

'Cattle-free by '93':
Evaluating the impacts of environmental activism
against public lands ranching in the American West,
25 years later

By
Cloe Dickson
University of Colorado Boulder

A thesis submitted to the
University of Colorado at Boulder
in partial fulfillment
of the requirements to receive
Honors designation in
Environmental Studies
May 2019

Thesis advisors:
Patricia Limerick, Center of the American West, Committee Chair
Dale Miller, Department of Environmental Studies, Honors Council
Phoebe Young, Department of History

© 2019 by Cloe Dickson
All rights reserved

ABSTRACT

The 'Cattle-free by '93' campaign sought to end to cattle grazing on public rangelands in the American West. The slogan, popularized as bumper stickers and other anti-ranching signage distributed by environmental activist groups, demonstrates the burgeoning frustrations towards public lands ranching at the end of the 20th century. In this paper, I explore the key figures and publications of 'Cattle-free by '93', as well as studying the environmental, economic, and cultural context in which the campaign formed. The central questions I seek to answer are: (1) What were the motivations of 'Cattle-free by '93'?, (2) What were the direct and indirect outcomes of the campaign?, and (3) What does the formation of 'Cattle-free by '93' tell us about rancher/environmentalist conflict? I rely mainly on primary literature including local and national newspaper articles, scientific journal publications, and federal government documents, as well as secondary texts about the public lands ranching issue. While 'Cattle-free by '93' failed to remove cattle from public rangelands, I find that the campaign had several significant outcomes: *increasing rancher/environmentalist partnership*, as demonstrated in the formation of organizations such as the Malpais Borderlands Group and the Quivira Coalition; *highlighting issues of traditional federal rangeland management and policy*, as illustrated by the Clinton Administration's failures to implement rangeland management reform; and, lastly, *creating awareness of conflicting land use ideologies*, as observed in the encroachment of residential development adjacent to public rangelands and the proliferation of the 'Cows Not Condos' counter-campaign. In sum, the rise of 'Cattle-free by '93' offers valuable insight into the contested uses of public rangelands, in addition to serving as a worthwhile study of natural resource management conflict within the broader field of modern American environmental history.

PREFACE

I am fascinated with the many facets of cattle ranching in the American West: the culture, the politics, the economics, the environmental impacts, the whole ordeal. I do, however, recognize that I am not alone in such fascination; many people, both in the United States and elsewhere, have come to find cattle ranching mystifying, as well. I, however, contend that there is one key difference that sets me apart from my contemporaries in the field of cattle ranching fascination: I don't eat beef. In fact, I haven't eaten animal products, in any form, for roughly the last seven years, which is to say that I am not exactly the poster child of the Colorado Cattlemen's Association, but nor do I want to be, either. Instead, I offer the reader a brief explanation on how a vegan-environmentalist from New Hampshire become fascinated with cattle ranching in the American West.

I stopped eating meat in the 7th grade, after becoming aware of the treatment of animals in factory farms. I eventually went vegan a few years later, a move that my parents regarded as just another phase that all teenage girls go through. Veganism to me, however, was and is much more than a diet; it was a way in which to view the world, where the food on my plate represented my compassion and respect for all sentient beings. Through veganism, I became more aware of the environmental impacts of the industrial production of animals for food, which led me to declare my major in Environmental Studies during my first semester at CU Boulder. During this time, I joined the campus chapter of the Vegan Justice League, where I found a community of like-minded individuals who were also concerned about the consequences industrial animal agriculture. I felt, more than ever before, reaffirmed to my belief in the vegan lifestyle.

All this would change, a few semesters ago, after taking a course in sustainable food systems. After class one day, I began talking with one of my co-workers about the federal subsidization of meat and dairy in the United States, which we had covered in lecture that day. I spoke passionately about government subsidies, depleted waterways, and ruined rangelands, all of which was underpinned by the mythical sense of rugged individualism so often touted by the American cowboy who uses public lands to raise cattle. Unbeknownst to me, the co-worker I was speaking with happened to be a member of a five-generation ranching family based in Elko County, Nevada, a place that could be the capital of western American cattle ranching. In response to my argument, my co-worker brought up points I had failed to consider: the costs of

running a ranch, an amount that cannot be measured purely in economic means, especially when considering the immense physical and emotional demand of life in rural Nevada. My coworker spoke with nostalgia of a childhood spent in the Ruby Valley in the summer, of family trips to stock shows and rodeos, of learning how to run a ranch from grandparents who had been doing it their entire life. I was taken aback by this conversation: our discussions in the classroom rarely considered the perspective of the American rancher. It was after this conversation that I first became interested in the many aspects and arguments of cattle ranching in the American West.

The seed of my fascination began to take root in the summer of 2018, when I stepped foot on a cattle ranch for the first time in my life. I had the opportunity to do undergraduate research at the Canyonlands Research Center (CRC) outside of Canyonlands National Park near Moab, UT. The CRC, owned by the Nature Conservancy since the 1990s, remains a functional cattle ranch committed to improving the western range through coalition of scientists, land managers, ranchers, and other local stakeholders, all of who are dedicated to combining science with traditional uses of the range. Working with Dr. Nichole Barger of the Ecology and Evolutionary Biology department, I participated in a monitoring program that sought to test different approaches to rangeland restoration in an area that had been heavily degraded by past livestock grazing. The site we were working on was in desperate need of rehabilitation; after a century of disturbance by cattle moving across the landscape to forage, the soil was loose enough that, coupled with the steady desert winds, we would leave the field each day with sand in our eyes, ears, hair, mouths. I still have sand in the bag I used to take with me to the field. To compound on past degradation, preliminary observations from the study showed minimal improvement in rangeland conditions since Dr. Barger's experiments began, which could be attributed to the historic drought facing the Colorado Plateau during 2018. Such outcomes reinforced the challenges associated with restoring aridland ecosystems.

Throughout my experience, I saw firsthand the implications of poor range management techniques and how past problems related to livestock grazing remain issues for the range today. However, while hanging out around the CRC, I also saw caught a glimpse into cattle ranching culture: cowboys on horseback driving stock across the landscape, federal agents attending trainings on how to better go about managing the rangeland, the sounds of distant moos that always seemed to be coming from somewhere else. In the month that I spent in the Moab area collecting soil data, I began to understand some of the ways in which cattle ranching gives a

sense of identity to ranchers and their families. More than that, though, I began to see the interdependence that exists between people and the land on which they work; how the sustained health and productivity of the immediate environment was critical to the physical, economic, and social wellbeing of ranchers and their families. At the end of the day, whether the western range was in a good state or not, I could pack up our lab's equipment and head home, where I would be just another vegan-environmentalist in Boulder. If the range was overgrazed and the forage depleted, it would be these people, the ranchers and their families, who noticed, not me.

I was not aware of the 'Cattle-free by '93' movement until Dr. Patricia Limerick brought it up during one of our first initial meetings to discuss a potential senior thesis. It was a few weeks after I had returned from the field and I was itching to learn more about the history of cattle ranching, specifically conflict between environmentalists and ranchers that seemed to be rooted in the range itself. Dr. Limerick spoke of seeing 'Cattle-free by '93' bumper stickers and op-ed pieces throughout the American West during the late 1980s and early 1990s, encapsulating the hyper awareness taking place around the country during this time. After a couple weeks meditating on the phenomena of wanting to outright remove cattle from the western range, and thinking back to my own heated conversations with my coworker, I thought it would be an interesting idea to study just how the 'Cattle-free by '93' bumper stickers came to be. It felt especially relevant for me personally, considering that prior to my summer in Utah I too might have advocated for our public lands being cattle-free, too.

The topic of this paper and my own fascination with cattle ranching in the American West, then, was born out of direct and indirect experiences with American public rangelands. Throughout the process of completing this paper, I have undergone a significant transformation in the way that I think about the issue of public lands ranching. While my work on these ideas ultimately culminates in the production of this paper, I hope to do more than to merely write a paper to be awarded honors upon graduation. This paper marks a reckoning, one not only of great personal significance, but of hopefully larger implications as well. While this paper focuses on a campaign to end public lands ranching, it also serves as a discussion of conflicts over land use in the American West, which will only become more pressing as the threat of climate change, coupled with a rising regional population, looms nearby. As a way to deal with such reality, I hope to generate new insight into managing the places that provide for us, inspire us,

and ultimately remind us of the importance of protecting the rangelands of the American West for generations to come.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>INTRODUCTION</i>	9
Imagining the West: conflict of visions	9
Public lands ranching: conflict overview	11
Research questions and scope	12
<i>BACKGROUND</i>	15
American rangelands: defining features	15
The western range closes	16
Multiple use and benefits of rangelands: modern management approaches	17
Perceptions of public lands ranching in the late 20th century	20
<i>EVALUATION</i>	22
Origins of ‘Cattle-free by ‘93’ campaign	22
Chronology of key figures and publications	28
Major outcomes of ‘Cattle-free by ‘93’	45
Legacies of ‘Cattle-free by ‘93’	56
<i>DISCUSSION</i>	63
Highlight the issues of traditional federal rangeland management and policy	63
Increase environmentalist/rancher partnership	65
Creating awareness of conflicting land use ideologies	66
<i>CONCLUSION</i>	68
Evolution of cattle-free activism: from fringe movement to the “radical middle”	68
The role of environmentalist/rancher cooperation in the era of global climate change ..	69

INTRODUCTION

Imagining the West: conflict of visions

When asked to imagine the American West, a person might think of the following: space, endless and wide-open, especially in contrast to navy, star-studded abyssal skies; natural beauty, the kind that is both dumbfounding and awe-inspiring, with features that seem out of this world by very existence; endurance, the recognition of time in which it took these seemingly timeless landscapes to come to be. The images we generate, the ones of white-capped rivers snaking through unending mountain ranges and cavernous canyons forming cracks in otherwise impermeable aridlands, collectively speak to the widespread fascination with the American West and the distinct role that its environment plays in molding our perceptions of the region today. Westerners and non-westerners alike know these places for the wilderness that characterizes the region, the type of pristine, unmarked environment that is largely unavailable elsewhere in the contiguous United States. It is the American West that inspires many to steward natural resources so that future generations may have similar experiences, too.

All this is not to say that there is a universal accord on how we manage the natural resources of the American West. While the region might be at the forefront in sparking awareness over the importance of environmental protection, the American West further serves as a testament to the difficulties associated with managing the natural world. Since the mass migrations westward and the encroachment of European-American citizens onto indigenous land, the American West has found itself at the vanguard of the quintessential debate in modern environmental philosophy: should we love the land or use it? Are we able to do both? For generations, westerners and non-westerners alike have disputed the management of the region's abundant natural resources. This is due, as described above, to the unique physical, geographic,

and ecological features that characterize its environment, making it a place rich with resources that could be extracted from the earth and utilized for economic gain. While some may see the intrinsic value of preserving the American West's natural beauty, others see dollar signs in extracting the region's defining resources. It is important to note that appreciating the environment is not without ramifications of its own; recreational economies, such as the building of ski resorts and the establishment of hiking trails, are largely driven by profit and have proven to have significant environmental consequences. As a result, it is difficult to compare those in favor of environmental protection to those in favor of using natural resources for human benefit, as there is considerable overlap between these arbitrary prescriptions.

When speaking of natural resource management, especially in the American West, one must factor into the conversation the common denominator that is the backbone of the region's geopolitics: public lands, which are by and large found within the boundaries of the eleven contiguous western states. In this context, I am referring to federally-held land that is owned by the American public and managed by certain federal agencies, including the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service, and U.S. Forest Service. Since the creation of the public lands system in the late 19th century, the US has been rife with controversy, specifically in regards to the conflicting opinions on its management and uses. Throughout the American West exists a complex duality: are public lands meant to be molded for purpose of economic gain and the pursuit of objective-minded progress, or is it a land best left untouched for the sake of continuity and the preservation of natural beauty itself? When you consider the fact that all tax-paying Americans technically own a huge swath of the American West, including its aesthetically, economically, and politically valuable natural resources, it is understandable why natural resource management in the region remains largely contested today.

Public lands ranching: conflict overview

The history of cattle ranching in the present-day American West long predates the establishment of the widespread public domain. Over the last century, the region has undergone significant transformation in terms of its environmental, political, and cultural histories, with cattle ranching often connecting these distinct pasts to form a unique aspect of American life. Precisely, public lands ranching captures two characteristically American inventions, the notion of the public domain and the myth of the rugged cowboy, which work hand in hand to reinforce the complexity of effective natural resource management on federally-held rangelands throughout the American West.

In studying the public lands ranching debate, there are two traditionally competing groups: environmentalists and ranchers. It should be noted that such categorization is largely arbitrary and somewhat misleading when considering the complexity of the public lands ranching issue. Nonetheless, it is a useful framework in which to study the competing uses of federally-owned rangelands in the American West.

As my former environmental history professor, Dr. Phoebe Young, often noted in class: there is no single environmental movement, nor is there a truly one-dimensional environmentalist prototype. In this paper, I refer to those opposed to public lands ranching as environmentalists, who tend to cite cattle ranching as a catalyst for a slew of environmental consequences on public land, including the pollution of waterways and overgrazing of native plants. It is by these claims that many, but not all, environmentalists and environmental organization call for an end to public lands ranching. Here, it is important to note the varying positions to which these so-called environmentalists feel about the topic of cattle ranching more

broadly, with some approving of the practice on private lands and denouncing it on the public domain, with others outright forbidding cattle ranching at all costs.

On the other side of the public lands ranching issue are ranchers themselves, specifically those that use the public domain for at least some part of their cattle production. In this paper, the term rancher refers people and organizations working to defend the importance of cattle ranching in many rural communities across the American West, in addition to promoting the notion of the American ranching tradition predating public land designation across the region. Rancher as a term, moreover, applies to the complex network of pro-ranching advocates, which often includes ranching communities and citizens of the rural American West.

Research questions, scope, & methods

I have focused this paper around the demand of some environmentalists and environmental groups to end ranching on American public lands. Between the early 1980s and the early 1990s, the ‘Cattle-free by ’93’ campaign became a rallying cry for environmental activist groups who distributed literature and items like bumper stickers and signage to promote the awareness of the public lands ranching issue. The ‘Cattle-free by ’93’ campaign, as well as the broader anti-grazing rhetoric within the environmental community at the time, has proven to be an opportune research area, for several different reasons. While there has been considerable literature produced analyzing other movements related to the western range, including the Sagebrush Rebellion and Wise Use movement, as well as significant coverage of conflict over private rights to public lands between the federal government and certain western ranchers. All this is to say that the ‘Cattle-free by ’93’ campaign and its derivatives is a worthwhile and much deserving research pursuit.

