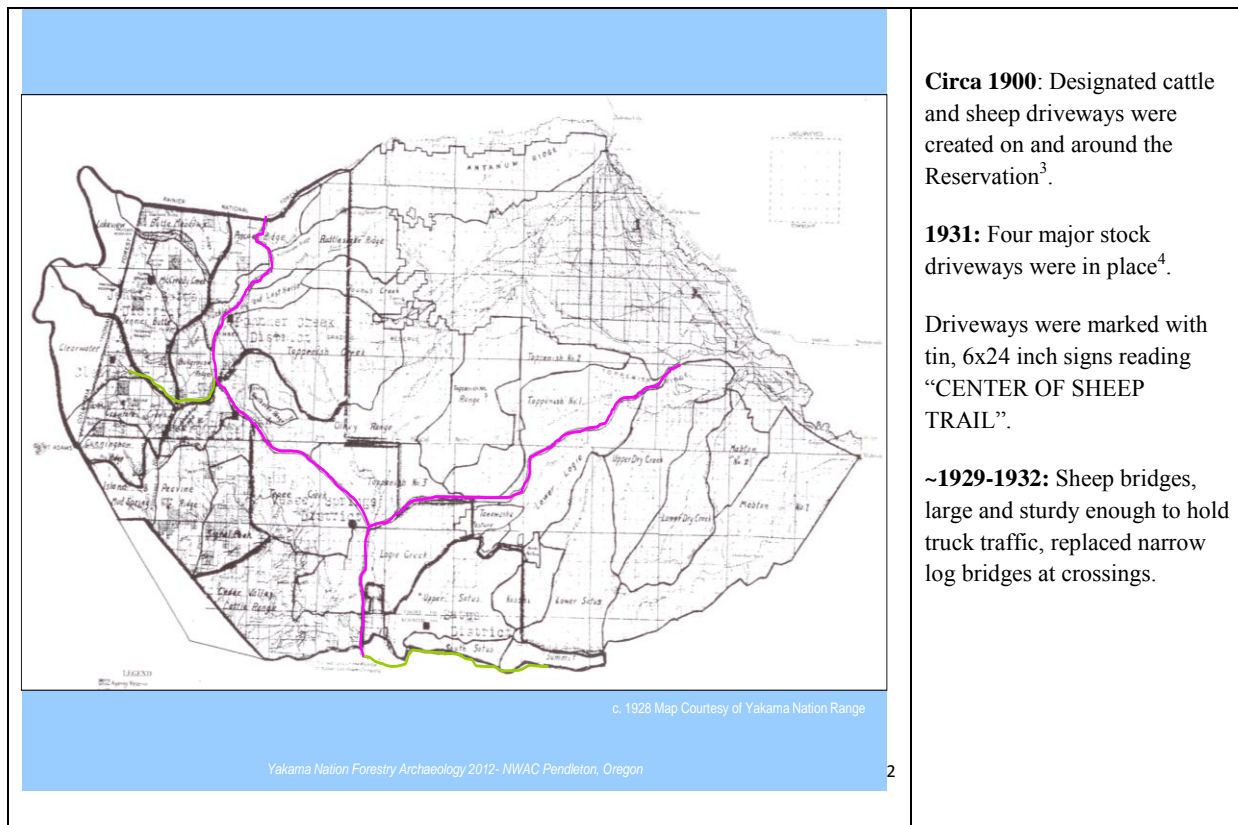


The Yakama Nation is currently planning to log a timbersale that has old sheep trails on it that were established in the 1880's. In 1840, Kamiakin traded horses for a small number of Spanish cattle from the Hudson's Bay Company and many other Yakamas traded horses¹. I have witnessed Yakamas make use of what available resources they have at hand to increase their standard of living. We originally were blessed by the offerings of our traditional foods, salmon, deer, roots, choke cherries, huckleberries. As horses, cattle, sheep, farming, timber, land, and other technologies have advanced, Yakamas adapt their abilities to the available resources and attempt to survive in American economies. The limitations set by the National Historic Preservation policies and other policies, on Yakamas and other landowners, to use our resources as they see fit can be a struggle when dealing with contentious issues and creating self-sufficient economies. I will illustrate how a 100 years of sheep herding on the Yakama Nation Reservation may potentially limit land management options of the Yakama Nation. The illustration below reveals the "major" sheep and cattle grazing "drive ways" on the Yakama Nation Reservation established in the 1800's.



¹ Splawn, 1980.

² 1928 "Drive Way" Map Courtesy of Yakama Nation Range, 2012.

³ Henderson, 1912.

