

Statement Summary Presented By:
Range Improvement Task Force



Cooperative Extension Service
Range Improvement Task Force



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Dr. Jerry G. Schickedanz - Coordinator
Dr. Larry Foster - Beef Cattle Specialist
Dr. John M. Fowler - Agricultural Economist
Dr. James R. Gray - Agricultural Economist
Dr. Phillip J. Swank - Wildlife Specialist

At the Hearings on:

"Livestock Grazing on Public Lands" - Senator Domenici
Senate Subcommittee on Parks, Recreation, and Renewable Resources
Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

"Bureau of Land Management Rangeland Improvements" - Senator Schmitt
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on the Interior

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INTRODUCTION

The Senate Subcommittee hearings held in New Mexico during the summer of 1979 were designed to provide additional information pertaining to the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) involvement in controversial issues which directly affect New Mexico citizenry and economy. Senator Domenici, under the auspices of the Senate Subcommittee on Parks, Recreation and Renewable Resources, investigated the legal authority for BLM activities and the need for changes in the law. Senator Schmitt, under the jurisdiction of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on the Interior, investigated the expenditure of funds appropriated by Congress and derived from grazing fees for rangeland improvement and for the development of Environmental Impact Statements on grazing allotment plans.

The following invited statements by the respective members of the Range Improvement Task Force were prepared to provide insight and information about the relevant issues. The input is provided according to the disciplines of range science, agricultural economics, livestock management, and wildlife science.

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At the Hearings on:

"Livestock Grazing on Public Lands" - Senator Domenici moderating
Senate Subcommittee on Parks, Recreation, and Renewable Resources
Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

August 6, 1979

Las Cruces Municipal Building

Las Cruces, New Mexico 88001

Dr. Jerry Schickedanz:

We are living today in a rapidly changing world with an apparent mood of getting private use out of the public lands--uses such as grazing, mining and timber. This mood has come about through laws and the regulations to enforce these laws. From the 1890's through the 1950's, there were only 13 laws affecting public land management. With the environmental movement beginning in the 1960's, there were 7 laws passed and since 1970 there have been 13 in eight years. There have been more laws passed in the last 18 years than the previous 70. There are laws to save the Socorro Isopod, but no one seems concerned for the rancher who may also be facing extinction.

With all of these new laws and regulations, public input is required. The public has been asked to comment on these many laws and proposed regulations and on the many Environmental Impact Statements that have been produced. However, the time frame in which comments are accepted is many times only the minimum amount of time required by law, and the requesting agency does not receive adequate input in order to make these laws, regulations and Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) acceptable. From a scientific point of view, and in my opinion, 45 days is inadequate time to address the issues and assumptions within Environmental Impact Statements.

The EIS's as written have reduced a very complex ecological relationship to a few generalizations concerning the soil, water, climate, and grazing animals. These relationships are not that simple. The University communities and groups, such as the Range Improvement Task Force and Western Universities Public Rangeland Coordinating Committee, have been providing technical input into these various areas for the past three years, many times repeating their concerns on the technical aspects with little success in changing ideas and assumptions contained within. The BLM in their effort to meet the time constraints of the lawsuit has ignored the directives from both the lawsuit and the National Environmental Policy Act. The information needed to fulfill these requirements is many times lacking and the BLM ignores the scientific input by proceeding on, even with this lack of information.

The Range Improvement Task Force has been providing the BLM with information from a scientific basis concerning the validity of the inventories as they relate to carrying capacity. The Range Improvement Task Force is very concerned with the BLM projecting precise carrying capacities from a one-year inventory on the resource. Calculations of stocking rates by methods used in EIS's involve independent estimates each associated with a certain degree of error on cover, composition, proper use factors, forage acreage requirements, and production estimates. Any validity of end results is probably coincidental. True grazing capacity can only be determined by stocking with an estimated number of animals and documenting the range trend. No inventory method will give a precise initial stocking rate such as the BLM is trying to use. True carrying capacity can only be determined through actual use records, utilization records, determining condition, and watching the trend up to 10 years.

