



ANNUAL REPORT

2017

WORKING TO
PROTECT, DEFEND AND RESTORE
OREGON'S HIGH DESERT

Dear Desert Supporter,

With sweat dripping from their brows and pride welling in their hearts, ONDA volunteers pulled the last stretches of barbed-wire fence out of the cow-free portion of the Steens Mountain Wilderness on a hot mid-August day in 2017.



Brent Fenty

This accomplishment was only possible thanks to efforts in the late 1990s, when ONDA members and others worked together to create the Steens Act, a federal law that ultimately protected this area as Wilderness. And it was bolstered by an important legal win in 2017, which stopped inappropriate energy development on the mountain that would have compromised all the benefits of protecting and restoring Steens. Thanks to your support and decades of persistence, this stretch of the Steens joins nearby Hart Mountain as one of the largest fence-free, livestock-free areas in the United States.

With your enduring commitment to Oregon's high desert, ONDA protects the lands, waters, wildlife and experiences that we all cherish.

You keep salmon and steelhead swimming up the John Day River every year, as they have for millennia. You ensure that the Owyhee's rugged red rock and craggy cliffs provide home to bighorn sheep and solitude to those of us who like to wander this wild area. Thanks to you, sage-grouse mating rituals and pronghorn migrations that were once more common across America still take place in the seemingly endless expanses of sagebrush steppe in the Greater Hart-Sheldon Region.

You've given ONDA an exceptionally effective toolkit to keep the wild character of the high desert intact.

Conservation advocates can keep wild areas whole. Volunteers can plant trees and shrubs to restore places that need a boost to become healthy once again. And, when we vigorously defend that which we have protected and restored, we can stand up for voiceless places. Together, we realize our responsibility to leave some of the world wild.

Thank you for this tremendous gift.

For a wild desert,



Brent Fenty
Executive Director

Cover photo: Sutton Mountain by Jim Davis



Keeping Water Cold in an Era of Climate Change:

One creek at a time, you are making waterways in the John Day River Basin more resilient to the impacts of a warmer, drier climate and giving salmon and the people who depend on them a fighting chance.



Protecting Steelhead Falls: Supporters of the proposed Whychus-Deschutes Wilderness Area fought back against a bill introduced by Representative Greg Walden that would have released part of the Steelhead Falls Wilderness Study Area without also designating the remainder of the area as Wilderness.



Pushing for a Better Inventory of Wilderness-Quality Lands:

Thanks to your persistence, the Lakeview District of the Bureau of Land Management recognized nearly 200,000 additional acres as having wilderness characteristics – a key step to seeing these lands managed in a way that preserves their wildness.

YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2017



Introducing New People to the High Desert: ONDA's completely refreshed website showcases the phenomenal beauty of the high desert. It's easier for supporters like to you to keep up with ONDA activities, and it's more welcoming for new people who are just beginning to get to know Oregon's high desert. Visit ONDA.org.



Keeping Steens Safe for Wildlife: After decades of volunteer effort, the Steens Mountain Wilderness is protected from the threat of energy development and free of unneeded barbed wire, giving the wild animals who live here the safe habitat they need to thrive.



Getting Our Leaders to Listen: More than 500 Oregonians attended listening sessions held statewide – including Malheur County – to stand strong for the Owyhee. We delivered their heartfelt postcards directly to Senators Wyden and Merkley to remind them of the hundreds of thousands of people who are waiting to see the Owyhee protected.



Connecting People with Place: More than 1,500 people added "experience the Oregon Desert Trail" to their bucket list in 2017. Whether they were inspired by one of our many live events or the comprehensive resources available on ONDA.org, you're helping outdoor enthusiasts fall in love with this landscape.

PROTECT

PHOTO: GREG BURKE

You advanced grassroots campaigns to protect five million acres in the John Day River Basin, Greater Hart-Sheldon Region, Owyhee Canyonlands, Central Oregon Backcountry and Steens Mountain.



“This kind of grassroots advocacy is effective because it sparks conversations, informs, and educates.”

JEREMY FOX
PUBLIC LAND LEADER

RALLYING PUBLIC LANDS ADVOCATES

Advocates from the Pacific Coast to the Idaho border spoke up loudly and often on important public lands issues, creating a chorus that cannot be ignored. You bolstered ONDA’s strong defense against the administration’s attempts to undermine a collaborative agreement to protect greater sage-grouse and you stood firm against efforts to diminish our National Monuments.

