

2011 Annual Report



Putting Oregon's Deserts on the Map

Typically when people think of Oregon, they think of old growth forests and untamed coastal beauty. However, half of Oregon is high desert, and this incredible area is largely unknown – even to most Oregonians.

The relative anonymity of Oregon's deserts is the main reason that we have permanently protected less than one percent of our state's desert lands. ONDA exists to put Oregon's deserts on the map. We remain the only group dedicated exclusively to protecting and restoring Oregon's high desert, and now boast over 4,000 members and supporters. In the coming years, we will need to connect thousands more people to Oregon's deserts if we want these wild lands to remain intact for future generations of Oregonians.

Over the years, ONDA has earned many successes, but the map on page 3 shows just how much work is still ahead. In the coming year, ONDA will continue our focus on protecting desert wilderness, defending our favorite places and restoring wildlife habitat.

Oregon Natural Desert Association 2011 Annual Report

To our supporters,

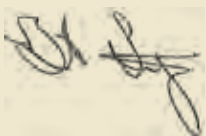
We all have that favorite place we pine for – the place where we mentally transport ourselves during dreary days or long meetings. If you're like me, these daydreams likely bring to mind the smell of sagebrush and the warmth of the desert sun. We can't always be in the landscapes we love, but by supporting Oregon Natural Desert Association, you're helping to ensure that your favorite place will be there for you and for future generations, whenever you're able to get there.

For 25 years, ONDA has worked tirelessly to protect, defend and restore our favorite place: Oregon's High Desert. While we take great pride in our accomplishments, like protecting over 210,000 acres of wilderness, we are even more proud of the strong connections we've forged with others who love Oregon's deserts.

Over the years, we've found that the more voices we bring together on behalf of our deserts, the stronger our message and the greater our success. Our strength is not in our similarity, but in our differences, and our willingness to come together despite them over a shared love of our favorite places.

Together, we are the voice of Oregon's deserts. Whether you've been here for one year or 25, thank you for being a part of ONDA's story.

For wild deserts,



Brent Fenty
Executive Director

Historic achievements:

1987: A hodgepodge group, including teachers, housewives, doctors, students, naturalists and retirees, come together over their shared love of Oregon's deserts. They were driven to action by their conviction that the government's recent inventory of wild desert lands had missed a huge chunk of the places that they knew and loved. Sure enough, citizen wilderness inventories confirmed this fact. Out of the conviction that these lands needed a voice, ONDA was born.

1994: In response to pressure from ONDA, the US Fish and Wildlife Service removes livestock grazing from the Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge. Since this historic victory, ONDA volunteers have gathered annually at Hart Mountain to remove hundreds of miles of obsolete barbed wire fences from the refuge. Sensitive populations of pronghorn antelope and sage grouse are now thriving at Hart Mountain.

1998: ONDA wins a lawsuit to remove livestock grazing from the Wild and Scenic Owyhee River corridor. Thousands of visitors each year now enjoy a thriving river ecosystem rich with willows and redband trout.

2000: ONDA leads a historic collaborative effort to protect Steens Mountain Wilderness, Oregon's first desert wilderness area.