The impact statements that are presently being released are better in terms of information gathered than the Challis EIS which was to be the prototype, but are still inadequate. The Task Force is still concerned whether the impact statements are truly identifying the alternatives, or are a process of adjudication and not looking at the impacts of livestock grazing, or have been designed to answer the court case and are not an accurate assessment of the range resource.

The Roswell EIS is an example of promoting a preferred alternative without other practical alternatives in reserve. Additionally, many assumptions have been made concerning this alternative such as specific chemicals to be used for brush control which have not received an approved EPA label. What happens if the label is not approved?

Recent publications which many people feel were designed to foster new funding for the Bureau of Land Management tend to dwell on the negative rather than the positive in terms of range condition in the western United States. It is my opinion that the western ranges are in the best condition they have been in since the initiation of the federal land management agencies. The general public has been unduly concerned about the 17 percent in a downward trend and only 18 percent in good condition. But few expound on the 83 percent in either a stable or upward trend.

From a research standpoint, there is poor documentation as to the validity and understanding of factors such as soil erosion rates, plant growth capabilities, growth responses to environmental conditions, grazing systems, soil compaction, to mention a few. For example, in the East Roswell EIS, how valid are the time requirements for the rest treatments presented in the proposed action? The objectives of the rest periods are to meet the physiological requirements of forage plants, wildlife habitat needs, and livestock production goals. These requirements are not specifically known for many range forage plants and are very general or speculative for wildlife habitat needs. When common sense tells you that something is not workable related to grazing systems, etc., how much documentation is needed before a change will be made?

The present Environmental Impact Statements contain serious flaws and conclusions of insufficient data and interpretation. These inadequacies must be addressed and corrected before a final statement can be completed and accepted as a reliable document for decision making purposes. **Bio-**logical data for the EIS's cannot be obtained within the court ordered time frame. **This urgency at the expense of sufficient quality biological data is certainly not in the best interest of the BLM, the ranching industry or the concerned public if the end result is a poor document with misleading interpretations that will not ultimately result in better management of our valuable range resource.**

Dr. Larry Foster:

The Final Judgement in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia ordered that the BLM "shall cause to be prepared . . . Environmental Impact Statements concerning the environmental effects of live-

stock grazing activities on the public lands". Many livestock producers have indicated that, thus far, the EIS's have been used to remove livestock grazing rather than justifying grazing on public lands. The BLM has chosen this avenue to justify re-adjudicating, reducing, and in some cases, eliminating grazing on public lands.

Allotment Management Plans (AMP's) have often been impractical from a livestock management point of view. The main purpose of the AMP's was supposed to be the improvement of the range, but this improvement has not developed in many cases. An example is the East Roswell EIS area where the allotments without any AMP's received an average total cut of 40.2%. Those allotments which did have existing AMP's received a total cut of 40.5%. While 10% of the allotments with AMP's received increases, 16.6% of the allotments without AMP's received increases. This relationship is even stronger in the Socorro EIS. This indicates a serious problem with the process or the procedures being used.

All of the EIS's have lacked what appears to be a reasonable alternative--that is, allowing the rancher to run his ranch the way he thinks it should be, provided that the range maintains or improves in the long-term trend analysis. This would involve a continual monitoring process with permanent transect records and photos being maintained by the BLM which has rarely been done up to now.

The carrying capacity cuts imposed upon a rancher have significant economic impact. From a practical stockman's point of view, the expenses do not go down proportionately with the cuts, which in many cases means economic disaster to the rancher. A rancher still has the same number of acres to ride over, the same number of windmills to maintain, the same miles of fence to maintain (or more if additional fences are added), and probably the same number of pickups required. The only potential savings would be in direct animal costs such as supplemental feed and number of bulls required.

Another problem not adequately addressed occurred on intermingled land in the Socorro BLM District where range improvements were suggested without regard as to land ownership. It is suggested that some water pipelines would originate on a rancher's privately owned water source to be piped onto BLM lands. This poses an interesting question--would the rancher be obligated to supply water in the future based on the "prior use" concept, even if he no longer holds the permit?

