

The Woozle Effect, Gaslighting, & the Cost of BS

Even Winnie the Pooh came to realize his own foolishness.

Words & photos by Steven H. Rich.

The genuine scientific term “woozle effect” describes continued, mindless or dishonest recycling of old nonsense. Example: Radical groups trot out the same old bibliographies of false anti-livestock claims in lawsuits—every citation a woozle—all predicting environmental catastrophe. If ranchers don’t expensively refute them, over and over, judges and media, lacking biological understanding, believe them. Woozles are imaginary creatures. The idea comes from the children’s book “Winnie the Pooh,” where Pooh, “a bear of very little brain”—but of great heart and high principles—leads his tiny friend Piglet, circling ’round a tree, finding ever more “woozle tracks” in the snow, getting more scared with each revolution, until they learn that all the tracks are their own.

Radicals sell malicious woozling as environmental defense, despite scientific proofs of necessary habitat, watershed, and other ecosystem healing that only skillfully managed livestock can provide. Ungrazed national parks in seasonal rainfall areas feature decreased biodiversity and fields of nonnative annuals after up to 98 years of “rest.” So obviously, removing livestock can’t fix soil health problems, woody species’ strangleholds and their fire consequences in rest-degraded/eroded soils like regenerative grazing can.

Ranch families, too, are collateral damage. Radicals know their own revenue streams depend on scaring inexperienced donors and collusion with governments having woozle-based policies. With genuinely ignorant activists, “very little brain” is an excuse, sort of. Hurting people and nature for cash, knowingly, speaks more to “little” principles and “little” hearts. Truly subtle woozles—they are, after all, information constructs—can possess the very souls of vulnerable, angry victims. That’s what radicalization is.

Gaslighting was defined in *Psychology Today* as “a tactic in which a person or entity, in order to gain more power [thus, money], makes a victim question their reality.... Any-

one is susceptible to gaslighting, and it is a common technique of abusers, dictators, narcissists, and cult leaders.” The term derives from the 1940 film “Gaslight,” wherein an evil husband attempts to drive his new wife insane by manipulating her reality. Beef and lamb producers are entangled in multigenerational gaslighting, while their Green abusers use endless woozles. Guess what? Beef and



VIA INTERNET

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lamb don’t cause heart problems, butter is *far* better for hearts than margarine, and genetics influence cholesterol levels far more than diet does. Inflammation from sugar is the problem. Also, cows don’t eat fish—Greens actually claimed that.

As I write, vast forest areas in California and other western states are burning severely, catastrophically. USDA-Rocky Mountain Research Station claims that the harm to soils,

habitats, watersheds, and wildlife populations from these fires is orders-of-magnitude worse than the most crazily incompetent grazing or any logging the Forest Service would ever allow. This is entirely because activists and the public were taught for generations, then culturally gaslighted—for money—with outdated American Romantic Period nonsense about unrestrained wildness; sublime, unbridled passion (example: the more horrid the destruction, the more “sublime”); and Native Americans as “noble savages,” i.e., scattered, instinctive wildlife.

This stuff gets continually revised, achieving maximum human and environmental damage. Think of Thoreau’s original writings about a “middle landscape” of livestock and lumber camps, etc.—if you can find any now. It’s purged from the Internet. His words are tortured and changed by doctrinaire revisionists until “politically correct Thoreau” now will say anything. That’s the process the anything-humans-do-defiles-nature notion follows. How do you think Native Americans like being gaslighted out of their ancestors’ achievements?

The following is from a published Op-Ed I wrote last summer. “Unlike us, even children in the West’s ancient and early historic native cultures knew that optimizing plant spacings determines nature’s fate—abundance or disaster. Wider-spaced trees can’t ignite each other. Sunlight reaches soils. Biodiversity increases 90 percent-plus. With great sophistication, Native Americans used the tools they had. They, like nature-based cultures worldwide, dedicated tremendous resources creating explosions of biodiversity, wildlife, food plants and perennial streamflows, while keeping fires small and short, thus protecting their families. They lit small, ‘patchy’ ground fires while lower fuel moistures prevented explosive fire behavior. This thinned forests and created firebreak meadows.”

