



CLOSING LETTER

FPB/IRC/91

File: 97250-20\020397

February 27, 2003

Dear Participants:

This is the Forest Practices Board's report on the resolution of a complaint about wildlife/range interaction and government enforcement of range in the Vernon Forest District.

The Complaint

On November 26, 2002, a hunter submitted a complaint to the Board that wildlife is not adequately considered when the district manager approves grazing on Crown land, and that the district's enforcement of cattle trespass is ineffective. As well, the complainant is concerned about how fencing affects wildlife and hunting.

Background

The complainant is concerned that grazing on Crown land is detrimental to the wildlife resource. For example when grazing levels are set, he believes that wildlife is not considered.

As well, while hunting in the fall of 2002, the complainant saw cattle on Crown range after they should have returned to private land. He reported that occurrence to the district. A week later he saw cattle grazing on Crown range in another location. This led him to believe that the district's enforcement of the cattle trespass was ineffective.

The complainant knows that it is illegal, under the *Wildlife Act*, to hunt on a grazing lease occupied by cattle. The complainant would like to know how he could tell if a fence marks the boundary of private land, a grazing lease, or other crown range. He also believes fences used to control cattle on Crown land negatively affect wildlife. He would like to see some other method to track and control cattle.

Resolution Efforts

When the district manager learned about the complaint, he asked for time to try and resolve it directly with the complainant. The complainant accepted that approach. District staff met with the complainant and discussed the issues on January 14, 2003.

The district outlined the steps it had taken to address the cattle trespass reported by the complainant and explained how they account for wildlife in range planning and through range practices. For the final issue, the district explained that there are only five grazing leases in the district. The complainant

suggested that the leases should be included in the hunting regulations. The complainant is still generally concerned about fences on Crown land.

Conclusion

The complainant and district believe that the first two issues have been settled. The third general issue about fences on Crown range is not a specific operational issue. Even if the third issue is not settled, the district range officer is attempting to facilitate the complaints concerns about fencing and the complainant is happy to continue working directly with the district.

Therefore, I am satisfied that this complaint has been resolved. On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank the participants for working together and encourage them to continue discussions at the local level. This letter closes this file.

Yours sincerely,

John Cuthbert
Acting Chair