## HENRY'S Fork River — Idaho

The Henry's Fork River rises on the continental divide on the west side of Yellowstone Park and drains a 4,000 square mile

area in eastern Idaho. The elevation of this case study site is about 6,200 feet. Annual precipitation averages approximately forty-five inches which comes mainly as snow and to a lesser extent from summer thunderstorms.

The river is fed by numerous large springs; Big Springs alone discharges approximately 0.5 million gallons per day. The spring water provides excellent growing conditions for rainbow trout which attract anglers from all over the world. The spring water keeps much of the river from freezing, thereby providing good winter conditions for fish and wildlife, including the threatened trumpeter swan.

Bison, antelope, moose, elk and deer grazed the watershed for thousands of years. Cattle and sheep have grazed the area since the late 1800s, numbering more than 3 million animals in their heyday.

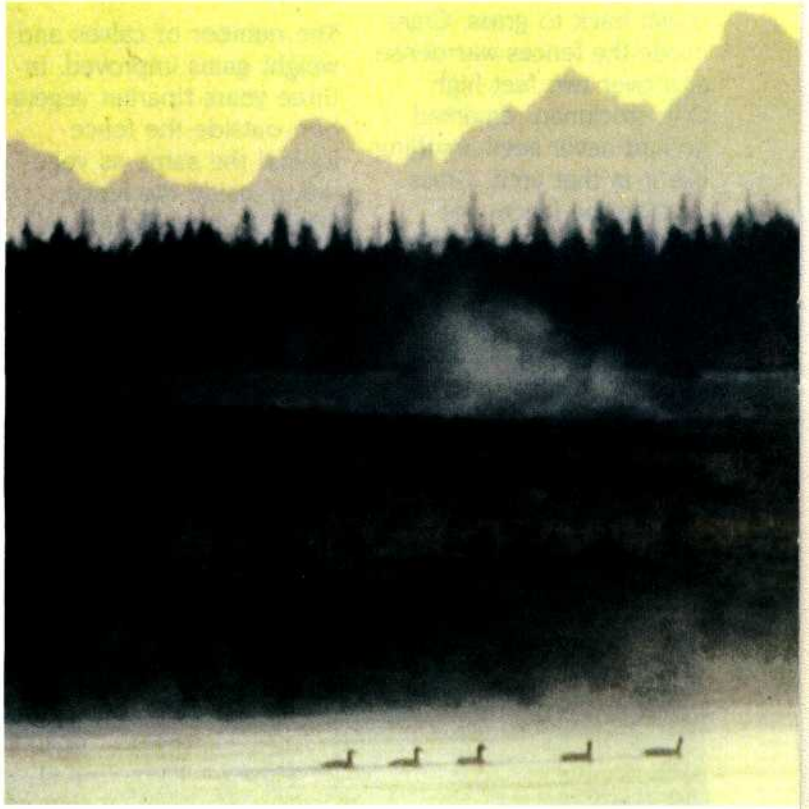
In the 1960s and mid 1970s the 12,700 acre Railroad Ranch — famed world-wide in trout fishing circles — was donated to the State of Idaho. Forty-seven hundred acres became Harriman State Park. An adjacent 1,000 acres, called Harriman East, are managed by the Idaho Foundation for Parks and Lands. Together they encompass six miles of some of the best rainbow trout habitat in the U.S.

Deeds transferring the property contained strong convenants to protect the environment. Livestock numbers were drastically reduced on Harriman East. Nonetheless, mid June to mid October continuous grazing still resulted in poor utilization of upland forage, damage to riparian vegetation and streambanks, and increasing conflict with growing numbers of fishermen.

In 1984 the single pasture was divided into four pastures, one of which was a narrow "set-back" pasture parallel to both sides of the river. This pasture included more land area than a typical stream corridor exclosure, but less area than normally would be included in a riparian pasture.

Livestock were grazed under a rest rotation system. The set-back pasture won't be grazed until riparian and streambank recovery objectives are met. Then it will be grazed under special prescription.

Implementing this grazing system allowed the livestock permittee to continue grazing the same number of animals to start, and increase animal numbers by 25% in the fourth year of operation, despite two consecutive years of drought. The non-profit Park Foundation continued to get badly needed grazing revenue. The set-back pasture eliminated fishermen-livestock conflict, and allowed future livestock use of streambanks to be carefully controlled to protect fish habitat.



The adjacent area now within the 4,700 acre Harriman State Park traditionally was grazed June-October by large numbers of livestock. After the park was formed, grazing was restricted to approximately 2,500 acres. The grazing period was limited to a few weeks in late fall to eliminate conflicts with spring waterfowl nesting and brood rearing in the riparian area and adjacent uplands, and to eliminate summer livestock conflicts with growing numbers of fishermen.

This grazing system accomplished its objectives by forgoing the majority of the area's livestock forage potential. However, it had the unintended consequence of concentrating livestock on Henry's Fork streambanks.

By late fall upland grasses are mature and dormant. Livestock naturally are attracted to the green vegetation in the riparian area. Streambank vegetation was overgrazed and banks were trampled which degraded important shoreline trout habitat. This eventually led to increasing complaints from the public that livestock grazing was