



ECONOMIC BACKBONE OR BOONDOGGLE?

As western economies change from being extractive based to more environmentally friendly, non-commodity values such as wildlife, water quality, and recreation are increasingly important. Today, income from non-commodity based operations in many Western states contributes far more to economic vitality than does ranching.

Despite the larger-than-life mythical stature of the western rancher, livestock grazing on western public lands is an insignificant part of contemporary western economies. The majority of the “livestock” workforce in Arizona raises chickens, not beef cattle or sheep. According to University of Montana economist Dr. Thomas Powers, public lands livestock grazing:

- ▼ Accounts for fewer than one-tenth of one percent of all jobs.
- ▼ Generates a mere 0.5% of all income in the West.
- ▼ Directly provides only 2,132 jobs in Arizona and 2,129 jobs in New Mexico.

“One dollar out
of every \$2,500 in income received
in the eleven western states is directly
associated with grazing on federal lands.

In employment terms, one out of every 2,000 jobs
is directly tied to federal lands grazing”

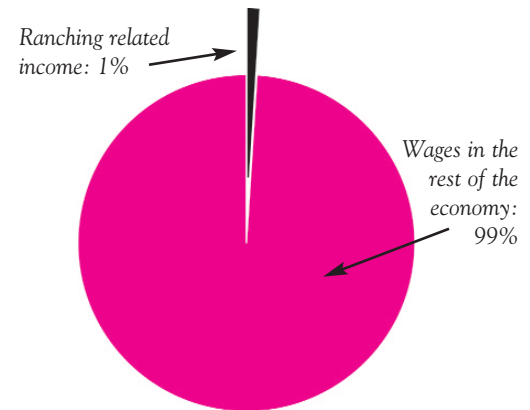
—DR. THOMAS POWER
UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA ECONOMIST

Grazing in the “hot desert” of the American Southwest is economically and environmentally absurd. A 1991 General Accounting Office report concluded that livestock grazing in the bone-dry Sonoran, Mojave, and Chihuahuan Deserts of southern New Mexico, Arizona, and California benefits a mere 1,000 ranchers and contributes less than one percent to the economies of these mostly rural counties. However, grazing continues to endanger wildlife, pollute water, and strip away soil, thereby forever damaging this fragile land.

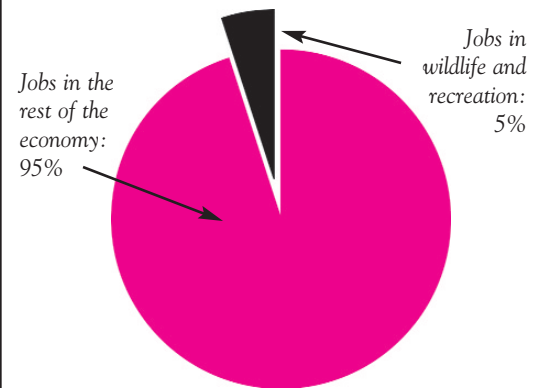
Increasingly, clean water, healthy wildlife populations, and aesthetic values are the basis of productive and expanding economies in the western states. In many areas, abusive grazing practices that degrade land and water are a limiting factor to sustainable economic growth.

- ▼ A 1991 study found that reduced livestock grazing in California’s Sierra Nevada would greatly enhance the net economic well being of the local community as a result of increased revenue generated from enhanced elk hunting opportunities.
- ▼ A 1992 study found that two ungrazed and popular nature preserves in southeastern Arizona, with streamside woodlands rich in birds, provide substantial economic benefit to the local economy.
- ▼ A 1995 bio-economic study determined that only seventy-five elk hunting permits could provide a viable economic alternative to ranchers in exchange for retiring grazing permits in the San Pedro Parks wilderness area.

THE ECONOMIC ROLE OF RANCHING THROUGHOUT THE WEST



ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF WILDLIFE AND RECREATION IN NEW MEXICO



Wildlife-related recreation in New Mexico is big business, contributing \$768 million to the state’s economy. According to the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, wildlife-associated recreation:

- ▼ Directly provides 12,000 jobs and over \$200 million in earnings.
- ▼ Generates \$385 million in economic activity from non-consumptive recreation alone.