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# Questions AND ANSWERS

about

## Grazing on National Forests

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
FOREST SERVICE

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# QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT GRAZING ON NATIONAL FORESTS

## INTRODUCTION

The national forests were established under authority of the Congress of the United States primarily for timber production and watershed protection. Grazing of domestic livestock is also recognized as a legitimate and important use. Other important uses include grazing by game, fur trapping, prospecting, and recreational activities of many kinds. The administration of these uses aims at the greatest good for the greatest number of people in the long run.

In the Western States the national forests are mainly located on the principal mountain chains where moisture is sufficient for tree growth. They also extend into the drier, brush-covered foothills and to other areas where conservation of water supplies is essential. These mountains and foothills embrace the headwaters which furnish about 85 percent of the flow of major western rivers and streams used for irrigation, for water power, and for domestic use.

Grasses and other forage plants suitable for use by domestic livestock are produced in natural openings and under the trees where they are not too dense. Approximately 80 million acres, or 50 percent of the total area of national-forest lands in continental United States, produces forage. Most of this grazing area is found in the West. The main forage plants on western national-forest ranges are bunchgrasses and other tender herbs which seldom form a sod. If, however, they are as abundant as the normal soil moisture permits, their fibrous roots interlace between the tufts under the bare soil spaces, and their spreading root systems, along with plant litter on the surface, help to hold the soil in place, keep it mellow and porous, and facilitate moisture penetration. The moisture absorbed by the soil is used to produce forage and other vegetative cover, evaporates, or passes on to underground flow where it issues later in the form of streams and springs.

In regard to the uses for which the grasses are adapted, great differences exist between bunchgrasses on western ranges and turf-forming sods such as are found on improved pastures of the humid East or irrigated lands of the West. The bunchgrasses cannot stand as heavy grazing as the turf-forming grasses. They lose vigor, decline in forage production, and eventually die as a result of too heavy grazing. However, if properly grazed, bunchgrasses and associated plants produce, year after year, forage that can sustain livestock and game. But not all vegetation is forage. Some plants are relished by livestock, others are not so well liked, and many are hardly grazed at all unless a deficient supply of better forage forces their use. Moreover, grazing must be sufficiently conservative so that enough stubble of basal stems and leaves of the more palatable plants is left to maintain their vigor and continued growth.

Of the 152 national forests, about 100 are important for grazing. There are roughly 10,000 grazing allotments, some used by individual operators, others used jointly by community groups. The demand for national-forest range far exceeds its capacity.

The principles guiding grazing administration on the national forests are:

1. The protection and conservative use of all national-forest land adapted to grazing consistent with the protection of other important uses of the land.
2. The permanent good of the livestock industry through proper care and improvement of the grazing lands.
3. The continued stability of the established ranch owners using the range.

The following 35 questions and answers are designed to give in more detail the important points regarding the administration of grazing use of the national forests.

**1. Are sportsmen, stockmen, campers, water users, timber operators, miners, or any other group favored by the policy governing the administration of the national forests?**

No. The national forests are administered on the basis of the multiple-use principle, and no special favors are given to any particular group or groups of users. Each resource—timber, forage, wildlife, recreational features, water, etc.—is managed so as to permanently serve as many users as possible without injuring or unnecessarily restricting any other type of user. Small areas, however, may be limited to a particular use, such as a picnic ground.



## **2. How many head of livestock graze on national forests?**

During the calendar year 1947 slightly more than 1,161,000 head of cattle and horses and 3,402,000 head of sheep and goats grazed under paid permit. The natural increase of these animals, i. e., calves, colts, lambs, and kids which entered the national forests before they were 6 months of age, or were born upon the range, were allowed to graze with these permitted livestock without additional charge. In addition, 84,000 head of livestock, primarily milk cows and work horses owned and used for domestic purposes by local ranchers, were grazed without charge. All together, about 9,000,000 domestic animals, including the natural increase, grazed for some period on national-forest ranges in 1947.

## **3. Who owns the livestock which graze on national-forest ranges?**

The domestic animals grazing on national forests are almost entirely owned by farmers and stockmen who live within or near national forests and who own ranch property the use of which is complemented by the grazing of the livestock for part or all of the year on national-forest range lands. In 1947 there were 18,494 holders of paid permits for grazing cattle, 3,248 for sheep, and 56 for swine. Approximately 6,760 other grazing permits were issued without charge to stockmen and farmers who did not hold paid permits.

