

Drought Spurs Spring Improvement

Attention has been focused recently on the development and protection of springs as a means of combating the drought and encouraging sound range management.

A range tour on July 15 dramatized the poor condition of water sources in the Mutton Mountains and Log Springs areas. Ride bosses Olney Patt, Sr., Jacob Frank, Sr., and

Larry Calica narrated the tour for Tribal Councilmen and members of the Natural Resources and BIA Land Operations departments. As ride bosses identified

development needs three proposals emerged:

1. Permission be obtained from the Tribal Council to fence and seed a tract of land at Four Corners at the base of the mutton Mountains for early spring and late fall pasturing. This would take the strain off the mountain area which is currently overgrazed and would utilize an active spring.

2. Cattle be confined by fence to the Warm Springs River canyon below Schoolie during the late fall. Winter pasture on the flats could be developed.

3. A fence be constructed between the Sidwalter Range Unit and the summering area to the north.

Development of water sources was seen as the key to successful distribution of livestock. Extension Agent Clint Jacks said, "It's becoming evident that there will be very little water available when cattle come out of the high country."

Jacks explained the kinds of development that the springs might need. Protection from livestock is crucial. Stock tend to trample the area around the source, compacting the earth and forcing the spring down. Fences would keep stock out but let wild animals in to utilize the water.

Some springs require that the water be removed from the area by pipeline into troughs or catch ponds. Catchments would be less expensive, but troughs are less likely to carry disease.

Dean Elliott in Land Operations is currently writing a proposal for \$5000 for spring protection purposes. Indicating that there is more money available for the development of springs, Elliott points out that the BIA requires "assurance" that a management program will accompany the development.

Elliott refers to the destruction of water sources and grazing patterns that has been caused by the development of springs without adequate protection from stock overuse.

While the BIA awaits word on funds, the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) and Jacob Frank's summer work boys have begun improving several springs. The YCC has been at Log Springs corral building a fence around the source of water. Last year's YCC work at Blue Jay Spring, which included a catch pond dug by the BIA, was demonstrated on the recent range tour. Tall lush grass within the fence and trampled dust outside pointed to the continued need for livestock control.

Jacob's group has completed work on several springs in the Log Springs, Simnasho Butte, Dog Butte Saddle and Jack Corral range areas. The BIA is assisting with tools and materials, although Jacob indicates that further development is needed.

"We'd like to go a little farther with digging catch ponds and building troughs but we don't have the funds."

"The formal range management units are the ones who are on the top of the priority list with the Range Committee and BIA," he said.



Cattle ride boss Olney Patt, Sr. points out one of several springs in need of development in the Mutton Mountains during a range tour July 15. Narrated by Patt, Jacob Frank, Sr. and Larry Calica, the tour dramatized the dry conditions of the heavily grazed open range.

Making note of the situation are (left to right) Cy Katchia (Land Use Committee and Water Board), Buddy Kalama (Credit Department and Tribal Hay Purchase Program), Roger Stwyer (Spilyay Tymoo), Gene Greene (Tribal Council Chairman) and Ray Welch (BIA Land Operations).

CDS Photo

Man-caused Fire Chars 700 Acres



With siren wailing, this four-propeller bomber from Redmond Air Center is dropping 24,000 gallons of retardant during the fight to contain a 700 acre range fire near Kah-Nee-Ta July 14. (Sandy Rangila Photo)

A careless smoker has been blamed as the cause of a 700 acre range fire which ravaged the area east of Kah-Nee-Ta Lodge on Thursday, July 14.

The alarm was turned in about 11:00 a.m. Thursday by the Eagle Butte lookout and a roads employee who informed Fire Control that the flames were spreading quickly.

Within minutes, the Fire Control helicopter was dispatched and mobilization of men and fire-fighting equipment began immediately, according to Larry Whalawitsa, Fire Control Officer.

A large four-propeller retardant bomber and lead plane

were called over from Redmond Air Center. Whalawitsa explained that ordinarily there are two bombers at his disposal, but one was up at the Wenatchee Forest fire. "Under the circumstances, we're fortunate that one was there," said Whalawitsa.

The combination of extremely dry conditions and very bad, erratic winds made the situation a difficult one to deal with. In addition to the aerial equipment, 40 men, three cats and four pumpers battled the stubborn fire.

It was finally declared "under control" at 5 p.m. Thursday, and mop-up continued throughout the night and

all the next day.

The fire was contained on the north side of the Warm Springs River, though it did jump the S-200 road at one point when the wind shifted. Those flames were quickly extinguished by fire control crews, however.

"This is the largest of the 24 fires we've had so far this year — all man-caused," said a disgusted Whalawitsa. He said he is getting pretty upset with people's carelessness in these dry conditions and that he is "no longer Mr. Nice Bear."

The Lodge was never really threatened since, though the winds were erratic, they were blowing mainly from the west.

Water Board Meeting

The newly appointed Water Board held their first meeting on the night of July 18, 1977. The purpose of the meeting was to select officers for the coming term. Here are the results, for Chairman Sid Miller, Vice Chairman Cy Katchia, Delford Johnson Secretary. Next was to make a schedule of meetings which

Tuesday nights were agreeable with the thought that special meetings will be called when necessary.

There are water studies to be reviewed, codes to be updated and several other projects that need immediate attention relating to water matters as the water situation is critical this year.



It's hard, hot work on the fire-line, especially when the thermometer reads in the high 90's. (Sandy Rangila Photo)