After the Treaty of 1855 the assimilation process of the Yakama people started through commercial grazing and farming on the Yakama Nation reservation and the surrounding Yakima County (not a county in 1860 though). The Yakima valley became a hub for commercial grazing and in 1874 Yakama tribal members owned approximately 13,000 horses and 1,200 head of cattle.⁵

The Yakama Agency started collecting grazing fees on the reservation in 1881 and produced \$1,695. The Indian Department wanted to cease all non-Indian owned livestock grazing on the reservation but the Indian Agent on the reservation disagreed. The Yakama Nation Agent began giving written “permits” to non-Indian livestock men who paid their fees in 1883⁶. Grazing leases on Reservations became legal with the enactment of 30 Stat. 62 in 1897 and the “Official” grazing permits were introduced to the Yakama Reservation in the early 1900’s⁷. The leasing program created outside revenue for the Yakama Nation and in 1922, generated \$22,000⁸. By 1934 approximately 837,264 acres of land were being grazed and in 1930, the Yakama Nation net profit was approximately \$76,000 with a Yakama Nation Forestry operating expense of approximately \$93,000⁹. Two of the Forestry’s staff was paid for range management within the \$93,000 budget.

⁴ Carter, 1931.

⁵ Oliphant, 1968.

⁶ Relander, 1960.

⁷ Williams and Babcock, 1983. Pg. 134.

⁸ Carter, 1931.

⁹ Williams and Babcock, 1983. Pg. ?



Loading Ferry on the Columbia River.¹⁰

Sheep were introduced in large numbers to the area in the 1870's and by 1880 Klickitat and Yakima counties had approximately 74,000 combined¹¹. Sheep continued to dominate the area as major grazer until the 1940's because they were more suited for rough pasturage found in Central Washington¹². Sheep provided quick returns on investment and provided a thriving economy for the area¹³.

The Yakama Agency Forestry employees were responsible for permitting the grazing permits and in 1910 the annual income from the permits was approximately \$15,000. This funding was used for the employee's salaries¹⁴. By 1917, the forestry staff was still not competent in grazing administration and this query the question of what issues or problems were being over looked by the forestry staff with grazing. The Yakama Agency Forestry staff at the time thought a certain amount of grazing would be beneficial to forest lands. They felt it helped control fire because it would reduce the fine grass fuel loading and decrease the underbrush. Sheep trails or "driveways" functioned as fire lanes for the Forestry Program's fire suppression activities¹⁵. The Yakama Agency Grazing Administration established 13 Range Units to control the number of sheep on the reservation and to effectively lease tribal lands¹⁶. The illustration demonstrates the grazing units as of 1933 on the Yakama Nation Reservation.

¹⁰ Illustrated History, 1904.

¹¹ Oliphant, 1968.

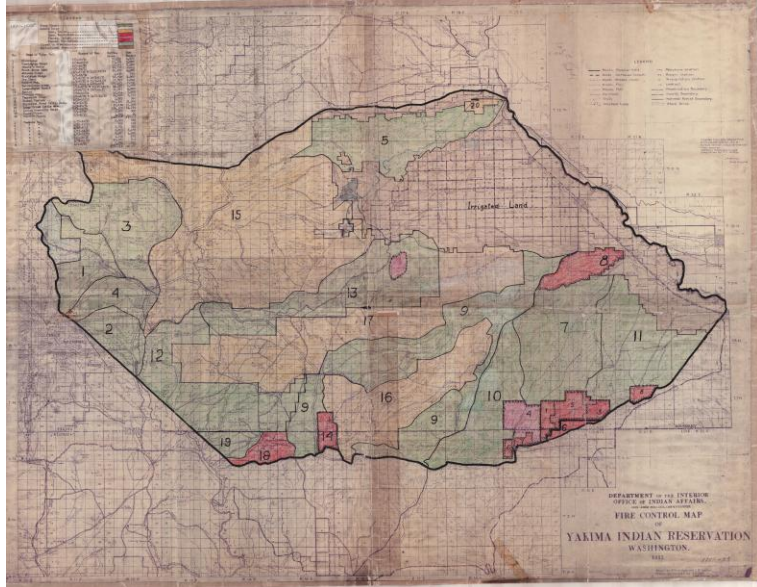
¹² Franklin and Dyrness, 1973.

¹³ Relander, 1960.

¹⁴ Williams and Babcock, 1983. Pg. 86.

¹⁵ Williams and Babcock, 1983. Pg. 135.

¹⁶ Whitlock, Carter, and Murdock, 1936.