Three distinct questions will guide my study of the public lands ranching issue:

- (1) What were the motivations of ‘Cattle-free by ‘93’?
- (2) What were the direct and indirect outcomes?
- (3) What does the formation of the ‘Cattle-free by ‘93’ movement tell us about the nature of rancher/environmentalist conflict?

To answer the questions I have posed above, I conducted extensive research in primary and secondary literature. In terms of primary literature, I examined local and national newspaper archives covering the public lands ranching debate between the early 1980s and late 2000s, which enabled me to trace the evolving public discourse about this issue. I used peer-reviewed scientific journal articles, which equipped me with the research on environmental, economic, and cultural aspects of public lands ranching. I studied federal government documents, which provided me with information on how public rangelands are managed. I looked at texts written by leaders of the campaign, which gave me an opportunity to assess individual motivations, tactics, and perspectives. For secondary literature, I focused on scholarly journals articles, book reviews, and textbooks related to the historical, political, ecological, cultural, and economic lenses of the US public lands ranching system, which, in concert, put me at a position to understand the many dimensions of ‘Cattle-free by ‘93’.

There will be three major sections of this paper: the background, the analysis, and the discussion. In the background section, I offer necessary information related to the history of cattle ranching on public lands in the American West. In the analysis, I trace the formation of the movement to end public lands ranching, beginning with John Muir in the late 19th century to the creation of ‘Cattle-free by ‘93’ and other campaigns like it. I pay particular attention to the major developments within the movement to end public lands ranching during the 1980s and 1990s, including publications such as *Sacred Cows at the Public Trough* (1983), and *Waste of the West*

(1991), as well as coverage in western newspaper archives related to the public lands ranching conflict. In this section, I also look at the outcomes of the ‘Cattle-free by ‘93’ campaign, specifically in regards to national rangeland policy during the Clinton Administration, as well as the formation of several environmentalist/rancher partnerships that formed as a direct result of the movement to end public lands ranching. Lastly, I explore the ways in which the conversation around ranching has changed in the environmental community in more recent years, specifically the ‘Cows Not Condos’ campaign, with specific focus on the implications in the arena of public lands ranching. In the discussion, I comment on three significant results of the ‘Cattle-free by ‘93’ movement, which are: (1) increasing environmentalist/rancher partnerships, (2) highlighting issues of traditional federal rangeland management and policy, and (3) creating awareness of conflicting land use regimes. At the conclusion, I summarize my findings, where I ultimately make the claim effective management of public and private rangelands will become increasingly important in the context of global climate change, underscoring the necessity of cooperation of both ranchers and environmentalists in guiding ecologically, economically, and socially sustainable approaches to the issue.

BACKGROUND

American rangelands: defining features

Rangelands are extremely diverse ecosystems and demonstrate considerable variation throughout the world. According to the United States Environmental Protection agency, rangelands are defined as “lands on which the native vegetation (climax or natural potential plant community) is predominantly grasses, grass-like plants, forbs, or shrubs suitable for grazing or browsing use”. Rangelands produce a diverse array of tangible products, including forage, wildlife habitat, water, minerals, energy, recreation, and wood, as well as intangible products, such as natural beauty and wilderness (U.S. Forest Service). As such, rangelands are both economically, socially, and culturally valuable.

There are about 770 million acres of rangelands in the United States (U.S. Forest Service). American rangelands are owned and managed in the following ways: about 50 percent are privately-held, 43 percent are managed by the federal government, and the remainder managed by state and local governments (U.S. Forest Service). Under the federal management category, the U.S. Forest Service, of the Department of Agriculture, manages about 96 million acres of rangelands, whereas the Bureau of Land Management, of the Department of the Interior, manages about 155 million acres of rangelands (U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management).

Since the late 19th century, cattle ranching on western rangelands have significantly shaped the ecology, politics, and culture of the American West. Rangelands serve as the most prominent type of land in the eleven western states, with about 70% of total land area found throughout the region is considered rangeland (Hess 2010). The arid and semi-arid nature of western rangelands was not suitable for agriculture or homesteading without irrigation, which

drove the expansion of the ranching industry during the early 1800s, when ranchers could keep their stock out on the region's vast, undeveloped lands (Heller 2015). The so-called "cattle kingdom" reigned over western rangelands due to several factors, including the removal of native bison, the forced relocation of Native American people, and the increasing consumer appetite for beef as a source of food (Merrill 2002). As we will see, the rise of the ranching industry considerably influenced the management of western rangelands.

The western range closes

As westward migration of European-Americans increased during the 19th century, the United States government was prompted to create an agency to manage the huge tracts of western lands. The General Land Office was created in 1812, which was designed to rapidly dispose of public lands (Heller 2015). At the time, the government ordered the General Land Office to "transfer public lands into private ownership, transform wilderness areas into agriculturally productive areas, and generate income for the government" (Heller 2015). In order to do this, the General Land Office was responsible for administering several key policies in the management of public lands. As western migration increased, alongside the rise of the American ranching industry, several key policies were created to manage ranchers who used public rangelands. The Stock Raising Homestead Act of 1916 allowed settlers to claim 640 acres of western land for the intent of raising livestock (Bureau of Land Management). The Stock Raising Homestead Act quadrupled the previous land parcel size that the General Land Office distributed under the Homestead Act, which effectively encouraged settlement, as well as participation in the livestock industry.

Over time, conflict among ranchers emerged as rangeland quality declined. "The unregulated grazing that had occurred for decades on the open range, in addition to creating

social conflict, had caused extensive damage to soil, plants, streams, and springs” (Heller 2015). In response, Congress was prompted to pass the Taylor Grazing Act in 1934, which is the first federal attempt at managing public lands grazing (Heller 2015). The Taylor Grazing Act authorized the Secretary of the Interior to establish grazing districts, which operates on a permit system where ranchers purchase permits to graze livestock within the districts (Heller 2015). As a result, the Taylor Grazing Act attempted to protect rangelands by controlling grazing through the districting and permitting process, while also working to stabilize the livestock industry (Anderson 2000). The Taylor Grazing Act set the precedent for the basis of rangeland management today.

Multiple use and benefits of rangelands: modern management approaches

There are several key features that define modern rangeland policy during the 1960s to 1980s. There was little public pressure to manage rangelands based on their multitude of benefits outside of this time frame (Brunson 2009). One of the reasons why rangelands received little attention was due to the general perception that rangelands were much less valuable than other land types, specifically in the American West (Brunson 2009). From 1960 to 1980, there was an increasing awareness of the multiple benefits and uses of rangelands (Brunson 2009). Below are several important laws that were passed during this time frame in response to mounting appreciation of rangelands across the American West.

The first key law of the 1960-1980 period of rangeland management was the Multiple Use Sustained Yield Act of 1960. The policy reads as follows: “the national forests are established and shall be administered for outdoor recreation, range, timber, watershed, and wildlife and fish purposes.” (Multiple Use Sustained Yield Act of 1960). The Multiple Use Sustained Yield Act, which is sometimes shortened to MUSYA, is critical in understanding

contemporary rangeland management. Per MUSYA, multiple use is defined as the “management of all the various renewable surface resources of the national forests so that they are utilized in the combination that will best meet the needs of the American people” (Multiple Use Sustained Yield Act of 1960). Similarly, sustained yield is defined as the “achievement and maintenance in perpetuity of a high-level annual or regular periodic output of the various renewable resources of the national forests without impairment for the productivity of the land” (Multiple Use Sustained Yield Act of 1960). MUSYA codifies the notion that many different activities can take place on public lands as long as each activity is conducted in a way that does not get in the way of other uses. In doing so, MUSYA seeks to harmonize the numerous types of activities taking place on public lands, from ranching to recreation, by giving no preferential treatment to one use over another. The codification of multiple use by way of MUSYA, however, may have ultimately contributing to the opening of the floodgate in the battleground of rangeland management in the future.

The passing of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) demonstrated the federal government’s commitment to maintaining ownership of public lands. FLPMA reaffirms the delegation of various federal agencies to continue the regulating the multiple activities that take place on American public lands. Public lands are defined as “any land and interest in land owned by the United States within the several States and administered by the Secretary of the Interior through the Bureau of Land Management” (Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976). FLPMA is important in the context of the federal commitment to the stewardship of public lands. The law reads: “the public lands [are to] be managed in a manner that will protect the scientific, scenic, historical, ecological, environmental, air and atmospheric, water resource, and archeological values” (Federal Land Policy and Management

Act of 1976). FLPMA is notable for putting the making the many distinct values of public lands into federal law.

Many pro-environmental groups were unsatisfied with FLPMA, which encouraged Congress to pass the Public Rangelands Improvement Act two years later, in 1978. The Public Rangelands Improvement Act reaffirmed the nation's commitment to monitoring trends in public rangeland conditions, which acknowledges that "vast segments of the public rangelands are producing less than their potential for livestock, wildlife habitat, recreation, forage, and water and soil conservation benefits, and for that reason are in an unsatisfactory condition" (Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978). Such characteristics included soil loss, desertification, and an overall decrease in productivity for the western range, have implications for watersheds, wildlife habitat, forage resources for livestock, increase flood danger, and overall reduce the aesthetic and recreational value of lands (Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978). One major outcome of the Public Rangelands Improvement Act was the way it impacted federal management approaches. As a result, the BLM changed its management techniques to focus on restoring specific natural resources of rangeland ecosystems, such as riparian areas, wildlife, plant species, and culturally historical objects (Heller 2015).

The Public Rangelands Improvement Act (PRIA) of 1978 is critical to understanding the economic component of public lands ranching in the modern day. The Act calculated a grazing fee for all public lands managed by both the BLM and the U.S. Forest Service across 16 western states (BLM). According to the formula created by the Act, the grazing fee cannot dip below \$1.35 per animal unit month, which is known as an AUM (BLM). Furthermore, grazing fees cannot increase or decrease more than 25 percent compared to that of the year prior, setting limitations to the amount at which grazing fees can change from year-to-year (BLM). The Act

shows particular concern for the “long-term local and regional climatic and economic changes”, reflecting the various roles that the range plays in western life (Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978).

In sum, MUSYA, FLPMA, and PRIA serve as the framework for the management of American public lands. MUSYA, with its focus on multiple use and sustained yield, suggests that many different types of activities can and should be allowed on public lands. FLMPA reaffirmed the notion of multiple use, while also acknowledging the federal government’s commitment to protecting the country’s public land system. In a similar vein, PRIA codified the importance of rangeland stewardship, as well as setting up the economic basis of public lands ranching today. Together, these three laws are cornerstones in understanding the public lands ranching issue.

Perceptions of public lands ranching in the late 20th century

The laws enacted between 1960 and 1980 mark a shift in the perception and use of American rangelands for the purpose of cattle ranching. While some rangelands are privately-held, many ranchers use some part of the public domain to raise cattle. Mark Brunson and George Wallace (2002) make the case that the category of ownership is the single factor that ultimately dictates how people feel about cattle ranching. The majority of the negative attention attributed to ranching in the American West is usually targeted to ranchers who use public lands to graze livestock (Brunson and Wallace 2002). By nature of its public designation, American citizens feel as though they have a legitimate stake in the happenings of public rangelands, seeing as they themselves technically own such resources. Moreover, there is a greater chance of advocacy campaigns in the public arena, as well. As opposed to privately-held rangelands, “activists who oppose western livestock management have the political and legal leverage to

force changes in management of public lands as opposed to private property” (Brunson and Wallace 2002, p. 94). The contested use of public rangelands would ultimately create a breeding ground for the anti-ranching activism that would take root in the American West during the 1980s and 1990s.

‘Cattle-free by ‘93’ arose in response the use of public lands in the cattle ranching industry. During the late 20th century, anti-ranching activism that flourished across western rangelands, as well as in other parts of the country, as well. Activists distributed bumper stickers, wrote op-ed pieces, and formed grassroots coalitions aimed at ending the U.S. system of public lands ranching. It should be noted that ‘Cattle-free by ‘93’ is one of several anti-ranching movements happening during the 1980s and 1990s. Other activist campaigns, such as the broader ‘Free Our Public Lands’, represent the growing dissatisfaction with the way that ranchers used public rangelands. It is important to note that in this paper I will use ‘Cattle-free by ‘93’ as an umbrella term for range of environmental, economic, and cultural arguments for demanding that public lands ranching end during the late 20th century. I will discuss ‘Cattle-free by ‘93’ and anti-ranching activism more broadly as a means to discuss environmentalist/rancher conflict during the 1980s and 1980s, in addition to studying the motivations, outcomes, and implications of such campaigns on American rangelands in the present day.

EVALUATION

Origins of ‘Cattle-free by ‘93’ campaign

Two key figures are elemental to the rise of the ‘Cattle-free by ‘93’ movement. John Muir, in the late 19th century, and Bernard DeVoto, in the early 20th century, both wrote about the harmful nature of livestock grazing on public lands. Prior to the rise of ‘Cattle-free by ‘93’ and the formation of grassroots campaigns to end public lands ranching, Muir and DeVoto created a foundation of anti-ranching rhetoric in the environmental community that endured well into the late 20th century.

John Muir is considered of the original “anti-livestock crusaders” (Wuerthner 2002, p. 29). Muir spent a significant amount of time in the southwestern Sierra Mountains, mostly for the purpose of studying the distribution and ecology of sequoia trees (Wuerthner 2002). During these “ramblings” in the region, Muir was confronted by serious degradation of the landscape, including “loggers hacking up the ancient sequoia trees” and the “claiming [of] land for private ownership” (Wuerthner 2002, p. 29). These discoveries were elemental in Muir’s transition from a naturalist to an advocate of land stewardship, with a particular vehemence towards extractive industries that put the sustainability of natural landscapes in jeopardy (Wuerthner 2002).

During this time, Muir also spent a considerable amount of time in the presence of domestic sheep. Over time, Muir began viewing the impact of sheep grazing in the Sierras as the “greatest threat” to its ecosystem, more so than privatization of land held in common or logging old growth forests (Wuerthner 2002, p. 29). Muir described domestic sheep as “hooved locusts” in reference to the mass migration of grasshoppers that are known to cause excessive damage to forests (Wuerthner 2002). A few years later, in 1889, Muir met Robert Underwood Johnson, who was the associate editor of the nation’s leading magazine, *Century*. On a particular trip to

Tuolumne Meadows in Yosemite, Johnson and Muir saw first-hand the particularly devastating effects of sheep grazing on the landscape, which “launched Muir on a diatribe against sheep” (Wuerthner 2002, p. 30). The passion of Muir and Johnson against livestock grazing in the Sierras would inspire many people in the decades to come.

