

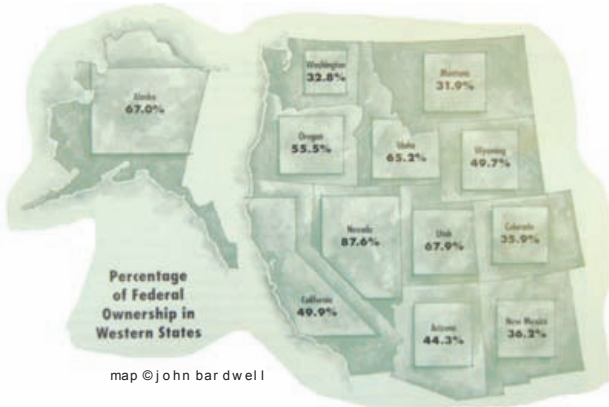


## Up Front

*Rich and sweet.*  
By C.J. Hadley

All jobs rely on one of two industries: mining and agriculture,” says Mike Rowe, star of “Dirty Jobs” (see p.10). “Every tangible thing our society needs is either pulled from the ground or grown from the ground. Without these fundamental industries there would be no jobs of any kind. There would be no economy.”

When I lived in New York City, Central Park was a gem—843 acres of trees, grass, ponds, playgrounds, and a horse rental outfit. It was as close as inhabitants got to “the country.” When I discovered Nevada 40 years ago, it was tough to even find a city. With 110,000 square miles of high, cold desert, 235 mountain ranges, and our southernmost glacier, it’s what *Washington Post* reporter Joel Garreau



called “the empty quarter.” Inhabited by gamblers, miners, ranchers and farmers, it was jaw-slackening to learn that federal lands in this enormous state amounted to 87.6 percent. That doesn’t leave much to own, but a whole lot to play with.

In this issue, Mike Coffman offers a special report on federal lands (p. 40). “As with almost everything else that has been twisted from the original,” he writes, “the Founders never intended that there should be large federal landownership. When they wrote the Constitution, feudalism and manorialism still existed in France and many of the Founding Fathers were eyewitnesses to the brutal treatment of the peasants under such a system. Today, that same brutality is crushing western landowners. In 1783, Thomas Jefferson insisted that all federal land should be sold as quickly as possible, and ‘shall never after, in any case, revert to

the United States.”

Not enough people care about that. Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-UT) does. He said on July 29, 2011: “During the Obama administration alone, we have seen a major effort from these Washington bureaucrats to block access to the land to all but a few uses. Our lands are rich with natural resources.... I’ve never seen a more hostile regulatory atmosphere for developing...energy on federal lands.”

Obama is not alone. Bill Clinton took 1.6 million acres of southern Utah for Grand Staircase-Escalante National Park. Using the Antiquities Act, he denied use of the largest deposit of the world’s cleanest coal and high-paying jobs to thousands. The second-largest deposit is in Indonesia (owned by Clinton supporters). That energy is shipped to China while our clean coal is untouched. It would have needed only a few hundred surface acres to mine the coal in Utah.

Rural America can save the country by carefully using natural resources. In 2001, the deputy chief of the Forest Service told *RANGE* when asked about overgrown, dead and dying forests, “We are going to let it burn.” Edgar Kupillas of Klamath Falls, Ore., writes:

“The U.S. has gone from a creditor nation to a debtor nation during the latter part of my life. The revenues of the U.S. Forest Service and the BLM in Oregon used to exceed expenses—in the ’60s, ’70s and ’80s—and they paid the counties part of those revenues. Now both agencies operate at a loss and the counties receive funds from the general treasury, and our forests are going to hell for lack of management.”

The federal agencies are managing these lands but not to America’s benefit. Coffman’s report explains it well.

But there are also federal land-use nuggets in Henry Lamb’s “Agenda 21 Goes Country” (p.25), Steve Wilmeth’s “Parallel Universes” (p.26), Trent Loos’ “Don’t Count on the Rabbit’s Foot” (p.57) and Phil Hall’s “The Meaning of Wilderness” (p.66).

More than a trillion tax dollars have been used to back “clean” private-enterprise solar energy projects for friends of the administration. Cost is up to \$80 million per job. On Oct. 15, 2011, Steve Forbes said on Fox News, “Clean power equals dirty politics.”

Federal land-management policy affects everyone in the U.S. We are an energy-rich nation that, with a change in direction, could use our natural resources to put hundreds of thousands of people to work while rebooting our economy. And we could sell surplus energy abroad, to people who don’t like us.

Wouldn’t that be rich and sweet? ■

## RANGE

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