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The grazing program was successful from an economic sense that Yakama tribal members prospered with their sheep, cattle, and horse operations. Yakima County alone had 153,288 head of sheep valued at \$306,456 in 1904¹⁸. The non-Indian sheep herd on the reservation in 1885, was approximately 20,000-40,000 head¹⁹. By 1936, 103 Yakama tribal member families were grazing livestock on the reservation²⁰.



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*On October 23, we left Yakima for the Warm Springs Agency, passing thru many miles of the so called Yakima winter range. We drove off the road to visit a small enclosure, fenced many years ago by the Indians for use as a graveyard. Inside the fence there is a good stand of the original bunch grasses that originally covered the hills. Outside the fence, there is little or no indication that these desirable grasses ever existed except in such places as are inaccessible to livestock.*²²

Frank B. Lenzie, Range Supervisor and J.F. Kinney, Director of Forestry writing to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs on November 9, 1931

The economies created by sheep and cattle grazing did however come at an environmental cost. Grazing activities had lasting accumulative affects across the landscape that the Yakama Nation

¹⁷ Map Provided by Yakama Agency BIA Range

¹⁸ Illustrated History, 1904.

¹⁹ Oliphant, 1950.

²⁰ Carter, 1936.

²¹ Paul, 1976.

²² Lenzie and Kinney, 1931.

are still attempting to mitigate. The first people to witness grazing on the reservation said the sheep were “lawnmowers” in 1857, at Fort Simcoe²³. The Yakama Nation DNR and Bureau of Indian Affairs have many programs such as the Range (BIA), Natural Resources (BIA), Fuels Management (DNR), Wildlife (DNR), Fisheries (DNR), Forestry (DNR), Forestry Development (DNR), Tribal Historic Preservation (DNR), Cultural Resources (DNR) and the Water Program (DNR) are the major programs that address the environmental alterations to the land caused by grazing. Some of the invasive species introduced by livestock include *Bromus tectorum*, *Rhus diversiloba*, *Poa pratensis*, *Poa compressa*, *Linaria dalmatica*, *Hypericum perforatum*, *Elymus caput-medusae*, *Lepidium perfoliatum*, *Bassia hyssopifolia*. In Central Washington most perennial grasses are not adapted to heavy grazing and don’t fully recover from increased grazing pressure. The graze tolerant plants become dominant species in these areas that are used by livestock and most are invasive species²⁴.

Sheep, cattle, and horses eat all types of grasses, forbs, bushes, and trees, native and non-native. The permanent loss of native species has taken place in our area and shrubs have become dominant in areas that were dominated by grasslands²⁵.

Furthermore, livestock high concentrations in riparian, meadows, and wetlands cause compaction on these soils. The compaction of the soil increased runoff creating incised channels across the forested area, meadows, and wetlands²⁶. The incised channels directly affect the water table and are especially detrimental in wet meadows. The water table drops to the depth of the incised channel and the water exits the watershed at an accelerated state.



Camas Patch, similar to Starvation Flats. Minimal incised channels.²⁷

If the soil was intact, it would act like a sponge and the water would slowly move out of the meadow in a controlled cooler manner, instead of during the fast accelerated runoff period. Once the water leaves the watershed it is no longer available for plants, animals, and fish later in the

²³ Relander, 1960.

²⁴ Franklin and Dyrness, 1973.

²⁵ Franklin and Dyrness, 1973.

²⁶ Franklin and Dyrness, 1973.

²⁷ Rigdon, 2008.

season. The major concern is the effects on salmon species reliant upon the cooler water in the summer months for spawning. The Yakama Nation has invested hundreds of thousands of dollars if not millions into the restoration of floodplains, meadows, and wetlands so they will function as they previously had.

I worked as a field supervisor on a meadow restoration project attempting to restore the meadow to a more natural state during the summers of 1996 and 1997.



Camas Patch on Yakama Reservation. Similar to Starvation Flats.²⁸

The Starvation Flats restoration project was funded by the National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to reduce soil erosion during the runoff season. Starvation Flats is approximately 3,400 feet in elevation and is considered to be “fringe Ponderosa Pine” habitat. Ponderosa Pine are the dominate conifer species in the area with willow, aspen, oak, and alder also being present. At this elevation and having a south facing aspect Starvation Flats is susceptible to “rain on snow” events with higher water energy runoff. Due to the grazing and logging activities this area has considerable incised channels in need of restoration. I was told the Yakama Nation invested money for restoration in the 1980’s on Starvation Flats. I remember seeing gabions made of logs and rocks from their efforts to stop the erosion.

