

Opinion: How we risked losing the West

By Jon Christensen, *High Country News*

Longtime readers of *High Country News* are familiar with the long debate over grasslands and public-lands grazing in the West.

Former Publisher Ed Marston came to see these controversies as key to the heart and health of our changing rural communities and landscapes. He guided many of us through tense stories about the sometimes-violent eruptions of the Sagebrush Rebellion in the 1980s and '90s, along with surprising accounts of the unexpected alliances forming between ranchers and environmentalists. At the same time, he gave us an intimate look at the lives of ranching families anxious about their uncertain future.

All of these stories were ultimately concerned with theories of how the land works and how knowledge of the land is gained. So many questions seem to come down to who knows what, on what authority do they rely, and exactly what does that knowledge and authority empower them to do.

Read the whole story