

# PROTECT DEFEND RESTORE

2012 Annual Report



# CELEBRATING OUR DESERT. CELEBRATING YOU.

Dear Friends,

Thanks. It is such a simple word and yet it conveys so much. Each year I am inspired by the commitment of Oregon Natural Desert



Brent Fenty

Association members, supporters, and partners to ensuring our cherished desert remains a place where we may connect to the natural world, ourselves and one another.

Now in our 25th year, protecting wild places and wildlife remains at the core of ONDA's slate of highly effective conservation programs. On the following pages, I invite you to discover and take a moment to celebrate just a few of the remarkable achievements you and the ONDA community have made possible in 2012.

Our work to protect, defend and restore Oregon's desert ensures that the next generation will experience the same beauty, solace and inspiration found in these special places as we enjoy today. Simply put, Oregon is a wilder place because of you.

Your support means the world to all of us who know and love Oregon's high desert. Today and always, we celebrate our desert and, we celebrate you.

For Wild Deserts,

Brent Fenty  
Executive Director

*On the cover: West Little Owyhee, camp at confluence with Toppin Creek, in the proposed Owyhee Canyonlands Wilderness. Photo © Jim Davis*

## 2012 HIGHLIGHTS

Thank you for supporting efforts to **protect, defend** and **restore** Oregon's desert and your contributions to these conservation achievements.

### PROTECT

**Dedicated efforts** to protect the Cathedral Rock and Horse Heaven areas near the John Day River resulted in their inclusion in the Oregon Treasures Act, now pending in Congress.

**Data was gathered** on 140,000 acres of potential desert Wilderness in southeast Oregon to request recognition and protection of these areas in planning efforts.

**Survey work** for the proposed 750-mile Oregon Desert Trail is nearly complete, and the route is poised for an official designation request.

**Member-supported programs** to protect five million acres of desert lands in Central Oregon, the Greater Hart-Sheldon Landscape and the Owyhee Canyonlands gained support from state and local residents.

### DEFEND

**Steelhead** will see improved habitat conditions following a 2012 court order that alleviated grazing impacts on hundreds of miles of streams in the upper John Day River basin.

**Steens Mountain** remains safe from expanded motorized use following a court decision barring a plan to develop more than 100 miles of primitive or nonexistent routes.

**Sage-grouse** in a half-million acre area flanking the West Little Owyhee River may finally benefit from improved habitat after a district court agreed that new science must be considered in the development of future land management plans.

### RESTORE

**An exuberant group** removed the last of the interior fences at Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge, a culmination of two decades of volunteer work to take down more than 250 miles of fence.

**More than 500 volunteers** gave nearly 5,000 hours of service to restoring Oregon's desert rivers and wildlands.

**The removal of 98 miles of fence** to improve wild-life connectivity, planting 13,400 trees in riparian areas to improve fish habitat, and the monitoring of 13 Greater sage-grouse leks are just a few of the achievements of our stewardship program.



West Little Owyhee, proposed Owyhee Canyons Wilderness. Photo © Tim Neville

## “WHY I SUPPORT EFFORTS TO PROTECT THE OWYHEE CANYONLANDS

*“The Owyhee is a place where one can go and truly be alone with nature. This is a unique experience in this time of billions of people.”*

— JULIE WEIKEL

lifelong Eastern Oregon resident,  
ONDA member since 2009



**OREGON’S OWYHEE CANYONLANDS** | Imagine a place where a wild river winds through vast, rolling country and the world’s largest herd of California bighorn sheep speckle the steep canyon slopes. Oregonians are fortunate that such a place, the Owyhee Canyonlands, exists in the southeast corner of the state. These canyonlands captivate visitors and feed the soul.

Protecting the unique geology, rare plants and wildlife, and boundless recreation of the Owyhee Canyonlands is among ONDA’s top priorities. Stretching for some two million acres, Oregon’s Owyhee Canyonlands is a conservation opportunity of national significance. Protecting the Owyhee is also of vital personal importance to many people.

ONDA’s Owyhee Wilderness Coordinator, Chris Hansen, describes the passion that drives his work this way: “We want to keep the Owyhee the way that it is. If you are sitting on the canyon rim and you watch the sun go down, or, if you are up for the first morning light on the mountain tops, that’s something that runs through the blood of every Westerner.”

The Owyhee Canyonlands is a place unlike any other. In 2012, your support moved us closer to securing permanent protection for this remote and wild desert landscape.

Thanks to you, ONDA trumpeted the virtues of the Owyhee Canyonlands and engaged an expanded supporter list to speak out for protections. We organized hikes, events, media and letter writing campaigns to share the importance of conservation action for the Owyhee with the world. We also deepened relationships with local residents, participated in planning sessions to protect the habitat of the imperiled sage-grouse, and much more.