In addition, 1,314 crossing permits were issued for 125,400 cattle and 1,217,600 sheep to use established driveways across national-forest land in order to move from ranches to outlying ranges or to market.

## **4. What is a national-forest grazing preference?**

A grazing preference is a priority over other applicants for grazing a specified number of livestock on a specified allotment or unit of national-forest range, granted to an owner of ranch property and range livestock. It may be acquired by (1) prior use of the land for grazing before its inclusion in a national forest; (2) inheritance of a permittee's livestock or ranch or both; (3) purchase of a permittee's livestock or ranch or both accompanied by a waiver of the preference held by the seller; (4) renewal of permit formerly held by a copartnership or corporation to individuals or pooling of preferences; and (5) if surplus range is available, regular use of forest range under temporary permit for five consecutive years and ownership of commensurate ranch

property. On the basis of such a preference a permit to graze livestock may be issued upon payment of the grazing fees.

**5. Does a national-forest grazing preference have much permanence?**

Yes. The preference holder retains the privilege to graze the number of livestock covered by the preference so long as adequate forage is available and can be used without conflict with other important uses. Also, to retain his privilege, the holder is, of course, required to conform to the regulations of the Department of Agriculture applying to this use.

**6. Does a preference guarantee forage to its holder?**

No. The policy of the Department of Agriculture is to permit the grazing of livestock only up to the grazing capacity of each range unit or allotment. If there is sufficient grazing capacity for all preference holders on such a unit, the preference holder is permitted to graze the full number of livestock covered by his preference. If weather, unsound use, or other factors reduce the available forage, the preference holder is entitled to graze his livestock only up to the grazing capacity of the range unit or, in case of community ranges, up to his proportionate share.

**7. Is a grazing preference a privilege or a property right?**

Grazing preferences have been established under the authority of the Secretary of Agriculture and are considered administratively and legally (by the courts) as privileges rather than rights, on the principle that there should be no vested rights on lands owned by all the people of the Nation. The amount of grazing which can be permitted at any time must be such as to safeguard watershed values, forage production, and the other resources, together with the industries and uses dependent upon them.

**8. Can national-forest grazing preferences be sold?**

No. Upon the sale of the ranch or livestock, or both, to which the preference is related, the preference may be waived to the Government and a new preference may be and ordinarily is granted to the purchaser, subject to any reduction needed for range protection or, occasionally, for limited redistribution of the privilege.

**9. What are the sizes of the paid permits?**

In 1947 the average paid permit for cattle was 67 head; for sheep, 1,073 head. Permits vary in size from 1 or 2 head to over 4,000 for cattle, and from about 10 to more than 26,000 for sheep.

Table 1 shows permits issued for grazing on western national forests by size class in 1945, the last year these statistics were compiled.

TABLE 1.—Grazing permits and livestock permitted, national forests in 11 Western States, 1945

SIZE CLASS	PERMITS		LIVESTOCK PERMITTED	
	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT
<b>Cattle and horses:</b>				
All permits . . . . .	17, 302	100. 0	1, 183, 283	100. 0
1-40 head . . . . .	10, 278	59. 4	172, 883	14. 6
41-100 head . . . . .	3, 937	22. 7	263, 120	22. 2
101-200 head . . . . .	1, 864	10. 8	269, 781	22. 8
More than 200 head..	1, 223	7. 1	477, 499	40. 4
<b>Sheep and goats:</b>				
All permits . . . . .	3, 721	100. 0	3, 893, 097	100. 0
1-1,000 head . . . . .	2, 332	62. 7	1, 029, 772	26. 5
1,001-2,500 head . . . .	1, 079	29. 0	1, 635, 581	42. 0
2,501-4,000 head . . . .	205	5. 5	642, 825	16. 5
More than 4,000 head..	105	2. 8	584, 919	15. 0

**10. What percent of the livestock in the 11 Western States are grazed on the national forests?**

On the basis of the Department of Agriculture estimate of numbers of livestock in the 11 Western States January 1, 1947, 11.6 percent of the cattle, exclusive of dairy animals, and 24.8 percent of the stock sheep grazed for some part of the year on national-forest ranges. (Stock sheep are those not being fattened for market.)

