

Buckaroo Stew

Plenty of red meat. By Hank Vogler

When you think of domestic terrorism, Timothy McVey probably comes to mind. Bombing the federal building in Oklahoma City, killing 168 people and injuring over 600, including children, was brutal. As I write in late June, Omar Mateen, an American-born Muslim who pledged allegiance to ISIS, has the distinction of being the biggest mass murderer in America. Oh! And, of course, Dwight and Steven Hammond.

Yes, “Rancher of the Year” Dwight Hammond, and his son Steven, “Young Farmer of the Year,” pled guilty to a charge of “domestic terrorism” that they were not advised carried a minimum of five years in federal prison. The judge reduced the sentence because he said that burning a few acres of brush did not rise to the severity of the five-year sentence and “would shock the conscience.” The Hammonds served the time handed down without incident. But the all-knowing, righteous Bureau of Land Management appealed the decision, the liberal 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals kicked it back to a lower court, and a different judge with a liberal bent reinstated the Hammonds to the five-year sentence. They are now serving their sentence. End of story? *Wrong!*

Beyond the Bundy family and others showing up to protest the treatment of the Hammonds and the shooting-in-the-back murder of LaVoy Finicum, the BLM refuses to reissue the Hammonds’ BLM grazing allotment permits. Keep in mind they were not convicted of any wrongdoing on the BLM. The fire that they admitted to—which they asked for and were granted permission to set to protect their winter feed, private land, and home—was twisted around to become domestic terrorism.

The absolutely vindictive behavior of the BLM is reprehensible. With the downturn in the cow market, making ends meet is hard enough, but to be drug around by the nose by a bunch of hate-filled bureaucrats is beyond the pale. It takes away not only the

Hammond family’s ability to stock to full numbers, but it also denies their use of the private land within these allotments and compromises the Steens Mountain special-use agreement. Also, throughout this ordeal, the only group to discharge a weapon was the federal government.

The environmental movement, with its vehement hatred of capitalism and the human race, has killed more people than Adolph Hitler. (The ban on DDT, which helped eliminate malaria around the globe, caused about 50 million deaths.) The timber industry, with its renewable natural resource harvesting of trees, is gone. Hundreds of mill

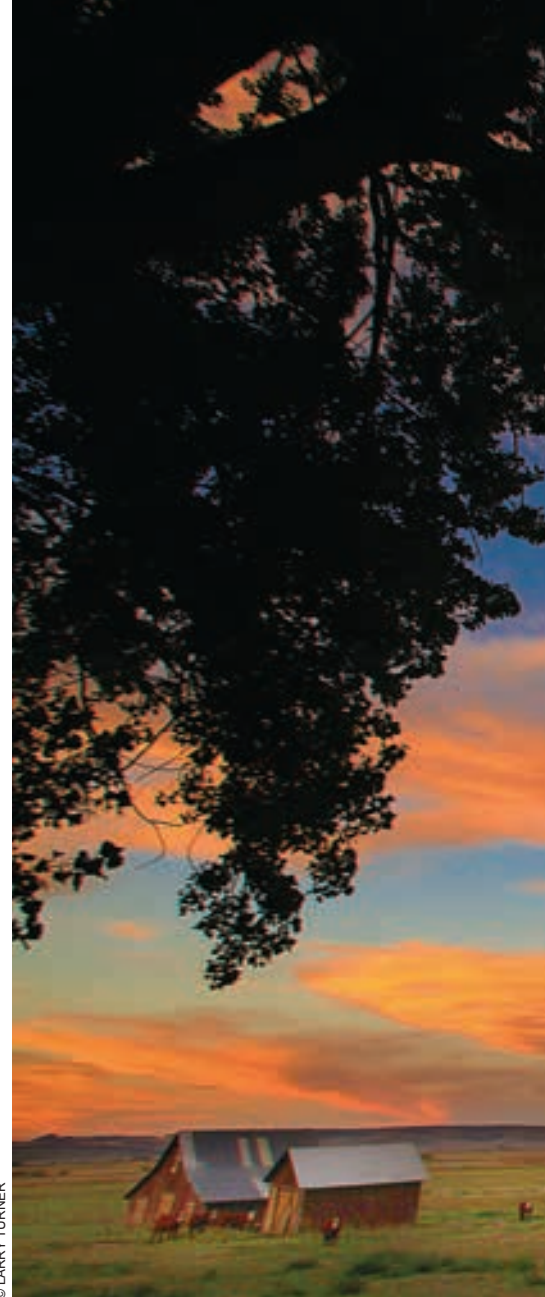
towns in the Pacific Northwest are decimated. The good management of timber has created more forests in the United States than were here when Christopher Columbus landed. The timber jobs have been replaced with more people working for the federal government. In the small town of Burns, Ore., the largest employer by

far is government—about 75 percent.

