



# About The Public Lands Council

Since 1968, the Public Lands Council (PLC) has actively represented the cattle and sheep producers who hold public lands grazing permits. PLC advocates for these western ranchers who preserve our nation's natural resources while providing vital food and fiber to the nation and the world. PLC seeks to educate and inform policy decision makers about public lands ranching to ensure the success and longevity of the industry in the United States.

## Who Are Public Land Ranchers?

Public land ranchers are independent, family-owned businesses that raise cattle and sheep to supply food and clothing to the world. Their work significantly impacts the economic and social sustainability of America's rural communities and their personal financial investment in maintaining the land saves taxpayers money. Today, public land ranchers are widely recognized for their work to protect the environment in which they live and operate. Ranchers and their families not only live and work on the range, they act as stewards of the land through efforts including:

- **Preserving clean water sources**
- **Controlling invasive plants and non-native grasses**
- **Protecting the habitat for endangered species**
- **Maintaining firebreaks to actively prevent forest & range fires and act as first responders when a fire occurs**
- **The Sage Grouse Initiative – a partnership of ranchers, state and federal agencies, universities, nonprofit groups, and businesses that work together toward the goal of wildlife conservation through sustainable ranching**

## BY THE NUMBERS

### History & Prevalence Today

For generations, ranchers have provided the nation with much needed food and fiber. Their work greatly depends upon on the long-term health and sustainability of America's public lands. Ranching is a unique part of our agricultural heritage that has evolved to efficiently fulfill the demands of the nation today.

- **1943**  
The Taylor Grazing Act gave grazing preference to established ranchers who were making beneficial use of the forage and water on a given range
- **1986**  
President Reagan issued an Executive Order establishing the current grazing fee
- **22,000 public land ranchers**  
Working in the U.S. today
- **250 million acres**  
Amount of public land ranched today
- **14 states**  
Contain public lands used for ranching today

### Impact on the Economy

Ranching is a safeguard against the loss of open space threatening the character of the American West and is an important part of America's economy and food supply.

- **\$1.5 billion annually**  
Amount contributed to the U.S economy by public lands ranching
- **\$12 million**  
Amount ranchers paid the federal government for grazing permit fees in 2014
- **\$3 per acre saved**  
It costs the Bureau of Land Management \$2 per acre to manage public land that is grazed vs. \$5 per acre of ungrazed land
- **19% of American beef cows**  
Graze on public lands in the 14 Western states
- **40% of the western cow herd**  
spend time on public lands
- **50% of the nation's sheep herd**  
spend time on public lands

### Active Conservation

Public land ranchers are committed to environmental stewardship initiatives to preserve and maintain the lands they work.

- **11 states**  
In which ranchers have worked with the USDA to conserve, restore or maintain sage grouse habitat
- **4 million acres**  
Of sage grouse habitat ranchers have saved (twice the size of Yellowstone National Park)
- **40 years**  
Livestock grazing has been recognized as an integral tool for rangeland management on both public and private lands

For more information, visit: [www.publiclandscouncil.org](http://www.publiclandscouncil.org)