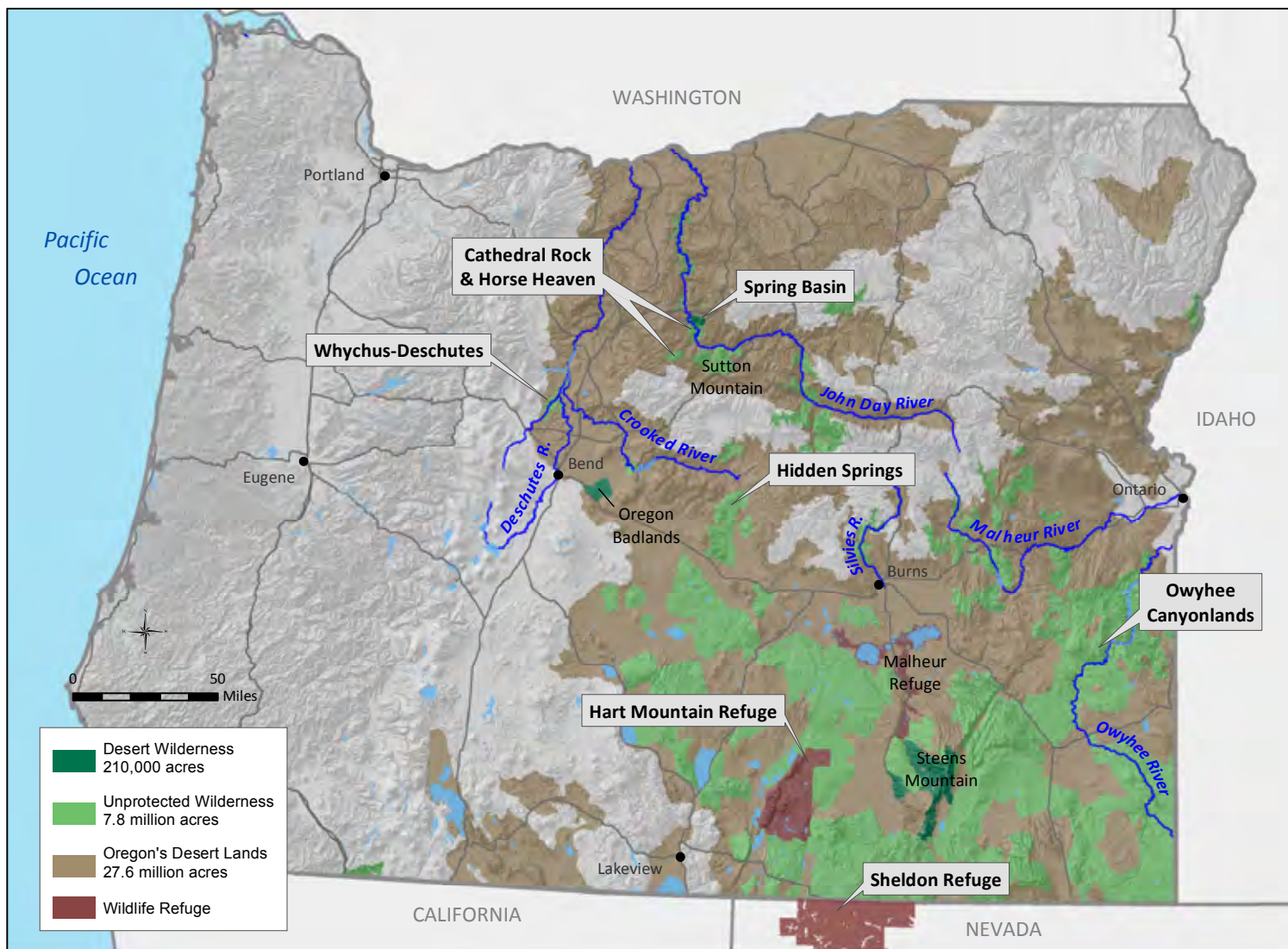
2009: Oregon Badlands Wilderness and Spring Basin Wilderness are protected after a grassroots campaign that engaged thousands of members of the Central Oregon community.

25 years and beyond: Priorities for 2012

Owyhee Canyonlands: At over 2 million acres and located in the southeast corner of the state, Oregon's Owyhee Canyonlands region is the largest expanse of undeveloped and unprotected wildlands in the lower 48 states. ONDA is working with a diverse coalition of partners to develop a proposal to permanently protect this iconic landscape.

Central Oregon: There are over 100,000 acres of unique wilderness lands throughout Central Oregon that are in need of permanent protection. These special areas face many pressures and ONDA is working to find ways to protect key areas including the Whychus-Deschutes Proposed Wilderness and the Hidden Springs Proposed Wilderness Areas.

John Day: The John Day River is vital because it flows freely – absent of dams. It hosts some of the best habitat for summer steelhead and one of the few remaining



wild spring Chinook runs in the Columbia Basin. ONDA is working closely with county officials, community leaders and local landowners to protect sensitive public lands in the John Day basin and promote healthy populations of fish and wildlife.

