

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History #30 - Side B

Subject: Dillard Gates

Place: Burns, Oregon

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Interviewer: Pauline Braymen

Dillard Gates, Range Specialist, Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon, speaks to the Harney County Cattlemen's Association in Burns in October 1973. His topic is the multiple use of the range and forestlands.

DILLARD GATES: ... Well, I'm happy to be here to visit with you fellows about a subject that I think is pretty important to all of us who are interested in use of our public lands, and our private lands as well. What I would like to do is to spend a little time with you looking up the definition of multiple use management, discussing some of the considerations as I see them in multiple use management, examining some of the problems and priorities and drawing some conclusions ... and making some suggestions of how we might plan activities to further multiple use management.

I speak to you not as a public land manager, because I'm not, or as a rancher, but as a range scientist and an educator with years of close contact with all segments of interest on the use management, association with public land managers and with the ranchers, and with the various publics that are interested in total use management.

When discussing this subject we must assume reasonableness on the part of all concerned. That is, the livestock operator, the public land manager, ... (Pause in tape)

But during my discussion, in no case should my remarks be construed to mean

abusive or destructive use. I'm talking only about the kind of management that is consistent with ecological characteristics of the land, management that is geared towards optimizing uses of our rebuildable resources. And I believe that another point to keep in mind is that reasonable, honest and intelligent men can look at the same information, the same data, and reach different conclusions. Thus we must be careful not to question the integrity of those who oppose us, or disagree with us, just because they disagree. I believe we can disagree or we can oppose a position but still have respect for the person's statement. And I think, in addition, that sometimes it's a very good intellectual exercise to take the other person's point of view and think through it from his standpoint. It might help you to solidify your own point of view, or it may make you see his point just a little bit better.

What I would like to do then in setting the stage is to read to you the definition of multiple use management, as stated in the multiple use sustained yield Act of 1960. I hate to read it because it's very, to me it is very awkward, and difficult to read. But I would like to do it just to clarify it.

Multiple use means, and I quote, "The management of all the various renewable surface resources of the national forest so that they are utilized in the combination that will best meet the needs of the American people. Making the most judicious use of the land for some, or all of these services or related services over areas large enough to provide sufficient latitude for periodic adjustments being used to conform to changing needs and conditions. That some land will be used for less than all the resources in harmonious and coordinated management of the various resources, each with the other, without impairment of the productivity of the land. Consideration being given to the relative values of the various resources, and not necessarily the combination of uses that

will give the greatest dollar return for the greatest unit output."

Well, that is the definition. It must have taken a real bureaucrat to write it, because that is an awfully awkward paragraph, as far as I can tell; it's pretty hard to reason it out.

Okay. Now let's look at some of the things that we must consider in what ... what we are concerned with is the land. The land is the resource. Well what is the resource made up of when we speak about the land?

As I see it, it's made up of primarily renewable and non-renewable factors. And when we talk about the renewable ones, at least in a reasonable time period, we are talking about the plants, that is the vegetation on the land. And we are talking about water. These are renewable resources. We are also, of course, concerned about soils, but from the standpoint of most of our life spans, soils are really not renewable. Though we know that there is a geological formation of soils, and there is erosion-taking place at all times. But at least for the sake of my discussion I would like to look at plants and water as renewable resources. And soils as a non-renewable resource.

We are also concerned, then, about the products of this land. And I'd like to break them down into two categories. That is what I think of in terms of traditional products. Because these are all a subject of point of view of course. The traditional products as I see them are wood, timber products, forage or livestock and game animals, water and wildlife. Things that I categorize then as the non-traditional, and they have in the past received, I think, due emphasis, is recreation and aesthetics, these kinds of things.

When we examine the definition of multiple use, and the products of the land, we see that for the most part, multiple use management is vegetation management, regardless of the product we are managing for. We manage vegetation by manipulating factors under our control to bring about the desired results. And a primary factor, not the

only one, that we have under our control, for manipulating this herbaceous, scrubby vegetation, on much of our rangeland is the old cow.

Thus the old cow becomes an important tool of multiple use management, and how we use that tool can greatly impact other uses.

We also have to consider the capabilities of the land. I believe that the time is coming in the not to distant future, when we in the United States, are going to have to take a much closer look at the land use. We are going to have to decide what products of the land, in what amounts, are essential for survival. And those required for the quality of life that we enjoy. They may not be the same.

We may well find that we cannot continue to have a significant portion of our land in non-productive state. These decisions are going to involve other decisions concerning what is essential and what is not. We may have to re-examine our needs and our desires.

