



PUBLIC LAND LEADERS

= HANDBOOK =

Your guide to sharing your love for public lands with others in your community
and empowering them to speak up for our land

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LET'S GET TOGETHER



Photo: Nate Willson

Getting people together to talk about public lands doesn't need to be an overwhelming or time consuming task. Plan whatever feels most comfortable to you. Your get-together doesn't have to be formal. What's important is to share with others why public lands matter to you, and ask them to join you in speaking up for our lands.

Some ideas for how to get people together to talk about public lands:

- o Treat your friends to beers and snacks after a day enjoying public lands
- o Get pastries and coffee or take-out lunch as a treat for your co-workers
- o Have a barbeque for friends, neighbors, or family
- o Host a wine and cheese party
- o Invite friends and family on a hike and take a picnic lunch along to share

Make it happen!

Once you've decided what you want to do, create a list of people to invite. Focus on those who probably enjoy and care about public lands, but might not know that much about Oregon's high desert or may not be aware of the threats to their favorite places.

Next, invite people to join you via email, text, personal phone calls, or good old-fashioned snail mail. Make sure the purpose of the get-together is clear in your invitation ("Please join me for beers and an informative discussion about public lands") so that people know what to expect. Here are a few details to consider including in your invitation:

- Are you encouraging your guests to bring others?
- Are children and/or pets allowed?
- What type of food and/or beverages are you providing?
- What do people need to bring (water, sunscreen, hiking shoes)?
- Directions, parking, and carpool information as needed

Finally, send Gena an email at gena@onda.org to share your plans.

She will mail you a check to cover the costs of your get-together!



Photo: Susanna DeFazio



Photo: Nate Willson



LET'S TALK ABOUT PUBLIC LANDS

You don't need to be an expert to lead a discussion about public lands. Below is a framework for leading a group discussion during your get-together. This does not need to be a formal presentation. While there are no set points that you need to cover or facts you need to convey, you can use the following suggested outline as a guide for thinking through how you'd like the discussion to go and how you will ask people to take action.

WHY WE'RE HERE

This is your opener. Keep it brief but clear so that people know the discussion is shifting to focus on public lands. For example: "I invited you all over tonight to talk about something that is important to me, and that I think/know is important to many of you as well, and that's our public lands."

NOTES:

WHAT PUBLIC LANDS MEAN TO ME

To get the conversation flowing, go into a little more depth about the values that public lands provide in your life, or tell a short story about an experience on public lands that had an impact on you. This doesn't need to be a big inspirational story—though if you have one to share, go ahead!

Here are some questions to consider as you brainstorm:

- *What's the most frequent way you enjoy public lands? Do you hike, camp, hunt, fish, run, boat, climb, ski, or mountain bike? Are public lands important to the success of your business or central to your work?*
- *What is your favorite place on public lands? Why?*
- *Try to imagine losing access to your favorite place, or visiting to find it damaged by development. How would that impact your life?*
- *Does spending time on public lands help you work through personal challenges, or improve your physical or mental health?*

These can also be good questions to pose to others if you want to get them engaged in the discussion.

NOTES:

Don't forget to take pictures! We would love to have photos of your successful get together to show other Public Land Leaders how simple and fun it is to talk with friends about public lands!



TAKE ACTION FOR PUBLIC LANDS

WHAT I'M CONCERNED ABOUT NOW

Pick one of the threats listed on the following page to talk about briefly, or another issue related to public lands that you're concerned about. You can also ask others in your group if they have read about a threat to public lands recently that they're worried about.

For example, you could say something like:

"I was really concerned when I heard about a bill in the Oregon State House this year to study "transferring" our public lands to the states. While this might sound relatively harmless, it could result in tax increases and even the loss of local places that we love, since states like Oregon can't afford to manage more land. Hundreds of Oregonians emailed and called their representatives to urge them to oppose the bill. I was really excited when I heard that this bill was dead, but I know we all have to continue speaking up because this was just one of the first threats to our public lands."

NOTES:

HOW YOU CAN HELP

At the end of your discussion, it's important to convey to your group that we all need to speak up for our public lands, or risk losing the places we care about. Encourage people to look at the list of suggested actions on the back of the brochure to get an idea of the many ways they could take action for public lands. This is a good time to let people know that you'd like them to stay engaged beyond attending your get-together by saying something like, "From time to time I may send you an email about a step you can take to help protect our access to public lands if that's OK with you."

Finally, **make a clear ask for people to take action right away** by encouraging them to take 10 minutes to write a postcard explaining why they care about public lands and want them to stay in public hands (or a more specific message about the threat you're most concerned about). This is a key part of your get-together, so it's important that you be assertive and clearly ask everyone to join you in stepping up to take action. Most people need to be asked to take this important but simple step, and they are much more likely to take action if they're asked to by someone they trust.