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Stay involved with efforts to protect the Owyhee Canyonlands, the John Day River, the Central Oregon Backcountry, and the Greater Hart-Sheldon Landscape at [ONDA.org/getinvolved](https://onda.org/getinvolved).

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*Big Indian Gorge, Steens Mountain Wilderness. Photo © Sean Bagshaw*

## “ WHY I SUPPORT EFFORTS TO **DEFEND** STEENS MOUNTAIN

*“Steens Mountain represents all that I love about Oregon’s high desert: the wildlife and wildness, the solitude and remoteness, with a vast empty horizon in which you can lose yourself.”*

— **LEE CHRISTIE**  
ONDA member since 1997



**STEENS MOUNTAIN** | Unlike the glittering Cascades, Steens Mountain is noted for its unrefined stark beauty, something wholly original in the sagebrush sea of eastern Oregon, and is home to sage-grouse, golden eagles, pronghorn, and other wild residents. 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 members and supporters.

However, the work to protect Steens Mountain has not ended with a Wilderness designation. Over the years ONDA supporters have defended its natural beauty and wildlife from many development pressures. In 2012, countless members, supporters and advocates stood beside ONDA to help turn the tide on an ill-advised wind energy development.

Thanks to these efforts, key agreements and contracts the developer needs to transmit and sell power have stalled, calling the future of the project into question. While this marks progress worth celebrating, the fight to stop this misguided proposal continues. ONDA is still challenging the government’s decision to allow construction of a 40-mile transmission line across Steens Mountain which would fragment important wildlife habitat.

ONDA’s Executive Director, Brent Fenty, worked as a Wildlands Coordinator implementing the Steens Mountain Wilderness from 2000-2003 and has spent many days hunting, fishing and backpacking in this amazing area. Brent describes the reasons behind his longstanding dedication to Steens this way: “When I first saw Steens Mountain, I basked in the quiet solitude and knew I’d discovered something so unique in our modern world – a vast, wild, beautiful place where development’s hand has not reached.”

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Defend Steens Mountain and speak out to protect all  
of Oregon’s desert wildlands at [ONDA.org/takeaction](https://onda.org/takeaction).

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Volunteers remove barbed wire at the Pine Creek Conservation Area. Photo © Bill Crowell

**HIGH DESERT STEWARDSHIP** | Getting our hands dirty, relishing back-breaking labor, and putting boots on the ground are just a few of the colorful phrases we hear members use when describing ONDA's restoration work. Beyond the vivid language, when you take a look at our Wilderness Stewardship and Restoration Program you'll encounter some of the most devoted volunteers found anywhere. After all, it takes a special person to drive endless hours on poorly maintained roads to the remote reaches of eastern Oregon only to work tirelessly in temperamental weather conditions...and have a good time doing it.

Thanks to our entire community of members and supporters, ONDA's stewardship program has grown substantially over the past five years and has made an indelible impact on improving the ecological health of central and eastern Oregon public lands. Our eager volunteers are essential to this success, as is our ability to forge productive partnerships with land managers. Pine Creek Conservation Area, 35,000 acres of former ranch land managed by the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs of Oregon in the John Day River basin, is one such partnership that has connected hundreds of volunteers to meaningful restoration work and has helped ONDA's stewardship program flourish.

In just one work day of many at Pine Creek Conservation Area in 2012, volunteers planted a remarkable 8,000 trees along Robinson Creek to improve habitat for native fish and wildlife. Jefferson Jacobs, Wilderness Stewardship Coordinator for ONDA describes the benefits of our partnership with Pine Creek Conservation Area this way: "Having the opportunity to take on vitally important restoration work alongside a committed collaborator and enthusiastic volunteers gives me great satisfaction. Knowing that this work benefits all of ONDA's conservation efforts and inspires program participants fuels me through the toughest of days in the field."

Join our fun-loving and committed crew at [ONDA.org/volunteertrips](http://ONDA.org/volunteertrips) or check out other, less grueling events at [ONDA.org/events](http://ONDA.org/events).