It is important to note that at this time, in 1889, Yosemite was a state park, not yet under federal management. The only way that Muir’s despised sheep could be legally excluded from the park boundaries would be to establish Yosemite as a national park (Wuerthner 2002). Cognizant of such technicalities, Johnson urged Muir to work to establish Yosemite National Park as a way to “exclude livestock from the Sierran high country” (Wuerthner 2002, p. 30). In addition, Johnson agreed to publish anything that Muir wrote on the topic of environmental destruction caused by livestock grazing (Wuerthner 2002). In 1890, Muir wrote two articles on livestock grazing: “The Treasures of Yosemite” and “Features of the Proposed National Park”, both of which promoted the establishment of Yosemite National Park, thereby encouraging the ban of livestock from grazing in the Sierras (Wuerthner 2002). Yosemite was ultimately designated as a national park not to exclude livestock, but for economic reasons, with Daniel Zumwalt of the Southern Pacific Railroad pushing for its creation as a means to transport tourists across the country (Wuerthner 2002). The history of Yosemite National Park helps put into the context the origins of anti-grazing rhetoric, especially how certain approaches were considered in reducing the impact of livestock grazing, such as putting aside land for the purpose of preservation.

The establishment of Yosemite National Park brought to light the two dominant approaches to natural resource management: preservation versus conservation. In 1891, Congress passed the Forest Reserve Act, which would later allow President Benjamin Harrison to create

the Sierra Forest Reserve, a four-million acre piece of land from Yosemite south to Kern River drainage (Wuerthner 2002). “Harrison’s proclamation,” writes Wuerthner, “signaled a marked reversal of public land policy.” Prior to President Harrison’s designation of the Sierra Forest Reserve, it was common to privatize land for the purpose of exploitation. At this time, both national parks and forest reserves forbade livestock grazing, as well banning mining and logging (Wuerthner 2002). As such, there was significant push back from western miners, loggers, and ranchers, who were more likely to back the opposing conservation philosophy popularized by the first director of the U.S. Forest Service, Gifford Pinchot (Wuerthner 2002). The Wise Use movement, as it came to fruition in the late 20th century, promoted the idea that “a scientifically managed forest was actually better off than an unmanaged forest” (Wuerthner 2002, p. 32). Compared to movements to end public lands ranching, Wise Use relied on the notion that many different activities could take place on the land, so long as it is managed accordingly.

Preservation, or the notion that wilderness must be put aside for its own sake, has long been a source of division within the natural resource management community. When Congress passed the Forest Management Act of 1897, forest reserves were opened up to logging, as well as mining and livestock grazing (Wuerthner 2002). While conservationists like Gifford Pinchot was a proponent of this move, John Muir on the other hand remained adamant that livestock grazing threatened watersheds and wildlife, as well as negatively impacting the ecology of the overall forest ecosystem (Wuerthner 2002). “It was inconceivable to Muir,” writes Wuerthner, “that anyone concerned with conservation would advocate livestock grazing in forest reserves” (Wuerthner 32). In other words, Muir could not see how someone who cared about the land, as Pinchot did, would want livestock grazing to take place in the nation’s new forest reserves. This sentiment foreshadows the formation of campaigns to end public lands ranching, with

preservation being the underlying tactic to restoring the western range for its own sake, as opposed to Pinchot's preface for conservation through managed grazing.

In the 20th century, one western writer, Bernard DeVoto, was responsible for putting the dispute over cattle ranching on public lands into the national spotlight. DeVoto, born in Ogden, Utah, spent much of his career as a writer focusing on the conservation of public resources, specifically those belonging to the American public lands system. In the late 1940s, more than a decade after the American agricultural community was forced to reckon with the devastation and implications of the Dust Bowl, DeVoto's narrowed his critiques of the conservation of public lands to the management of cattle ranching on the federal domain. DeVoto wrote extensively about the flaws of the American public lands ranching system, with a specific attack on the political and social influence of western stockmen. These writings appeared in publications such as *Harper's Magazine*, as well as in widely-circulated outlets such as *The Saturday Evening Post* and *Collier's*. In concert, DeVoto's publications in these various outlets "represented a sustained, impassioned, and complex argument for the conservation of public lands..." (Muller 2005, p. xiii). According to DeVoto, the only way to conserve public rangelands was to end ranching.

Throughout his career, DeVoto had gained high-profile status for his "Easy Chair" column in *Harper's Magazine*, which positioned his critiques of public lands ranching to be deemed credible by his wide-ranging audiences, as well as widely-distributed among both western and non-western readers (Merrill 2002). One "Easy Chair" publication in particular, titled "The West against Itself", provided a scathing condemnation of ranching on public lands and has been cited often by those who want to remove cattle from the public domain. In the article, DeVoto described cattle ranching as "the business which created to the West's most

powerful illusion about itself and ... has done more damage to the West than any other ...” (1947). Beyond the environmental consequences of ranching, DeVoto further charged that the destruction of western rangelands was perpetuated by the political control of stockmen and the ranching industry. As they became increasingly involved in national politics from the late 19th century onwards, ranchers began to assert a level of political dominance over the management of the western range that in turn resulted in dominion over, and thus degradation of, many western public lands.

Some ranchers and livestock interest groups began advocating for the privatization of the western range. During the 1940s, western politicians Pat McCarran, Frank Barrett, and Edward Robertson had all introduced bills that weakened federal ownership of western rangelands. (Merrill 2002). Critics of privatization charged that ranchers were trying to turn over the federal rangelands to state ownership, ultimately for the purpose of allowing individuals to purchase parts of the public domain (Merrill 2002). “DeVoto accurately charged,” wrote Merrill, “that public lands ranchers were attempting to convert their grazing privileges to into vested rights and that they wanted the land turned over to the states, ultimately for individual purpose” (2002, p. 192). Many people opposed transferring public lands to private hands on the basis of land grabbing in which the acquisition of resources by some often leaves the rest empty-handed. DeVoto charged that the demand by western politicians to privatize the western range, or transfer land rights to state governments, was an attempt at “one of the biggest land grabs in American history” (1947).

DeVoto’s critiques offered a more entrenched argument against public lands ranching. In the oft-cited publication, “The West against Itself”, DeVoto wrote that “the Cattle Kingdom never did own more than a minute fraction of one percent of the range it grazed: it was national

domain, it belonged to the people of the United States” (1947). When western politicians, influenced by their rancher constituents, acted according to the interests of the public lands ranching community, DeVoto charged that such decisions inherently affected the broader, tax-paying American public. “This is your land that they are talking about,” DeVoto writes in regards to the attempts to privatize the public domain (1947). Karen Merrill notes, “DeVoto got across more successfully than anyone had done before that these lands were public property and belonged to all the American people” (2002, p. 171). DeVoto is responsible for shifting the anti-ranching rhetoric towards an argument tied to the public ownership of federal rangelands.

DeVoto’s eloquent, widely-read, and controversial articles generated severe backlash from ranchers. Merrill notes that after the publication of “The West against Itself” in 1947, DeVoto “generated yet more animosity among organized ranchers against easterners and against the federal government” producing pages of responses in stock growers’ journals (2002, p. 193). After 1947, there was what Merrill calls a “growing gulf” between public lands ranchers and parties outside of the ranching industry (2002, p. 193). From the stance of conservationists, public lands ranchers were attempting a massive land grab of land belonging to the American public, while stock growers saw conservationists as easterners bent on “locking up” the western range (Merrill 2002, p. 193) As Merrill notes, “...while DeVoto’s portrait in particular captured none of the political divisions among stock growers, he did correctly discern that, at least in the leadership of the livestock associations, the political discourse embraced the eventual privatization of the public range...” (2002, p. 193). Such ideological directions left leaders of livestock associations “wide open to the storm of criticism they received”, deepening the rift between ranchers and conservationists and reinforcing the differences between them (Merrill 2002, p. 193) Furthermore, DeVoto held that the American people were responsible for

safeguarding the public domain from its users, which would later prove to be an important aspect of the formation and agenda of grassroots campaigns towards the end of the 20th century.

Chronology of key figures and publications

After DeVoto, there was a lull in anti-ranching activism for several decades. In the wake of rangeland improvement legislation during the period of 1960 to 1980, anti-ranching advocacy rose once again towards the late 20th century. Formation of campaigns such as ‘Cattle-free by ’93’ reflect the burgeoning awareness of problems associated with public lands ranching, including many of the same economic, environmental, and cultural arguments first popularized by Muir and DeVoto.

Some of the most outspoken advocates of ending public lands ranching were husband-and-wife naturalists Nancy and Denzel Ferguson, authors of *Sacred Cows at the Public Trough* (1983). During the 1970s, the Fergusons managed a biological station at the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, where they saw first-hand the impacts of public lands ranching and started advocating for its end. The publication of *Sacred Cows* catalyzed the modern movement to end public lands ranching, known as the ‘Cattle-free by ’93’ campaign. Mike Hudak, author of *Western Turf Wars: The Politics of Public Lands Ranching*, comments that until this point, the cattle-free movement was lacking its definitive text. “Ranching’s devastating impacts upon the American West have drawn the attention of environmentalists since the writings of John Muir in the 1870s. Yet not until 1983... have activists had a book that advanced a case for ending ranching on public lands” (Hudak 2003, p. 46). *Sacred Cows* became, for many environmentalists during the 1980s and 1990s, the ultimate handbook for dealing with the problems of the western range.

The Fergusons became infamous in the ranching-heavy country of southeastern Oregon. In 1980, the Fergusons complained about cows grazing on the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge due to the impact of grazing on critical wildlife habitat (Dixon 2016). Despite its designation as a wildlife refuge, many animals were killed by farm machinery or displaced by cattle, even with 400 miles of barbed-wire implemented throughout the area to keep cattle out (Dixon 2016). After a successful letter-writing campaign aimed at drawing attention to grazing abuses, the Fergusons were able to decrease the total number of cows allowed on the refuge, much to the chagrin of local ranchers (Dixon 2016). Ultimately moving to rural Grant County in 1982, the Fergusons' experience at the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge inspired them to make it their life's work to remove cattle from public lands.

Sacred Cows was centered on the importance of maintaining the health of rangeland ecosystems. Part of the problem, the Fergusons argue, is western rangelands were often seen as less valuable than more scenic vistas of the American West. "While public concern was leading to the establishment and protection of national forest reserves," write the Fergusons, alluding to the precedent of forest preservation during the late 19th century, "no similar sentiments were being voiced in behalf of the public-domain lands" (1983, p. 35). Leftovers not obtained by homesteaders, various state governments, or federal agencies comprised half a billion acres of mainly arid and mountainous lands (Fergusons 1983). Due to the way in which rangelands were often unwanted or seen as less valuable than other types of western ecosystems, the public trough was born: huge tracts of western lands, distinguished from other parts of the public domain based on the use and aesthetics of American rangelands. These lands, often "...lacking forests or other readily apparent values..." were considered worthless to use in livestock grazing operations (Fergusons 1983, p. 35). According to the Fergusons, the problem is rooted in the fact that few

people are willing to take a stand against injustices on American rangelands, largely because many of the landscapes used for ranching are seen as subordinate to others. As the Fergusons point out, it is interesting how such unwanted lands would set the stage for decades-long fights between its varying users.

In concert with the notion of the public trough, the Fergusons introduce the concept of the cow as a sacred being in cattle-obsessed culture of the American West. Cows, the Fergusons argue, exist as much more than forage-munching ungulates. The current destruction of public lands stems from a “general reluctance to take actions detrimental to the cow”, which enables injury to perpetuate itself with little concern for the health of the land itself (Fergusons 1983, p. 46). The public trough had created a deeply flawed system of ranching on public lands in the American West.

The Fergusons also rejected the way in which the media perpetuates the cowboy myth. Over time, the cowboy had become synonymous with the notion of rugged individualism and the spirit of American independence. The cowboy, according to the Fergusons, served as a conduit of nostalgia-fueled imaginations, where men on horseback ride freely in the open range in perpetuity, while at the same time demonstrating the endurance of the ranching tradition in rural American communities today (1983). “With rare exception, the eastern press has ignored events on rangelands, while continuing to spread the ridiculous myth of the pulp-magazine cowboy (Fergusons 1983, p. 46). The media perpetuates the myth of the cowboy, asserted the Fergusons, without reporting the true degradation of the range that has been taking place during the last century. The glamorized portrayal of the American rancher, the Fergusons argued, underscores the importance of setting the record straight, in which the general public must become aware of issues related to the management and use of western rangelands.

The perpetuation of the cowboy myth created mass confusion about the use of land in the American West. In *Sacred Cows*, the Fergusons wrote: “Ordinary citizens from eastern states know virtually nothing about livestock on public lands, and, in fact, are usually shocked, when they come West to find that there *are* cows on public lands” (1983, p. 46). Since World War II, more people than ever before visit public lands throughout the year, which generated appreciation for land that was managed by the federal government but technically belongs all tax-paying citizens. Finding out that livestock graze on public lands challenges the perceptions of pristine, untouched public lands, yet most Americans are unaware of this fact (Ferguson 1983).

Consciousness of the public lands ranching issue began to gain traction after the publication of *Sacred Cows*, which eventually found its way to the bookshelf of the highly controversial Edward Abbey. In 1986, Abbey published an article titled “Even the Bad Guys Wear White Hats” in the January 1986 issue of *Harper’s Bazaar*, which was intensely cited by advocates of the Fergusons’ work. This article was lauded by many who follow rancher-environmentalist conflict as a particularly memorable and scathing critique of cattle ranching on American public lands. Abbey put forth the notion of a ‘cowburnt’ West, where one can find “hordes of these ugly, clumsy, stupid, bawling, stinking, fly-covered, shit-smearing, disease-spreading brutes” (1986). Similar to the argument made by the Fergusons in *Sacred Cows*, Abbey was extremely concerned about the environmental impacts of ranching. Abbey puts forth that cattle ranching in the region has led to water pollution, destruction of native plants and herbs, increase in non-native and invasive species such as cheatgrass, Russian thistle, and wheatgrass, and a general sense of infestation and encroachment into what was formerly considered wild places -- “our canyons, valleys, meadows, and forests” (Abbey 1986). He then went on to critique the corporation ranchers, who, according to Abbey, are more concerned with

the profit of their companies than the overall health of the land. This is compared to small ranchers, who must rely on the subsidies of the federal government to put up their ranching operations, oftentimes leading ranchers to “flood the public lands with their cows” (Abbey 1986). As a result, the public lands ranching system encouraged the destruction of western rangelands as they are known in the present moment, and, according to Abbey, should be terminated immediately.