**11. To what extent do national-forest ranges contribute forage for livestock in the West?**

In 1947, national-forest ranges in the 11 Western States provided permitted cattle and sheep with 5½ percent of the total animal-unit months of forage and feed required for cattle other than dairy animals and for stock sheep in those States. Although it is not possible to determine accurately the forage provided calves and lambs grazed with permitted livestock on national forests, but not charged for, it is probable that this forage equaled

an additional 2 percent of the total animal-unit months required, thus bringing the total national-forest contribution to 7½ percent. (Federal grazing districts account for about 6½ percent and private range and cropland for about 85 percent.)

Permitted cattle grazed an average of 5.2 months on the national forests in 1947; sheep 2.9 months. Most national-forest ranges are grazed during the summer when the mountain forage is growing. Some, especially in the Southwest, are grazed year-long. The lush, palatable forage on cool summer ranges produces a large percentage of high-quality fat lambs and grass-fat steers which go direct to slaughter.

## **12. What grazing fee is charged?**

In 1948 the average fee per head per month was 40 cents for cattle and 10 cents for sheep. No fee is charged for the young of permitted livestock, provided they enter the national forest before they are 6 months of age. When the original base fee was established in 1928, it was based on commercial rates for leasing comparable private lands, adjusted according to accessibility, limitations as to use, and other factors affecting grazing of each national-forest allotment, with some additional discount. The grazing fee for each year is set annually according to a formula worked out in cooperation with the national stockmen's associations, based on average livestock prices in the Western States during the previous year. The current fees are now less than one-half the rates on comparable private range.

## **13. How does grazing compare with other values of national-forest lands in the western United States?**

In 1948 revenue to the Federal Government from grazing receipts from western national forests totaled a little less than 3 million dollars; receipts from the sale of timber totaled over 20 million dollars. These are the two main income-producing uses.

The value of national forests for water yield is very high. A fair average market value for irrigation water in the West as it comes from watersheds is \$1.50 an acre-foot. A reasonable average yield of water from an acre of western mountain watersheds is one-half acre-foot per year, valued at 75 cents. The value of the forage crop on western ranges, as indicated by the rentals livestock operators pay for use of private range land, runs from about 1 to 10 cents an acre yearly.

The total investment of national-forest grazing permittees in ranch properties and livestock has been estimated at about

\$300,000,000. The total investment in western irrigation developments, largely dependent on national-forest watersheds, is \$4,500,000,000. If the investment in western irrigation agriculture is divided by the acreage of important watersheds, the resulting figure is about \$30 per watershed acre. If the investment of the national-forest grazing permittees in livestock ranches and livestock is divided by the acreage of national-forest grazing lands, the result is about \$3.75 an acre.

In addition to their value for irrigation agriculture, national-forest watersheds have other extremely important values. They supply the water for much of the hydroelectric power produced in the Western States. Hundreds of western towns and cities depend on the national forests for their municipal water supplies. The whole economic life of the West, indeed, depends in a large measure on a reliable, usable water supply from the national forests.

Satisfactory watershed management and the rebuilding of deteriorated watershed cover is extremely important in the reduction of flood damages and of the costs of flood control on the lower reaches of major streams. Flood damages and costs of projects for the control of floods total many millions yearly in the West.

The recreational and wildlife resources of the national forests also have important values. In 1947 a total of 21,324,000 recreational visits were made to the national forests—34,000,000 man-days of use. The 4,537 improved camp and picnic grounds were utilized by 8,780,000 persons. The national forests are the principal home of extensive western deer and elk herds and many other kinds of wildlife. Approximately 4,700,000 hunters, fishermen, and trappers utilized the national forests in 1947—a total of over 16,000,000 man-days of use.

Cash expenditures by sportsmen and other recreationists are an important source of income for local businessmen. Although no reliable estimate of the amount is available, if each person spends only \$2 or \$3 a day, the annual total must reach many million dollars.

