

Wupatki Grazing Terminated

Editor's Note: Larry Henderson, Superintendent of Wupatki-Sunset Crater National Monuments in Arizona, submitted this account of "a recent success story."

By Steve Cinnamon

After more than a century, cattle grazing has been terminated in the 15,000 acres of the western portion of Wupatki National Monument. Cattle grazing began in the late 1880s as three Babbitt brothers left Cincinnati, Ohio and began ranching operations in the Flagstaff, Arizona. Their operations included grazing public domain on what was later to become Wupatki National Monument.

In 1924, the monument was established as two separate units totaling 1620 acres to "...reserve prehistoric ruins built by the ancestors of ... the Hopi or People of Peace...". In 1937, the monument was expanded to include an additional 33,631 acres. The expansion was created out of the public domain land grazed by the CO Bar Cattle Company. The park entered into agreements with the ranchers to graze according to existing park service guidelines. Provisions of the first grazing permits included 500 head of cattle from the period of December to May to utilize snowfall for a water source.

As the ranch management developed water sources, the grazing season was shifted to mid-November through mid-April. The three brothers of the corporation were given a lifetime permit but began negotiations for a term permit after one brother died and another was in failing health. By 1958, the Park Service had denied issuing a 50-year permit but were willing to accept a 20-year non-renewable permit in addition to an 800-acre exchange to 'even' out the boundaries. The 1963 Memorandum of Understanding between the park and ranch cited the non-renewable provision of the permit, the land exchange, a permanent 200-foot easement across CO Bar Ranch to remote sections of the monument, and provision for a fenced stock drive-way to allow cattle access from Antelope Prairie into Wupatki Basin.

With the permit slated to expire in 1983, a meeting was requested by the ranch management in October, 1981. The ranch management presented an argument of not being prepared to absorb the loss of 15,000 acres of winter range and requested a five-year extension of the permit. Former Director Dickenson granted the request adopting the provisions of the 1963 agreement. One alteration was that the grazing season was shifted to mid-October through mid-March for 500 head of cattle. This action was undertaken at the request of Southwest Regional Chief Scientist Dr. Milford Fletcher to reduce the competition between livestock and pronghorn antelope for spring forage.

Range condition had improved dramatically from 1977 baseline data established by Northern Arizona University. Researchers had established range transects and erected four grazing enclosures to determine range condition as part of their four-year Natural Resource Survey. Clipping plots and trend plots, which were begun in 1981 and conducted yearly, indicated the range had improved from a poor classification to an upper good/excellent condition. Photographs verified the improvement recorded by line intercept transects.

In order to insure that a second extension would not be granted, Resource Management Specialist Steve Cinnamon began a monitoring program to determine the effects of livestock grazing on surface deposits of cultural artifacts, primarily potsherds. The strongest argument to deter future grazing was the damage to

cultural resources and its direct conflict with the park's having been established to preserve such prehistoric features. Photoplots of potsherd destruction by trampling verified the surface destruction. An inventory type archeological survey across the monument also recorded damage to prehistoric sites resulting from livestock grazing activity.

In December 1985, the CO Bar Ranch Management requested a meeting with park management. They offered an exchange of 3000 acres of land for a new 25-year grazing permit. They also reminded park officials of the potential for developing a gravel deposit located east of Crack-in-Rock, which would require improvement of the road and great physical disturbance to the prehistoric landscape in that area.

Park management prepared a threats memo to Southwest Regional Director John Cook, outlining the situation. Bruce Anderson, Southwest Region archeologist, who conducted the archeological inventory, verified the lack of unique or rare archeological remains in the land to be acquired. Correspondence with the ranch management began to stress the conflict of grazing and the Service's mandate of preserving prehistoric resources. A briefing statement highlighting the administrative decisions of the grazing program over the past 50 years was prepared for the Directorate staff. Then NPS Director William Mott stood by the park's recommendation to terminate grazing.

The permit expired in March of 1988. The park's boundary remained unfenced. The ranch manager approached the Park Service and offered to pay for trespass grazing for the winter season of 1988-89. Cinnamon established a monitoring program to have patrol personnel count cattle. A bill of collection was prepared for the ranch management adopting the 43 CFR non-willful trespass rate of \$8.42/AMU* after establishing a justification with the Southwest Regional office.

In April, 1989 notice was received that NRPP funding was available to begin fence construction. A budget outlining the expenditure of \$70,000 was established. Military surplus equipment air compressors, 1 ton trucks, and pickups were acquired from Luke AFB surplus yard. All material had been purchased with year end funds from previous years. A day labor crew

**AMU = Animal Month Unit, which can be one cow with calf, one horse without foal, or 5 sheep.*

began work in early May. The orientation and training session included movies on equal opportunity, a tour through the parks and a background of the grazing activities in the monument. Logistic bugs were worked out during the first week. The 7-person crew included one GS-4 Ranger to assist with survey and monitoring work, three maintenance workers and three laborers.

As work progressed, the crew found their strengths and established a system of using the air compressor to drill brace post holes in the morning, and t-post holes on line in the afternoon. They were able to construct an average of 1/8 mile of four strand fence a day. Considering all holes were having to be drilled, it was much faster than anticipated.

In mid-June, the park received word that an additional \$50,000 was available if it could be spent. Cinnamon programmed for a second five-man crew, five miles of material, equipment rental and GSA vehicles and a contract for an estimated 11,000 feet of fence for the stock driveway. The second crew arrived in late June and assisted in the completion of a critical 9-mile stretch across Antelope Prairie, reaching Highway 89 on the western boundary of Wupatki on August 2. A field celebration included Cinnamon and Superintendent Henderson pounding the final post and clipping the last four strands of wire on the north boundary fence.

The crew continued to fence the remaining 7 miles of boundary. As of late September they have completed 13 miles and have 3 remaining. Dr. Fletcher of the Southwest Region is providing an additional \$15,000 on October 1 to continue the crew in hopes of completing the boundary.

"I consider it a rare opportunity for a Resource Management Specialist to be involved in all phases of the Wupatki grazing program," said Cinnamon. "I have had the opportunity to work with the regional office personnel, fellow resource managers, ranchers, contractors, and staff and to see this project through. It could not have been completed without Dr. Fletcher's arguing for a securing funding. The day labor crew has been great. They have completed all fence work to date without an injury. Communication between divisions within the park improved as maintenance personnel helped complete line survey, cattle guard installation, material transport and vehicle servicing. The completion of this project is the highlight of my eight years at Wupatki."

Cinnamon is now Resource Management Specialist with the Midwest Regional Office.



Driving the last fence post. Steve Cinnamon, Resource Management Specialist and Larry Henderson, Superintendent, Wupatki & Sunset Crater NM.