Beyond the environmental argument, Abbey also latched onto a cultural criticism of public lands ranching. Abbey paints the public lands rancher profession as a lazy, irrelevant, and obsolete career, stating that “[a]ny public school teacher does harder work, more difficult work, more dangerous work, and far more valuable work than any cowboy or rancher” (Abbey 1986). Similar to the Fergusons’ notion of the cowboy myth, Abbey argues that there are many more hardworking people than there are hardworking public lands ranchers (1986). On such basis, Abbey disagrees with the way in which the public lands ranching industry is largely subsidized by the American public. If ranchers were off the range, Abbey argued, most people would not miss them, considering that the American people are the ones paying for much of the cost of public lands ranching. In an article from the *Moab Times-Intelligencer*, Abbey wrote: “Beef ranching on our public lands is a taxpayer-supported industry whose time has come and gone. Let’s give it a decent Christian burial and be done with it” (1986). Abbey’s inflammatory comments suggest that there are many layers of the call to end public lands ranching, be it for environmental, cultural, or economic reasons.

Similar to the Fergusons’ argument in *Sacred Cows*, Abbey feared that not enough people were willing to expose the destruction of public ranching. Abbey claimed that, “...beef cattle eat up forage and browse which could be used to support a much larger population of elk as well as

mule deer, bighorn sheep and pronghorn antelope. And buffalo. Everyone who cares about hunting should ponder this fact. And everyone I have talked to agrees with me - in private” (1986). Abbey argued that social power of ranching in the American West created a culture of intimidation that made it hard for people to call out problems associated with how the range was being managed. Abbey argued that “the decent majority reluctant to air in public their views on anything controversial”, especially cattle ranching on public lands (1986). Abbey’s response was that there too much at risk to stay quiet about the devastation perpetuated on western rangelands, making the move to end public lands ranching a time-sensitive issue.

While perhaps best known for its anti-logging campaigns in the Pacific Northwest or their anti-dam demonstrations in the Southwest, EarthFirst! was once deeply involved in the arena of issues related to public lands grazing. Earth First! was created in 1979 in response to “an increasingly corporate, compromising and ineffective environmental community” that had formed through the birth of the American environmental movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s (EarthFirst!.org). The founder of EarthFirst!, Dave Foreman, wrote the first draft of the Earth First! Statement of Principles and Membership Brochure on September 1st, 1980, in the attempt to define the group’s mission and further recruit members. The principles that Foreman outlined are much in line with biocentrist philosophy, including the assertion that “[w]ilderness has a right to exist for its own sake” and that “[a]ll human decisions should consider Earth first, humankind second” (Foreman 1980). Most notably, Foreman provided context for the establishment of the “radical wilderness preservation group that is not afraid to say what needs to be said and do what needs to be done to save Mother Earth...” by asserting that conservationists in the mainstream environmental movement had failed to speak out against the mismanagement

of natural resources by federal agencies, including the Bureau of Land Management and the Department of the Interior (Foreman 1980).

EarthFirst! was responsible for producing a suite of anti-ranching material during the late 1980s and early 1990s. EarthFirst! allegedly wrote a 48-page manifesto about ending public lands ranching in 1991, although there has been little evidence as to the existence of the document online (Reed). While some credit the Fergusons for coming up with the slogan ‘Cattle-free by ‘93’, others say that it was EarthFirst! who publicized this saying, as well as others like ‘No moo by ‘92’, and ultimately played a major role in distributing them in the form of bumper stickers, posters, or small signs. Karl Hess, a rangeland historian, writes that these slogans were “strategically placed on public-land ranchers’ buildings, fences and gates” by EarthFirst! activists (1992). Hess claims that EarthFirst! took the credit for the proliferation of these signs across the western rangelands (1992).

In several EarthFirst! magazines, public lands ranching was a major topic. One EarthFirst! contributor, Vistara Parham, wrote, “[R]ed meat producers persuade us that grazing is ‘good for the land’ just like the tobacco industry says cigarettes are fine for the body” (1991, p. 25). To back up this claim, Parham cited the 1990 EPA report on riparian areas being their worst condition in history, as well as that eighty-five percent of all topsoil loss in the country is caused by livestock grazing, which lacks a citation (1991, p. 25). Parham shifted the direction of her article to the nature of cattle ranching in the West, specifically the fact that the cow is an “alien, exotic species, ill-adapted to arid western ecosystems” (1991, p. 25). As compared to the native buffalo, Parham noted how cows tend to stay in one place and congregate around bodies of water, causing soil to become compacted, streams to be choked, and native plants to be decimated by hungry cattle in search of forage (Parham 1991). Overgrazing has other

implications, Parham claimed, including decreasing food production and increasing the chance of wildfire on semi-aridlands (1991). Another major point Parham brought up is the extermination programs that the government has carried out to benefit cattle ranchers by decreasing the susceptibility of cattle to unlucky encounters with natural predators (1991).

Part of Parham's credibility as a writer comes from the fact that she was born into a three-generation ranching family, with significant experience seeing the impacts of mismanaged grazing operations. "[T]hose who live here have undeniable evidence from our own eyes and noses," wrote Parham, "... [w]e dare not put a sleeping bag down in the dark, our public wildlands swarm with flies, riparian areas are trashed and the stench of cows is overwhelming, even in the most remote places" (1991, p. 25). Parham argued that cattle should be moved to "more appropriate terrain", which suggests that they are currently on less appropriate terrain, public lands (1991, p. 25) on behalf which Parham argues that public lands belong to the public, who "won't tolerate the degradation much longer" (Parham 1991, p. 25). As demonstrated by others in the 'Cattle-free by '93' campaign, Parham made the case that ending public lands ranching is an issue that must be achieved sooner rather than later in order to save rangeland ecosystems.

As with many other EarthFirst! campaigns, Parham's article encouraged the formation of grassroots, on-the-ground work as a means to achieve the end of public lands ranching. At the end of the article, there is a call for assistance in Parham's efforts. "Vistara Parham is an impassioned grassroots activist who could use some help", it said beneath the article, alongside Parham's Sheridan, Wyoming contact information listed for reference (1991, p. 25). The call to action described here reflects the way in which 'Cattle-free by '93' relied heavily on both

individual and collaborative efforts as a means to end public lands ranching. EarthFirst! shaped the way in which ‘Cattle-free by ’93’ approached the premise of ending public lands ranching.

Waste of the West (1991) by Lynn Jacobs appeared in the anti-ranching canon shortly after EarthFirst! began publishing articles related to ending public lands ranching. *Waste of the West* was first self-published in 1991, with a second edition published a year later. In its 1992 printing, Jacobs includes the following inscription in the first few pages:

As we go to press again, new material on public lands ranching keeps pouring in... By far most of the new material reinforces the basic premise of this book: public lands ranching should be ended, ASAP. The situation is not significantly improving as claimed by the industry, and cannot really improve as public lands ranching continues. This is becoming increasingly evident to more and more people. The movement is growing. Ranching has become a major issue... this book and the message it carries will spread far and wide (Jacobs 1992, p. 34).

While *Sacred Cows* is rife with complex and scientific descriptions of the current state of western rangelands, *Waste of the West*, by comparison, is a text meant to be distributed and thus aid in the formation of grassroots campaigns to end public lands ranching. According to Jacobs, there are two important factors in rangeland reform: firstly, a person must become informed about public lands ranching, and secondly, disseminate information about the problem. “Through the various means discussed in this book and other sources, learn about public lands and public lands ranching... Spread the real story of welfare ranching; arouse the sleeping masses” (Jacobs 1992, p. 559). Other actions include getting directly involved in rangeland policy, by submitting comments and speaking at public hearings about federal land use, or contacting elected representatives regarding public lands ranching (Jacobs 1992). Another option is to adopt a

grazing allotment so that a member of the cattle-free movement would be consulted each time that management plans are altered (Jacobs 1992) “Write the relevant local BLM or Forest Service office explaining how you are affected by ranching (it degrades your hiking, fishing, birding, swimming, aesthetic enjoyment and/or whatever) in a certain area,” suggests Jacobs, “and request that you be designated an affected interest with respect to the grazing allotment...” (1992, p. 559). Such an approach would, according to Jacobs, prevent ranchers from further degrading public rangelands.

Some alternative actions proposed by Jacobs involve basic grassroots organizing. One way to do this was to print bulk print pamphlets about public lands ranching in order to distribute information to anyone at anytime (Jacobs 1992). Jacobs intended to contact people such as public lands users, specifically recreationalists, as well as influential organizations, federal agencies, and politicians that are involved in public rangeland management. “For true adventure,” wrote Jacobs, “pass out your stop-ranching material at livestock association meetings” (Jacobs 1992, p. 561). Other approaches include performing demonstrations focused on stopping public lands ranching. Since public lands ranching occurs throughout pretty much all of the eleven western states, “possible locations for demonstrations are practically limitless” (Jacobs 1992, p. 562). Stop-public-lands-ranching demonstrations have been “effective in reaching the public, and with increasing numbers of demonstrations (and therefore, increasing public awareness) the government is beginning to get a message it cannot ignore” (Jacobs 1992, p. 562).

Aside from canvassing and putting on demonstrations to end public lands ranching, Jacobs also offered civil disobedience as a possible course of action to take. Nonviolent civil disobedience in regards to public lands ranching, according to Jacobs, would be a plan to “refuse

cops' orders to disperse, physically block a roadway, occupy a government office, drive a cow off public land into a nearby BLM office..." (1992, p. 563). However, other, more direct tactics might also be necessary in obtaining a cattle-free range. Jacobs talked about the growing frustrations of environmentalists towards the public lands ranching system, which has led many to become disheartened by the prospects of promoting rangeland health without resorting to more extreme tactics. "A growing number of people are disillusioned with a ranching-bound government that refuses to protect the public and its land... A diversity of interests are tired of trying in vain to change the situation through culturally sanctioned means" (Jacobs 1992, p. 564). Here, culturally sanctioned means refers to the traditional rangeland reform as attempted by federal agencies. Due to past failures, some individuals have taken to monkeywrenching, an Edward Abbey term for sabotage of machinery for the purpose of environmental liberation. These people "cut fences... leave gates open ... drive cattle onto neighboring allotments ... decommission destructive ranching machinery ... close ranching roads ... leave stop-ranching messages on the livestock road signs ... and generally do what they want to thwart the industry's ability to continue business as usual" (Jacobs 1992, p. 564). Civil disobedience is a hallmark of the 'Cattle-free by '93' movement, underscoring the frustrations of environmentalists who are willing to both directly and indirectly interfere with the current system of rangeland management to get their point across.

An interesting argument made by Jacobs in *Waste of the West* is that he is not advocating for the end of all ranching activity. Instead, Jacobs wants to turn private lands ranchers against public lands ranchers. "Drive a wedge between private lands ranchers and their unfair competition [public lands ranchers]," advises Jacobs. "Communicate with private lands livestock organizations and individuals, enlightening them to withdraw their support for welfare

ranchers” (Jacobs 1992, p. 560). This approach goes against Jacobs advice elsewhere in *Waste of the West*, specifically in that he advocates for both the reduction in consumption of beef, as well as wanting to “[p]romote the novel concept that cowboys and ranchers are mere mortals after all and do not warrant extra-special treatment” (Jacobs 1992, p. 560). It seems unlikely that advocates of ending public lands ranching would find partnership with private lands ranchers and Jacobs offers no evidence that this specific tactic was successful. Moreover, on the next page, Jacobs references a national beef boycott that was started by the Fergusons, including an image of a Burger King sign with a bumper sticker that reads “BOYCOTT PUBLIC LANDS BEEF” (Jacobs 1992, p. 561). Jacobs admits that it can be difficult to know where it is beef and other animal products come from and offers “if in doubt [of where it came from], don’t buy” (Jacobs 1992, p. 561). While it would be impossible to know for sure where exactly the burgers produced at the pictured Burger King actually came from, it appears improbable that they would be coming from American public lands.

At the end of *Waste of the West*, Jacobs includes a petition that is meant to be copied and sent to “your Senator, Representative, or other chosen relevant government entity” (Jacobs 1992, p. 567). The petition reads:

We consider commercial livestock production on public/government land to be economically, socially, politically, and environmentally destructive and unjustifiable. We ask the President, Congress, Bureau of Land Management, Forest Service, states, counties, and other relevant government entities to take all commercial livestock production on all public/government land (Jacobs 1992, p. 567).

Jacobs provided a list of contacts that work on public lands ranching policy, including six organizations that advocate for “more or less total cessation” of ranching on public lands. These

are: Free Our Public Lands! of Tucson, AZ, Public Lands Action Network of Santa Fe, NM, EarthFirst! of Missoula, MT, Wild Earth of Canton, NY, Ranching Task Force of Tucson, AZ, and Rest the West of Portland, OR (Jacobs 1992). It is interesting to note how all of these organizations were focused primarily on ending public lands ranching as a way to protect rangelands of the American West.

There is significant evidence for communication among key figures of ‘Cattle-free by ‘93’. One such example involved communication between Edward Abbey and Lynn Jacobs during the creation of *Waste of the West*. Jacobs writes that Abbey offered to write the foreword of *Waste of the West*, but ultimately died in 1989, two years before its publication. “Like many of us who are close to the Western wild, Cactus Ed [Abbey] came to understand that ranching is not natural to the wild West but is instead its most deadly enemy” (Jacobs 1992, p. 1). Jacobs intentionally left the foreword section blank, without an opening by the cattle-hating Abbey, and wrote that “[t]his space is dedicated to his vision of a West free from ranching” (1992, p.1).

Jon Marvel is another key proponent of ending public lands ranching. Marvel has become what some call “one of the most tenacious anti-grazing activists in the West” (Gibson 2010). Marvel grew up in Delaware, getting involved in the fledgling environmental movement of the 1960s after reading Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* (Jacobs 2014). After earning a master’s degree in architecture from the University of Oregon, Marvel moved to Idaho, where he first encountered public lands ranching (Jacobs 2014). Much like other anti-ranching activists of his time, Marvel saw first-hand the impacts of public lands grazing on western rangelands, which encouraged him to take action into his own hands (Jacobs 2014). At first, Marvel attempted to garner support from federal and state agencies, but these efforts often failed to change the way in which grazing occurred on public lands (Jacobs 2014). It should be noted that Idaho has an

extensive ranching history, making it less surprising that Marvel's attempts would be in vain.

Marvel, however, also sought support from pro-environmental organizations such as the Natural Resource Defense Council, but once again received minimal help in generating rangeland reform (Jacobs 2014).

Lack of support from federal and state agencies and environmental organizations encouraged Marvel to seek alternative routes. In 1993, Marvel established the Idaho Watersheds Project. The primary purpose of the Idaho Watersheds Project was to purchase grazing leases for state lands (Jacobs 2014). By purchasing leases, Marvel hoped to prevent ranchers accessing grazing leases, thereby forcing ranchers off state rangelands (Jacobs 2014). Marvel became infamous for the theatrics that he would put into attempting to purchase grazing leases. Marvel once showed up to a public hearing bearing a suitcase filled the cash to purchase the grazing lease being sold, only to be turned away by the sale of permits to local ranchers instead (Jacobs 2014).

