

RANGE

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RANGE is an award-winning quarterly devoted to the issues that threaten the West, its people, lifestyles, lands and wildlife. No stranger to controversy, RANGE is a leading forum for opposing viewpoints in the search for solutions that will halt the depletion of a national resource—the American cowboy.

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Up Front

Fire and flood.
By C.J. Hadley

On Oct. 14, 2016, just before the last issue was published, I was evacuated from my home at three a.m. due to the Little Valley fire. I escaped that fury but 28 homes burned to the ground and all historic buildings and contents on the Cliff Brothers Ranch turned to twisted metal and soot. Thankfully, the pregnant cows survived.

Just before this issue was published, in came the floods. By the second week of January, Washoe Valley, Nev., had experienced 4.5 inches of rain, more than half of its annual expected precipitation. Seventy-nine inches of snow fell on the Sierra within 48 hours, wind gusts were clocked at 173 miles an hour on the ridgetops, and with cold, wind, snow, ice and rain it was one hell of a mess.

On the first morning, I was out on the street walk-

ing through water with a shovel breaking up ice flows four inches thick and several feet across. They were blocking the 24-inch culverts in the ditch and I was attempting to prevent the raging water from washing away my driveways. I saved the one shown above.

Trees fell over in the area. Power poles were no longer perpendicular. Huge broken branches from my cottonwoods were lying in water. The grave prepared for my old horses looked like a reservoir. The water table, according to the numerous lakes on my few acres, was higher than some of my dirt and brush. And after a four-year drought—even though my crawl space needed to be pumped out, my house smelled like cooked cabbage, and my Great Danes preferred idling indoors—it was still a welcome experience.

Fire. Then flood. Is pestilence next? Probably not, because we already have that with the hoards of locusts and rats working as politicians, green lawyers and renegade government agents.



Pestilence next? Probably not, because we already have that with the hoards of locusts working as politicians, green lawyers and government agents.

I admit to being a dog-loving, blue-state, blue-collar voter (a former New Yorker) and a Hillary Clinton “deplorable.” Thankfully, last November 8 there were more of us than there were of them—the progressives who think they are intellectually superior and want to imprison our cowboys and run our lives and the world.

You know that RANGE mostly covers the West but the issues we write about also affect farmers in Zimbabwe, reindeer herders in Siberia, and food-service workers in Kansas City. Talking about food, there is a truckload of red meat in this issue: wolves, mustangs, autocracy, tunnel vision, wind and solar, the Bundys and Hammonds, state sovereignty, federal lunacy, and Big Green money. Don't

miss “Power Down” by Mike Coffman (page 12), “Unforgettable” by Dave Skinner (18), “Eco-Profits” by Dan Dagget (52), “Technocracy” by Patrick Wood (56), “Death of a Thousand Cuts” by Chance Gowan (64), “Ignoring Nature's Law” by Rachel Dahl (72), and “Rapacious Feds” by Judy Boyle (80).

But don't panic. Between these serious reports are dozens of pages offering art, beauty, hope and a glimpse of yesterday. Check out “Lunch With Tom Lea” by Tom Russell

(34), “Sheep, Dogs & Scotland” by Elaine Fletcher (74), “The Big Lift” by Donnelly Curtis (84), and “Ammon Bundy's Slam Dunk” by Todd Macfarlane. Regarding the latter (46), we pray that the jurors on the three separate upcoming Bundy trials in Las Vegas (like their counterparts in Portland) will also realize that it is not Ammon and friends who should be on trial, but the federal government agents who set them up and killed their friend LaVoy Finicum.

It's been tough for cowboys for decades but we believe that sanity will return soon, that there will be fair treatment for the people who live and work on the land, that honor and constitutional law will return to the courts, that the Antiquities Act will be rewritten to prevent more massive takings, and that hardworking legislators and county and federal leaders will use real science (not consensus, groupthink and fake news) to analyze climate change.

Is the turnaround a fantasy? Maybe. But thank God it rained. ■