

# Tensions mount between Nev. ranchers, feds

By Molly Hennessy-Fiske, Los Angeles Times

Gerald “Jerry” Smith grew up in Nevada and went to work for the Bureau of Land Management right after college. As a local, he figured he was uniquely suited to work with the ranchers who have long resented the federal government’s role in land management here.

It didn’t quite work out that way.

Now retired from a job as district manager for the BLM, Smith knows all about the tensions that have long defined relations between ranchers in the rural West and the federal government, which manages much of the region’s land. Those tensions have boiled over in recent days at a wildlife refuge in Oregon and are at a perpetual simmer here.

Now it is Smith’s successor as district manager, Doug Furtado, who has become the enemy for many people in the region.

Although there have been no violence or threats here, the risk is real. Federal employees in Nevada have been attacked in the past over land-use disputes – shot at, their offices and cars bombed.

**Read the whole story**