



# WING-TIPPED WELFARE COWBOYS RIDE THE RANGE

Politicians and ranching industry groups, claiming that changes in federal grazing policy will hurt small “mom and pop” ranchers, are playing loose with the facts. The majority of public land grazing is controlled by a few wealthy individuals and corporations.

## Corporate Cattle Barons

A review of grazing permits shows that major energy companies, real estate developers, and wealthy families control millions of acres of publicly owned land. In Idaho, David Packard and Bill Hewlett of Hewlett-Packard control a BLM permit covering 100,000 acres. Jack Simplot, one of Forbes 500 wealthiest individuals, has grazing permits in Idaho, Oregon, and Nevada. Oil giants such as Union Oil, Getty Oil, and Texaco, as well as lesser known companies also control millions of acres of public lands. Other large permittees include the Anheuser-Busch family, the Mormon Church, and life insurance companies such as John Hancock.



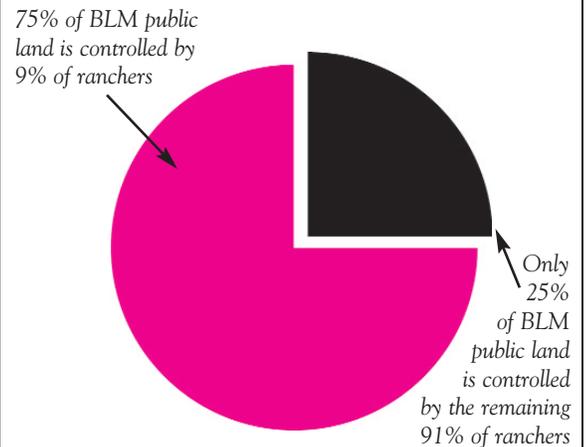
## The Political Connection

The who's who in Western politics shows strong ties to the public lands ranching industry. The families of former Sen. Malcom Wallop (R-WY) and Sen. Max Baucus (D-MT) control federal grazing permits. In the House, Rep. Joe Skeen (R-NM), Rep. Bob Smith (R-OR), and Rep. Barbara Cubin (R-WY) controlled grazing permits until elected to Congress; family members still control these permits. Statehouses and governorships across the West are also heavily infiltrated by ranchers, who long ago established winter legislative sessions to avoid conflicts with ranching commitments.

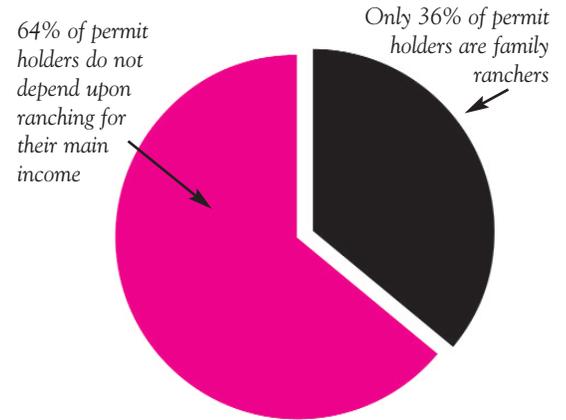
## Hobby Ranchers

Many “ranchers” are actually persons attracted to the romance and ruggedness that are part of the cowboy myth. A report disclosing the status of permit holders on the Prescott National Forest found that over half of all permittees were doctors, lawyers, developers, and even a poet. In the infamously overgrazed Rio Puerco watershed in New Mexico, nearly half of all permittees live in Albuquerque, more than two hours away from the area where their cows graze.

### DOMINATED BY THE FEW



### HOBBY RANCHERS IN PRESCOTT NATIONAL FOREST



## A Majority of Land in the Hands of a Few

Seventy-five percent of Bureau of Land Management lands are controlled by nine percent of the permit holders. A National Wildlife Federation report found that the top twenty BLM permittees, who represent less than one percent of all permit holders and own permits under a variety of names and entities, control nearly ten percent of all forage. On Forest Service lands, the five hundred largest permittees control forty-eight percent of the land. In the Southwest, over fifty-five percent of the forage is controlled by only nine percent of permit holders.