

and deepened. Within five years the riparian area had roughly doubled in width due to the elevated water table. Vegetation shifted from sagebrush and rabbitbrush back to grass. Grass inside the fences was dense and over two feet high. One stockman remarked he had never seen anything like it in that area. Grass outside the fence was sparse, less than two

Herding and strategically placed salt blocks improved livestock distribution and provided ungrazed forage for stock being trailed to winter pastures.

The number of calves and weight gains improved. In three years riparian vegetation outside the fence looked the same as vegetation inside the fence. Huff Creek had narrowed

■ Herding livestock to fresh forage, and providing grazed forage proper rest for regrowth, are ancient arts that still work. Animal weight gains improved concurrently with improved riparian conditions.

■ Steep terrain and natural barriers facilitated herding by restricting livestock movement between drainages.

■ Herding was as effective as fences in controlling livestock grazing of riparian areas.

■ The effective rider clearly understood the objective of the riparian improvement grazing strategy, was dedicated to the project and worked the cattle daily.



Inside (left) and outside (right) a Huff Creek riparian protection fence in 1984 after improved grazing management through herding.

inches tall, and dominated by sagebrush.

The demonstrated potential for increasing livestock forage while simultaneously protecting other riparian values prompted the livestock association to change its grazing strategy for the six mile long Huff Creek drainage.

A rider was hired to herd stock in the north half of the allotment. Grazing in the Huff Creek valley bottom was delayed until late August through September. The lower half of the valley received light grazing because the herder accelerated the animals' natural drift pattern.

by about one-third, doubled in depth, and water temperatures had declined. The percentage of eroding streambanks decreased from about 80% to 20%. The number of Bonneville cutthroat increased to 444 per mile, an 1,100% increase over 1978 levels.

The success on Huff Creek and similar efforts elsewhere removed the immediate threat to survival of the Bonneville cutthroat. In 1987 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service decided to wait until 1992 to review the results of habitat recovery projects before deciding whether to proceed with listing the fish as a threatened species.

■ Herding was successful at keeping cattle out of a drainage; it was not successful at keeping cattle out of the riparian area once they were in the drainage.

■ The area had been in a deteriorated condition for so long local stockmen were surprised by the vegetative potential revealed by improved grazing management.