

Cliff and Bertha Gardner
HC 60 Box 700
Ruby Valley, Nevada 89833
Dec. 4, 2012

Kenneth E. Mayer, Director
Nevada Department of Wildlife
1100 Valley Road
Reno, Nevada 89512

Dear Mr. Mayer:

With sadness we read your letter printed in the Nov. 23 issue of the Elko Daily Free Press. Most of what you had to say was untrue. The most blatant of all however was your claim that critics have yet to produce evidence indicating lack of effective predator control is the controlling factor limiting mule deer production throughout Nevada.

Nothing could be farther from the truth. The amount of historical and scientific data demonstrating the positive effects of predator control practices that is available to you and others is voluminous, even in face of the fact that you and others of your ilk have been doing all you can to suppress such information for years now.

What is lacking on your part is your unwillingness to acknowledge the truth. You want the world to believe that man's influence upon the world is bad - that ranching is bad, that grazing is bad, that roads and power lines are bad, that free enterprise is bad, and private land ownership is bad.

Governmental officials have been suppressing and hiding information from the public for many years now. They don't want the public to know the truth concerning the importance of livestock grazing and predator control. On Oct. 6, 2010 the Board of County Commissioners for Elko County sent a copy of Rural Heritage Preservation Project, "Finding of Facts Document" to your agency asking that you address each issue raised within the document so as to determine if past actions taken by the various resource management agencies might be responsible for downtrends in wildlife numbers. Instead of answering the challenge, you sidestepped the issue.

On December 3, the Elko Commission submitted a second letter to your department asking that you respond to their request. Again you avoided answering the County's request.

In the August 2011 issue of Nevada Rancher, I issued you a challenge asking that you produce data supportive of the positions you have taken in the past regarding wildlife management. I received no response. And so on September 23, while making a presentation before the State Wildlife Commission I again asked that you or other officials respond to requests made. Again we received no response.

While passing yourself off as experts and by spreading untruths you have been able to snow the public into believing you are protecting the environment when in fact you have been pursuing an agenda detrimental to every value the people hold dear. Deer, sage grouse, song birds and pygmy rabbits have not declined because of modern human activity. Deer, sage grouse, song birds and pygmy rabbits have been declining in number because of agency actions that have been put in place over the years.

Four times you have been challenged - four times you have sidestepped the issue. Today we challenge you again. Before you or others working for government go forward with plans for the protection or preservation of sage grouse which might end in causing farther harm to every value we hold dear, we demand that the following steps be taken.

First, we demand that a study be undertaken for the purpose of determining sage grouse status and production on private lands owned by the Sorensen family near Secret Valley, as compared to that on lands now owned and controlled by the Bureau of Land Management, mid-way up the Mary's River drainage, which have not been grazed for more than 15 years. If this is done, perhaps it will reveal the truth regarding the issue at hand. Is it those working within the private sector whose management practices are hurting sage grouse - or is it those working within the various resources management agencies?

Second, we demand that a large study area (roughly the size of Area 7 and Area 10) be set aside here in Nevada where livestock grazing and predator control practices similar to those which were carried on in the 1940's, 50's, and 60's be conducted for a period of twenty or more years for the purpose of determining the true effects of grazing and predator control practices on sage grouse, mule deer and other wildlife.

Third, we demand that a study be completed so as to determine amounts of yearly production and nutritional value of black sage growth or regrowth, on plants that are grazed by domestic sheep on a regular basis, as compared to black sage plants that are left ungrazed from year to year. Should it be found that winter ranges which are grazed routinely produce a much higher percentage of highly nutritious feeds each year than ranges which are left ungrazed from year to year, it may offer an explanation, why it was that sage grouse did so well when great numbers of domestic sheep were being grazed in the past.

Fourth, we demand that officials working for the Nevada Department of Wildlife, the U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, answer and address each question that is presented in the Rural Heritage Preservation Project, Findings of Facts Document which has been presented to them, before any new plan, rule, policy or regulation is put in place or implemented for the protection and preservation of sage grouse in the State of Nevada. It now appears that actions of the past have been based on false assumptions. If such is the case, new policy needs to be formulated mirroring those practices that were in place during the first half of the 1900's.

Fifth, we demand that officials working for the Nevada Department of Wildlife make data available showing the total number of mule deer buck tags which were issued within the State of Nevada for each year, beginning in 1945 through 2010; the total number of mule deer doe tags that were issued within the State of Nevada for each year beginning in 1945 through 2010; the total number of mule deer bucks that were harvested each year beginning in 1945 through 2010; and the total number of mule deer does that were harvested each year beginning in 1945 through 2010. For too long now, such data has been hidden from the public. It's time we know the truth.

Sixth, we demand that before any new plan for the preservation and protection of sage grouse be implemented, such practices as will be proposed by persons working for the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management be first implemented and carried out on the Ruby Lake National Wildlife Refuge, the Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge, and Hart Mountain Wildlife Refuge, so that their effectiveness can be determined. Should such practices work on refuge lands, then and only then should they be implemented on other lands found throughout the West.

We look forward to your response.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cliff Gardner", with a date "1/29/2007" written below it.

Cliff Gardner