From a practical standpoint, the BLM has only one logical tool to prudently manage the public range--that is livestock. They cannot control wildlife movement or numbers to accomplish proper forage utilization. The wildlife is a state ownership and responsibility. They cannot, due to budgetary and legal restraints, manipulate the range as they would like, thus the only thing they can control is livestock. Often, livestock are managed as tools to indirectly manage other resources such as wildlife, recreation, timber, etc. In most instances, it is the rancher who winds up footing the bill for the other users.

It has been suggested that the above concerns are a result of the BLM not having one single livestock specialist. The BLM counter has been that many of the range management people are trained in this area. This may be true but their primary emphasis has been range first and maybe livestock as an after-thought. **The BLM has indicated** that the rancher has been utilized as the expert in this area. However, the ranchers apparently have not been involved in the backroom planning sessions where the pie is divided up. **The other interests such as** recreation, wildlife, wilderness, range, visual resources, watershed, archeology, geology, air quality, threatened and endangered plants and animals, etc. are represented by someone whose main responsibility is watching out for and jealously guarding his speciality area. **The** only one whose interest is not protected is the one who makes a living off the land and pays for the privilege--the livestock owner. The livestock producers feel that they take what is left of the pie after all others have eaten.

It would appear that if the BLM is to continue to allocate resources in this manner, that someone from the livestock area be represented to protect this productive segment the same as the other users.

Dr. John M. Fowler and Dr. James R. Gray:

An Environmental Impact Statement is, in general, an extensive document attempting to relate the factors of the physical environment to the social, economic, and institutional guidelines imposed upon that environment. Preparation and analysis of draft statement contents must be done with meticulous care to assure that the relevant relationships are adequately represented and that the magnitude and extent of impacts are appropriately determined.

The economic sections typically included in the Bureau of Land Management Environmental Impact Statements are minimal despite the fact that major local groups are primarily concerned about the severity of the potential economic disruption. These concerned groups are ranchers, local businessmen, and government infrastructure leaders. Little economic information is included in the EIS other than ranch incomes and on- and off-ranch employment.

Misinterpretations of economic data as well as deletions of key economic impacts could be avoided if the economists-contractors could have either 1) active participation in preparation of the pertinent sections of the Environmental Impact Statement or 2) opportunity to review a preliminary draft of the Environmental Impact Statement before it is released to the public.

Contractors should not be kept in isolation from one another during preparation of their reports. If, for example, economists could consult with the biological or physical scientists working on other elements in the environmental statement, higher quality data could be available for measuring the range of potential impacts. **Coordination among consultants** approaches the zero level during BLM environmental studies of grazing impacts. Each discipline doesn't exist in isolation but rather interaction and multiple-use are the rule and not the exception.

Economic Conditions

The BLM has typically failed to calculate the full magnitude and extent of direct adverse economic impacts to the local area, the state, and the nation; indirect income reductions are also inadequately reflected. **Input-output models or alternative multipliers are necessary** to trace direct income reductions through an economy in order to obtain an accurate handle of the total severity of both the direct and resultant indirect income changes resulting from carrying capacity reductions.

Animal Unit Valuation

The procedure of simply estimating the value of an animal existing in the area and the multiplying the AU value times the proposed AU reductions does not adequately reflect the degree of the direct impact. Borrowing capacity reductions are simply estimated at 40 percent of the AU value on the ranch. **A recent survey was conducted by the Range Improvement Task Force** in which knowledgeable persons without a vested interest in the Environmental Impact Statement were interviewed. These persons were: ranch appraisers, ranch realtors, Federal Land Bank credit officers, internal revenue service personnel, and insurance company appraisers.

The results of this survey indicate that due to the a) uncertainty and b) the increased regulation associated with BLM management, the value of the public animal unit on BLM lands is decreasing. An additional observation afforded by a majority of the informed experts is that: not only is the impact of the BLM management starting to be reflected by a reduction in the market price, but there is also an additional problem associated with "non salability" of the BLM AU. The market impact of such a result are basically fourfold:

1. The direct economic loss which was estimated eight million due to the reduction in AUs and loss of 3.5 million in borrowing potential.
2. A further economic loss due to a decrease in value of the retained AUs on the ranches in the EIS area.
3. Opportunity cost associated with widening gap between Federal AUs and the value of state and deeded animal units.
4. Can't sell ranches which are subjected to BLM management.

