

# Outcome-based Grazing Program

The Bureau of Land Management implements an initiative known as Outcome-based Grazing Authorizations. It is designed to offer a more collaborative approach between the BLM and its partners within the livestock grazing community when issuing grazing authorizations. The following is part of a series highlighting ranches in this pilot program.



## Willow Creek Ranch

Austin, Nevada

### Q & A with Russell Fitzwater, Ranch Manager

#### **How would you describe this ranch to someone who has never been there?**

A lot of sagebrush. We have about 2,000 acres of private land and about 57,000 acres of BLM land. We have nine pastures, and we're located about half way between Eureka and Austin, in northeast Nevada. We don't have much natural water so we have to pump our stock water, which keeps us busy. If you don't check pumping everyday you will be to late when you find something isn't working.

#### **What is the philosophy that guides this ranch?**

The ranch was terribly run down when we bought it 19 years ago. We have worked constantly to make it better. To make the land better for the wildlife, livestock, birds and everything else. The philosophy is to get it perfect someday.

## **Why did this ranch enroll in the Outcome-based Grazing program?**

I've had a really good relationship with the BLM. I've considered them a partner. I've worked with our current BLM range conservation specialist for the last two or three years. He's been my partner when it comes to the Outcome-Based Grazing Program. They approached me about this program and said they thought it would be a good fit. They asked if I would like to be involved, and I did. I went ahead and filed the paperwork and they gave us the opportunity to try it out..

## **Why is some flexibility important in a grazing permit?**

On my nine pastures, I've had the same schedule since 1994. The pastures aren't the same as they were in 1994. Sometimes we get good spring and summer rains on the west end and not the east, or vice versa. It would just be a lot better to have some flexibility to utilize the feed where we aren't going to hurt the land. Water problems are also a factor. We need to be able to provide enough water for the stock and the land.

## **Why should someone who isn't involved in agriculture care about how public lands are managed?**

I think some people look at us and see what we do and think that we are taking advantage of the land. They think that the cattle need to get off the range. But people may be missing how we are trying to better the land. Public means that it belongs to everybody and it is our responsibility to keep it intact.



***Partnering to Conserve Sagebrush Rangelands** is a collaborative effort between the BLM and Intermountain West Joint Venture. Our purpose to catalyze proactive, voluntary, and community-led sagebrush rangeland conservation – expanding success across private and public lands. This collaboration is supporting the Outcome-Based Grazing Authorizations efforts. Learn more at [www.PartnersInTheSage.com](http://www.PartnersInTheSage.com).*