NRCS’s goal was to elevate the water table by placing “sediment traps” in the incised channel to perform several functions. The first is to slow the energy in the water down during runoff so it does not create larger incised channels. Second, the “sediment traps” were to capture sediment during the runoff to uplift the incised channel and therefore elevating the water table. Third, the sediment in the “sediment traps” would become the growing beds for native-vegetation like sedges and rushes to reestablish. The sedges and rushes would also slow down the energy in the water during runoff and collect more sediment for more growing beds. The process was intended to reestablish the meadows so they could function as sponges for the watershed. The final objective, however it may not of been for NRCS but it was for the Yakama tribal member project manager was to increase the water table level to have more water available for the traditional foods and medicines that grow on Starvation Flats. They include bitter root, wild carrot, wild onion, camas, aspen, willow, and oak.

Yakama Nation natural resource programs still manage range units and limit grazing access to special use areas such Starvation Flats. The programs install and maintain fences that due a limited job of keeping our cattle and horses. I have not witnessed a fence that keeps out deer or elk anywhere. The picture illustrates the difference between a fenced area and non-fenced area.

²⁸ Rigdon, May 2008.

[REDACTED]

The Yakama Nation decided to disallow sheep grazing on the Yakama Nation Reservation due to their impacts in our environment in 1979. Grazing still affects the ability of Yakama people to practice their traditions. I attempted to dig wild carrots for a celebration feast of an elder and the hoof prints made it difficult or the cattle and horses ate the tops off the plants we were looking for making it impossible to find our desired food.

In 1981 the Yakama Nation Tribal Council set aside 20% of all grazing fees to be used for “range improvements”²⁹. The Yakama Nation has continued to invest their own resources into their lands even though it is a “Trust” responsibility of the United States to do so. The 20% of the set aside grazing fees collected today still go to “range management” but I believe most of it is for staffing purposes and not restoration work. Grazing is a trust treaty right and will be upheld by the BIA and Yakama Nation at all times, assuring grazing is implemented in the best manner possible with the best management practices is always the goals of each tribal and BIA program.

I feel that grazing is a listed trust resource and therefore is a “trust” responsibility and should be conducted and funded by the United States government. [REDACTED]

The situation to provide best management practices becomes difficult as management and mitigation budgets diminish. The BIA and Yakama Nation continually attempt to do more with less to fulfill their obligations for the management and practice of our treaty trust resource. Even though there have been social, environmental and cultural impacts from grazing on the Yakama Nation it is still a treaty trust resource that has to be practiced to be upheld and strengthens the sovereignty of the treaty.

The situation I ran into during a timbersale planning meeting June of 2012, was the Yakama Nation Archeologists, Cultural Specialist, and Water Specialist were speaking of buffering the “drive way” or sheep trails because of their historical value. Significant trails are listed in the Historic Preservation Policies and the Yakama Nation is bound by law to protect them. There were actually no Cultural Specialist at the meeting but the Water Specialist spoke as if she is a Cultural Specialist. From my perspective she is because she is a “traditional” Yakama tribal member who has lived on the reservation her entire life and has 20+ year of experience in natural resources. She also possesses a natural resource management degree.

The Yakama Nation Forestry Archeologist explained there are trails on this timbersale and they may have to protect or mitigate them. I was at the meeting and asked the question why? I

²⁹ Yakama Nation Tribal Council Resolution, 1981.

wondered if the Yakama Nation abolished sheep grazing on the Yakama Reservation in the 1970's (I actually thought we abolished the grazing many years before), why would want to protect the trails? I totally understand protecting the artifacts, camps, engravings, and other associated physical attributes of sheep trails. The archeologist explained the important history associated with the trails and the economies created for Yakama people by grazing our land. I replied, "I feel that sheep trails have a stigma associated with them to the Yakama people for the environment impacts they imposed on our lands and it doesn't make sense to me to protect such a thing". By the end of her discussion she could only state it was the law.

Once the meeting had ended the real attitudes on everyone's position on the matter started to reveal itself. The Yakama Nation protects almost every form of historic information (physical and intellectual properties) it possible can. The Water Specialist in the meeting stated she is tribal member and many "Indian" trails were absorbed for other purposes such as sheep trails and logging roads. She continued to state that many physical properties of these trails were destroyed by the activities of logging and grazing. However, she felt it was important to protect the sheep trails even though they are associated with assimilation and degradation of our environment from my perspective.

I shared my story with the Starvation Flats restoration project manager (he currently is a Yakama language and science teacher in the Yakima Lower Valley). He felt as I did. The analogy he used was the names of "Simon Butte", "McKay's Butte", "McCormick Meadows" and many other places were associated with sheep grazing and those places had "Indian" names that we no longer use.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]