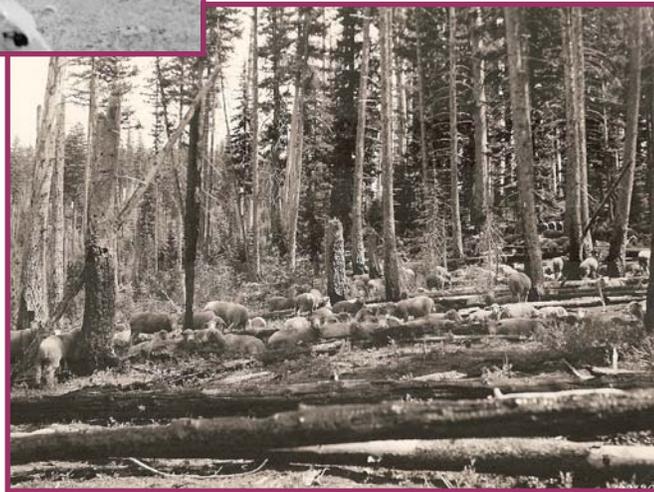


Grazing

Western ranchers were some of the strongest opponents of the creation of forest reserves. They feared that grazing would be prohibited and their fears were confirmed when the Secretary of



Interior banned grazing on Federal forest reserves in 1894. As early as 1896, Gifford Pinchot favored regulated sheep grazing on the forest reserves and in 1900 the Department of Interior established a free permit system to control the number of animals on



Upper left: Bentz Brothers cattle at Swartz Meadows, nd.
George V. Ring photograph.

Lower Right: Sheep being driven along the Adams Road to their summer range, nd.
USFS photograph.

the forest reserves. After the creation of the Forest Service in 1905 grazing continued to be free, but in 1906 the Forest Service announced fees would be imposed: 25 to 35 cents per head of cattle and horses, with a lower rate for sheep and goats. Forest Rangers set up new grazing allotments with set dates for entering and leaving the forest reserves. Across the nation grazing revenues exceeded those from timber every year between 1906 and 1910.

In 1915 there were 9,000 head of cattle and horses and 35,000 sheep grazed annually on the Nez Perce National Forest. The numbers grew to 70,456 head of sheep and 13,992 head of cattle in 1919.

The Forest currently grazes nearly 4,000 cows and calves and another 2,300 sheep, but the number of allotments continues to decline for various reasons including a decline in available forage in some areas, and conflicts with other natural resources like anadromous fish and native bighorn sheep in other areas. Today we are completing allotment management plans for the remaining 24 active allotments with the intent of sustaining grazing under closely managed plans that address other resource objectives, such as anadromous fish habitat.



Sheep driveway bridge and sheepman's camp on John's Creek, nd.
George V. Ring photograph.