We can’t “light burn” our way out of this hellish cycle now. It’s going to require logging, lots of it, and prescribed grazing. At the time, I called on the public, media, educators, politicians and activists to “become wildfire-competent and end this mess.”

Green-group executives absolutely know all that. You can’t study nature-related disciplines without learning that pre-European-contact America was a native human-created landscape from sea to sea. They’re intentionally gaslighting little children and their teachers—the whole culture—in order to destroy rural communities so that they, wielding vast, inherited cultural momentum, can “recreate”



Canyonlands National Park, this part aka “The Needles big Russian thistle patch.” Obviously, after many “livestock free” decades, park soil biology still favors nonnative annuals and bare ground. Skilled ranchers optimize the timing, frequency, intensity of grazing and animal impacts to lift soils out of this dead end.



This “Mother of the year” (two calves) was framed. Strange, radicals cite old BS, hoping to ban cow pies. Do cows eat fish, fish eggs, cause “dung fires,” etc.? Are dry washes really “critical fish habitat”? Are “abusive grazing” and “proper grazing” the same thing? Repeated false claims should be stamped “woozle” and banned, “with prejudice,” from past/future court and NEPA deliberations.

a fantasy world that never existed—to get paid and have an easy life with lots of outdoors’ time. They hang out in places that haven’t burned yet. Westerners are living in the fiery, degraded consequences of that anti-human fantasy. This horror happens when humans hate each other and stop managing intelligently.

Because of gaslight groupthink, people sit there passively while it happens...to other people. When it happens to them, the poor, brainwashed victims just sigh and say, “I guess fire’s natural in forests.” Gigantic, uncontrollable, sterilizing blazes with huge fire-tornados throwing burning trees into millions of

acres and consuming thousands of homes are not natural. If the public knew this, things would change. Mega-big-money players are using these frauds to control vast public resources. There aren’t words for how it feels after explaining for 30 years. I’m using new language, hoping it triggers free thoughts. You gotta try. Pray it’s not too late to implement all the planet-saving soil/ecosystem discoveries we already know actually work. There are a *big* bunch of gaslit woozles in the way. As Pooh would say, those are the very worst kind. They’re made of unexamined, old, old irrationalities, with their hooks deep into people’s loves and loyalties, and they are

deeply believed.

When I was a young environmental consultant, formally commenting on environmental impact statements and assessments that would completely ruin clients’ lives if not refuted, I would have often used the following in those comments: “The amount of energy necessary to refute bullshit is an order of magnitude bigger than to produce it.” It’s called the Brandolini Principle. It underestimates the problem. The *only* thing that breaks the spell cast by gaslit woozles is direct experience with nature, under the guidance of folks who know the behavioral languages of many creatures, including plants and fungi. It’s called “going



Cryptogam soil crust fails again—for 68 years. This crust-woozle is an old standby in anti-rancher NEPA and lawsuit pleadings. If this soil environment actually did “favor establishment of native grasses,” they wouldn’t be rare and endangered here.



Pre-catastrophic fuel load. Once started in this mess, crowning wildfires can’t be stopped without favorable winds and, hopefully, rain. They must be immediately suppressed. Federal funding practices based on multi-generationally gaslighted woozles encourage letting fires grow.



The next woozle-caused fire will be MUCH worse: fire-killed trees fall, fuel loads (see aspen resprouts) rebuild. Next fire? Vast tonnages of heavy fuels burn for hours in close soil contact. Result? Catastrophic soil sterilization, “hydrophobic” (rain-proof) soil crusts, catastrophic flooding, mass erosion, ruined habitats and lost potentials. Gaslighted public can’t see for smoke of burning woozle-BS.



Beetle kill: Navajo Lake, Utah. For more than 100 years, all real foresters have known this happens when tree stands get too thick. Trees must drown attacking bark beetles in sap. When water-competition makes “soil drought,” trees can’t defend themselves.

native.” It’s loving nature and people enough to experience continued epiphanies like “Wow!” “Cool!” That lets you recognize the nature pattern. It’s how people get free.

