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Soon after Dr. Luann Wurst and her team began their research on the Backbone Ridge, she became confused because of what they were finding. It was the summer of 2000. The reason was what she and her students were finding did not fit the "government narrative."

One day, as she was working, she was approached by the owner of a nearby large, successful dairy farm. The man was Ed Gates.

Gates said to her, "They got it all wrong." He said that the dominant narrative that these lands can't be farmed productively was just not true.

The encounter was significant because it helped her understand the contradictions they had found so far and continued to find. This led to the conclusions Dr. Wurst presented in her final report. The whole resettlement movement could be called "the mistake that never should have happened."

Carol E. Fagnan