**14. It has been said that the Forest Service aims to eliminate grazing entirely from national forests. Is this true?**

No. Definitely and positively the Forest Service does not seek to exclude livestock from the national forests. On the contrary, the policy aims at building up and maintaining the national-forest ranges so that they can make their maximum contribution to a

permanent and stable livestock industry, consistent with the protection of watershed and other values and uses of the national forests. Grazing is a suitable and productive use for large areas of national-forest lands.

**15. Why are reductions made in the number of livestock permitted to graze on the national forests?**

Usually they are made for range protection; that is, to remedy too heavy grazing which causes deterioration of the capacity of the range to produce forage. Such overgrazing may have come about through (1) use by too many livestock or game animals, (2) use too early in the spring or too late in the fall, (3) drought, which reduces forage production, (4) poor management of the livestock on the range by the permittee, or (5) thickening of timber or brush stands to the point that this plant competition reduces forage growth.

In some situations, including certain steep, easily erodible soils and important municipal or other critical watershed areas, total exclusion of livestock from the range may be required.

More rarely, reductions are made as penalty for violation by the permittee of the terms of the grazing permit or the regulations on which it is based.

**16. How are necessary reductions in permitted livestock numbers determined?**

The reductions necessary are determined by the amount by which the present permitted livestock exceeds the estimated grazing capacity of the range in question. The opportunity to overcome range damage by water development, reseeding, fencing, and improved methods of management of livestock on the range is given consideration. The final decision to reduce livestock numbers on any national-forest range is reached only after the opportunity has been offered the permittee for a thorough study of the situation on the ground in company with the forest officer in charge of the area. If heavy reductions are made they are usually spread over several years to provide an opportunity for adjustment in livestock operations.

**17. How great are the reductions proposed?**

As estimated in 1948, the reductions proposed for 1949 and 1950 averaged about 2 percent per year of the total number of livestock permitted to graze on western national forests in 1947.

These over-all average reductions would be of minor consequence to stockmen if they could be spread uniformly over all

national-forest ranges. But it doesn't work out that way. Individual users are affected in varying degrees, depending upon whether needed reductions already have been made, upon the extent of overstocking which is still occurring, whether the ranges lie within watersheds that are in deteriorated condition and have easily erodible soils, or where serious floods have originated or are likely. Many ranges will require no reductions at all.

### **18. Why can't these proposed reductions wait?**

Postponement of needed reductions required to stop overgrazing would cause further range deterioration and necessitate greater reductions at a later date. The longer corrective action is postponed, the more difficult the cure becomes, especially if the more fertile topsoil is lost.

### **19. What consideration is given to the economic and practical effects of proposed reductions on the permittee's livestock operation and on the local community?**

Stabilization of local communities is one of the principles of national-forest administration and policy. In management for economic stability, full consideration must be given to the land, its condition, and its productivity. Unsatisfactory range practices reduce land productivity and adversely affect the prosperity of local people, in the long run.

The effects of adjustments in grazing on the individual stockman are carefully considered before any action is taken. Reductions in permitted livestock are resorted to only where no other alternative for correcting unsatisfactory situations can be effectively used.

Reductions in livestock numbers on overgrazed range do not necessarily lower returns from individual livestock enterprises. Research tests, as well as practical operating experience, show that it pays to stock conservatively. Greater and more economical beef production results because the cattle have adequate forage at all times. Studies conducted on the Santa Rita and Jornada Experimental Ranges in Arizona and New Mexico show conclusively that greater calf crops, greater weight gains, lower death losses, and higher net returns are obtained with moderate range stocking than on similar range with heavy stocking. This same principle has been demonstrated on the Manitou Experimental Forest in Colorado and in several other parts of the West.

## **20. Will reductions in livestock on the national forests put livestock ranchers out of business?**

Reductions in permitted numbers of livestock will very rarely put a livestock rancher out of business. In most cases the permittee is able to continue a profitable business through reorganizing his operation. Reductions in livestock numbers make more forage available for each remaining animal. This often results in lower costs of production and increased profits. At the same time, it gives a stability of operation not present when the range is deteriorating from overgrazing.

Drastic reductions, which may be required on critical watershed areas, could conceivably put a rancher out of business if he is entirely or largely dependent on national-forest range. In such cases, and fortunately they are indeed rare, the immediate interest of the permittee must be subordinated to the long-time interest of the community.

