

A wide, flat, grassy field with a line of trees and a small structure in the distance. The field is mostly green with some brown patches, suggesting a dry or overgrazed area. In the background, there is a line of trees and a small structure, possibly a barn or shed, on a slight rise. The sky is not visible.

THE NORTHERN RANGE

HOW MUCH MORE CAN IT TAKE?

“I now suspect that just as a deer herd lives in mortal fear of its wolves, so does a mountain live in mortal fear of its deer. And perhaps with better cause, for while a buck pulled down by wolves can be replaced in two or three years, a range pulled down by too many deer may fail of replacement in as many decades.”

Aldo Leopold

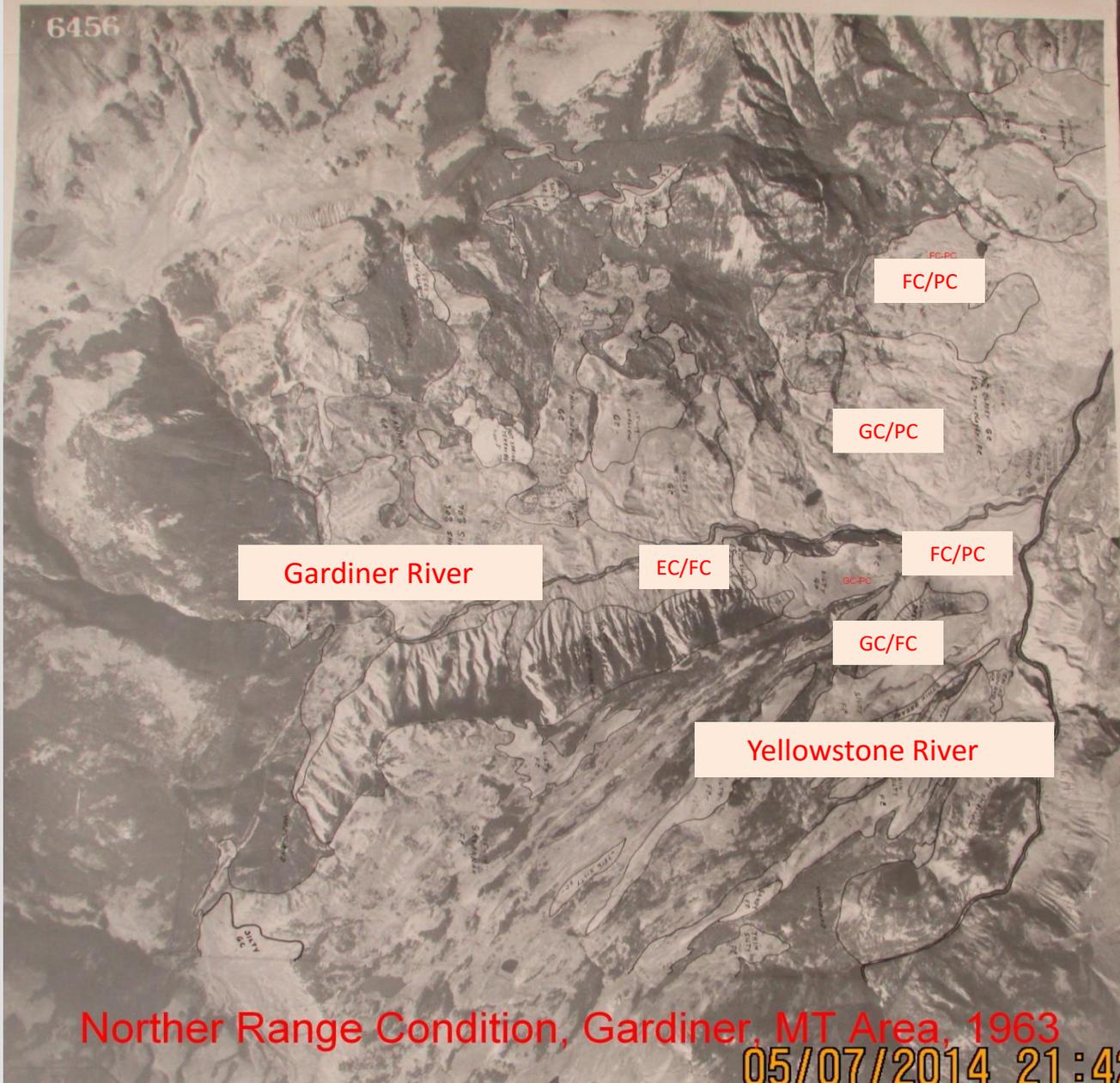
1963 and 2015 Range Inventories

- Native range acres: 137,000
 - Excellent Condition: 6%
 - Good Condition: 49%
 - Fair Condition: 43%
 - Poor Condition: 2%
 - **Excellent + Good Condition: 55% in 1963**
- **Excellent + Good Condition: 0% in 2016**

Warning Signs from the 1963 Range Inventory

- All aspen sites showed destructive use
- Wetlands: no or very suppressed willows
- Sagebrush in some areas: severe utilization
- Conifers severely used; little reproduction
- Ridges with severe utilization of forage
- Noxious weeds increasing

6456



Norther Range Condition, Gardiner, MT Area, 1963

05/07/2014 21:42



05/07/2014 21:51

Yellowstone River

Lower Black tail
Deer Creek

GC/FC

GC/FC

6455

Photo Tour of Northern Range

- Decline in watershed health and function
 - Loss of ground cover (litter) =EROSION
 - Loss of deep-rooted perennial grasses
 - Continued loss of riparian habitat
 - Loss of stream function
 - Loss of RESISTANCE and RESILIENCE
- Decline in biodiversity & food resources
- Loss of structural habitat diversity













Production: 1043 lbs/A
Bluebunch wheatgrass 58%

Site 509
December 2014













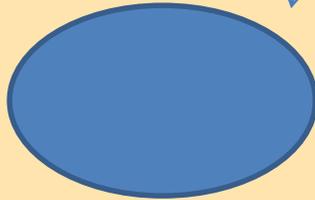




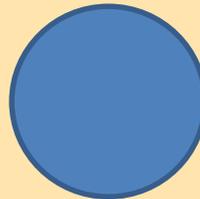
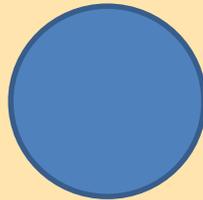
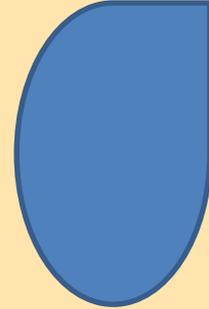




P – F
Conditon



G – E
Condition



Landscape level Poor Condition

















In Summary

- Continuing, progressive decline in watershed health and productivity
- Continuing decline in biodiversity
- The Northern Range is overstocked w/ bison by at least an order of magnitude
- 2 months of grazing available at current stocking to avoid continuing damage

What is “NATURAL?”

- Humans have probably been the “Keystone” predators keeping bison on the move and controlling numbers
- It is “un-natural” for us not to intervene
- YNP is the wrong place for the “American Serengeti”