Another thing to consider is that to a large degree, the characteristics of the land influence how it is used. There is a relationship between the land and the products it produces, in terms of the kind of products it produces and the amount of products it produces.

And there is also a relationship between the kind and amount of products that a piece of land produces and its location. If there is a piece of land with a certain set of characteristics with a certain kind of production, it may be used differently if it is located in one place than if it is located in another adjacent to other resources.

We also need to consider the needs and desires of the public. We have to give some consideration to what the public is willing to pay, and sometimes it is who pays who gets. Sometimes it is not the same person or same group.

We have to consider trade-offs. What we are willing to pay for what we get. As indicated earlier, rangelands are being subjected to many other than traditional uses. Some of these are legitimate in my estimation, and some of them are a bit question-able. I further believe that what the public wants is not necessarily what the public should have, unless its wants are consistent with good land management.

We must also give some consideration to priorities of use. Priorities are related to land capabilities, and again the needs and desires of the public. In the past few years, there have been some indications that priority uses of range lands were shifting from productive to the more non-productive uses. Due to the worldwide concern for energy and food shortages, these priorities may well need to be adjusted. There is concern for how long the United States and other countries with a high red meat consumption can afford the luxury of this high red meat consumption. The luxury of red meat as the primary source of protein.

As population grows, there will be an increasing need for increased production and consumption of cereals and other grains directly for human consumption. When the arable lands, think of the lands primarily now in our Midwest, that are used for grain and also livestock production, these arable lands will provide most of the bulk of production for cereals, I think, for it's going to be used directly for human consumption.

And rangelands, in my opinion, will become relatively more important for production of red meat, as a source of animal protein for human consumption. I believe that the red meat portion of our diet may well decrease as we look down the road, but a greater proportion of the red meat will be produced on our rangeland.

The old cow is still an efficient machine for harvesting the low quality forage of our extensive rangeland resources. In fact, it is about the only one. For the sake of the

environmentalists, as indicated, this machine to harvest this resource, has a built-in waste distributor and the bi-products are biodegradable.

Priorities are also related to our economic situation. When establishing priorities of use, we must give full consideration to the economic contributions of the range livestock industry and timber industries, to the economic well being of both communities, and to the state and to the nation.

We must also give some consideration to the socio-political environment in which we operate. Shorter work weeks, at least for urban people, we don't see much of this in the country, more leisure time, more mobility, more fluency, all contribute to the added pressures of non-productive uses of range lands. To a large degree, the problems of other than traditional uses of rangelands are a function of the time people have available for something other than making a living.

Parenthetically, I might add that a 60 hour work week would probably do more to rid the range of many of the, what I would say, "the uninformed environmentalist" than anything I can think of. But we must also keep in mind the social and cultural dependence of local communities on rangelands and on related resources. Management decisions that adversely affect the economy of the rural west would also be a real blow to other dependent industries and the people making a living from this.

We must also consider these priorities in light of the new interest in rural development, how we are going to keep the people down on the farm, which seems to be another point of interest in our government now. We have to remember that multiple use decisions affect not only the land for which they are made, but many others.

Priority selections must recognize that people who live on the land, people who derive their livelihood from the land, have more at stake than those who do not. I believe

this was a point that Senator Hatfield was alluding to this morning when he was talking about local control or local inputs into this recreation area. We know that public lands belong to the public and all citizens enjoy certain privileges on them. However, it seems reasonable that there is an implied priority privilege for people using the land for productive purposes, of course within the limits of sound land use. It seems reasonable to me that people of Oregon have a stronger voice in the management of Oregon public lands than the people of New York City. And then it follows that the people of Harney County have a more direct voice concerning public lands in their county than the people in Portland.

I don't mean that they should have the sole use, the sole voice, but certainly they should be listened to very carefully.

Okay, what are some of the problems affecting multiple use management? There is a problem between the competition between the uses of the land. There is more people are wanting to use the land for more purposes. The land is being subjected to more uses. Some of these uses are petty, some are compatible, some are even complimentary.

For example, we could look at the use of livestock for manipulating wildlife habitat in a constructive way. We could look at the use of livestock for manipulating vegetation on watersheds to make the watersheds work better. And, of course, again, I have to emphasize that I am talking about properly managed use, because without proper management these things would just be reversed.

There is also a problem of compatibility of users. In some cases land uses may be compatible, but the users may not be. And it is not really a problem of land, but the people who use it.

Take, for example, here we can look at sometimes the incompatibility of the hunter and the stockman, the recreationist and the stockman, or the recreationist and the recreationist people who want to use the same piece of land for different kinds of recreation.