## **21. Do reductions in livestock numbers permitted on national forests affect meat production and prices?**

Reductions in permitted numbers to stop overgrazing make more forage available per animal, permit more efficient use of the forage by the remaining animals, and result in production of more meat per animal. Reductions for other purposes are so small in relation to the total number of livestock in the country, and the possible production corresponding to the number of animals removed from the range equals so extremely small a part of the total meat production from cattle, sheep, and swine, that they have only a very insignificant effect on the total meat supply of the Nation. This national total was 23 billion pounds of dressed meat in 1947. Even if there were no offsetting benefits, the planned 1949-50 reductions *for all purposes* could not be equivalent to a yearly meat production loss of more than  $\frac{1}{50}$  of 1 percent. It is difficult to see how this could affect meat prices.

## **22. What are transfer reductions and why are they made?**

In some instances grazing preferences are reduced when the Forest Service transfers a preference from a stockman who sells his ranch, livestock, or both to the stockman who purchases them. These transfer reductions are made (1) to remedy too heavy use of the range and (2) when there is an especially urgent need, to provide increases in grazing privileges for small permittees or to grant new permits to small applicants. Very few transfer reductions for the latter purpose have been made in recent years, and



they are made only when the preference being transferred exceeds the minimum number of livestock required to provide a reasonably stable enterprise for the support of a family.

The joint committee of the two national stockmen's associations, appointed to consider the Forest Service problems concerning national-forest grazing policy and administration, has agreed with the Forest Service that no grazing preference should be transferred for numbers in excess of the safe grazing capacity of the range.

### **23. Has the Forest Service reduced livestock grazing on western national-forest ranges while deer and elk have increased?**

The first Service-wide estimates of game animals on the national forests were made in 1921. According to the estimates, 436,000 deer and 52,000 elk, as well as small numbers of other big game, grazed for at least part of the year on western national forests. It was generally conceded that numbers of game animals were depleted and were smaller than was desirable on most ranges.

In response to public demand, hunting seasons were further restricted by State game authorities, refuges were established, law enforcement was tightened, and other efforts were made to restore herds. The result was a rapid increase in game populations throughout the West. By 1947 deer numbers on the western national forests had increased to over 1,500,000 and elk to more than 161,000, so that grazing by deer and elk was about four times that in 1921. Other game animals had increased in smaller amounts.

On the other hand, in 1921 domestic livestock numbers on national forests were still high as a result of World War I increases which had been permitted in an effort to produce more meat. During the period 1921-47 cattle numbers on western national forests decreased from 2,063,283 to 1,177,836 and sheep numbers from 6,978,433 to 3,404,596—a reduction in livestock grazing of about half. Much of this total reduction has not been due to increased game populations, although in a good many areas game has been a major factor.

Moreover, nearly half of the western national-forest land is not livestock-grazing area but is used by wildlife. Most of this acreage is unsuited for domestic livestock, though a small percent is closed to livestock on account of recreation, watershed, wildlife, or other high-priority uses. Therefore, much of the big-game increase occurred on lands not used for livestock production.

An increase in game numbers, as such, is not necessarily undesirable. The development and maintenance of a desirable wildlife habitat and the production of a reasonable amount of big game for public use and recreation are legitimate functions of the national forests. Nevertheless, in accomplishing this objective, all grazing animals—both domestic livestock and big game—should be brought into and kept in balance with the grazing capacity of the available range.

The policy of the Department of Agriculture is to handle big-game problems on the national forests in cooperation with the States. Under this policy the Forest Service is required to determine the extent to which the national forests will be devoted to wildlife production along with other uses, and in cooperation with the State fish and game or conservation departments, to formulate plans for securing and maintaining desirable populations of wildlife species. Also, the Forest Service cooperates with State officials in planning and carrying out orderly utilization, in accordance with State laws, of wildlife on national-forest land. This may include special open seasons designed to remove surplus numbers where they exist.

There are a good many places in the West where the deer and elk populations have outgrown their forage supplies, and numbers should be reduced to grazing capacity. In some areas it is desirable to increase the present rate of progress in reducing oversized game herds. The "no sportsman kills a doe" philosophy has for many years exerted a powerful influence against sound game management and control. Most State game authorities have received public support in their efforts toward proper protection of the wildlife resource, but few of them have received adequate backing for its needed utilization.

