

# Butte Valley National Grassland Klamath National Forest



The 18,425-acre Butte Valley National Grassland was dedicated in July 1991

The designation of the area as National Grassland is not a description of the area as much as a statement of policy and effort to restore the area to a multiple of uses and benefits.



The Butte Valley National Grassland is an area that has endured many changes. Prior to public ownership, the flat sandy soils and lakebed enticed homesteaders to settle

the area. The land was drained, plowed and grazed. During World War II, the Grassland was used as a bombing range. The manipulations took its toll on the land; productivity decreased; and, with the drought of the 1930's there was an evident need to reclaim the land and help the stranded homesteaders.

Under the authority of the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tennant Act of 1937, the purchase of these now sub marginal lands by the Federal Government began. By 1943 the purchase of the acres in the Butte Valley was completed and the area became known as the Butte

Valley Land Use Project (LUP). The Soil Conservation Service was appointed administrator and started the task of stabilizing the ground by planting over 4,000 acres of Crested Wheat grass. They worked with the settlers to set up grazing associations, establishing grazing practices, and worked together to develop locally enacted conservation practices.

In 1954 the management of these lands were reassigned to the Forest Service, specifically Goosenest Ranger District of the Klamath National Forest. While other lands acquired under the same authority were designated National Grasslands, the Butte Valley LUP remained a purchase unit. This meant that the lands were subject to disposal. It also meant that on managing the land, we're not yet decided. In other words, there was a reluctance to make long-term investments in the land because of its temporary status. By the 1980s various attempts were made to dispose of the LUP. It was identified by the federal government for sale, considered for a prison site, and seen as a possible county landfill. In 1984, at the public's request the National Grassland designation was made strong support of the local Congressional delegation, California Cattlemen's Association, California Fish and Game and the local public. The persistence of many members of he public, the Butte Valley Grassland received its official status and became the nation's 21<sup>st</sup> National Grassland.