The four aforementioned results represent a more realistic assessment of the total range of impact directly affecting the ranching industry in the EIS area.

When the summation of the total direct and indirect costs is coupled with the realization that the animal units of grazing has decreased drastically on federal ranges since 1960, it is readily apparent that ranching and support agri-industry are fighting not to maintain high profits but rather are fighting to maintain mere existence.

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At the Hearings on:

"Bureau of Land Management Rangeland Improvements"

Senator Schmitt moderating

Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on the Interior

August 25, 1979

Albuquerque Public Library Auditorium

Albuquerque, New Mexico

Dr. Jerry Schickedanz:

Recent publications which many people feel were designed to foster new funding for the Bureau of Land Management tend to dwell on the negative rather than the positive in terms of range condition in the western United States. **It is my opinion that the western ranges are in the best condition they have been in since the initiation of the federal land management agencies. This is not to say that there is not still room for improvement, but it has unduly focused attention on about 17 percent in a downward trend and little on the other 83 percent in either a stable or upward trend. It is a turn in the right direction to have such an important resource as range to receive its recognition as one of the most basic resources in our nation. Now that we have the attention, we must proceed carefully in the decisions that are made relative to management of this resource and its related uses--such as livestock, wildlife, watershed, etc.**

The range improvements should be designed to improve the range resource. It should be remembered that the range cannot be indefinitely increased. There are factors which man cannot manipulate such as climate and the land's capability or potential. **The potential of the resource is a very important concept because not every piece of land can produce grass "belly deep to a horse" that we hear so much about. We must recognize the limitations and manage accordingly.**

Manipulating livestock for a forage increase through systems of grazing management must consider the goals and objectives of all the users. The ranch operator must be considered with his economic constraints, goals and objectives because if the operator is put out of business in the process of improvement, what are we left with? Consideration must also be given to how fast an improvement in range condition needs to be made. If the end result of an agreed upon goal is obtained, is it necessary or possible to reach that goal in 5 years rather than 10 or 20?

When placing priorities of where the range improvement money should be placed, potential of the resource to respond must be paramount. It should not be spent on what looks to be in the worst condition. This is a reverse incentive, by placing improvements first on allotments that have been abused over ones that have not been abused. Improvement practices such as brush control should be reviewed according to the land's response capability. Consideration needs to be given to areas where brush infestations may be light, but control now will reduce the possibility of a major control project in the future. **This consideration will require a change in policy of making every project cost-effective. Brush control projects should also have follow-up maintenance money attached to the project. They are not one shot programs and do not last forever.**

However, when considering structural improvements for erosion control or watershed management, then the worst problems should be considered as priority. **The structural works should be on the small watersheds where gully plugs, channelization, reseeding, etc. will have an effect, not at the other end with a major flood control structure.**

With the passage of the Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978 (P.L. 95-514), monies have been earmarked specifically for on-the-ground range improvements. **How these monies are to be placed on the ground** should not be through a national policy statement for specific improvements. What is good for the Roswell BLM District is not what is needed in the Challis District of Idaho. **These decisions must be prioritized** on a local basis through the use of the local district advisory boards. These groups are on the ground and recognize the needs more accurately than someone looking out the window of a Washington, D.C. office.

A provision needs to be made whereby the money can be carried over from one year to the next. Climatic conditions do not pay any attention to fiscal year appropriations. In New Mexico, we may have only one year in ten that conditions are optimum for reseeding or the climatic conditions are not favorable for a brush control project. **It is foolish to go** ahead and spend the money on the project when failure is assured just because the money will be turned back if not spent.

In summary, we must consider the resource and the users in the wise application of the money spent as we proceed toward range improvement.