**24. Are increases in permitted livestock allowed on understocked ranges, and are permittees given the benefit of increases in grazing capacity resulting from sound management?**

Yes. The present policy permits increases in livestock numbers on understocked ranges. If increased grazing capacity results from adjustments in rate of stocking, range reseeding, construction of range improvements, or good management by the permittees and occurs within 10 years after an adjustment, it is recognized as a benefit to be distributed equitably among the users of the allotment or unit. If there is just one user, he is allowed to utilize the increased grazing capacity.

**25. What recourse does a grazing permittee have to appeal decisions made by forest officers regarding reductions in stocking or other adjustments in management with which the permittee does not agree?**

Under existing regulations, the permittee has two avenues of appeal: (1) He may appeal the decision of the local forest officer in turn to the forest supervisor and the regional forester; or (2) he may have his case reviewed by the appropriate advisory board. If he disagrees with the recommendations of the advisory board, he can, within 20 days, file with the chairman of the board a statement covering the points on which he dissents. The entire record is then forwarded to the regional forester for decision. If he disagrees with the decision of the regional forester under either procedure, he can carry his appeal to the Chief of the Forest Service, and finally to the Secretary of Agriculture.

The avenues of appeal available to permittees are adequate to insure fair treatment. Appeals reaching the Secretary of Agriculture are reviewed by members of his staff, and independent decisions are reached.

Another opportunity for permittees to appeal is afforded by the National Forest Board of Review, established May 10, 1948, by the Secretary of Agriculture. It is composed of private citizens whose duties are to advise the Secretary concerning problems arising in connection with the public use of the national forests and other land administered by the Forest Service. Among other things, the board may be called upon to advise the Secretary of Agriculture on the disposition of appeals to the Secretary by forest users, including the livestock interests, from decisions by the Chief of the Forest Service. The joint committee of the two national stockmen's associations has agreed that this board should consider important matters of policy and not individual appeal cases unless these involve important policy matters.

Members of the Board appointed in 1948 are Dr. Jonathan Forman, of Columbus, Ohio; Prof. Gilmour B. MacDonald, former head of the Department of Forestry, Iowa State College, Ames, Iowa; and Dr. Roland Roger Renne, president of Montana State College, Bozeman, Mont.

The advisory group is appointed on the basis of personal competence and not as the representatives of any groups or organizations interested in the use of national-forest land. Members must have no financial interest in the use of this land.

**26. Do national-forest grazing permits lend stability to livestock operations?**

Yes. This has been substantiated by the premiums in prices paid for livestock (\$50 to \$150 per head for cattle and \$5 to \$10 per head for sheep) and for commensurate ranch property used in connection with a national-forest grazing preference. The Farm Credit Administration has for many years recognized the value of national-forest grazing privileges in making loans on ranch properties. Also, private banks give similar consideration to the value of grazing permits in making loans. Economic surveys indicate that ranches dependent upon national-forest ranges are among the most stable operating units in the West.

**27. Should conditions required of the permittee and agreements made with him by forest officers be in writing?**

Yes. Commitments, promises, and agreements between permittees and forest officers, with the laws and regulations governing the national forests, should be in writing and be considered as binding upon both the permittee and the Forest Service. This was the subject of one of several proposals presented by the Subcommittee of the House Public Lands Committee following its series of hearings in the Western States.

**28. Why are sportsmen and recreationists interested in national forests?**

Sportsmen and recreationists are interested in national forests because they afford the principal public hunting and fishing areas of the West, as well as many of the other outstanding recreational advantages. National forests furnish yearlong or seasonal range for nearly 70 percent of the western big-game animals. The national forests also contain about 90,000 miles of unposted streams and 1½ million acres of fish-producing lakes, over 4,500 developed camping and picnicking areas, 230 winter sports areas, and 400 organization camps for group outings, besides 77 designated wilderness areas, wild areas, and roadless areas and many scenic and other special attractions. The development and maintenance of satisfactory habitat for game, desirable fishing streams, and the other recreational attractions is of interest to the many people who use them.

**29. Are wilderness areas open to grazing?**

Yes. Regulation U-1 of the Secretary of Agriculture permits grazing of domestic livestock on wilderness areas, subject to such restrictions as the Chief of the Forest Service considers desirable.

