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Review of The Range

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The Range. By Sherm Ewing. Missoula: Mountain Press Publishing Company, 1990. Foreword, preface, prologue, epilogue, register of range characters, range plants, glossary, notes, bibliography, index. 284 pp. \$12.95 U.S., \$16.95 Can.

"Range" is one of those consciously undefined words in our language. Rather than generating a single image, it produces many, from cowboys to science to art. Rancher/writer Sherm Ewing has put together a book that reinforces the complexity of range as a concept, as a field for economic activity, and as a subject of scientific inquiry.

The author has the great advantage of having lived and ranched on both sides of the border (Alberta and Montana) and it seems he has talked to just about every Canadian and American that has ever kicked a cow chip. The book is composed of an extensive series of short, journalistic interviews, each a page or two long, in which ranchers, range managers, scientists, and others speak in their own words about range experiences. No judgment or interpretation is offered; these are "man-on-the-range" interviews, if you will.

Ewing acknowledges the primary-source nature of the interview material by some thirty-five pages of appendices, including notes, a glossary, and a bibliography, making it relatively easy for the interested reader to pursue ideas presented in the text. A number of black and white photographs are also interspersed through the book.

The writing style of the book is chatty and colloquial, making it very accessible. I did find the style somewhat irritating at times, and the very short interviews can only serve as the barest of introductions to the topics discussed.

I was pleased to see an interview with Bill Anderson of Oregon, the father of Coordinated Resource Management Planning, and a significant but frequently unrecognized figure in range management. On the down side, Ewing missed a key Canadian range scientist in Dr. Bob Lodge, originator of the concept of complemen-

tary grazing of native and introduced forage species.

Range management has a fascinating past and an uncertain future, and Sherm Ewing has added to our stock of historical knowledge of the subject. I would like to see more of this author in a future book, more of his own ideas, and more of his critical judgment on which direction this great, fuzzy notion of range should go in the future.

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