After buying grazing leases for the purpose of retiring ranching proved largely unsuccessful in rancher-friendly country like rural Idaho, Marvel quickly began using legal tools to go about ridding the western range of livestock. Using the National Environmental Policy Act, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, the Endangered Species Act, and the Clean Water Act, Marvel and the Western Watersheds Project saw legal victories throughout early lawsuits (Jacobs 2014). Moreover, one of Marvel's most successful contributions to rangeland policy was in 1999, when three simultaneous rulings in the Idaho Supreme Court made it legal to bid on expiring state grazing leases as a means to retire them for conservation (Jacobs 2014). Marvel's tactics marks a shift in the approaches to the cattle-free agenda, using environmental statutes to punish ranchers for degrading western rangelands.

The Idaho Watersheds Project has since become the Western Watersheds Project. The name change reflects the regional goals of the organization, which continues to fight public lands grazing in the present day. The Western Watersheds Project has offices in eight western states, an advisory board comprised of scientists in the fields of botany, biology, and conservation ecology, and a coalition of attorneys based in the progressive-leaning urban center of Boise, Idaho (Gibson 2010). “[Marvel’s] objective is as simple as it is absolute: the total removal of domestic livestock from Western public lands, some 250 million acres of desert, forest, grassland, rivers, and streams stretching from Montana to California” (Gibson 2010). The legal framework established by Marvel endures in much of the work that Western Watersheds Project continues to do today. Current actions against public lands ranching by Marvel and his staff include “injunctions on behalf of endangered species, challenges to government grazing decisions, lawsuits against the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Forest Service, the agencies that control federal lands” (Gibson 2010). The Western Watersheds Project is one way in which the efforts of ‘Cattle-free by ’93’ endures into the present-day.

Marvel’s work is not without critique. In a University of Chicago magazine article about Jon Marvel’s work on removing livestock from western public lands, Nathan Sayre, a geographer at the University of California Berkeley, offers the critique that “throwing all ranchers off public lands won’t solve the problem”, insisting that the rancher/environmentalist conflict is much more complex than Marvel’s work gives it credit for (Gibson 2010). Sayre claims that Marvel’s work is ecologically unsound in and of itself, as it is rooted in the false idea that removing cattle from the western range will improve rangeland ecosystems altogether (Gibson 2010). Beyond the environmental argument against the work of the Western Watersheds Project, Sayre further offers an economic critique. Without access to public lands, Sayre

asserted, ranchers would ultimately overgraze their own private holding (Gibson 2010). The degradation of private land is especially harmful when considering the ecological composition of private rangelands, which tend to have fertile soil and abundant wildlife (Gibson 2010). Sayre's critiques shows how efforts to end public lands ranching have been analyzed by the academic community in the time since 'Cattle-free by '93' dominated rancher/environmentalist relations during the late 20th century.

'Cattle-free by '93' and the broader effort to end public lands ranching can be observed in the formation of other anti-ranching organizations. One example is the creation of RangeNet in 1997. by Larry Walker, a retired BLM range conservationist, first formed RangeNet as an internet platform to discuss the management of public rangelands. In a 2003 interview with Mike Hudak, Walker spoke about his motivations to provide online resources related to range conservation. According to Walker, the greatest improvement of rangeland ecosystems could achieved by removing the adverse impact of livestock grazing on public lands (2003). "I planned, when I retired," said Walker, "to get active in the environmental community, to work towards [ending public lands ranching]" (2003). Due to his background as a BLM employee, Walker found that many environmentalists were critical of his motives (Walker 2003). As a result, Walker chose to use the internet as a way to distribute information about range conservation to people interested in the public lands ranching issue (2003). Cost of maintaining internet pages had decreased considerably during the time, which enabled Walker to create RangeNet in an affordable way (Walker 2003). "I met folks, through the internet... who are interested in the management of the public lands... because at that time there was no group focused specifically on that" (Walker 2003). Walker then began nominating people to join the

online RangeNet community, which generated hundreds of members in the group's first years (Walker 2003).

Over time, RangeNet became more than an internet community to discuss rangeland management. Each RangeNet conference had a different theme. The first RangeNet conference was held in Reno, Nevada in 2000, where about a hundred lawyers, scientists, and activists gathered to develop a plan to end all ranching on public lands west of the Rocky Mountains (Knight, Gilbert and Marson 2002, p. 143). RangeNet demonstrates efforts in the 21st century to bring together the individual, loosely-organized campaigns that were promoted by Abbey and Jacobs in past attempts to end public lands ranching. The theme of the 2002 RangeNet conference in Boise, Idaho was "Bovines or Biodiversity: The National Campaign to End Abusive Public Lands Ranching". The 2002 RangeNet conference is described by an advertisement in *High Country News* as the chance for "some verbal sparring, rangeland management tips, literary musings and maybe a little bird-watching..." (Paskus 2002). The 2002 RangeNet conference was attended by the likes of Jon Marvel and the *High Country News* editor, Ed Marston, in addition to a variety of public land agencies and anti-ranching activist groups such as the Santa Fe-based Forest Guardians (Paskus 2002). At the conference, the Edward Abbey Memorial Hooved Locust award was presented to someone who, in the words of Marvel, "has brought the truth about public-lands ranching to the attention of all Americans" (Paskus 2002). In 2003, RangeNet was held at the University of Colorado Natural History Museum in Boulder, Colorado. Attendees included famous anti-ranching advocates including the likes of Jon Marvel and George Wuerthner (Citizen Review Online 2003). In addition, there were several organizations in attendance as well, including the National Public Lands Grazing Committee, the Center for Biological Diversity, the Forest Guardians, and the Western Watersheds Project, to

name a few (Citizen Review Online 2003). Some of the topics presented at RangeNet 2003 were related to the impact of ranching on biodiversity, the current state of endangered species such as the sage grouse, and the economics of public lands ranching (Citizen Review Online 2003). The variety of conferences held during the beginning of the 21st century represent the enduring efforts by some of the original members of ‘Cattle-free by ‘93’ movement to end public lands ranching in the 2000s.

‘Cattle-free by ‘93’ transformed the way in which public rangeland management was understood during the 1980s and 1990s. The many diverse yet connected figures and publications of the ‘Cattle-free by ‘93’ umbrella campaign to end public lands ranching, including the likes of Ed Abbey, the Fergusons, Lynn White, Jon Marvel, and Larry Walker, promoted the idea that no-compromise approaches to western rangeland management was key to the environmental, economic, and cultural sustainability of the American West. In the 1980s, there was significant literature produced related to increasing awareness about the issue of public lands ranching, and by the 1990s, much of the work focused on using collective, legal, or economic tools to achieve the goal of cattle-free western rangelands. By the start of the 21st century, the deadline to end public lands ranching as called for in ‘Cattle-free by ‘93’ had failed to have been met, but nevertheless we can see how the activist groups continued to work towards extreme rangeland reform, as demonstrated by the Western Watersheds Project and the formation of RangeNet.

Major outcomes of ‘Cattle-free by ‘93’

Increased awareness of the public lands ranching issue is perhaps best demonstrated by the way in which federal rangeland reform was taken up during the 1990s. In fact, the election of Bill Clinton, coupled with the president’s appointment of Bruce Babbitt as the Secretary of the

Interior, environmentalists seemed poised to witness to major rangeland reform during the 1990s. As Rose Strickland, chair of the Sierra Club Grazing Subcommittee, said an issue feature of *The Planet*, “the stars seemed to be aligned for a radical overhaul of the archaic rules that govern livestock grazing on our public lands” (1994). However, as it would soon become apparent on the national stage, federal rangeland reform was perhaps much more complex than anyone had expected at the time.

In the spirit of catchy slogans of the time, Babbitt’s plans for new approaches to public land management was dubbed Rangeland Reform ’94 and reflected many of the arguments put forth by ‘Cattle-free by ’93’. One of which was the economic framing of the public lands ranching issue. Babbitt announced his plan to double the grazing fees for public lands ranchers, which was considered “a major step toward reshaping Western land policy”. On more than 280 million acres of public range, the original plan was to increase the grazing fee from \$1.86, set by the past Reagan and Bush administrations, to \$5 over the course of three years, with an expected generation of nearly \$20 million for the United States Treasury (Krauss 1993). It should be noted that major pushback from Western Republicans in the Senate decreased the amount to just \$4.28 instead of \$5 (Krauss 1993). Aside from raising grazing fees, the plan also shortened length of grazing seasons, decreased the use of pesticides on public lands, and set up a procedure by which punished ranchers for breaking their leasing agreements (Krauss 1993). The plan also sought to incorporate the opinions of ranchers and livestock interests. Instead of dictating policy initiatives to ranchers and western politicians, Babbitt sought to involve those that would most impacted by the rangeland reform policies that he was advocating for in his plans (Klyza 1996). By the summer of 1993, an environmental impact statement was drafted and throughout June and July

the public was encouraged to comment on the plan in a series of open meetings that took place in various locations across the West (Klyza 1996).

Despite attempting to appeal to ranchers and western politicians, the Clinton Administration experienced one failure after another in the years since it first picked up the grazing issue. These new regulations were, unsurprisingly, “heralded by environmentalists” while being “sharply criticized” by Republican senators (Krauss 1993). In September of 1993, Clinton’s range reform bill was shot down in the Senate, where senators voted 59-40 on behalf of delaying the raising of grazing fees and tightening of land management schemes for at least a year (Klyza 1996). By 1994, however, it would appear as though the Clinton Administration had given up on any major rangeland reform. Republicans had gained control of Congress in the midterm elections, many of whom supported existing rangeland policy (Davis 2001). A *New York Times* article published in December of that year describes the Clinton Administration’s all out reversal on policy change, with it ultimately deciding not to increase fees paid by ranchers who use federal lands to grazing their cattle (Cushman 1994). Unsurprisingly, environmentalists were extremely critical of this move. “Mr. Babbitt’s longtime allies in the environmental movement, who assert that lenient range policies benefit ranchers at the expense of taxpayers and the environment, assailed the decision to put the issue in the hands of a Republican Congress” (Cushman 1994). Johanna Wald, a lawyer at the Natural Resources Defense Council, is quoted as saying that the move is “worse than doing nothing” since, in her opinion, it puts a Republican-controlled Congress in a position to “perpetuate subsidies for welfare cowboys” (Cushman 1994). The Sierra Club Subcommittee on Grazing asserted that the Clinton Administration’s plan only minimally raised grazing fees, created unenforceable guidelines, prevented proper

management of environmentally-sensitive areas, and set up federal officials to continued to be bullied local ranchers and other livestock interests groups (Strickland 1994).

While Babbitt's attempts at rangeland reform generated backlash from both environmentalists and ranchers alike, there were some significant outcomes in public lands management during the mid-1990s. Some examples of federal rangeland reform included the clarification of legal definitions for permittees, the ability of federal agents to enforce permit requirements, and the establishment of resource advisory committees in place of the previous grazing advisory boards (Davis 2001). Another success in the arena of federal rangeland reform involved the failure by western Republicans to establish livestock grazing as the dominant use of public rangelands, which reinforced the multiple use statute codified in past federal management legislation (Davis 2001). In 2000, the Public Lands Council, a pro-ranching trade organization, took Secretary Babbitt to federal court over the Department of the Interior regulations (Davis 2001). The U.S. Supreme Court ultimately upheld all but one of Babbitt's rangeland reforms in *Public Lands Council v. Babbitt*, a major success for the Clinton Administration. It is important, however, to note that the success is relative when compared to the rangeland reform that Babbitt first proposed in 1992.

The no-compromise approach to rangeland management manifested itself in the Sierra Club, a mainstay in the environmental conservation movement. Almost a century after its founding in 1892, activist groups began pushing the Sierra Club in a more radical direction. "In the 1990s," Keith Makoto Woodhouse claimed, "Sierra Clubbers inspired by the no-compromise environmental politics of the 1980s led the Club to tougher positions on several key issues" (2018, p. 263). One of the most pressing issues of the day was timber logging in national forests, which had long been attacked by radical environmental groups like EarthFirst!. In 1996, the

Sierra Club voted to endorse the “zero cut” initiative, a measure that promoted the end of commercial logging in all national forests (Woodhouse 2018). The “zero cut” initiative was started halfway across the country, by an Indiana environmental group called Protect Our Woods (POW), that asserted the economic inefficiency and environmental degradation caused by national forest logging (Woodhouse 2018). Another coalition formed that promoted the end of logging in national forests called the Native Forest Council (NFC), which was founded by frustrated Sierra Club member in Oregon after “butting heads one too many times with Club leadership” (Woodhouse 2018, p. 263). External pressure from “zero cut” advocates like EarthFirst!, POW, and NFC eventually found its way inside the Sierra Club, with certain members beginning to threaten insurgency if it did not take a stand on logging in national forests (Woodhouse 2018). In 1995, EarthFirst! leader Dave Foreman won election to the Sierra Club board of directors, with many more radical environmentalists running as candidates for each board election from 1994 to 2000 (Woodhouse 2018). The changing composition of its leadership advocated for the shift away from “compromise and toward a hard-line stance on wilderness” (Woodhouse 2018, p. 264). In 1996, the Sierra Club voted to embrace the “zero cut” initiative, a move that would mark the way in which the no-compromise approach promoted by ‘Cattle-free by ’93’ transformed more traditional ways of natural resource conservation (Woodhouse 2018).

The Sierra Club’s adoption of the “zero cut” policy helped to shape the organization stance on other key issues in the arena of natural resource management in the 1990s. “Even after the adoption of zero cut, the policy’s advocates within the Club continued to push for further action on logging and then on other issues” (Woodhouse 2018, p. 266). The Sierra Club soon began working to transfer the success of the “zero cut” campaign to the management of public

rangelands. “Several years after the zero cut victory,” writes Woodhouse, “Club members solicited enough signatures for an ultimately unsuccessful ‘zero cud’ initiative advocating an end to commercial grazing on public lands... (2018, p. 266). The so-called “zero cud” initiative grew out of the Sierra Club’s campaign against national forest logging, mirroring the no-compromise approach of radical environmentalists of the day. “Zero-grazing advocates say public lands ranching damages riparian areas, costs taxpayers needless expense in subsidies, and diverts precious water to raise feed crops such as alfalfa,” writes Kirsten Bovee for *High Country News* (2001). To garner support, advocates of the ‘zero cud’ initiative worked to collect over 1,300 Sierra Club member signatures at REI stores, recreational areas and trailheads, and at organizational meetings that demonstrated the desire to end public lands ranching (Bovee 2001).

