

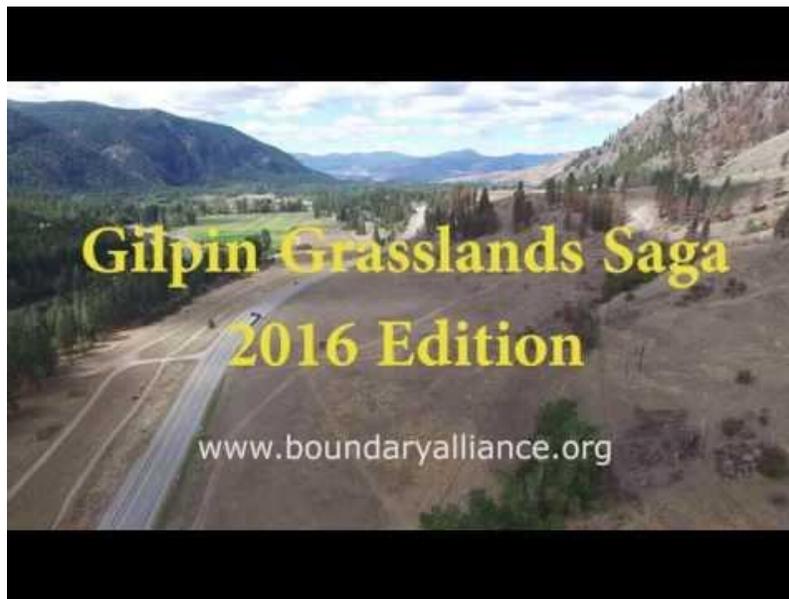
GILPIN GRASSLANDS SAGA 2016 EDITION

MARCH 2017

The sorry history of “range management” in the Gilpin continued in 2016.

The video below tells part of the tale, and if your devices and download speed allow, the video is viewable at up to 1920 x 1080 high definition.

Drone views provide a new perspective.



In 2016 we saw repeats of earlier issues plus a new one.

On August 19 2016, Barry Brandow reported the presence of range cattle, inside a protected area at Gilpin Creek, to Range Branch and to MFLNRO Regional Head Office. Cows were not normally grazing this area until November but had been in the area surrounding the protected area for weeks. It is puzzling that with cows in clear view from the Highway, the Tenure holder and Range Branch had not moved the unauthorized cattle out. MFLNRO indicated it was a high priority to move the cattle back to the preferred range however cattle were still in the area September 3rd and maybe later.

In September 2016 we visited the area north of the pasture and looked at various range-fences that are intended to separate pastures. It was clear that a recent flurry of activity had occurred, fences repaired, tightened, old fallen trees removed from fence to prevent unwanted cattle access. All no doubt at considerable public expense, to fix poorly maintained fences. Further West, towards Morrissey, new replacement fences replaced by Interfor were not only **not** wildlife friendly but at frequent heights of 50" to 53" exceeded guidelines. Bottom wires sometimes less than 9" from ground. All in all a sorry

example of a lack of concern for wildlife and a lack of oversight. Our calls for full wildlife friendly fencing still ignored by Ministries that fail to address wildlife concerns.

Along Morrissey Creek various downed or damaged older fences still allowed cattle access to the creek or between pastures which likely accounted for cattle visible across several pastures. Open gates allowed potential access back to the Lost Lake area as was observed in August.

The unauthorized cattle presence in the Gilpin Creek area impacts a section of unprotected Parkland. On September 12th we spoke to Parks Branch who claimed that cows accessed the area because Interfor failed to repair fences properly and then “someone” let cows into the fenced and gated enclosure.

The poor fence maintenance and lack of oversight are more likely causes of the cattle access to the general area. Because of the claim that “someone” had let the cows into the protected area we revisited raw 4K drone footage taken at low elevation while the cows were still inside the enclosure. That footage clearly showed no evidence of disturbed ground where it would have occurred had either of a couple of gates been opened by persons unknown. The above video shows where and how cows actually entered the protected area.

It is unfortunate and unproductive that Range Branch and other Ministries have a habit of blaming “persons unknown” when cattle are found where they are not supposed to be. The usual suspect should be poor fence maintenance by tenure holders and the failure of oversight from a variety of Ministries.

Our video also goes to Lost Lake where year after year cattle damage occurs. In 2016 the tenure holder (or agents) managed to flood the Lost Lake area while supposedly activating a cattle waterer. Cattle therefore trampled the area beyond the Lost Lake fence to access the overflow water while the waterer was drained or dried up. The flooding extended beyond most of the new fence, installed by volunteers who had moved and replaced the old fence because much of it had rotted or rusted by being immersed in water.

In September 2016 we talked to Range Branch who said the flooding had occurred because of overflow from the cattle waterer. We suggested that it was more likely that the 2” supply pipe to the pond had been opened, and not shut off in time to prevent flooding. The supply pipe was originally installed to enable the refill of Lost Lake, see <http://www.boundaryalliance.org/lostlake.pdf> however new Range Staff were seemingly unaware of its existence. We did some calculations as to the “overflow” of the waterer and calculated that the overflow if any, would have occurred over a very long period to overflow the pond. From either source it is apparent that oversight was lacking.

On a subsequent visit, we were unable to confirm the presence of the 2” supply pipe due to the flooded depth of Lost Lake. We did revisit 4K drone overviews of the pond and we did confirm the presence of the supply and overflow pipes.

Will the tenure holder do the right thing in 2017 to prevent damage?

Will Range Branch, MFLNRO, ensure it?

Cattle grazing on public land makes no economic or ecological sense. Government continues to avoid that discussion. Until then some change is possible.

Our earlier articles and videos on the Gilpin are available:

LOST LAKE REVISITED Jan 2016 <http://www.boundaryalliance.org/lostlakerevisited.pdf>

NATURE TRUST FENCING REVISITED
Dec 2015 plus video http://www.boundaryalliance.org/naturetrust_fencingvid.pdf

NATURE TRUST Spring Protected
after 42 years <http://www.boundaryalliance.org/naturetrust.pdf>

LOST LAKE, GILPIN GRASSLANDS
& a RANDOM ACT of
PUBLIC GOOD <http://www.boundaryalliance.org/lostlake.pdf>