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DEPENDENCY RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PUBLIC RANGE AND
PRIVATE LANDS - A DISCUSSION

Cruz Venstrom, BAE, Reno - Chairman
H. R. Hochmuth, BAE, Berkeley
Howard Mason, Univ. of Nevada, Reno
Deo Broadbent, Utah State Agric. College, Logan
M. H. Saunderson, Forest Service, Ogden
A. F. Vass, Univ. of Wyoming, Laramie
Howard R. Baker, Univ. of Arizona, Tucson - Rapporteur

Introductory - By the Chairman. Although the subject of public and private land dependencies is not new, emphasis is timely on the policy aspects because of several recent public programs, administrative trends and specific legislative and administrative proposals. These are: (a) flood control surveys of the USDA and the War Department; (b) USDA watershed plans under the Water Facilities Program; (c) legislative and administrative consideration to unify the federal land payments to local units of the government in lieu of tax payments; (d) the Grazing Service range fee appraisal; (e) the trend toward direct federal activity bearing on farm operations through irrigation projects, grazing services, National Park, monument and other recreation areas, regional "authorities", etc.

Possibly we can make better headway on this age-old problem of land dependency by using some new thought patterns. The orthodox seems to be to find a few facts that are true for a particular area and then proceed to make or imply generalizations for wide areas and situations. But one finds in this approach little criteria for judging such situations.

My rationalizing is based on an economic democracy which seeks to give individual management of livestock units. This is usual. But in many developing, conflicting and confusing federal and state interrelations, particularly in the West, we must give more conscious attention to the realistic situation of the individual operator as a member of a "laissez faire" in the original concept is gone. Public administrators deal directly with social values.

What are some of the fundamental characteristics of a social use relationship of people to resources?

1. The resources are handled on a sustained yield basis. This necessarily implies erosion control, as the soil is the basis of all life. The trend would be toward sustained yield of rationally determined uses rather than they be plow land, grazing, timber, recreation, watershed or others.
2. The highest competitive social use takes precedent over all other uses. Multiple uses are general. The above would apply in cases

conflict whether only minor adjustments in uses were needed or whether two or more uses were mutually exclusive.

3. Individual management and responsibility is encouraged for those uses left to individual operations. There is no sharp line between private and public business, but no one is questioning private operation of large livestock units.

4. Credit, valuation and other business needs are satisfied. The system must permit projection of the farm organization for business purposes.

5. The individuals have the feeling of security for life satisfaction. This is the human counterpart of projecting the business operations.

6. The operating units (farms and ranches) are balanced businesses of minimum sizes or greater. We have an emerging social philosophy applying to units below the acceptable local minimum. We have no clear philosophy for "bigness". In some ways (4) and (5) are implied under (6).

7. Reasonable contributions are made out of the agency land income to local governmental functions. In general, the local units of government are supported to some degree by a share (taxes) of the earnings of local businesses. In so far as this system exists, the continued flow of earnings to local government support is logical after the resource is in public hands. "Reasonable contributions" would be at the level as for similar resources in private hands. "Reasonable local governmental functions" would be those that are normal to the people in the area normally supported by direct local assessments. Obviously, there is a need for current or periodic revisions to keep the relations "reasonable" for the particular time.

8. The amenities of society are observed. Society has certain amenities that must be respected in land use. There must be certain freedoms to move about. Hunting and fishing must be available. Many other kinds of recreational and relaxing areas must be available. When private ownership restricts these amenities or when stream or site destruction occurs, society may be moved to some form of action which makes clear that the property is a conditional grant by society.

Private fee simple ownership does not appear as such to be a general characteristic of a sound land use relationship. Experience has generally favored fee simple ownership for agricultural lands, and various forms of fee simple ownership for forest lands. Where do the one-crop grazing lands fit into this scheme?

At first thought one is apt to conclude that the extensive grazing lands have only one use -- much like farming lands. But the great areas of even the smaller operations and the great distances up to 200 to 300 miles travelled by sheep between ranges introduces many multiple uses and causes alone.