In actual practice most wilderness areas are grazed and the livestock are handled in exactly the same manner as on other national-forest lands.

**30. Why are irrigationists and water-power and municipal water users interested in national forests?**

These groups are concerned with the management of the national forests because most of the water in the Western States on which they so vitally depend comes from national-forest watersheds. The amount and distribution of that water depends upon the condition and management of the watersheds.

Without effective protective plant cover to check runoff and bind the soil, surface runoff is excessive, soil is eroded from slopes, gullies are formed, reservoirs and irrigation ditches are silted up, spring flows assume flood proportions, flash floods occur from intensive summer storms, and highways, buildings and other property are damaged, oftentimes miles away from where the floods started.

Sound range management aids in restoration or preservation of plant cover; unwise use causes deterioration. The aim of national-forest watershed management is to maintain the protective cover or where it is depleted, to restore it as rapidly as possible. Rain or melting snow on lands well covered with grass, shrubs, or trees does not quickly run off but moves slowly over the surface, where it seeps through the decaying leaves and twigs down through the porous topsoil to form underground reservoirs. This process, both on the surface and underground, helps provide a steady, dependable flow of clear water from springs and in streams throughout the year.

**31. Should the Forest Act of 1897 be amended to provide by law that grazing be a basic use of national-forest lands?**

Although by law the primary purposes of the national forests are to produce timber and protect watersheds, there is ample authority in the Act of June 4, 1897, to permit and encourage other uses under regulations of the Secretary of Agriculture. Regulations issued under the authority of that act, which have the full effect and force of law, provide for grazing of domestic livestock on the national forests. Grazing as one of the major uses has also been repeatedly and increasingly recognized by the Congress in the annual appropriation acts for the Department of Agriculture containing provisions for range management, improvement, and research. There can be no doubt that such

use of the national forests has full legal sanction and cannot be stopped for lack of authorization in the laws. Present policies and programs fully recognize this situation.

In view of the foregoing, there is no actual need for amending the Act of 1897 to provide by law that grazing be a basic use of national-forest lands. If an amendment to that law should be enacted, other important and widespread uses and values not previously included, such as recreation and wildlife, also deserve to be recognized.

### **32. Should national-forest advisory boards be given legal status?**

Yes; if present advisory-board members and livestock interests desire it.

For many years there have been local grazing advisory boards for ranger districts and entire national forests in the Western States. Some 800 such local boards are now functioning. They are playing an important part in ironing out local problems and in working for sound management of the range. Such boards are composed mainly of permittees who graze livestock on the particular allotment, ranger district, or national forest covered by the board. Their function is entirely advisory. Final decisions on policy and related administrative matters remain with the Secretary of Agriculture. This is, of course, the only way in which responsibility for action can be definitely placed.

### **33. Is a greatly enlarged program of range improvement, including water development, reseeding, fencing, and rodent and weed control needed on national-forest lands?**

Yes; a greatly enlarged program of range improvement is urgently needed to obtain efficient use of the forage resource. It is a national-forest policy, within the limits of available funds, to provide for the construction of fences, water developments, and other improvements needed for proper use of the range. Steady progress is being made. The Federal Government has invested over \$16,000,000 in 24,400 miles of fence, 4,000 miles of stock driveway, 14,800 water developments, over 200,000 acres of range reseeding, and other improvement items. Construction of most of these improvements was accomplished through emergency public-works programs beginning in 1933.

Except for range reseeding, only very small amounts were appropriated for range improvement during the fiscal years 1948 and 1949. About \$1,300,000 was appropriated for range reseed-

ing in the 2-year period. For range improvements, including reseeded, \$5,000,000 a year could be used advantageously. The total of such work on all western national forests would involve upwards of \$100,000,000.

**34. Should grazing permittees be allowed and encouraged to make range improvements on national forests, including water developments, fencing, reseeded, rodent and weed control, and soil and water conservation, at their own expense?**

Yes; of course, but unacceptable strings should not be attached to offers of cooperation. If cooperation is made conditional upon receiving special and unusual privileges or is detrimental to the public interests it cannot be accepted. Otherwise, permittee cooperation in the construction and maintenance of needed range improvements on the national forests has been and still is desired by the Forest Service and is encouraged to the fullest extent in keeping with the objects of good management.