Hart-Sheldon: The Greater Hart-Sheldon Landscape, a high desert oasis with natural lakes, sagebrush flats, and rugged ridgelines, spans over 3 million acres in southeastern Oregon and northern Nevada. This area encompasses both the Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge and Sheldon Wildlife Refuge, and is home to hundreds of fish and wildlife species. With a full-time

coordinator focused on cooperative efforts to restore and connect the Hart Mountain region to its sister refuge across the border in Nevada, 2012 promises to be an exciting year for the Greater Hart-Sheldon landscape.

Enforcing conservation laws: In 2012, ONDA will continue to focus on protecting wild lands and sensitive wildlife by ensuring that the government is properly managing our wild deserts in accordance with the law. Our priorities will include watching over management of wild and scenic river corridors, securing administrative reforms to public lands grazing, and addressing threats such as off

road vehicles and energy development.

Restoring habitat for wildlife: Over the years, hard-working ONDA volunteers have planted thousands of trees, restored dozens of miles of streams, decommissioned old roads and removed enough barbed wire to stretch from one end of Oregon to the other. 2012 is shaping up to be our biggest year yet. Notably, we will celebrate the end of our decades long fence removal efforts at the Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge as the last few miles of barbed wire are lifted from the landscape, and pronghorn are once again allowed to run free.

"This is the most beautiful place on earth. There are many such places. Every man, every woman, carries in heart and mind the image of the ideal place, the right place, the one true home, known or unknown, actual or visionary."

— ED ABBEY

For 25 years, protecting wild places and open space has remained core to ONDA's mission.

Wilderness is where we go for respite from our everyday lives, where we challenge ourselves, where we find solace and peace.

Our work in 2011 to protect, defend and restore special places in Oregon's desert ensures that your grandchildren, and theirs, will be able to connect with their natural heritage and precious plants and wildlife will thrive.

Simply put, we're here because you are here. We can't thank you enough for standing with us on behalf of Oregon's deserts.

*"I've roamed and rambled and I've followed my footsteps
To the sparkling sands of her diamond deserts;
And all around me a voice was sounding:
This land was made for you and me."*

— WOODY GUTHRIE
This Land Is Your Land



Cathedral Rock, photo © Greg Burke

Cathedral Rock and Horse Heaven

Wilderness conservation is sometimes as much an art as a science. While there are lessons to be learned from our successes and setbacks, there is no formula to follow. Case in point: our campaign to protect Cathedral Rock and Horse Heaven Wilderness on the Lower John Day River.

A newer aspect of ONDA's wilderness strategy is stationing our staff in small towns near the areas we are trying to protect. This gives us the opportunity to build relationships with the people who live and work daily in the wild landscapes of Oregon's deserts, and to be on the lookout for opportunities for collaboration, often with unlikely partners.

ONDA's John Day Coordinator was living in the hamlet of Clarno when he discovered just such an opportunity. Young Life, the owners of a youth camp, had a problem with hunters unwittingly trespassing on their land. The checkerboard of public and private land ownership in the area means that hunters have to be constantly diligent to remain on public land. The camp has to assign several staff members to patrol the camp boundaries to ensure safety of the children. Clearly this was not an ideal situation for either party.

When ONDA and user groups came to the table to discuss solutions, an audacious, but simple solution was hatched: swap all of the public land that is currently inaccessible to the public for private land along the river and uplands that is more attractive to hunters, boaters, anglers and hikers. The resulting blocks of public land would be designated as the 8,015 acre Horse Heaven Wilderness, and the 8,686 acre Cathedral Rock Wilderness along the Wild and Scenic John Day River.

The resulting proposal quickly gained the support of local stakeholders and Oregon Senators Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley. The Cathedral Rock and Horse Heaven Wilderness Act was introduced into Congress in 2009, and, in a major step for ONDA and our partners, the bill was reintroduced on March 17, 2011. We are grateful to Senators Merkley and Wyden for standing strong on behalf of wilderness despite the current gridlock in Congress. Thanks to their hard work, and your support, we will soon be able to take down the "No Trespassing" signs so that all visitors can enjoy the silence and solitude of wilderness and four miles of new public access along the John Day River.