Dr. Larry Foster:

I would like to express some thoughts on how money could be spent in the future to do a better job in improving our range resource. First I would like to suggest that changes be made, and I don't know whether it is Congressional change or Bureau policy to allow ranchers to place range improvements on the public lands that they operate on under what used to be known as a "Section 4 Permit." Many ranchers are willing to install improvements on their allotments totally at their own expense. For many years this was a policy, but in the late 60's the policy changed and we see very little of this today. If the rancher is willing to put money into the land to improve it, I think the taxpayers should allow him to do it. This will make our tax dollars go farther and also will improve the range resource at a lower cost.

I think there also may be a way to allow the BLM to more or less subcontract out range improvements to the ranchers and the Soil Conservation Service (SCS). There seems to be a better working relationship between the SCS and ranchers and many people feel that the range improvements would be better if funds were expended in this manner rather than BLM personnel doing the designing and installation of the range improvements. It might be a way to cut red tape if done properly.

At any rate, I think the rancher should be the one to decide on the location of improvements and have input on the type of improvements to be installed. The rancher should propose to the BLM the improvement rather than vice versa. This may seem a minor point but I believe ranchers would be more willing to accept such a proposal rather than coming from BLM personnel on where to put improvements. **From a livestock point of view, the improvements need to be practical and must be used by cattle if they are to work. Often ranchers feel that fences are in the wrong**

places, watering facilities are in the wrong places or the wrong design to be used by cattle. The ranchers are the ones that have the expertise on the practicality of such an improvement. Therefore, I feel it important that they make the initial proposal on locations and on type of improvements, thus to insure practicality and a better expenditure of Federal tax dollars.

Along these lines, the improvement standards, for example the fence manual, need overhauling. The example most prominent in my mind are the standard design of fences. From a livestock point of view the fences in the BLM manual really won't hold livestock, at least the type of livestock that we raise in New Mexico, over a long period of time. Thus, ranchers aren't very interested in putting in a type of improvement that they know won't work to begin with.

Both the BLM and the rancher have been hampered by decisions prompted by environmental interests. One example is to not allow water tanks to be placed on hill tops, which allow gravity flow distribution due to the fact that it is not aesthetically pleasing. The problem is however, that not even a judge can make water run uphill. I can't believe that a properly painted tank is that displeasing.

My final point is that improvements, whether they be brush control, reseeding, or structural improvements, such as fences or water developments, should be put on an area where the resource will respond the most. This response may be either in increased vegetation which might be derived from a brush control project or better distribution of cattle which might respond from a water distribution project. These improvements should be placed without regard as to whether a permittee holds an AMP or a grazing system or not. The EIS statements in Socorro, Roswell, and Rio Puerco all have range improvements in them, but all the range improvements are placed on allotments which have a proposed grazing system. Thus, the BLM is holding the range improvements as a carrot in front of a donkey in order to get them to go where they want. To me this is wrong. If the resource will respond on an individual allotment even if it does not have a BLM grazing system, then he should be allowed to have improvements. This form of incentive in my mind is not making the best use of our tax dollar. Also, the improvements should be put in place without regard to previous misuse of the land. For example, in the past both the Forest Service and the BLM have concentrated many of their range improvement monies on allotments which have been in trouble perhaps due to previous mismanagement. By doing this they are rewarding the poor manager and penalizing the good manager. The good manager who has no problems with his allotment yet has potential for improvement by more range improvements being installed does not get the money because he is not having problems. To me this gives little incentive to doing a good job. I believe it is time to quit rewarding the poor managers and start rewarding those who try to improve their operation and do a good job of managing.

In summary, I feel that we should look at the total resource and apply the money where it would do the most good in the quickest amount of time without regard to previous management or mismanagement and without regard to whether or not an individual has signed up to go along

with the BLM Allotment Management Plan (AMP). The improvements put in place should be practical as far as the resource is concerned, as far as the livestock are concerned, and as far as the rancher is concerned. I believe the improvements should be looked at from a multiple use concept, in other words the waterings should be put in so that wildlife can use it as well as cattle and conversely wildlife waterers should not be put in strictly for wildlife but also allow cattle to water at that particular watering. The range improvements should be in place before going into a grazing system rather than trying to cut down on the number of cattle to accommodate a grazing system in hopes that somewhere down the road we will build improvements to fit in.

