

OBSTACLES & OPPORTUNITIES

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PROGRESSIVE stockmen and land managers have long demonstrated there are no insurmountable technological barriers to restoring and protecting the long-term productivity of western riparian areas and adjacent uplands.

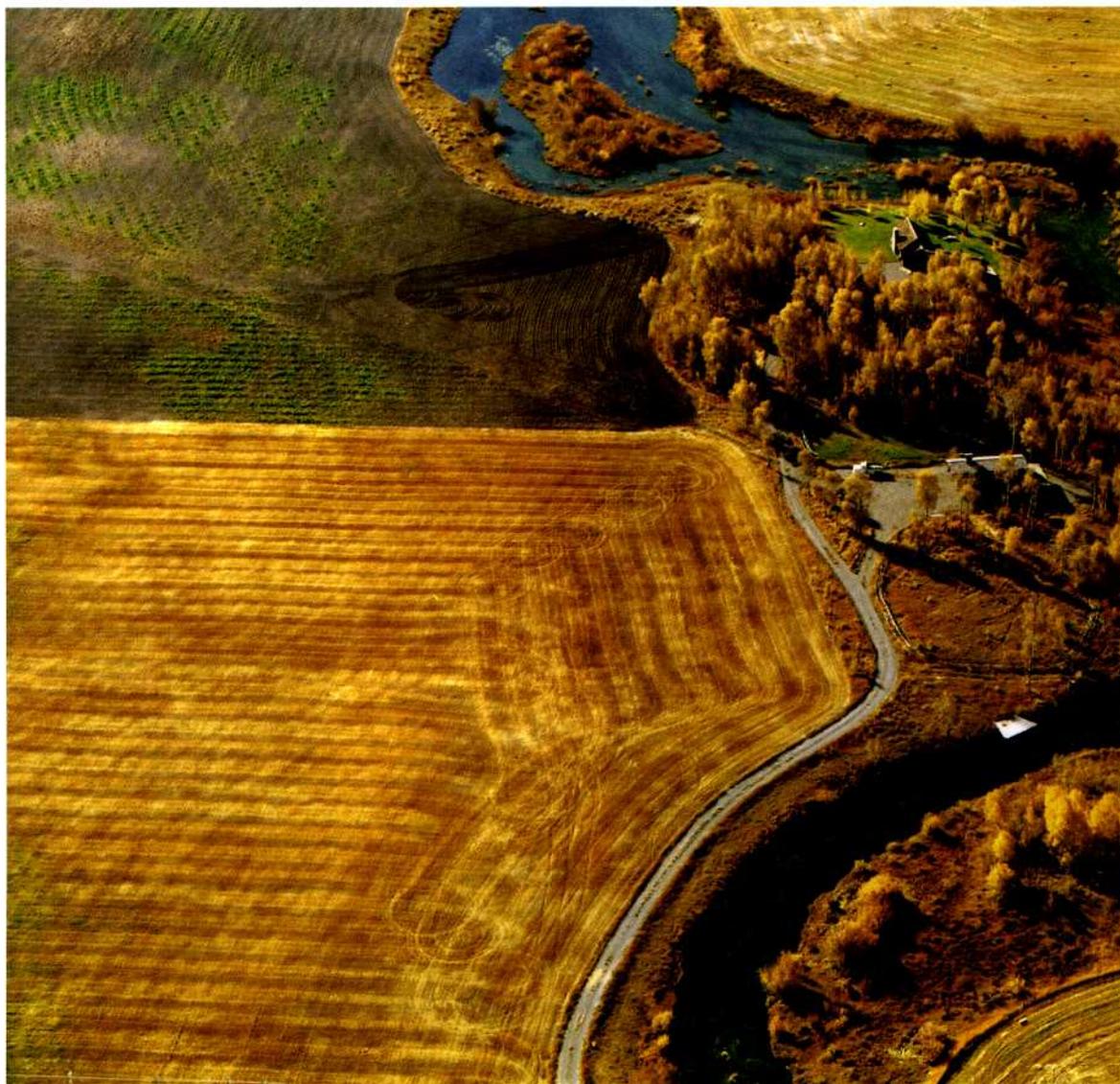
Nonetheless, many millions of acres of private and public land and associated riparian areas are in need of improvement; vast areas are in desperate need. This clearly indicates there are formidable educational, economic and social barriers to widespread transfer of proven technology to the ground.

The preceding case histories are representative of broad areas of land in the West. They reflect a large reservoir of riparian improvement knowledge and practical experience. This experience strongly suggests that initiatives in the following areas would help break down barriers to improved grazing management on western riparian areas.

EDUCATION

Traditional grazing practices are resistant to change. It is frequently and widely acknowledged that education about the techniques and benefits of improved riparian grazing management should have highest priority. In most cases, however, education has no priority in budgets.

Therefore, it is not surprising there is widespread lack of understanding and acceptance of proven riparian management technology. And of the enormous direct and indirect costs of deteriorated western riparian areas and adjacent uplands.



It is difficult, but not impossible, to capture these costs in economic terms. For example, Harold Dregne, Professor of Soil Science at Texas Tech University, roughly esti-

mates the value of potential forage lost due to past and present overgrazing of western rangelands to be approximately \$200 million per year. Even greater economic losses may be attributed to reduced quality and quantity of usable water, diminished fish and

of these costs in order to marshal private, public and political support for remedial actions. But the cost of present deteriorated riparian conditions is the dark side of the problem. It is equally important to quantify the social and economic benefits of

wildlife populations, shortened economic life of water supply and hydroelectric reservoirs, and other costs of deteriorated watersheds.

It is important to know more about the nature, magnitude and distribution

improving the long-term productivity of western riparian areas and associated uplands.