The ‘zero cud’ initiative was criticized by ranchers and citizens of the rural American West. The collection of signatures were concentrated in areas largely out of sight of federally-held rangelands, in places like New York City, Los Angeles, and San Francisco, urban centers where public lands ranching obviously does not take place (Bovee 2001). The regional division lent itself to a broader discussion on culture and identity in the American West, with some people arguing that “urban enviros are ignoring the rural reality” of ranchers and their families who depend on public lands to maintain their operations (Bovee 2001). Certain figures in the Sierra Club, like David Orr, the prominent leader of the ‘zero cut’ initiative, recognize many ranchers’ dependency on public land, but must ultimately come to terms with limitations of the range itself. In conversation with Bovee, Orr discusses the rural-urban divide: “I’m sympathetic to where they’re coming from... but ranchers are part of a culture that’s facing change, whether they’re ready or not” (2001). Such observation demonstrated how the debate over public lands

ranching struggle was about much more than the physical land; it was about the competing cultures and identities interacting with and attempting to manage the range itself.

The 'zero cud' initiative also marked an internal fracturing within the environmental movement. Some of the most unabashed attacks on the movement to end public lands graze came from within the ranks of long-time Sierra Club members, usually from places with rich ranching traditions on the public domain across the American West. Some Sierra Club members were outspoken against the campaigns to end public lands ranching, stating that adopting a no-grazing stance sets up the organization for failure when trying to work with the people working on the land itself (Bovee 2001). Critics of the 'zero cud' initiative included long-time members of the Sierra Club such as Barbara Johnson and Courtney White, who both expressed fears that the movement to end public lands ranching yields a polarization between ranchers and environmentalists at a time when such friction is bad for both the people, but the land, too (Bovee 2001).

Some thought that the 'zero cud' movement had been misconstrued to portray environmentalists as wealthy, urban elites who are out of touch with realities of rural life. George Wuerthner, a long-time proponent of ending public lands ranching, published an article titled "A Poverty of Imagination" in the same news outlet, *High Country News*. "...[A]s one of the leaders of the Sierra Club's zero-cow movement," writes Wuerthner, in direct response to Kirsten Bovee's article, "I can say without hesitation that the staunchest supporters of zero cows are well acquainted with the West's public lands and know from first-hand experience the multiple ecological impacts wrought by cows" (2001). Moreover, asserted Wuerthner, environmentalists "don't just sit in the city discussing some theoretical West..." as was implied by Bovee's article (2001). Furthermore, Wuerthner sought to clarify that "most of [the environmentalists] aren't

rich, either” (2001). It is important to note here that Wuerthner offers no way of supporting his claim that environmentalists are neither out of touch nor rich, but instead speaks on behalf of the general feelings of the ‘zero cud’ advocates from within the Sierra Club.

Some argued that other professions could ultimately replace the cattle ranching industry of the American West. Wuerthner argued that the poverty of imagination referenced in the title of the article was caused by the fact that most ranchers and rural citizens were unable to imagine a life without ranching in the American West (2001). Advocates of ‘zero cud’ believe that “there are alternative ways of making a living in the West than by pounding the soil to pulp, trampling riparian areas into muddy quagmires and driving hundreds of species to extinction” (Wuerthner 2001). Wuerthner and other advocates of ending public lands ranching acknowledge that the United States is a rich country and this richness is evident in not only funds, but in creativity as well (Wuerthner 2001). “It’s simply not a choice between having cows trash the West or people having to live in caves without food, water, or electricity, as critics of any natural resource reform often try to suggest” (Wuerthner 2001). The poverty that Wuerthner is referring to in the article’s title is the inability of ranchers and other advocates of public lands ranching to visualize different ways of generating an income in the more remote areas of the American West. In spite of this, Wuerthner remains confident in the imagination of the American people when it comes to the public lands ranching debate. “If we use our minds,” Wuerthner claimed, “I am positive we can find alternative solutions that provide a brighter future for rural people while giving the land a well deserved respite from abuse” (2001). While Wuerthner seemed optimistic about the prospect of cattle-free rangelands, there would be no institutional of such policy. Despite the signatures received and the intense anti-ranching rhetoric generated by ‘zero cud’,

the initiative failed when Sierra Club membership voted against the policy in April 2001 (Woodhouse 2018).

Somewhat paradoxically, campaigns like ‘Cattle-free by ‘93’ proved to be elemental in creating environmentalist/rancher partnerships. The formation of the Malpais Borderlands Group is a direct outcome of the polarization created by the anti-ranching activism of the 1980s and early 1990s. The Malpais Borderlands Group was formed to promote the environmental, economic, and cultural sustainability of ranching in the American West. In 1991, the Gray Ranch in the New Mexican borderlands was purchased by the Nature Conservancy as part of their Last Great Places campaign (Sayre 2005). Due to the biodiversity of the area, environmental groups pressured the Nature Conservancy to turn the Gray Ranch into a wildlife preserve, where ranching activities would be banned as a way to promote the restoration of the area’s sensitive, rare rangeland ecosystems (Sayre 2005). Word spread about unknown future of the 272,000 acres that comprised the Gray Ranch at the time, causing great uncertainty among local citizens and ranchers who used parts of the area surrounding Gray Ranch as forage for cattle (Sayre 2005). In many places across Arizona and New Mexico, agencies such as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the BLM, in addition to the Nature Conservancy, were responsible for buying ranches for the sake of environmental protection (Sayre 2005). Much to the celebration of environmentalists, livestock grazing would often times be excluded, which created tense relations on the range during this time.

Part of the concern arose from the influence of anti-ranching rhetoric on environmentalist/rancher relations during the late 20th century. Drum Hadley, a local rancher in favor of rangeland conservation, was nervous about the “poisonous and counter-productive” atmosphere of relations between ranchers and environmentalists during the late 1980s and early

1990s (Sayre 2005, p. 39). In many ways, the rhetoric of ‘Cattle-free by ‘93’ campaign permeated life in the rural Southwest, with bumper stickers appearing on road signs and fences near ranches throughout the Gray Ranch area of the New Mexican borderlands (Sayre 2005). Drum Hadley, however, “believed ranchers and environmentalists could resolve their differences, or at least they could get along with each other” (Sayre 2005, p. 40). The problem, according to Hadley, had more to do with the lack of real dialogue that has historically occurred between the two camps, which ranchers not having expressed to environmentalists the importance of the ranching lifestyle to them and their families (Sayre 2005). Hadley, in concert with other conservation-minded ranchers in the Gray Ranch community, started the Malpais Borderlands Group in 1993 as a way to showcase the capacity for partnership among ranchers and environmentalists.

The first major success of the Malpais Borderlands Group was the purchase the New Mexican Gray Ranch from the Nature Conservancy in 1993. After many months of discussion between environmentalists and ranchers in the area, Hadley and other leaders of the Malpais Borderlands Group decided to focus on advocating for the needs and desires of the Gray Ranch community, specifically maintaining traditional ranching lifestyles and ensuring the health of the range in the process. The Group’s mission statement reads as follows:

Our goal is to restore and maintain the natural processes that create and protect a healthy, unfragmented landscape to support a diverse, flourishing community of human, plant and animal life in our Borderlands region. Together, we will accomplish this by working to encourage profitable ranching and other traditional livelihood which will sustain the open space nature of our land for generations to come (Sayre 2005, p. 8).

This statement is important in the context of the cattle-free movement because it asserts that ranching can be sustainable and, perhaps more importantly, suggests a reciprocal relationship between the land and the cowboy lifestyle which it supports. That is to say that the belief that the longstanding ranching traditions should be continued in perpetuity is dependent on the maintenance of healthy and productive landscapes. Couched in that last part is the need for habitats to remain free from development, for the range to be home to ranches and not ranch houses, and be this way today, as well as tomorrow, and for the future of ranching communities indefinitely.

Another example of rancher/environmentalist partnership fostered by ‘Cattle-free by ‘93’ is the Quivira Coalition, formed in 1997 in response to the anti-grazing sentiment of the Santa Fe Sierra Club during this time. The Quivira Coalition was founded by “two conservationists and a rancher who believed that a ranch that supported wildlife and a healthy ecosystem could also support a viable ranch business” (Quivira Coalition website). The executive director, Courtney White, is quoted in saying that the purpose of creating the Quivira Coalition was to “convince the urban environmental that ranching is sustainable” while also working to help the “rural ranching community understand urban values and why environmentalists feel the way they do” (Matlock 2006). In 2003, a group of twenty ranchers, environmentalists and scientists met to “take back the American West from the decades of divisiveness and acrimony”, the sort of context in which the cattle-free movement formed and thrived in its no-compromise approach to managing public rangelands (Quivira Coalition website).

The Quivira Coalition has four major goals: to improve land health, share knowledge and innovation, build local capacity, and strengthen diverse relationships (Quivira Coalition

website). To achieve these objectives, the Quivira Coalition is primarily concerned with working on projects such as hosting an annual conference, enrolling new ranchers in the organization's agrarian ranch apprenticeship program, restoring riparian zones and uplands, building collaboration with Native Americans, and producing a journal *Resilience* (Quivira Coalition website). In sum, the independent projects all work towards promoting the long-term notion that grasslands restoration as the "most effective, efficient, and immediately viable path to remedy the devastating impacts of global warming" (Quivira Coalition website).

Since its 1997 formation, the Quivira Coalition has been working to bring together people of diverse backgrounds, especially people of different occupations, values, and ages. In 2006, the Quivira Coalition fifth annual conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico, the theme was "Bridging the Urban-Rural Divide: Reconnecting People to Land and Each Other". White believes that the "debate between urban and rural dwellers is less shrill than it was in the heyday of the 'Cattle-free by '93' movement" yet is growing between rural and urban dwellers nonetheless. As White puts it, the division is based on water and land, and the fact that the "rural West has it [and] ... the urban West wants it" (Matlock 2006). As Matlock states, there needs to be a bridge over the urban-rural divide, which Whites believes is best created through restoration and active stewardship (2006). Climate change and its many implications does not select to target either rural or urban communities, instead both will be impacted, if not in different ways. The solution, according to White and the rest of the Quivira Coalition is partnership, between ranchers and environmentalists, and perhaps more importantly, between urban and rural communities.

Legacies of 'Cattle-free by '93'

'Cattle-free by '93' has evolved significantly in the last 25 years. Widespread exurban development on and near western rangelands has dramatically changed the way in which people view the public lands ranching debate. The fear of habitat fragmentation from the environmental community, coupled with the desire to continue the western ranching tradition in the face of the ranchette and dude ranch phenomena, may prove to be an area of compromise between the once divided respective camps. In formal; and informal arenas, the 'Cows Not Condos' campaigns marks a significant shift away from the cattle-free mindset that once dominated the western range.

In a 2010 interview with the Montana Association of Land Trusts, Rock Ringling, the managing director of the Montana Land Reliance takes credit for coming up with the bumper-sticker campaign 'Cows Not Condos'. While the Montana Land Reliance is primarily focused on conserving privately owned lands, the 'Cows Not Condos' campaign offers insight into the shifting paradigm of land management approaches in the West for public rangelands as well. Ringling, long concerned about the specter of subdivision, sees land trusts as one viable option to forgo the building of condominiums at the expense of traditional agricultural and ranching lands (Marx 2010). "Nothing wrong with condominiums," states Ringling. "But we are much more oriented to production agriculture... We're sort of the undevelopers." (Marx 2010).

Perhaps what is most appealing about the 'Cows Not Condos' mentality is that it appeals to many to many different uses of the land. In Ringling's conversation with Glenn Marx, executive director of the Montana Association of Land Trusts, he puts forth the idea that land protected from development, through resource management instruments like conservation easements, people both in-state and out-of-state benefit. In-state people, who use land for traditional purposes such as farming and ranching, are able to continue these practices without

subdivisions impeding their available resources. Similarly, out-of-state people who use the land to recreate and for its scenic values, as many in the ‘Cattle-free by ‘93’ camp did, are able to continue doing so without seeing a brand new subdivision during a hike in the Montana wilderness.

The ‘Cows Not Condos’ argument is not without flaw. “The politics like the bumper sticker itself, are black and white, but the complexities are rather greater, as anyone involved in the actual details well understands” (Starrs 1998, p. 254). These complexities that Paul Starrs is referencing here includes the contentious relations between ranchers and the federal government, environmentalists and ranchers, and environmentalists and the federal government, in addition to the role of ownership in private and public rangeland management. Moreover, much of the science remains unsettled, as well. While it is known that subdivisions contribute to a open space depletion, habitat fragmentation, and decrease the scenic values of a landscape, some argue that suburbanizations, or the rise of condominiums, are not the worst thing to happen to the West. “Agriculture - both livestock production and farming - rather than being ‘compatible with environmental protection’ has had a far greater impact on the western landscape than all the subdivisions, malls, highways, and urban centers combined” (Wuerthner 1994).

However, others disagree with Wuerthner’s argument, citing the lack of research on the environmental impacts of suburbanization. In *Ranching the View: Subdivisions versus Agriculture*, Knight et al. puts forth the claim that “subdivisions can have profound impacts on the biodiversity of rural areas, particularly when they are adjacent to protected natural areas” (1995). Moreover, the phenomena of “ranchettes” also has major implications for the look and feel of the American West. As Mitchell et al. puts it, “foothills subdivisions are repeatedly laid out on high ground overlook surrounding landscapes... [n]ew home construction and well

digging technologies, coupled with no necessity of having to care for livestock, allow today's foothills ranchette resident to place a premium upon panoramic viewsapes" (2002, p. 3). In other words, landscapes, specifically the ever contested rangelands, have become a commodity to be bought by and sold to the highest bidder, oftentimes leaving economically marginal rancher to pack his bags and head home.

For more and more ranchers and their families across the West, home is no longer on the range. This is not to say that all people are leaving these lands; since the 1990s, the western states have become the fastest growing region in the United States (Mitchell et al. 2002). There are two main areas in which the new westerner will settle: urban centers, in predominantly suburban locations, or rural areas, in primarily exurban spaces. The latter of which are almost exclusively created from the subdivision of farms and ranches (Michell et al. 2002). This phenomena is not localized in the American West, but is mirrored in national agricultural trend and broader land use changes around the world as well.

Connecting the 'Cows Not Condos' debate to its contested predecessor "Cattle-free by '93", it is important to recognize the ways in which private development participates in a direct relationship with our nation's public lands. One example of the interplay between private and public lands are vegetation management objectives, including the use of controlled burns and managed wildlife, which could be potentially limited as a restoration technique in the face of nearby private and commercial development (Mitchell et al. 2002). Other concerns include debates over water rights as well as the demand for private access to adjacent public lands, which could have negative consequences for resource management, especially for land managers (Mitchell and Wallace 1998, Mitchell et al. 2002). In addition, the subdivision of private lands next to public lands may also alter vegetation composition and landscape structure, with the

potential to “limit animal travel corridors, reduce suitable habitat for sensitive species, and increase predation by domestic pets” (Mitchell et al. 2002, p. 9).