Dr. John M. Fowler and Dr. James R. Gray:

Misinterpretations of economic data frequently occurs in the Environmental Impact Statements prepared thus far in New Mexico by the BLM. Active participation of the economic contractor in preparing final or draft reports has not been sought by the BLM although three draft reports have been prepared by the BLM as of August 1979. This statement will briefly deal with each report.

Rio Puerco EIS Nine pairs of initial grazing points as of 1978 and end points as of 1995 were provided to the economic contractor by the BLM dealing with the Environmental Impact Statement area. These points and results consisted of percentages of present grazing that would be permitted on BLM lands as well as lands in other ownerships. Ranchers were surveyed in the EIS area to determine how their ranches would change if grazing was adjusted to these percentages. The percentages included two initial points for the proposed action, and an additional percentage change for the end points in 1995. An analysis was made to determine effects of each pair of initial point and end results on the individual ranches, the local economy, and the regional trade area of the ranchers.

The percentage end results of the proposed action used in the economic analysis was a 400 percent increase over present grazing. The increase finally budgeted by the BLM in the draft statement was 80 percent. None of the results in the contractors' economic report could or should have been used by the BLM for their draft report because of the discrepancy between the 80 percent and 400 percent end points.

Estimates of impacts, including new jobs in the economy, were reported in the final draft EIS to be the same as those in the contract report, despite the five-fold difference in AUMs availing under the proposed action. This was an obvious error or misinterpretation. None of the infrastructure impacts were reported in the final draft, despite major treatment of these items in the contractor report. Of particular significance were impacts on the school system, health care, and financing of municipal services. This was a major omission caused perhaps by inability of the BLM to project changes based on a 400 percent increase in grazing to changes resulting from an 80 percent increase in grazing.

East Socorro EIS The East Socorro EIS also suffers from the same type of fault mentioned in the Rio Puerco EIS. The long run anticipated end points which were used in the questionnaire to determine future labor adjustments and eventual ranch budgets, were not the endpoints that were finally selected by the BLM. **These discrepancies invalidate the accuracy of the developed budgets.**

There is no economic justification for using a Benefit/Cost ratio of less than one as is done in the East Socorro EIS in order to justify an expenditure or an improvement.

East Roswell EIS The contractor for the economic support data used in this EIS was the Harbridge House; they expressed concern about misinterpretations of economic data in the preliminary draft of the East Roswell EIS.

Summary The economic sections typically included in the BLM Environmental Impact Statements are minimal despite the fact that major local organizations are primarily concerned about the severity of the potential economic disruption, little economic information is included in the EIS other than ranch incomes and on-and-off ranch employment.

Misinterpretations and overextensions of economic data as well as deletions of key economic impacts resulting in a waste of taxpayers dollars could be avoided if the economists-contractors could have either: 1) active participation in preparation of the pertinent sections of the draft EIS or 2) opportunity to review a preliminary copy of the draft EIS before it is released to the public.

Contractors should not be kept in isolation from one another during preparation of their reports. If, for example, economists could consult with the biological or physical scientists working on other elements in the EIS, higher quality data could be available for estimating the range of potential impacts. Each discipline doesn't exist in isolation but rather interaction and multiple-use are the rule and not the exception. Such interaction would prevent any potential duplication of effort and allow any complementarity to be taken advantage of, thus encouraging the largest gain for every tax dollar spent.

Dr. Phillip J. Swank:

I am not knowledgeable of how the Bureau of Land Management has in the past spent funds appropriated by Congress for wildlife. Therefore, my comments will be directed to what I perceive as the current priority needs of wildlife and fisheries resources on BLM lands.

With the passage of the Federal Land Policy Management Act (FLPMA) in 1976, there has been a greatly increased emphasis by the BLM on wildlife and fish. This document directs the BLM to manage all the

resources on the public lands under the principles of multiple-use and sustained yield. While I can be somewhat critical of the BLM's wildlife and fisheries past program, I am optimistic for the future.