Defend

Steens Mountain, photo © Greg Burke

Steens Mountain

Steens Mountain is often called the crown jewel of Oregon's desert, and its protection as Wilderness in 2000 was a crowning achievement for ONDA. Rising out of a sea of sagebrush, Steens defies the senses and humbles the soul. Along its flanks, U-shaped gorges cut by ancient glaciers provide refuge for golden eagles, pronghorn antelope, redband trout and many other wild creatures. Starting in the spring, nature paints the walls of these gorges with a multicolored brush as millions of wildflowers spring from the desert floor. Steens Mountain is a landscape beloved by many Oregonians, and people from all over the world visit every year to marvel at its unique beauty.

ONDA's campaign to protect Steens Mountain didn't end when the Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Area (CMPA) was created in 2000. Over the years, we've defended Steens against threats to its natural beauty and wildlife. No industrial development exists on the mountain or within the CMPA, which includes private land; structures are limited to private ranches and small-scale or primitive campgrounds and recreation facilities.

With an industrial scale wind power development planned for the flanks of the mountain, ONDA is working diligently to ensure that the natural character of the Steens Mountain area is not permanently altered. The stated purpose of the CMPA is to protect ecological, scenic, and recreational resources on Steens Mountain and to facilitate cooperative management efforts between landowners, the public, and state and federal agencies. ONDA stands behind this law and the years of collaboration and compromise that led to the protection of Steens Mountain.

This is not an easy stance to take. The threats posed by climate change to Steens Mountain, and all of our favorite places, are urgent and real. The need to transition to a more sustainable energy economy based around renewable sources is clear. But ONDA shuns the notion that permanently marring one of our nation's crown jewels with industrial-scale development is part of the solution to this complex, long-term problem.

Thank you for standing with ONDA in 2011 in defense of Steens Mountain. With your support, we will ensure that future renewable energy development is sited where everyone can agree that development is appropriate, and that Steens Mountain remains wild and natural.



Restore

ONDA volunteers, photo © Gena Goodman-Campbell

Wilderness Stewardship and Restoration

When it comes to the accomplishments of ONDA's Wilderness Stewardship Program in 2011, the numbers speak for themselves: 400 volunteers, 5,000 hours, 18 miles of obsolete barbed-wire fence removed, over 3,000 trees planted, and number ONE volunteer group in our region (as the 2011 recipient of the Governor's Volunteer Award). What the numbers don't express is the personal connection that each volunteer forges with the desert landscape through their restoration work.

We often grow to love a place not just because of our experiences there, but because of the people who share the experience with us. You know that you'll always remember who was with you when you caught your first summer steelhead or first stared off into the expanse of the Alvord Desert.

When you join ONDA on a volunteer trip in the desert, you can bet that you will recall the faces and stories of the people you work beside just as much as the long, sweaty hours pulling fence or planting trees.

So while we are incredibly proud of the accomplishments and tremendous growth of our Wilderness Stewardship Program over the years, we know that the true value of the program lies in the thousands of people that have been introduced to the wonders of the high desert through volunteering on an ONDA trip.

If you've volunteered with ONDA, you know about the unique relationships you form with other volunteers when you're out getting your hands dirty; you know the incredible feeling of looking back over your shoulder at a landscape devoid of fences or boundaries; you know that the most satisfying work is that which you undertake in good company and fresh air. What you might not realize is the power and credibility bestowed on ONDA by the combined work of our volunteers.

One of the most important accomplishments of our Wilderness Stewardship Program is the credibility that it can give us in local communities; ONDA doesn't just talk about the need to protect, defend and restore Oregon's deserts – our volunteers are out walking the walk hundreds of days every year. So whether you've put in your time pulling out rusty barbed wire fences or made a donation that helps our volunteer program grow, we are incredibly grateful for your contribution.



Numbers Tell the Story

It's often said that there is strength in numbers, but here at ONDA we know that our strength runs deeper than just numbers. While there is strength in a packed meeting room, a \$100 check in support of our work, or 1,000 letters to a senator, it also matters who is in that room, penning those letters, or making those contributions. Every voice is valuable because it represents a different person's desert story.

