



The Value of Ranching

Today, more than 22,000 ranchers graze cattle and sheep on Federal lands. These ranchers, who provide food and fiber to our nation, own their own property, and pay an annual fee to the government that permits them to graze their animals on some of the 250 million acres of public lands designated for multiple uses like grazing throughout 14 western states. The work ranchers do to maintain the land saves the Bureau of Land Management approximately \$750 million in taxpayer dollars each year. Without that contribution, the BLM would require an annual budget increase of 60% or more.

What is the fee?

This fee covers only the right to graze on the public lands under very specific terms and conditions. Contrary to ranchers who pay to graze on private land, which is maintained by the owners of the private land, ranchers who hold a public lands grazing permit enter in to a partnership with the federal government to cost-effectively manage public lands and are responsible for maintaining the fences, water sources, healthy wildlife populations, safe recreational spaces, and the land in general, the costs for which comes from the ranchers' own pockets.

PRIVATE LANDS

Ranchers Pay

Ranchers Receive

Grazing Fee

Right to graze on private land

Maintained fences

Maintained water sources

Maintained wildlife populations

Maintained grasslands

PUBLIC LANDS

Ranchers Pay

Ranchers Receive

Grazing Fee

Right to graze on land

Costs to build and maintain fences on land

Costs to build and maintain water sources

Costs to maintain wildlife populations

Costs and time to participate in conservation efforts

Time to maintain grasslands

Time to remove invasive species from lands

Time to respond to and control wildfires





“When you consider all the costs involved in grazing, the [grazing fee costs for private and public lands] are roughly equal. Or in some cases, public land grazing can cost the rancher more.”

-John Tanaka, Ph.D.

**Co-Director, Sustainable Rangelands Roundtable
University of Wyoming**



A Win For The Environment

- Ranchers who graze on public lands also serve as stewards for that land.
- Ranchers' commitment to effective stewardship includes ongoing efforts to preserve clean waterways, control invasive plants and non-native grasses, and protect endangered species. They also maintain feeding areas used by native species, and serve as first responders during disasters like forest fires.
- Ranchers have worked with the USDA to save 4 million acres of sage grouse habitat in 11 states – that's twice the size of Yellowstone National Park. Because of this effort, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife determined that the sage grouse was not warranted for listing under the Endangered Species Act.



A Win For Taxpayers

- Ranchers' work to maintain the land saves the BLM approximately \$750 million in taxpayer dollars each year.
- According to the Department of the Interior, grazing on public lands contributes a minimum of \$1.5 billion annually to the economy. Public lands supply about 21% of all livestock in the western states.
- Ranchers paid the federal government \$12 million for grazing permit fees in 2014.
- Ranchers save the BLM an average of \$3 per acre. It costs the BLM \$2 per acre to manage public land that is grazed compared to \$5 per acre of ungrazed land. This is due to the time and resources ranchers contribute to take care of the land on which they hold permits for grazing.
- Ranchers pay taxes on the public lands permits they hold.



For more information, visit: www.publiclandscouncil.org