Soon after the passage of FLPMA, the BLM began to redirect some of these programs into the management of the wildlife and fisheries resources. Qualified personnel with expertise in the fields of wildlife and fisheries management were hired and wildlife management plans were initiated. However, the lawsuit mandating Environmental Impact Statements be prepared before range improvements are made has been responsible for limiting actual on-the-ground wildlife and fisheries habitat improvements according to the BLM. Personnel that could have been directing on-the-ground improvements are being utilized to assist in conducting inventories. Additionally, the requirement that Environmental Impact Statements be finalized and Allotment Management Plans signed by permittees before improvements can be approved has been cited as a factor in limiting on-the-ground improvements. These range improvements are necessary now--not four or five years from now. This constraints must be lifted and funding provided so that on-the-ground improvements can proceed.

The inventories are providing baseline data on fish and wildlife status. The wildlife information has been needed for a long time, and I do not think that these inventories should be impeded now or discontinued when Environmental Impact Statements are finalized. The present BLM wildlife and fisheries inventories are extremely limited in scope. After the Environmental Impact Statements are finalized, continued information should be gathered to expand the wildlife and fisheries resource inventory.

Two other areas where good baseline data are limited, and as such should receive immediate attention, are in determining the forage requirements of wildlife species and the habitat needs and requirements of endangered species. In the Environmental Impact Statements, forage is currently being allocated to both wildlife and livestock. However, the forage allocation to wildlife is limited to the big game species. I am not advocating, at this time, allocating forage to all other wildlife species because of the general lack of knowledge as to their requirements. However, if the wildlife resource is going to be properly managed on a broad ecosystem approach, everything that consumes forage will have to be included in the allocation formula. To do this with any confidence, baseline data must be available. I recommend that adequate funding be provided and research studies be initiated to gather this baseline data.

Our knowledge of the habitat needs and requirements for endangered species is sadly lacking. Research programs in these areas need to be expanded. As we know, it takes many years to re-establish quality vegetation in areas that have been misused, and many lifetimes are needed to rebuild productive topsoils that have been lost. It should also be pointed out that if a wildlife species is lost, it can never be recovered.

Funding should also be provided to re-establish riparian habitats. Such riparian habitats, which are those habitats associated with wetlands, are extremely limited on BLM lands. Those areas where water was available were the first to be settled. Heavy livestock grazing and domestic use

around these watering areas resulted in the loss of much of the associated riparian habitats. Most of these areas are now under private ownership. Stock tanks and remaining natural water on public lands provide an opportunity to re-establish some riparian habitat. These range improvements should be designed and constructed in a way that will serve both livestock and wildlife. The upper areas where the water flows into the stock tanks should be fenced to promote wet land vegetation growth. Once established, this vegetation would slow the movement of topsoil into the tanks and lengthen their period of usefulness. Fencing in such a manner would promote the establishment of riparian habitats and benefit both wildlife and livestock.

A final point that should be emphasized is that some permittees have been helping to provide for the needs of the various wildlife species found on the western rangelands. On the other hand, many permittees have not addressed wildlife needs. In my opinion, the support for wildlife by the permittees is currently on a downward trend. One possible explanation for this current downward trend in support for the wildlife resource is the bad relationship that often exists between the BLM and the permittees. An analogy of this current situation would be the man who is mad at his boss. He can't take it out on his boss so he kicks his dog instead. Permittees are told that stock tanks have to be fenced to save riparian habitat, cattle enclosures have to be built to provide for the nesting needs of prairie chickens, and fences have to be modified to allow antelope passage. The permittee's first reaction is that if the wildlife weren't out there, the problem would disappear. This feeling, I think, represents the feelings of many of the frustrated permittees in New Mexico. While wildlife and fisheries managers within the BLM have the expertise to prepare management plans to improve wildlife habitat, there is a need for positive support and cooperation by the permittees and the BLM before enhancement of wildlife resources can be fully realized.

In summary, while there has been progress by the BLM in recognizing and providing for the needs of the wildlife and fisheries resources, much still remains to be done. Restraints limiting on-the-ground improvements must be lifted. An expanded inventory is needed and funding must be made available to determine the forage requirements of all wildlife and the needs of endangered species. Riparian habitats need to be re-established. All of these priority needs of wildlife can not be realized without the support and cooperation of the BLM and the permittee.