Postcards can be addressed to one of Oregon's senators, your member of Congress, or another leader whose decisions impact public lands, such as Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke (find contact info on Page 7). If you'd like, you can hand out the letter writing worksheets for people to use, but make sure they get their postcard written and hand it off to you before they leave—we all know how easy it is to forget to take that final step!

OUR LAND UNDER THREAT



Photo: Sage Brown

1. “Local Control” schemes

For years, anti-government radicals have encouraged state governments to seize American public lands. Right now, some state legislators in the West (including here in Oregon) are pushing Congress to hand over land that belongs to all Americans. However, state governments simply can’t afford to manage millions of acres of land, and would inevitably be forced to sell off portions of our land in order to pay for costs like firefighting and trail maintenance. We already have a voice at the local level to help shape how our public lands are managed through legally required public input processes. “Local control” schemes would take the opportunity for input away from everyone who does not live in the same state or county as the places that they care about.

2. Removing protection for national monuments

In December 2017 President Donald Trump dismantled the spectacular Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monuments in southern Utah, fulfilling the wishes of extremists in Congress who have long pushed for stripping protections from America’s public lands. 2.8 million people across the country made their voices heard during the administration’s comment period, with the vast majority telling the administration to leave our national monuments alone. In spite of this outcry, Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke recommended downsizing four national monuments and changing several others to allow for more development. Southern Oregon’s beloved Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument has already been made a target, and could be next.

3. Budget cuts to public lands

President Trump’s recent budget proposal contains significant cuts to the agencies that care for our public lands. Land managers already lack the resources they need to maintain facilities like trails and campgrounds, and these proposed cuts would make things even worse at a time when use of public lands is increasing.

4. Eroding protection for sage grouse and other sensitive species

The Trump Administration is considering making changes to sage grouse conservation plans like the one here in Oregon that was developed through years of collaboration between the state, conservationists, ranchers, and other stakeholders. These plans were developed to avoid an endangered species listing for sage grouse, and are an unprecedented act of cooperation in land management. Undermining these plans would put sage-grouse recovery in jeopardy, and erode the willingness of diverse parties to work together in the future.

STAND FOR YOUR LAND!

While the threats to our public lands are more real than ever, we can defend our lands and ensure a healthier future for them if we speak up together. Our elected leaders and the people they appoint to make decisions that impact our public lands need to hear from YOU. Whether you live in Burns, Bend, or Beaverton, you have a valuable perspective on our lands and how they enhance the lives of Oregonians every day.



NEXT STEPS

Photo: Jeremy Fox

AFTER YOUR GET TOGETHER, PLEASE RUN THROUGH THIS QUICK CHECKLIST:

- ☐ **Send your completed postcards back to ONDA** in the stamped envelope included in your toolkit. We will stamp and mail them to your target for you!
- ☐ **Send Gena an email at gena@onda.org** with a quick summary of your get-together and a few photos. Please try to answer the following questions if relevant:
 - o How many people attended your get-together?
 - o How did it go?
 - o Were there any questions or ideas that came up that you'd like us to follow up with you about?
 - o What do you think was the most successful part of your get-together?
 - o Anything you would do differently next time?
 - o Any tips for other public land leaders?
- ☐ **Send a thank you email to your group**, share an opportunity for further engagement, and give people an opportunity to sign up for ONDA emails. (Gena will send you a draft email to work from)

STAY IN TOUCH!

From time to time, we will send you updates on threats to our public lands or ways that people can take action. Please consider forwarding these updates along to the people who attended your get-together and encouraging them to stay active and continue speaking up for the amazing public lands in Oregon's high desert. And if you have ideas for how people can take action for public lands, please get in touch with us!

THANK YOU FOR BEING A PUBLIC LAND LEADER!





SHOW UP, SPEAK UP, STAND UP FOR YOUR LANDS

Senator Ron Wyden:

221 Dirksen Senate Office Building

Washington, DC 20510

(202) 224-5244

Find out when Senator Wyden will be in your area:

<https://www.wyden.senate.gov/oregon/events>

Senator Jeff Merkley:

313 Hart Senate Office Building

Washington, DC 20510

(202) 224-3753

Find out when Senator Merkley will be in your area:

<https://www.merkley.senate.gov/events/town-halls>

Find your representatives in the US House and the Oregon State Legislature:

<https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/FindYourLegislator/leg-districts.html>

Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke

Department of the Interior

1849 C Street, N.W.

Washington DC 20240

feedback@ios.doi.gov

Tips for calling your elected leaders:

- Take the time to write out the points you want to get across and practice reading them out loud.
- Introduce yourself by saying your name and where you live so that they know you're a constituent.
- Share a personal story, and/or tell them why public lands are important to people where you live.
- Reference a specific bill or issue you're concerned about or just say "thank you for standing up for our public lands."