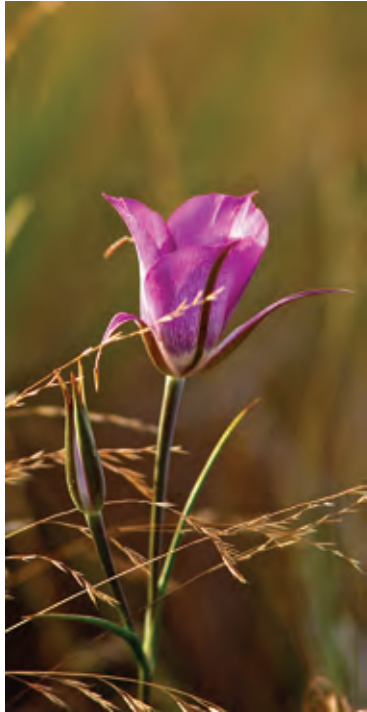
## “WHY I SUPPORT EFFORTS TO RESTORE THE JOHN DAY RIVER BASIN

*"ONDA volunteers are one of the most important partnership assets to our conservation area work. Thanks to their work, and that of many other partners, I've seen the conservation area improve in many ways. Numerous miles of obsolete fences are now gone, and areas alongside our streams are recovering. ONDA has been a great partner in accomplishing this work."*

— **RICK HAYES**

Manager, Pine Creek Conservation Area  
ONDA has been a partner at Pine Creek  
since 2001

# OUR VISION FOR THE YEAR AHEAD



Mariposa lily. Photo © Al St. John

Thanks to your input and support, ONDA has an ambitious plan to protect, defend and restore Oregon's high desert in 2013 and beyond. Your support will maintain four regional efforts to protect over five million acres of pristine desert wildlands. You'll help enforce conservation laws that defend native fish and wildlife, and you'll propel restoration that enhances Oregon's high desert. Priorities for 2013 include:

**Passage of the Oregon Treasures Act** will result in new protections for critical lands in the John Day River region, improved public access to miles of riverfront, and the recovery of native salmon populations.

**Wildlands in the Greater Hart-Sheldon Landscape** will be protected thanks to an extensive inventory of over 900,000 acres of public land.

**Engaging with the people** who live and work in central and southeastern Oregon will identify shared values and new ways to work together in support of conservation.

**Core habitat for imperiled Greater sage-grouse** will be protected and appropriate siting for renewable energy projects will result from participation in state planning efforts.

**Our expanded outreach efforts** will reach thousands and build awareness of conservation opportunities across Oregon's high desert.

**Stewardship initiatives** focused on spring restoration, fence removal, invasive species control and fire recovery processes will support desert health while engaging over 300 volunteers in field work.

Thank you for your continued support. Together, we are the voice of Oregon's desert.

**The more voices we bring together on behalf of our deserts,  
the stronger our message and the greater our success. Thank you  
for standing alongside ONDA this year and far into the future.**

## CONTRIBUTE TO OREGON'S NATURAL LEGACY: GET ACTIVE THIS YEAR

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### MAKE A SPECIAL DONATION.

Your generosity speaks to your passionate commitment to conservation. Oregon's high desert is a wilder place because of your vital, sustaining support of ONDA.

[ONDA.org/support](http://ONDA.org/support)

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### GROW OUR COMMUNITY.

Volunteer in the field, office, or at a community event. Attend one of many educational and social events hosted by ONDA. Most importantly, invite a friend to join you in supporting our wild desert.

[ONDA.org/events](http://ONDA.org/events)

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### CONTACT YOUR REPRESENTATIVES.

Do you love the Owyhee Canyonlands, the John Day River, Steens Mountain or the Central Oregon Backcountry? Tell our elected officials why protecting Oregon's high desert is important to you.

[ONDA.org/takeaction](http://ONDA.org/takeaction)

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### NEED MORE IDEAS?

Wear ONDA Gear: [ONDA.org/gear](http://ONDA.org/gear)

View and Share Our Video: [ONDA.org/video](http://ONDA.org/video)

Connect with Our Blog: [ONDA.org/blog](http://ONDA.org/blog)

Stay Involved with It All:

[facebook.com/OregonNaturalDesertAssociation](https://facebook.com/OregonNaturalDesertAssociation)





George Reynolds. Photo © Scott Bowler



Fred Sawyer. Photo © Dave Sherrill

# 2012 HONORS

People are at the heart of what we do. To show our appreciation, each year ONDA honors two individuals who have made outstanding contributions to desert conservation. Selection is never an easy task. Meet our 2012 winners.

**Alice Elshoff Desert Conservation Award:** It is safe to say that no one has introduced more people to the wonders of Oregon's desert than Alice Elshoff. When Alice retired from ONDA's Board of Directors in 2009, we decided to honor her work by naming an award after her. This award annually recognizes an individual who has followed in Alice's footsteps, going above and beyond in his or her contributions to the protection of Oregon's desert.

