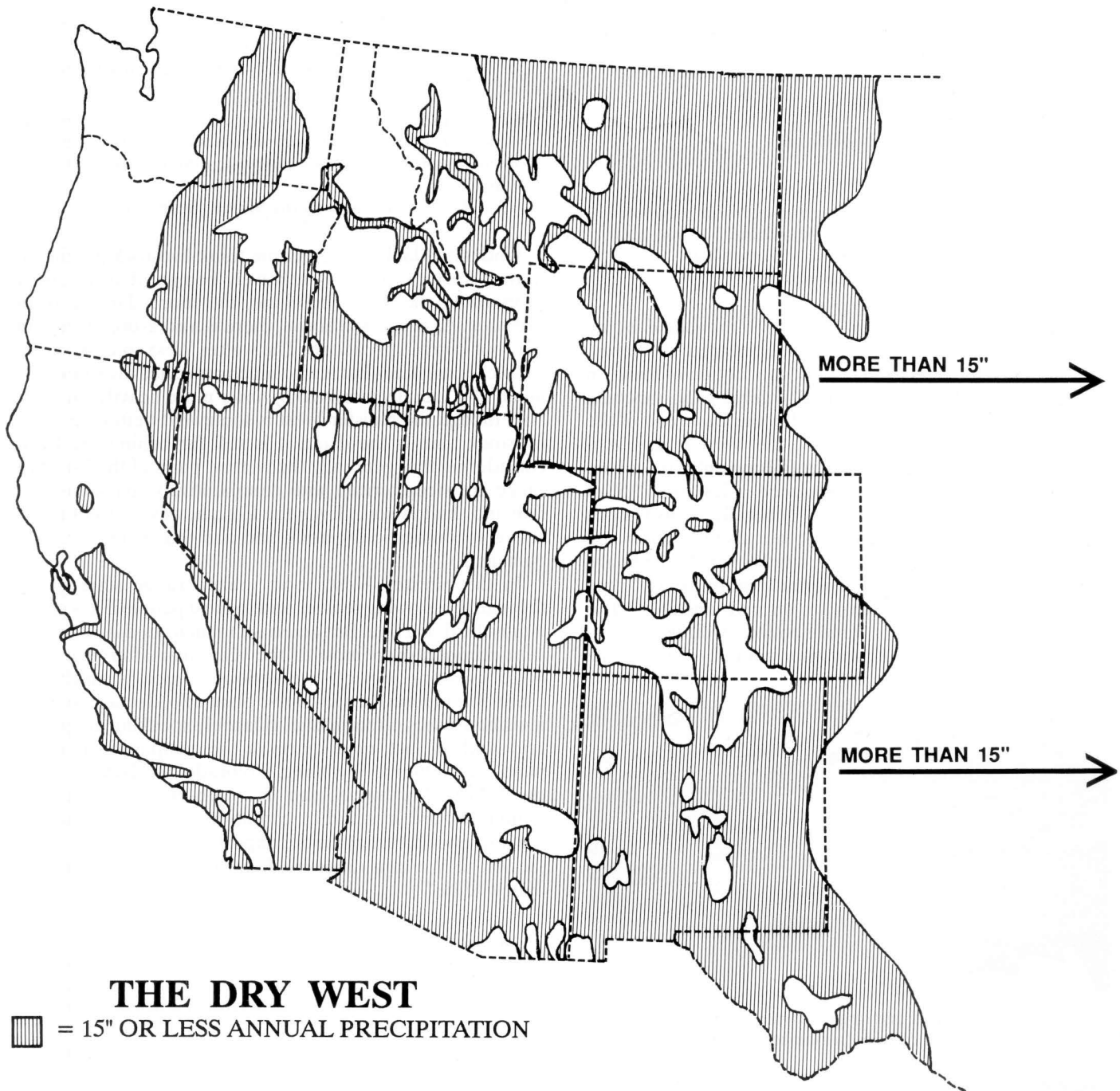




THE DRY WEST

▨ = 15" OR LESS ANNUAL PRECIPITATION

cut out for fuel, many others cut down for the cattle during drouths and the winters when the feed was scarce on the range, and many have been washed away during the floods that have rushed down this stream nearly every year since the range started to deplete. The same condition applies to practically every stream of any size in the Tonto.

Numerous similar descriptions abound. It is clear that enormous changes in the Western landscape have occurred since European settlement.

In 1930, an Indian returned to her former home in southern Utah for the first time in 40 years and observed the effects of white occupation. She noticed that, "This country is no good anymore; everything is dry; the creeks are cut deep; the plant foods are all gone."

--Charles Kay, wildlife biologist

Other misunderstanding stems from the fact that the most verdant and productive vegetation in the West is now gone. Originally, ranchers claimed the best forage plants on the most well-watered land throughout the West. After each rancher staked out his territory, his livestock relentlessly sought out and consumed the best of the best in each area. Every subsequent year for more than a century, ranchers and their livestock have searched out the best of the remaining best. Consequently, we have come to accept vegetation that is less and less productive as the norm, failing to realize what has been lost. Thus have the most biologically significant portions of Western public land also been the most heavily abused by livestock.