**35. What do national forests contribute to local and State governments to offset loss of tax base?**

Contributions of the national forests to local and State governments are of three kinds: (1) Cash contributions; (2) physical improvements; and (3) relief from cost of certain administrative and policing duties.

Each year an amount equal to 25 percent of the cash receipts of the national forests goes to the States containing national forests, for distribution to the counties in the national forests for road and school purposes. An additional 10 percent of receipts is allotted for expenditures on national-forest roads and trails in the States of origin, so that the States and local communities get the direct benefit of 35 percent of national-forest gross receipts.

Improvements include range fences, water developments, lookout towers, roads, trails, telephone lines, and recreation facilities. The accumulative investment by the Government in all types of physical improvements on national-forest lands in the 11 Western States on June 30, 1948, totaled more than \$268,000,000. During the fiscal year 1948, \$49,000,000 of Forest Service funds were expended in these States for protection and development purposes, general administration, and other costs connected with Forest Service activities. All these expenditures help to provide local employment and increase the value and use of local resources, as well as the business derived from this use.

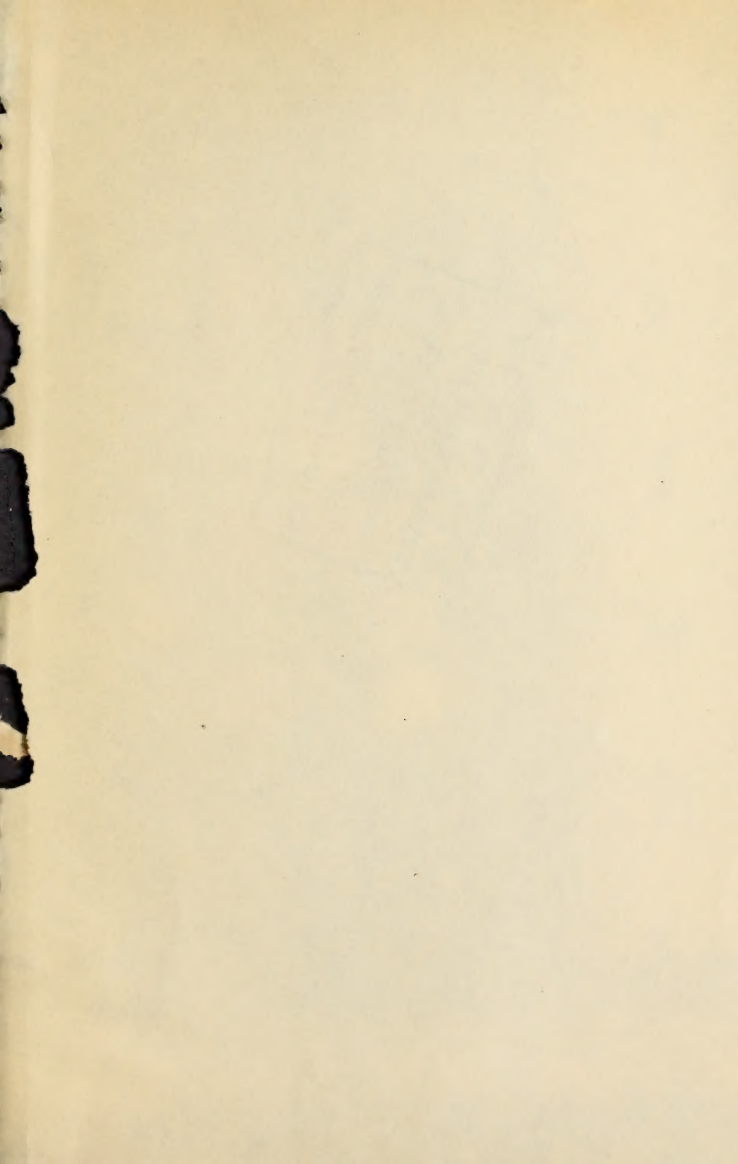
The county and State governments are relieved of substantial expenses for such services as forest fire protection, development and maintenance of recreational facilities and roads, certain policing duties, and erosion and flood control.

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