Brunson and Wallace (2002) suggest that the mutual hostility held by both environmentalists and ranchers is ultimately counterproductive in the management of both private and federal rangelands. Instead, research suggest that new rural landowners have “considerable empathy with both ranching and the environment” and can furthermore provide an “infusion of financial and political resources” (Brunson and Wallace 2002, p. 103). The acreages purchased by owners of hobby ranchers or ranchettes can help protect against further intensive settlement patterns, serving as a buffer for national parks, forests, wilderness areas and public rangelands from what Brunson and Wallace term “less compatible uses” (2002, p. 103). Brunson and Wallace make it clear that they do not support “any reduction of efforts to keep existing ranches in production or to guide the subdivision of land toward ecologically sensitive or agriculturally productive areas” (Brunson and Wallace 2002, p. 103). Instead, ending hostility towards the new neighbors in many traditional ranching communities can serve in a suite of outcomes that will benefit all parties involved. In order to do this, both ranchers and environmentalists must adapt to changes in the West.

‘Cattle-free by ‘93’ campaign has changed over time in response to new perspectives arising within the public lands ranching issue. Through an environmental justice lens, some make the case that campaigns to end public lands ranching disproportionately target small family ranchers who rely on public lands to support already-modest ranch sizes. In response to the radical tendencies of Sierra Club leadership during the 1990s, anthropologist Ernie Atencio published a 50-page report called *Of Land and Culture: Environmental Justice and Public Lands Ranching in Northern New Mexico* in 2001. Atencio was asked by the Sierra Club’s

Environmental Justice Committee to investigate ranching in northern New Mexico, specifically what the end of public lands ranchers would mean for those that live and work on the range. *Of Land and Culture* was printed a second time, in 2004, for the purpose of including more recent developments in the debate around public lands ranching.

When viewed in an environmental justice frame, the public lands ranching issue becomes much more complex. Atencio argued that, “this is more than a ‘cows versus condos’ argument. And it is more than an argument of cows versus the loss of mere lifestyle or profession choice. It is an argument of a unique culture and communities that have endured in this region for 400 years. It is an argument of environmental justice” (2004, p. 23). It is not just about removing ranchers from public lands; the ‘Cattle-free by ‘93’ campaign directly interferes with many components of the culture of the rural American West. Atencio argued that viewing cattle ranching as a profit-motivated industry forces environmentalists to think that the only way to stop the damage done to rangelands is to outright remove all livestock. He warned that the “... the danger of straight and narrow economic thinking is that it fails to take into account the less quantifiable, though no less important, issues of social well-being and cultural vitality” (Atencio 2004, p. 23). Atencio’s claims prove valuable in understanding the responses generated by ‘Cattle-free by ‘93’ and how broader anti-ranching rhetoric was received in the 21st century.

Some aspects of landscapes, it would seem, cannot be bought and sold in a way that correlates in economic terms:

Without access to public lands, it’s clear that an age-old tradition, and an essential local economic pursuit, would probably be over. Losing legal title to community land grants is one thing, but losing all access to centuries-old traditional grazing lands would be the final blow. Not only would the rich fabric of social, cultural, and

economic continuity begin to fray, but local ranchers who are barely staying afloat as it is in a floundering local economy would find themselves in worse condition, struggling to provide even the basic comforts, food, and education for their families. It would be yet another in the long legacy of injustices to impoverished Hispano villages (Attencio 2004, p. 26).

This new framing of the public lands ranching argument is significant and reflects the splintering that occurred in the environmental community from this point forward. It is important to note, however, that Attencio is specifically referencing the Hispanic ranching communities of New Mexico, which is an angle of analysis that obviously does not apply to all of the American West. Nevertheless, coupled with the success of rancher/environmentalist partnerships that came to fruition during the 1990s, publications like *Of Land and Culture* serve to complicate the public lands ranching issue significantly, in a way that is not represented by early works of 'Cattle-free by '93', such as the Fergusons' *Sacred Cows* or Jacobs' *Waste of the West*.

DISCUSSION

‘Cattle-free by ‘93’ sought to reckon with the history of ranching on public rangelands by removing cattle as a way to restore sensitive, aridland ecosystems of the American West. Despite efforts by environmental activists to end public lands ranching during the 1980s and 1990s, cattle still graze on federal rangelands in the present day. However, there are several significant outcomes of the anti-ranching activism during the late 20th century. In my evaluation, I found that ‘Cattle-free by ‘93’ served to cause the following: (4.1) highlight the issues of traditional federal rangeland management and policy, (4.2) increase environmentalist/rancher partnership, and (4.3) create awareness of conflicting land use ideologies.

Highlight the issues of traditional federal rangeland management and policy

During the early 1990s, the Clinton Administration attempted to raise grazing fees and implement grazing reform several times over the course of 1993 to 1995. Part of the reason that the Clinton Administration chose to tackle grazing issues was due to rising tensions between ranchers and environmentalists over public lands ranching at the end of the 20th century. The Secretary of the Interior at the time, Bruce Babbitt, was unprepared for the intense backlash that the Clinton Administration would receive from western politicians, ranchers, and the livestock industry. If anything, the gridlock resulting from Babbitt’s attempts at public rangeland reform reiterate the political and cultural influence of ranchers that many in the ‘Cattle-free by ‘93’ movement were outwardly critical of. Nonetheless, it is hard to say that anyone expected the level of pushback that the Clinton Administration would receive for such attempts.

The traditionally low fee to graze livestock on public lands was something that many in the ‘Cattle-free by ‘93’ community attacked during the 1980s and 1990s. Calling ranchers ‘welfare cowboys’ whose livelihoods were subsidized by the American public, activists

effectively brought attention to the problematic nature of rangeland economics. From the start, Babbitt was an advocate for raising grazing fees on public lands. In 1993, Babbitt began his career at the Department of the Interior by arguing for the doubling of grazing fees, which generated intense pushback from ranching interests. Over the years, Babbitt lowered the amount at which he wanted grazing permits set, until eventually dropping the initiative altogether.

The Clinton Administration's failures to raise grazing fees is demonstrative of two key aspects of issues related to modern rangeland management: firstly, the political prowess of livestock interests, and secondly, the complexity of rangeland economics. "Even the ranchers' lobby was stunned at how quickly Clinton had taken the entire Western land reform package off the table," writes Timothy Egan of *The New York Times* (1993). Babbitt, who once stayed up all night with Edward Abbey in the Arizona wilderness, was clearly influenced by the energy that the movement to end public lands ranching had generated during the late 1980s. However, it would turn out that raising grazing fees was a much more difficult, entrenched issue than either environmentalists or ranchers could have guessed. The second aspect of the failures of the Clinton Administration in the arena of rangeland reform has to do with the intangible nature of many of the values associated with ranching life and culture. It was demonstrated here that raising grazing fees does not account for the ways in which ranching is embedded into the fabric of rural western American life, thereby underscoring the limitations of using economic logic to deal with a problem that transcends the federal government's bottom line. The 'Cattle-free by '93' movement effectively brought awareness to the public lands ranching issue, encouraging environmental advocates like Babbitt to tackle rangeland economics, which ultimately did little in the grand scheme of things in the end. As a result, the failures of the Clinton Administration

during the late 20th century highlight the limitations of using traditional federal management and policies to enact effective rangeland reform.

Increase environmentalist/rancher partnership

For anyone aware of the complex history of the management of public rangelands, Babbitt's shortcomings on achieving comprehensive reform should come as no surprise. However, there were other outcomes of 'Cattle-free by '93' that could be deemed unexpected. The intense polarization between ranchers and environmentalists of the 1980s and 1990s, wrought by environmental activists wanting to end public lands ranching, ultimately served as a means to foster environmentalist/rancher partnerships, many of which endure into the present day. The earliest example of this is the Malpais Borderlands Group, which formed in 1993 in direct response to the polarization created by activists in the 'Cattle-free by '93' movement during this time. In Nathan Sayre's book, *Working Wilderness*, we see how both ranchers and environmentalists were impacted by the anti-ranching rhetoric that was perpetuated by the campaign to end public lands ranching. Fearful of the implications that such gridlock would have on the health of American rangelands, environmentalists and ranchers in the New Mexican borderlands teamed up to advocate for the endurance of the rural ranching industry through the conservation of the region's sensitive and primarily arid ecosystems.

The Malpais Borderlands Group inspired a movement in natural resource management of public rangelands that had not been seen in the American West prior to its formation. Following suit, Courtney White and two conservationists famously formed the Quivira Coalition in 1997, which has achieved national fame and transformed the way in which both sides of the aisle view the public lands ranching issue. Knowing the polarized context in which both the Malpais Borderlands Group and the Quivira Association formed, it is hard to say that either

would have formed without the anti-ranching sentiment that campaigns like ‘Cattle-free by ‘93’ and ‘Free Our Public Lands’ perpetuated during the 1980s and 1990s. The formation of both groups outside of the federal arena, in addition to the bumbles of the Clinton Administration’s failed rangeland reform during this time, marks a shift toward environmental management that is best achieved at the local, community-based level.

Create awareness of conflicting land use ideologies

Lastly, the rise of ‘Cattle-free by ‘93’ campaign serve to splinter the environmental community over conflicting land use ideologies. While many environmental activists during this time were arguing for the end of public lands ranching, some became concerned about the existential threat of commercial development that were increasingly becoming reality on American rangelands ever since the mid 20th century. As mentioned elsewhere, some environmental advocates abandoned the ‘Cattle-free by ‘93’ rhetoric in favor of a new bumper stickers slogan across the American West: ‘Cows not Condos’. That is, the notion that cattle, while having damaged the western range in the past, are still better than the commercial development that has proliferated in many traditional ranching communities across the region.

The ‘Cows Not Condos’ argument remain contested in the environmental community today. During the late 20th century, fear of commercial development was one of the reasons that led to the creation of the Quivira Association, mentioned above. One of the reasons that the Quivira Association was founded in 1997 was due to the no-compromise approach to rangeland management that had begun to infiltrate the Sierra Club, one of the oldest and most respected conservation organizations in the world. The ‘zero cud’ initiative demonstrated the way in which radical environmentalism informed its more traditional counterpart, despite failing to become Sierra Club policy by early the 2000s. As a result, White and other members of the Santa Fe

Sierra Club formed the Quivira Coalition, cognisant of the commercial development that was and is encroaching on New Mexican rangelands today.

The 'Cattle-free by '93' campaign formed in response to the increasing awareness of the importance of protecting American rangelands. Radical environmental groups, anti-ranching advocates, and environmental activists contributed to the movement to end public lands ranching through a variety of social, legal, and political approaches. In the end, the 'Cattle-free by '93' campaign failed to achieve its ultimate goal of ending ranching on public lands in the American West, yet nonetheless contributed to the environmental history of American rangelands in a way that challenged many of the prior notions of natural resource management in the region. Once seen as a fringe movement with a lofty goal it would achieve by monkeywrenching, it has become apparent that 'Cattle-free by '93' had much larger implications that anyone in the movement would have realized at the time. Environmentalists and ranchers could continue bickering over public lands ranching until the cows come home, but there is evidence to suggest that their home might be on western American rangelands afterall.

CONCLUSION

Evolution of cattle-free activism: from fringe movement to the “radical middle”

During the late 1980s and early 1990s, many people considered anti-ranching campaigns like ‘Cattle-free by ‘93’ as fringe and left-of-center, with little chance of achieving the removal of cattle from public rangelands. Over time, however, ‘Cattle-free by ‘93’ transformed as an activist movement into public policy, with several significant impacts on 21st century federal rangeland management. While unsuccessful at ultimately ending public lands ranching, the ‘Cattle-free by ‘93’ campaign brought an increased awareness to public rangeland policy of the 1980s and 1990s, as well as demonstrating the severe polarization that had formed over time between ranchers and environmentalists.

Originating in preservationist ideology, anti-ranching rhetoric - specifically against public lands ranching - became a mainstay in the arena of radical environmentalism during the 1980s. People like Nancy and Denzel Ferguson, Edward Abbey, and Lynn Jacobs, in concert with organizations like EarthFirst! and the Western Watersheds Project, sought to end public lands ranching for the sake of saving western range from further destruction. Concern for the environmental impact of overgrazing transformed into a personal attack of welfare ranchers who use public funds to destroy western public lands. Environmentalists’ attack of public lands ranching slowly transitioned from the notion that the western range had been mismanaged to an ideological shift that saw ranching as unnatural and inherently destructive. Traditional conservation organizations began to absorb the anti-ranching rhetoric of the day, as demonstrated by the Sierra Club’s ‘zero cud’ campaign and the formation of the Western Watershed Project. Moreover, the anti-ranching advocacy popularized by activism of ‘Cattle-free by ‘93’ prompted Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt to propose several reforms to rangeland policy during his

appointment under the Clinton Administration. Further publications advocating for the end of public lands ranching, from the legal perspective of lawyer Debra Donahue to the more emotional approaches of George Wuerthner, represent the continuation of ‘Cattle-free by ‘93’ into the 21st century, something that is evident in the founding of anti-ranching activist network RangeNet in 2000.

While ‘Cattle-free by ‘93’ permeated into the crevices of the mainstream environmental movement, certain cracks began to form in its underlying motivations. For instance, the polarization between ranchers and environmentalists that ‘Cattle-free by ‘93’ had generated unlikely partnerships, most notably in the formation of the Malpais Borderlands Group in 1993 and later the creation of the Quivira Coalition in 1997. As ‘Cattle-free by ‘93’ generated national attention and brought the public lands ranching issue to the American consciousness, the mainstream environmental community began to grapple with the direction it was heading moving forward. In light of the existential threat of commercial development and the emergence of the ‘Cows Not Condos’ counter to the movement to end public lands ranching, modern environmentalists were forced to reckon with the implications of truly cattle-free rangelands.

The role of environmentalist/rancher cooperation in the era of global climate change

Westerners today are no stranger to extreme weather events that have degraded landscapes, destroyed built environments, and irrevocably altered human perceptions of the world around us. For most westerners, it comes as no surprise that such events indicate the beginnings of global climate change, the precipice on which we all stand. Most people in the science community today recognize that climate change will, without a doubt, transform the way ecosystems work in the years to come. Such change will inevitably alter the function and composition of western rangelands, which tend to be extremely sensitive to change and will

likely respond to perturbation in various ways. For the American West more broadly, the impacts of climate change include a grocery list of natural disasters, including the likes of mega-droughts, devastating wildfires, and record temperatures that will fundamentally change the environmental composition and overall resilience of the western range.