Ranchers depend on the stewardship of the range. They suffer if it is not taken care of. Here in Nevada, the feral horse population is out of control and horse advocates lean on the emotions of people and blame greed on the ranchers’ part. We are a country of laws. The laws that were put in place to control, *not eliminate*, feral horses are not being followed. The BLM is not removing the horses because it is a guaranteed lawsuit by the advocates.

Both the pro-horse groups and the resource-user groups lobby Congress. The prima donnas in the House and Senate line their pockets with gold while the range and horses suffer. The ranchers are being told that the BLM may have to eliminate grazing for 10 years as it can’t follow the law and remove the feral horses that are abusing the range. What do you do for 10 years when you have no place to run your livestock? Your banker will answer that question. It can be proven that the horses are the abusing party, not the livestock. If this confuses you, get in line.

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Hunters in the West have lost thousands of opportunities from the lack of huntable species. Statistics show that rural economies have lost billions of dollars because there is nothing left to hunt. The game commissions have been infiltrated by touchy-feely, can’t-we-all-get-along management. Predators are out of control and the wildlife departments make lame excuses that the lack of hunting is entirely the ranchers’ fault. The facts are that when wildlife was at its zenith, so were cattle and sheep numbers. The facts are that the agenda of the wildlife folks is to eliminate ranching. They are plagued with the touchy-feely Uncle Walt Disney cute-and-cuddly animal crowd. The data that textbooks were written with are all false baseline data. Predators were at their lowest point in the ’60s when the environmental movement started.

Sage grouse were as thick as starlings in the ’60s. Ravens, coyotes, foxes and all other



predators were low. The anti-ranching crowd learned from the spotted owl. You hear very little about Old Spot. The only threat to them now that the timber industry has been destroyed is that they are crossbreeding with the barred owl. The enviro answer is to kill the crossbred owls. The new crossbreed of owls has on their breasts, ••• --- •••. The cure for the lack of sage grouse is worse than the disease and high costs, thus permanent budgets and per diem. Ronald Reagan said, “The closest thing to eternal life on earth is a government program.” Sage grouse and livestock have coexisted for more than 100 years. Now grazing must go even though 80 percent of the nest disturbance is from ravens. The largest growth industry in the West is fire control and the West is awash in firefighters, at great expense to taxpayers.

People have screamed that the answer to fire is livestock. As livestock numbers have

plummeted, fire-burned acres have skyrocketed. We can’t use livestock to eat fuel loads and create millions of protein meals because it is too simple and cost effective. Now, thanks to the sage grouse, even more emphasis is being put on fire control, not by grazing but fire suppression. This only makes matters worse. Read the fire reports; now they say how many acres of sage grouse habitat burned. Lame excuse. Didn’t they have fires when the sage grouse evolved?

We can only hope that members of Congress and the Senate figure out that the electorate is disgusted with the moneychangers. The Democrats and Republicans fight all day long and sleep together at night. After all, the Constitution says all appropriations originate in the House, yet the prima donnas fund anything that comes by them. Once they get Potomac fever, power and money dominate their thinking. They were sent to

Hereford cattle in early autumn pastures at the J Spear Ranch outside Paisley, Ore., with sunset over Coglan Buttes.

Washington to represent their districts and states, but that information must not be in their election-filing packets.

Finally. Hillary. Were she anyone else, she would be hung for treason, or at least be spending life in prison. She might be best pick for president. Think about it. With any luck she will be in Fort Leavenworth, Kan., for a few hundred years and we can save money by renting out Air Force One and Two for junkets.

Hang and Rattle! ■

Hank Vogler runs needmoresheep company in eastern Nevada. His Morse code is S.O.S. for spotted-striped owls in jeopardy. Don’t miss his Hammond stories at rangemagazine.com. Click on “Enemies of the State.”