Another problem is that, another problem affecting multiple use management, can be narrow or biased interpretation of multiple use by the public land manager, or by the users of the public land. Another problem can be the pressures on public land managers from what I consider to be often an uninformed public. People without ecological background or understanding of the biological processes involved in land management are, in my judgment, having far too much influence in the management of the public lands and some are wanting to extend this influence much farther, onto private land.

When management of our lands is criticized, or when suggestions made, I think it is well to evaluate the critic. Try to understand something of his background, of his understanding of the problems, and his vested interests. There is also a problem in multiple use management in the reluctance of some ranchers to accept the new uses of public rangelands as legitimate uses. This is probably due in part at least, to the natural conservatism of the rancher, and in part, maybe, to his skepticism of new things, new ideas that impact his operation or impact his income.

In the past year, as in many of the years, there has been only limited amount of risk capital available in our agricultural community, in our farms and ranches. The farmers and ranchers have had to have pretty good assurances that something is going to pay or they will not want to invest much into it. Risk capital has been, and is still limited in agriculture.

Even so, the livestock operator pays a grazing fee only for grazing privileges, not

for exclusive use of the land.

Another problem, in my judgment, is the over reaction of public land managers to public pressures, real or imagined. Certainly we need to consider the viewpoint of others, but we do not need to be intimidated by it. The professional land managers are hired and paid to be professional; to understand a variety of ways to analyze and to make decisions based upon fact. And not to dance to the tune of the environmentalist fiddler or anybody else, even when this fiddle is considerably out of tune.

All of us involved in resource management must take our professional responsibilities seriously. We need to educate the public, not to second-guess it. For in the long run, we must look to an educated and informed public to support sound multiple use management of our public lands.

Another problem of multiple use management is the policies and regulations imposed on renewable resource management from outside sources. Without going into them in detail, I am thinking of regulations imposed by such things as the DEQ, the EPA, our Forest Protection Act. All of these are having a real impact and are probably going to have a greater impact on multiple use management.

I think another problem for multiple use management, is that ranchers tend to be cowmen rather than grass men. They have a tendency to see a solution to a problem in terms of how it will affect the cow, rather than how it will affect the grass, or the vegetation.

And I believe I understand at least some of the reasons for this. My observations are that most Oregon ranchers grow grass to feed their cows. Maybe some problems of resource management would be solved if more had the philosophy of growing cows to harvest the grass ... It really is a different philosophy of management expressed here.

But as I see it, grass is the crop. It is harvested and marketed through the animal.

Another real problem of multiple use management, and maybe this is our primary problem, is a lack of communication between public land managers, ranchers and the public. In my judgment, in the past too much management planning has been done, and too many decisions made without timely or sufficient inputs from ranchers and other concerned segments of the public.

Another problem involved in use management, and this may not be really as important, is that multiple use management is not confined to public lands alone. There is much that public and private land has similar characteristics. The products of the land are the same; the only thing is that the ownership is different. The returns for the products and values may prove, or be allocated to different segments of society, that is to the private landowner. The private landowner, in my judgment, should be compensated for the products of his land, especially if multiple use management, significantly, impacts or reduces benefits from what would be realized from single use alone.

This compensation, of course, would come from charging for a trespasser or hunting, ... charging for recreation rights. So in some ways I think the private landowner should be compensated for the products of his land.

Okay. We have talked about the definition of multiple use management; at least we've read it. Given some consideration to factors in ... multiple use. We have looked at some of the problems and priorities, but it is clear that there are some additional characteristics we need to look at. Multiple use management must give full consideration to the variety of uses for which an area is adapted. It must always involve resource conservation. Conservation, the term conservation implies use without abuse, that is use oriented toward the long run. We know that all areas cannot be used for all purposes.

Land ... (Pause in tape)

It is reasonable to assume that needs and desires of the public and resource users will be considered along with resource characteristics when multiple use decisions are made. Land use decisions must be kept in balance between resource characteristics and demands made upon.

Multiple use management decisions must give full consideration to the impact on the local economy and the stability of local industries impacted. I do not mean that the livestock industry or the timber industry should manage our public lands. But the essential characters of these industries, I think, must be well recognized and given full consideration.

The renewable nature of resources managed under the multiple use concept must be recognized. Management must provide for renewal; that is for sustained yield. We must also recognize that renewable resources such as grass, trees and water, cannot be preserved on the land. They can only be conserved. There is a real difference between conservation of resources and preservation. An old professor of mine used to say that grass is an annual crop; use it or lose it. The same thing can be said of trees and water.