The era of global climate change beckons comprehensive, adaptive, and functional natural resource management both in the American West and in world's rangeland ecosystems. Thousands of ranchers, as well as the vast biodiversity that western rangelands support, lie directly in the path of the unprecedented climatic transformation of the American West. As Atencio iterates in *Of Land and Culture*, ranchers possess a unique ecological knowledge of western rangelands, the kind of intelligence that one acquires through the sheer dependency on the land for economic, as well as cultural survival. Ernie Atencio, along with other scholars of the western range including the likes of Nathan F. Sayre, Paul F. Starrs, and Jack Stauder, acknowledge the fact that ranchers cannot be stewards if they are forced off the range.

The polarization between ranchers and environmentalists created by the 'Cattle-free by '93' campaign ignited new approaches in the management of the western range. However, the impending nature of global climate change will make these solutions temporally-sensitive, thereby limiting the time available to come up with a comprehensive plan in managing rangelands of the American West. The 'Cattle-free by '93' campaign taught us that formation of rancher/environmentalist partnerships are possible, which ultimately increases the chance of long-term ecological, economic, and cultural success of public lands ranching in the American West. Moreover, one could argue that there is simply too much at stake in the face of global climate change for rancher/environmentalist conflict to endure.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abbey, E (1986). "Cowburnt." *Harper's Bazaar*. Retrieved from: <https://harpers.org/archive/2015/02/cowburnt/2/>
- Abbey, E., Peterson, D (ed). (1986). "Sincerely, Edward Abbey." *The Sun Magazine*. Retrieved from: <https://www.thesunmagazine.org/issues/370/sincerely-edward-abbey>
- Adler, J. (2012). Property Rights and the Tragedy of the Commons. *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from: <https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2012/05/property-rights-and-the-tragedy-of-the-commons/257549/>
- Anderson, W. E. (1989). "Cattle-free by '93 -- A Viewpoint." *Rangelands*: 11(4). Retrieved from: https://www-jstor-org.colorado.idm.oclc.org/stable/4000352?pq-origsite=summon&seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents
- Anderson, J. (2000). Public Lands Council v. Babbitt: Herding Ranchers Off Public Land?. *Brigham Young University Law Review*, 2000(3), 1273.
- Atencio, E. (2004). *Of Land and Culture: Environmental Justice and Public Lands Ranching in Northern New Mexico*. Santa Fe, NM: Quivira Coalition.
- Baden, J. A., Snow, D. (1997). *The next West: public lands, community and economy in the American West*. Washington, D.C.: Island Press.
- Baker, W. (2000). *Tony and the Cows: A True Story from the Range Wars*. Kansas City, Kansas: Confluence Press.
- Blakeslee, S. (2000). "On Remote Mesa, Ranchers and Environmentalists Seek a Middle Ground." *New York Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2000/12/26/science/on-remote-mesa-ranchers-and-environmentalists-seek-a-middle-ground.html>
- Bookchin, M. (1990). *Defending the earth: a dialogue between Murray Bookchin and Dave Foreman*. Boston, MA: South End Press.
- Bookchin, M. (1982). *The Ecology of Freedom: the emergence and dissolution of hierarchy*. Palo Alto, California: Cheshire Books.
- Bovee, K. (2001). "'Zero-Cow' initiative splits Sierra Club." *High Country News*. Retrieved from: <https://www.hcn.org/issues/197/10281>
- Bradford, D. Reed, F. LeValley, R.B, Campbell, C. Kossler, S. (2002). "Livestock Grazing On The National Forests - Why continue to do it?." *Rangelands*: 24(2). 3-11. Retrieved from: https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5401590.pdf

- Citizen Review Online. (2003) "The Agenda for the RangeNet 2003 Conference in Boulder, Colorado." *Citizen Review Online*. Retrieved from: https://citizenreviewonline.org/oct_2003/agenda.htm
- Christensen, J. (2002). "Environmentalists Hail the Ranchers: Howdy, Partners!". New York Times. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2002/09/10/science/environmentalists-hail-the-ranchers-howdy-pardners.html>
- Cushman, J. H. (1994). "Administration Gives Up On Grazing Fees." *The New York Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/1994/12/22/us/administration-gives-up-on-raising-grazing-fees.html>
- Daggett, D. (1995). *Beyond the Rangeland Conflict: Toward a West that Works*. Layton, Utah: Grand Canyon Trust.
- Daggett, D. (2017). *Gardeners of Eden: Rediscovering Our Importance to Nature*. Reno, Nevada: University of Nevada Press.
- Devall, B., Sessions, G. (1985). *Deep Ecology*. Salt Lake City, Utah: G.M. Smith.
- Deverell, W. ed. (2004). *A Companion to the American West*. Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing.
- Dixon, J. (2016). "Rancher Rebellion at the Malheur Refuge is Nothing New. Just ask Nancy Ferguson." *Willamette Week*. Retrieved from: <https://www.wweek.com/news/2016/01/13/rancher-rebellion-at-the-malheur-refuge-is-nothing-new-just-ask-nancy-ferguson/>
- Dryzek, J. S., Schlosberg, D. (2005) *Debating the Earth: the environmental politics reader*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Foreman, D. (1980). EARTH FIRST Statement of Principles and Membership Brochure ("Draft Platform") Republished by the Environment & Society Portal, Multimedia Portal. Retrieved from: <http://www.environmentandsociety.org/node/6810>.
- Fox, Mary Lou, ed., Earth First! Journal 13, no. 7 (1 August 1993). Republished by the Environment & Society Portal, Multimedia Library. <http://www.environmentandsociety.org/node/6973>
- Friedberger, M. (1994). "Cattlemen, Consumers, and Beef." *Environmental History Review*. 18(3): 37-57.
- Gibson, L. (2010) "True Grit." *University of Chicago*. Retrieved from: <https://magazine.uchicago.edu/1002/features/marvel.shtml>

- Gottfried, G. J. (1999) "Toward integrated research, land management, and ecosystem protection in the Malpai borderlands: conference summary." Fort Collins, Colorado: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Research Station.
- Hardin, G. (1968). "The Tragedy of the Commons." *Science*. 162(3859): 1243-1248.
- Heller, A. "History and Management of Public Rangelands in the United States: A Case Study from New Mexico." *Inquiries*. 7(3): 1-3. Retrieved from: <http://www.inquiriesjournal.com/articles/1024/3/history-and-management-of-public-rangelands-in-the-united-states-a-case-study-from-new-mexico>
- Hess Jr., K. (1992). *Visions upon the land: man and nature on the western range*. Washington, D.C.: Island Press.
- Hess, Bret. (2010). "Rangelands West Partnership." Retrieved from: <http://www.waaesd.org/rangelands-west-partnership>
- Horn, M. (2017). *Rancher, Farmer, Fisherman: Conservation Heroes of the American Heartland*. New York, New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Hudak, M. (2003). "Public Lands Ranchers: Heading for the Last Roundup?" *VegNews*. No. 27, p. 46.
- Kaufman, W. (1994). *No Turning Back: Dismantling the Fantasies of Environmental Thinking*. New York, New York: Basic Books.
- Kleckner, D. (1993). "High Risk In Raising Grazing Fees." *Chicago Tribune*. Retrieved from: <https://search-proquest-com.colorado.idm.oclc.org/news/docview/283595024/abstract/37AF56B050054444PQ/3?accountid=14503>
- Knight, R. L., S. F. Bates. (1995). *A new century for natural resource management*. Washington, D.C.: Island Press.
- Knight, R. L., Wallace, G. N., Riebsame, W. E., (1995) "Ranching the View: Subdivisions versus Agriculture." *Conservation Biology*. 9(2): p. 459.
- Knight, R. L., White, C. (2009). *Conservation for a New Generation: Redefining Natural Resources Management*. Washington, D.C.: Island Press.
- Knize, P. (1999). *Who Owns the West? The Atlantic*. Retrieved from: <https://www.theatlantic.com/past/docs/issues/99jul/9907ranchers3.htm>
- Knox, M. L. (1991). "New Philosophy for Ranching." *Chicago Tribune*. Retrieved from: <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-1991-12-20-9104240181-story.html>

- Knowlton, C. (2017). *Cattle Kingdom: the Hidden History of the Cowboy West*. Boston, Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
- Jacobs, J.P. (2014). "Anti-grazing group fights to keep guerilla vibe after court wins, leadership change." *GreenWire*. Retrieved from: <https://www.eenews.net/stories/1060010785>
- Jacobs, L. (1991). *Waste of the West: Public Lands Ranching*. Tucson, Arizona: Lynn Jacobs.
- Jordan, T. G. (1993). *North American Cattle-ranching Frontiers: Origins, Diffusion, and Differentiation*. Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico.
- Johnson, D. (1991). "A Range War of Words On Grazing in the West." *The New York Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/1991/08/05/us/a-range-war-of-words-on-grazing-in-the-west.html>
- List, P. C. (1993). *Radical environmental: philosophy and tactics*. Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- Matlock, Staci. (2006). "Quivera Conference Explore Urban-Rural Divide." *The Santa Fe New Mexican*. Retrieved from: <https://search-proquest-com.colorado.idm.oclc.org/news/docview/331640390/8B68658684644E0EPQ/14?accountid=14503>
- Multiple Use and Sustained Yield Act of 1960, 16 USC § 86-517.
- Merrill, K.R. (2002). *Public Lands and Political Meaning: Ranchers, the Government, and the Property Between Them*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Moffat, K. (1990). "No Middle Ground in Grazing Debate." *Albuquerque Journal*. Albuquerque, New Mexico. P. 7. Retrieved from: <https://search-proquest-com.colorado.idm.oclc.org/news/docview/2176313680/70751E1F864E46A4PQ/5?accountid=14503>
- Negri, R. (1997). *Tales of Canyonlands Cowboys*. Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press.
- Ostrom, E. (2009) "A General Framework for Analyzing the Sustainability of Social-Ecological Systems." *Science*: 325(5939): 419-422. DOI: 10.1126/science.1172133
- Ozeki, R. (1998). *My Year of Meats*. New York, New York: Viking Press.
- Quivera Coalition. (No date). Quivera Coalition Website. Retrieved from:
- Paskus, L. "A cow of a time." *High Country News*. Retrieved from: <https://www.hcn.org/issues/234/13377>

- Rennicke, J. (1992) "Sacred Cows?". *Backpacker*. Retrieved from:
https://books.google.com/books?id=dt4DAAAAMBAJ&pg=PA46&lpg=PA46&dq=sacred+cows?+backpacker&source=bl&ots=09mzjCE8bG&sig=ACfU3U1oFM7IBITGLXH F4DDHvIU_9AeEow&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKewj47MiEyaPhAhVC1IMKHfkIAUg Q6AEwC3oECAsQAQ#v=onepage&q=sacred%20cows%3F%20backpacker&f=false
- Rich, Frederic. (2016). *Getting to Green: Saving Nature: A Bipartisan Solution*. New York, New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Rifkin, J. (1992). *Beyond Beef: the Rise and Fall of Cattle Culture*. New York, New York: Dutton.
- Roughgarden, Jonathan, Robert M. May and Simon A. Levin, editors. (1989). *Perspectives in Ecological Theory*. Princeton: Princeton University Press
- Rowley, W. D. (1985). *U.S. Forest Service Grazing and Rangelands: a history*. College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press. 1st ed.
- Russell, S. A. (1993). *Kill the Cowboy: A Battle of Mythology in the New West*. Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley.
- Sayre, N. F. (2002). *Ranching, Endangered Species, and Urbanization in the Southwest: Species of Capital*. Tucson, Arizona: University of Arizona Press.
- Sayre, N. F. (2017). *The Politics of Scale: a History of Rangeland Science*. Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press.
- Scheffer, V.B. (1991). *The shaping of environmentalism in America*. Seattle, Washington: University of Washington Press.
- Shabecoff, P. (2003). *A Fierce Green Fire: an American Environmental Movement*. Washington, D.C.: Island Press. Rev ed.
- Sharman, A. R. (1991, Jul 19). The myth of the welfare rancher. *New York Times (1923-Current File)* Retrieved from <https://colorado.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.colorado.idm.oclc.org/docview/108726396?accountid=14503>
- Stauder, J. (2016). *The Blue and the Green: a Cultural Ecological History of an Arizona Ranching Community*. Reno, Nevada: University of Nevada Press.
- Stepans, R. (2008). "A Case for Rancher-Environmental Coalitions in Coal Bed Methane Litigation: Preservation of Unique Values in an Evolving Landscape." *Wyoming Law Review*. Retrieved from:
<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/e639/b3b86f8bfddc5b9dcd23648f2cc59285ca2f.pdf>

- Strickland, R. (1994) "Whatever Happened to Grazing Reform?" *The Planet*. Retrieved from: <http://vault.sierraclub.org/planet/199411/ftg-grazing.asp>
- Snow, D. (1992). *Voices from the environmental movement: perspectives for a new era*. Washington, D.C.: Island Press.
- Thomas, H. S. (1992). "Solving Environmentalist/Range User Conflicts." *Rangelands*: 14(2). Retrieved from: <https://journals.uair.arizona.edu/index.php/rangelands/article/download/.../10335>
- Voigt Jr., W. (1976). *Public grazing lands: use and misuse by industry and government*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.
- Wagenknecht, L. (2002). "RangeNet 2002, Or Ma and Pa Kettle in the Big City." *Watersheds Messenger*. Retrieved from: https://www.westernwatersheds.org/watmess/watmess_2002/2002html_fall/article3.htm
- Walker, L. (2003). "The Genesis of RangeNet." Interview. Retrieved from: <https://vimeo.com/69843039>
- Waugh, J. (1991). "Grazing right." *Chicago Tribune*. ProQuest Historical Newspapers. P.18
- Weisman, A. (2007). *The world without us*. New York, New York: Thomas Dunne Books/ St. Martin's Press. 1st ed.
- White, C. (2008). *Revolution on the Range: the Rise of a New Ranch in the American West*. Washington, D.C.: Island Press/Shearwater Books.
- Wilkinson, C. F. (1992). *Crossing the Next Meridian: Land, Water, and the Future of the West*. Washington, D.C.: Island Press.
- Worster, D. (1994). *An unsettled country: changing landscapes in the American West*. Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press. 1st ed.
- Worster, D. (1994). *Nature's economy: a history of ecological ideas*. New York, New York: Cambridge University Press. 2nd ed.
- Worster, D. (1992). *Under western skies: nature and history in the American West*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Wuerthner, G. (2002). *Yosemite*. Voyageur Press: Minneapolis, MN. 29-33.
- Zaslowsky, D., Watkins, T. H. (1994). *These American Lands: Parks, Wilderness, and the Public Lands*. Washington, D.C.: Island Press.