My friend Eric Schwennesen saved a lot of kids’ lives and healed nature in Somalia, Chad, Mali, Pakistan, and many other countries. He courageously fought off entrenched woozle-culture bureaucrats to make International Aid Agency-sanctioned spaces for pastoral herding peoples. They needed to rediscover holistic principles behind their ancestors’ ecologically successful, migratory lifeways and then adapt them to the one big

“village ranch” that governments had forced onto them. They created miracles of environmental and cultural healing.

Eric and I taught several Holistic Management classes with Tommie Martin, now a Gila County, Ariz., supervisor. We repeatedly said: “Please don’t just believe us. Learn to see and measure, collaborate, plan and monitor.” In one exercise, Eric gave classes notebooks on both ranch lands and ungrazed areas and sent them out to make observations. When we called them in, Eric checked their work. All those professionals, many with advanced degrees, had zero

observations, *only* conclusions. They “observed” things like “overgrazing” in places where no cows had been for many years. Eric reexplained the difference again and sent them off. Result? More conclusions, with some exceptions. Typically, it took three sessions before classes could *observe*, not just recite woozle-speak. I assigned that exercise many times with the same result. By the third repetition, some class members were pretty angry and mumbled things like, “Damn, I paid all that money to get indoctrinated.”

The *very best* way to get free is to learn



Postfire flood. Years later, big storms still send massive floods. This one carried trees and boulders, stripped branches and downcut streambed downstream. Fire reached 80,000 acres. Wozzle-think ordered three rangers to let it burn—when it was only three feet wide.



Grass and flowers next to water hole. Ill-planned grazing makes large “gradients” where forage plants die out. Here, they grow inside the “water lot” fence, built to exclude cows at times. Wildlife easily go over and under. It’s been vandalized by woozle-possessed radicals. If not for livestock, the water wouldn’t be here.



“Wildland Fire-Use Fire”—still barren, two years later. Over 90 percent of ignition? Agency drip torches, in June, when strong winds blow. Surprise, it escaped! Only the worst kind of woozle-think creates policies “of very little brain”—and much less heart.



Which side do wildlife like? Radicals ignore issues like forage quality for wildlife. Elk, deer, pronghorns, etc., much prefer “regrowth” after livestock graze. The old gray stuff would starve them to death.

scientific range and forest monitoring. I call it “land language.” This holistic process includes insects and their species, bird species and sign, small and large animal species and sign (yep, snakes and lizards, too), plant and animal age and condition profiles, plant spacings, bare or covered ground, live plant species, cover, water cycle and mineral cycle condition, and more. It’s best done in groups containing ranchers, loggers, government staff, university people, and environmentalists. Our classes did that after discussing things like the inverse relationship between trust and control and open

communication versus manipulation.

You’ll find your “enemies” love nature as much as you do. You’re outdoor people. You can bless each others’ lives. When you understand land language, you will find that only real, competent ranchers and people who love learning can heal the range. Only real, nature-knowing loggers and people who love learning can heal fire-prone forests. You’ll see, together, that removing livestock from overgrazed areas helps, but only for a while. Then wildlife leaves and things get worse. Paying attention to land language over time will reveal this. If land is not overgrazed, though,

don’t fix it. Tune it up till it sings! You’ll find that only open, curious, hardworking, smart, kind, collaborative people can actually heal anything. Mean people are “stuck on stupid.” They love woozles, gaslighting and BS. That’s because they’re possessed...by some really nasty specimens. They need outdoor time with wise friends. Lots of it. ■

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Wild turkeys, loving life. Farm pasture: plenty of nutritious alfalfa and insects. Though irrigated fields are “not natural,” the turkeys, deer, elk, etc., don’t care—at all. Still, there are crazy woozles programmed to end all human activity.



Brief rain sends floods after fire. This blaze totaled 500,000 acres. Such huge fires never happened prior to policies based on Romantic Era philosophy—not science. Native Americans and rural-raised federal officers didn’t allow gigantic fuel loads to build. Gaslighting has stripped this memory from public awareness.