It's the thousands of voices in support of ONDA's work that make up our story, and our strength. When you support ONDA, you are here with us for every long day pulling fence, every big meeting and every tough decision. ONDA is a force for Oregon's deserts because when ONDA walks into a room, we all walk in together.

Packsaddle Mountain, photo © Jim Davis

Financial Summary

Assets

Total Current Assets	\$793,662
Total Fixed Assets	\$50,280
Total Other Assets	\$172,925
Total Assets	\$1,016,867

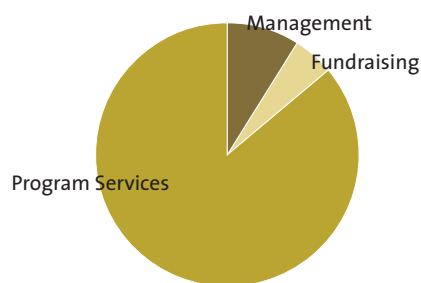
Liabilities & Equity

Total Liabilities	\$52,098
Total Equity	\$964,769
Total Liabilities & Equity	\$1,016,867

2011 Total Revenue	\$994,687
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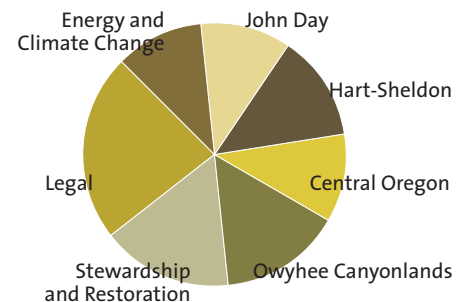
As of 12/31/2011.

Expense



Program Services	86%
Management	9%
Fundraising	5%

Spending by Program



Central Oregon	13%
Energy and Climate Change	11%
Hart-Sheldon	15%
John Day	16%
Legal	23%
Owyhee Canyonlands	11%
Stewardship and Restoration	11%



Alice Elshoff Desert Conservation Award

It is safe to say that no one has introduced more people to the wonders of Oregon's deserts than Alice Elshoff. As a teacher back before the days of ONDA, Elshoff used to take busloads of elementary school students out to the Oregon Badlands, where they often ended up lying on their bellies, magnifying glass in hand, studying the small miracles of the desert. With her bottomless enthusiasm and quick wit, this founding member of ONDA has had such an impact on our organization that when she retired from ONDA's Board of Directors in 2009, we decided we'd better name an award after her. The Alice Elshoff Desert Conservation Award now annually honors an individual who has followed in Alice's footsteps, going above and beyond in their contributions to the protection of Oregon's deserts.

Alice Elshoff hiking in sage country, photo © Alan D. St. John

2011 Alice Elshoff Desert Conservation Award Recipient: Durlin Hickok



Durlin Hickok

As the President of ONDA's Board of Directors from 2006–2010, Durlin oversaw a period of tremendous growth and change for ONDA. During Durlin's tenure as President, Bill Marlett, ONDA's founding executive director, announced that he would retire. Durlin led ONDA forward with a strong vision for the future, and guided the board in their selection of Brent Fenty as ONDA's new executive director. He also helped recruit new members to ONDA's board who brought with them crucial experience with business and communications.

In 2009, ONDA finally won our 20-year campaign to designate the Oregon Badlands and Spring Basin Wilderness Areas. This victory was celebrated by people from all corners of our community, from business owners to realtors to doctors. The broad base of support that these wilderness areas enjoy is in part a testament to the inclusive and collaborative focus of Durlin's leadership. Thank you, Durlin, for your years of service to ONDA and Oregon's deserts!

"You're only young once, but if you are careful, you can be immature all your life."

— ALICE ELSHOFF



Working to protect,
defend and restore
Oregon's high desert
for over 25 years.

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THIS PAGE: Pronghorn at Sheldon-Hart Mountain
National Wildlife Refuge, photo © Greg Burke.
Canyon Walls at Iron Point on the Owyhee River,
photo © Greg Burke. ONDA volunteers pull fence at
Pine Creek Conservation Area, photo © Scott Erickson

COVER: Little Wildhorse, photo © Jim Davis.

