

RESOURCES

FIRE IN THE SHRUB-STEPPE

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

LIVESTOCK USE & MECHANICAL TREATMENTS



Photo: U.S. BLM



Photo: Kara Karboski, WRCD



Chris Schachtschneider
Livestock and Range Extension
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Oregon State University

Chris's work has focused on utilizing livestock to achieve management or ecological goals and challenging current paradigms for both producers and the public.

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RESOURCES

- OSU Newsletter: [Targeted Grazing Applied to Reduce Fire Behavior Metrics and Wildfire Spread](#)

Q&A WITH CHRIS SCHAFTSCHNEIDER

Q1: To what extent are bison using the high desert shrub-steppe?

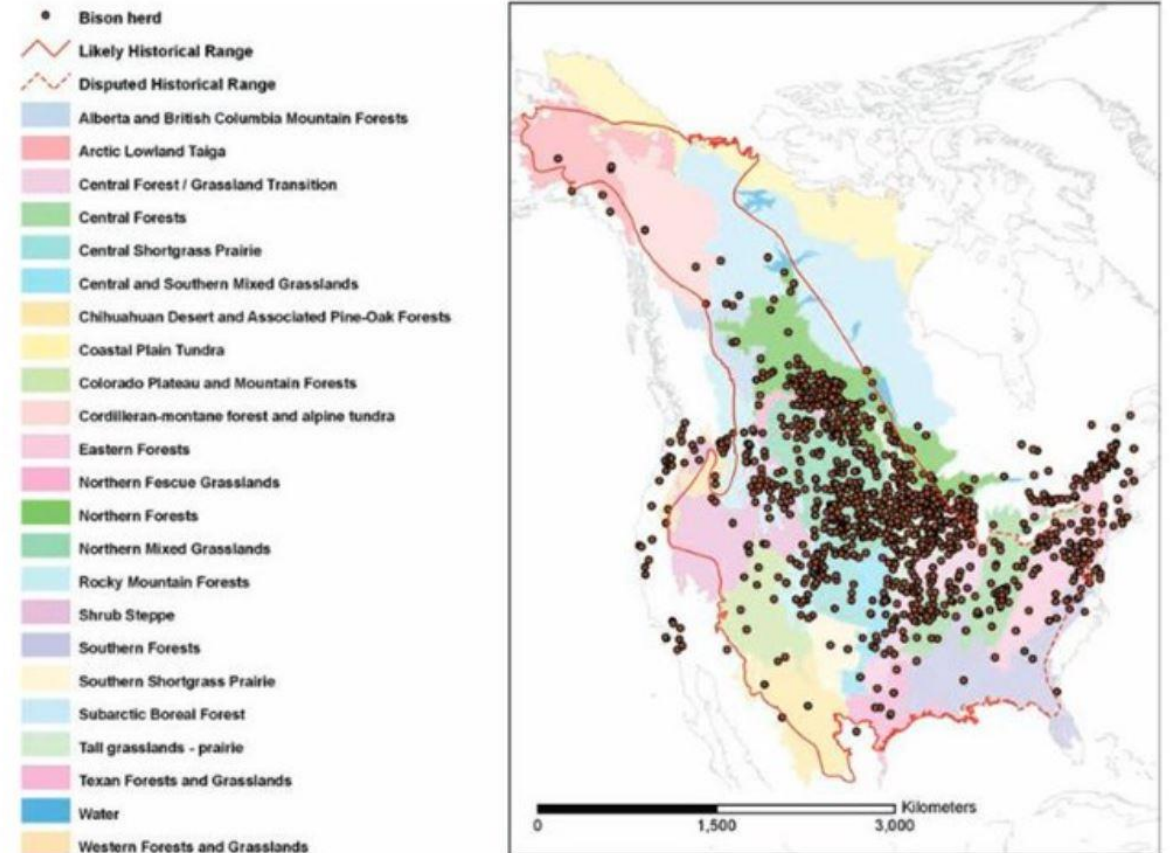
Under the historic range of bison herds, you can see that the range skirted the more arid and timbered landscapes. I would say that they spend little to no time in the more arid landscapes. However, they could have used high desert shrub-steppe landscapes so infrequently (once every 10+ years), that it was not considered “range.”

Q2: While we need to reduce or eliminate massive and high-intensity fires, what are your thoughts on how we can preserve the large old-growth sage and high-density grasslands so many species require, and which are not conducive to cattle use?

To best answer this question, we must remember that landscapes are never static. So, what is not old growth sage now was once open grassland. Fire is a necessary disturbance that naturally completes this cycle – and regenerates new growth. Preserving these old growth stands may be the right move in the short term, but at some point, they will die and need to regenerate through naturally occurring or planned fire. I think the best way to preserve old-growth sites is to rebuild the natural succession, increase the number of sites through a continuous transition of varied landscapes.

Q3: Are the results of your study being applied to Arid Lands Ecology (ALE) or conservation plans or grazing plans?

I sure hope so! Currently, I do not know of any specific application of this work in ALE, conservation, or grazing plans .



Predicted historical range of bison before European settlement.

Photo courtesy of Sanderson, E.W., Redford, K.H., Weber, B., et al. (2008). The ecological future of the North American Bison: Conceiving long-term, large-scale conservation of wildlife. Conservation Biology 22: 252-266

Using Mechanical Treatments for Community Protection

Q&A WITH SETH HULETT

Q1: Has WDFW installed green strips on their land, or do they have plans to?

At this time, WDFW has not utilized green strips locally, but there is interest in creating green strips on or adjacent to designated wildlife areas. I expect to start utilizing this strategy on WDFW land in the next few years.

Q2: Assuming that this project is successful, do you see green strips completely replacing the traditional disc fuel breaks or do you see a combination of green strips and disc fuel breaks being a successful method to change the fire regime in this area?

If the project is successful, I would expect them to be utilized more than disk fuel breaks; however, the decision will be made by the landowner and site dependent. Overall, disking is cheaper, quicker, and with certain soils, may be more effective than seed mix. I also think this shift will take years before the method is utilized as frequently as disc fuel breaks.

Q3: Any plans to extend the fuel break beyond the primary roads (highways) and utilize secondary roads (two tracks) to be able to compartmentalize areas in order to keep fires small?

Yes. We would love to see tens of miles of green strips in the area to compartmentalize the Blackrock area, reducing wildfire risk. We hope to utilize farm roads and two tracks in areas where it could be beneficial.



Seth Hulett
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Seth works with private landowners to create and maintain wildlife habitat in the southern Columbia Basin. Seth's experience includes planning, implementation and monitoring of habitat restoration projects.

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