## ALICE ELSHOFF DESERT CONSERVATION AWARD RECIPIENT: GEORGE REYNOLDS

Many refer to George Reynolds as "Mr. Hart Mountain." This moniker is thanks to George's work to co-found the Friends of Hart Mountain organization and spearhead efforts to remove un-needed fence from Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge. Over the years, George inspired many others to take up the challenge of restoration work at Hart Mountain. Today, thanks to these efforts, flourishing wildlife now move freely across this vast landscape. Thank you, George, for your inspirational work.

**Volunteer of the Year Award:** ONDA is graced with hundreds of volunteers willing to take on any challenge. Each year, ONDA selects one exceptional volunteer who generously donates his or her time and talents to advance ONDA's mission to receive this special award.

## VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD RECIPIENT: FRED SAWYER

Fred Sawyer has been volunteering with ONDA for about as long as ONDA has had volunteers. He has participated in countless field work trips, read every legal brief, and gone out on his own to inventory Wilderness Study Areas. In addition to all of that, Fred's enthusiasm and dedication exemplify the spirit of ONDA volunteers. Thank you, Fred, for all of your contributions.

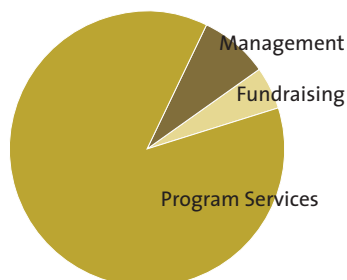
## 2012 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

It is often said that there is strength in numbers. At ONDA, we know this is true. It's the thousands of voices in support of desert conservation that make ONDA's story and our strength. Every donation large and small, every volunteer hour spent removing fence and stuffing envelopes, and each and every call or letter adds up to an incredible investment in ensuring a healthy and promising future for Oregon's desert landscapes, waterways and wildlife.

Your commitment and gifts empowered hundreds of people to care for and restore our desert, supported legal work that improves habitat for sage-grouse and steelhead, and kept the protection of desert wildlands a priority for our elected officials. The following information reflects the scope of your giving and the programs these contributions support.

### EXPENSE

Program services	87%
Management	8%
Fundraising	5%



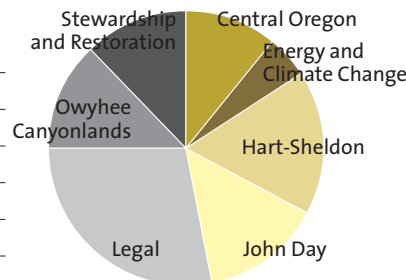
Assets	
Total Current Assets	\$752,105
Total Fixed Assets	\$43,904
Total Other Assets	\$179,906
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$975,985</b>

Liabilities & Equity	
Total Liabilities	\$14,641
Total Equity	\$961,344
Total Liabilities & Equity	\$975,925
<b>2012 Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$1,140,378</b>

Financials reflect ONDA's fiscal year ending December 31, 2012.  
Audited financial statements provided by Kerkock, Katter & Nelson, LLC.

### SPENDING BY PROGRAM

Central Oregon	11%
Energy and Climate Change	5%
Hart-Sheldon	17%
John Day	14%
Legal	28%
Owyhee Canyonlands	13%
Stewardship and Restoration	12%





#### STAFF

**Brent Fenty**  
Executive Director  
**Barksdale Brown**  
General Manager  
**Allison Crotty**  
Development Director  
**Nick Dobric**  
Hart-Sheldon Program Manager  
**Gena Goodman-Campbell**  
Central Oregon Coordinator  
**Ben Gordon**  
John Day Coordinator  
**Heidi Hagemeier**  
Communications Coordinator  
**Chris Hansen**  
Owyhee Coordinator  
**Corie Harlan**  
Development Coordinator  
**Jefferson Jacobs**  
Stewardship Coordinator  
**Mac Lacy**  
Senior Attorney  
**Dan Morse**  
Conservation Director  
**Michael O'Casey**  
Stewardship Assistant

#### AT LARGE

**Craig Miller**  
GIS Specialist  
**Bill Marlett**  
Senior Conservation Advisor  
**Dana Nehl**  
Bookkeeper  
**Jeremy Fox**  
Desert Trail Coordinator

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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**Ken Rait**, Portland  
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**Jack Sterne**, Bend  
**Chris Van Dyke**, Tumalo  
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*Clockwise from top left:*  
*Coyote. Photo © Marylynne Diggs*  
*Coglan Buttes from Alkali Flat.*  
*Photo © Greg Burke*  
*Oregon Desert Trail inventory,*  
*Leslie Gulch. Photo © Jeremy Fox*  
*Hart Mountain Last Fence Pull.*  
*Photo © Jim Davis*  
*Owyhee River float trip. Photo*  
*© Leon Werdinger.*

