



By Gary Frasier

Frasier's Philosophy

Conflict. The news media is full of conflict around the world on any topic you wish to pick. To many people, conflict is a violent confrontation. This type of conflict is happening in the Middle East or in some countries in Africa.

There are many other instances where conflict is nothing more than a difference of opinion or a viewpoint. These conflicts can be very emotional and important to the individuals involved. This is the type of conflict that occurs when discussing wildlife habitat. Although some people will not admit it, there are two sides to the question. It is the responsibility of the resource manager to find the solution that will allow a sustainability of the resource and still allow the various users of the land to meet their objectives. This is not an easy task. In many instances it is necessary for some “give and take” on all sides.

In this issue of *Rangelands*, with the theme of wildlife, we discuss one of these conflicts, concerning sage-grouse. With open-minded discussions, we can find where information is lacking. With adequate information, we can make an informed assessment of the problem and reach an agreement on how to manage the resource. As we assess the information, we must realize that our background, interests, and biases will affect how we interpret the information (is the glass half full or half empty?).

There are other instances of wildlife management that are just as contentious—black-tailed prairie dogs, spotted owls, and wolves, just to name a few. If we only look at one side of the problem, we will lose. The courts will decide what is to be done. As resource managers, we will have lost. I know that I do not agree with some people on how we should manage our wildlife habitat resources. I, at the same time, recognize that their side is just as valid to them as what I see on my side. I, as someone interested in proper resource management, have a responsibility to find a common ground that will allow everyone to meet their objectives. To meet a common resource management objective, I know that I will have to give up something and believe that the other side will also make some adjustments in their beliefs. This is the way to solve a conflict without it becoming so violent that only a court can resolve the issue. ♦