And I do not believe that this philosophy is inconsistent with either conservation or the multiple use concept. I believe that multiple use decisions must reflect the professionalism of the decision maker. It must reflect that he has an understanding of the things involved in the decision he is making. That he has given consideration to all the alternatives to be involved. And then that he has made his selection of alternatives and he arrived at a decision or solution that is reasonable, that is practicable, and that is attainable.

There will always be a difference of opinion. And in my opinion, that is good. But

all concerned must work together in an attempt to solve common problems. We must be willing to compromise; we must be willing to compromise without compromising principles. We have to have some principles that we live by, but be able to do some compromising in order to get along in general.

Okay. Then, what are some of the ... things that I have discussed up to here. Multiple uses, pertaining to the Act of 1960, is specific, in that it calls for management of the various renewable resources, provide a sustained yield of products and services. It is broad enough to allow flexibility of management to encompass reasonable goals of resource users and public land managers. There appears to be wide latitude allowed at the local level to interpret the act and implement management activities to meet requirements of the act.

The requirements of the act, and what I presume to be the goals of the public land managers and resource managers, here I'm talking about the ranchers, are not mutually exclusive. In fact, as I interpret the act, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to meet the requirements of the act without full involvement of the range livestock and the forest industries.

The act calls for sustained yield of products and services. Two of these, and two very important of these, are the forage and the timber. Of course, there are others.

Okay, then. We have a law that is broad. It allows wide latitude at the local level, to be effective at the local level. To be effective it requires the inputs of the range users as well as the public land managers and the public. This being the case, I think that we need to get together, these three units, or these three elements. We need to get together to examine our goals and set objectives to achieve these goals. It means getting together very early.

We need to get together and look at the problems, because we know that problems exist. We need to look at the facts and to try to develop some alternate solutions. And then we need to make decisions that are compatible with the multiple use act, the resources, the industries, the local economies and the public use.

Well, how can we do this? Certainly it isn't easy. But I believe some ways we might approach this, is that land managing agencies should involve in a constructive way the range users and the public in the early stages of the decision making process. This does not mean that the public land managing agencies should make some plans and presents it to the people for rubber stamp approval. The process must encompass all elements from problem identification to problem solution.

The public land managing agencies must make judicious use of the authority granted to them. They should be fully aware of the impact of their decisions on the economic and social stability of the communities. And at the same time they must meet their responsibilities. This is not always an easy task.

The public land managing agency must be willing to negotiate, to listen to alternative solutions to problems and to compromise without compromising principle again, and not just take a hard line stand and stick with it until the other side wears down.

The position they need to be able to make, as they have no direct economic stake in the decisions that they make.

The range livestock users, and here I am talking primarily about the range livestock industry, must play an aggressive, constructive role in the decision making process. They can't just set and wait to be asked. They have to insert their ideas into the process. They must be willing to expend the necessary time and energy to make these ...

Even some times when there is --- maybe it is hay time or something, and they are

making hay out in a meadow, there might be opportunities to make hay in another way if they were sitting down and hammering out some of these problems. Look at some of these problems, and hammering out solutions ... I know it takes time, but in the long run it might take a lot less time ...

The ranchers must recognize that their role is only advisory, but they should make certain that the advice that they give is so damned good, so wise, and so reasonable that it cannot be ignored. I think this is a real responsibility for ranchers ...

Range livestock operators must recognize that there are other legitimate uses of public lands in addition to grazing, and then must lead the way, demonstrating the compatibility of these uses or ... resource allocations for their ...

I think the range livestock industry has a tremendous opportunities ahead of them to function in this role of multiple use management decision-making. But they are going to have to work at it.

The contributions of rangeland resources to the economic, social welfare of this state and nation are too great to ignore or to take lightly. The demands on these resources are going to accelerate. I read in the paper here the other day that the recent awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to Kissinger and LeDocThu has given additional status to this art of negotiation. I'm sure that there was ...but they did get together, and they solved the problem, or at least they went a long ways towards the solution of the problem. Well if they can do it, we ought to be able to it. We, those of us that are involved in the various segments of multiple use management, and those of us who want to see all the problems ... but can't agree on the solutions of all these problems. So I'd say then, let's roll up our sleeves, and let's sit down around the table and get to work. The need is too great, there is too much at stake for all of us to ignore the problems.

I would add that we in the rangelands resources program at Oregon State are most happy and anxious to help you if we can, and I hope and pray ...

(END OF TAPE)

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