benson (SI), Zakhe Mpopu (ACHM), Shannon Horst (SI) and Precious Phiri (ACHM). OPPOSITE: Jody Butterfield with trainers for the Africa Centre. Front row, from left: Jody, Sibon Ncube, Mupenyu Mberi, Sunny Moyo and John Nyilika. Back row, from left: Precious Phiri, Tawana Ngwenya, Oscar Nwenye, Forget Mavenge, Nicholas Ncube and Elias Mcube.

The Brown Revolution

Over the past year, the Savory Institute (SI), along with John Fullerton and Larry Lunt—East Coast financiers steeped in the world of triple bottom line, or impact investing—have been nurturing the formation of an exciting new SI/Fullerton/Lunt partnership. SI brings nearly five decades of Holistic Management practice and expertise, and Fullerton/Lunt bring their experience, contacts and unique perspective in the world of finance and the raising of capital. The result is a newly formed entity—Grasslands LLC.

"Our Grasslands effort," Savory says, "is rooted in SI's quest to engender a Brown Revolution—a refocusing of land management on the regeneration of the world's topsoil." Fullerton and Lunt had been hunting for a project with meaning, scope, and game-changing potential. They have found that in their partnership with the Savory Institute, and the result is Grasslands. For more information, check out www.savoryinstitute.com.