RESULTS

10,779 MESSAGES DELIVERED

Signatures. Postcards. Phone calls. Email after email. Elected officials and agency staff heard loud and clear: any effort to undermine public lands will be challenged!

1 BAD BILL STOPPED

Your outcry stopped a bill that would have “studied” the merits of selling your public lands to the highest bidder.

325 ADVOCATES CREATED

Through the Public Land Leaders program, you empowered new advocates for public lands who teach their own friends, family members and colleagues how to defend the wild places they love.

DEFEND



PHOTO: DEVLIN HOLLOWAY

You protected Steens Mountain from industrial-scale energy development, preserving the region's important wildlife corridors.



"I support ONDA on a monthly basis as a way I can keep in touch with the root of my conservation ethic and allow for their strong advocacy work to keep going. I count on them!"

TAYLOR GOFORTH
SAGE SOCIETY
MEMBER

GIVING WILDLIFE A PLACE TO THRIVE

ONDA's steadfast supporters protected habitat and the wilderness experience on Steens Mountain, and all throughout the high desert. ONDA emerged victorious from a decade-long legal effort to keep Steens Mountain wild when a federal court ruled that the Department of the Interior had failed to consider the impacts of energy development on the greater sage-grouse's critical winter habitat. You also protected Steens from off-road driving and creation of new roads. Desert-wide, you're fighting back against attempts to gut or invalidate the federal plans to conserve Oregon's sage-grouse population.

RESULTS

ZERO INDUSTRIAL ENERGY ON STEENS

You secured a final court victory in our long-running case to stop industrial-scale energy development on Steens Mountain.

565,000 ACRES OF CRITICAL SAGE-GROUSE HABITAT MONITORED... TWICE!

By observing on-the-ground sage-grouse habitat conditions each spring and fall, ONDA can hold land managers accountable for maintaining the habitat conditions that this imperiled bird needs to survive.

RESTORE



PHOTO: SAGE BROWN

In the John Day River Basin, you fortified the region's lands and waterways for a changing climate, to the benefit of area residents and wildlife alike.



"I've been inspired to learn more about land management and conservation from hiking the ODT. I like how the trail serves as a springboard to get people – like me – involved."

KAT HAMPTON
OREGON DESERT TRAIL
THRU-HIKER

GETTING HANDS-ON IN THE HIGH DESERT

You improved fish and wildlife habitat all throughout the high desert. You reestablished conditions that will invite beavers to return to the Malheur National Forest, pulled fences in order to give migrating animals safe passage in the Oregon Badlands and the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, maintained hiking trails on the Fremont National Forest and on Steens Mountain that had been unattended for decades, and a whole lot more.

The best part? Each one of the 438 volunteers who lent a hand in this work gained a new appreciation for the unique ecology of the high desert.

RESULTS

56 ARTIFICIAL BEAVER DAMS BUILT

Made of wooden posts and woven plant materials, this nature-mimicking technique creates the wet meadows and lush streamside habitat that fish and wildlife need while beaver populations rebound.

11,900 NATIVE TREES AND SHRUBS PLANTED

Planting trees along critical desert waterways reduces erosion, lowers water temperatures, and provides the food and building materials for beaver.

97,000 ACRES MADE SAFER FOR WILDLIFE

After two decades of volunteer effort, the entire cow-free portion of Steens Mountain Wilderness is now free of unneeded barbed wire.

OREGON NATURAL DESERT ASSOCIATION

STAFF

Jeremy Austin
Hart-Sheldon
Coordinator

Barksdale Brown
General Manager

Allison Crotty
Development Director

Brent Fenty
Executive Director

Lisa Foster
Development
Coordinator

**Gena Goodman-
Campbell**
Public Lands
Coordinator

Ben Gordon
Stewardship Director
John Day Coordinator

Corinne Handelman
Outreach Coordinator

Corie Harlan
Owyhee Coordinator

Jefferson Jacobs
Riparian Restoration
Coordinator

Lindsay Jones
Membership
Coordinator

Mac Lacy
Senior Attorney

Dan Morse
Conservation Director

Michael O'Casey
Stewardship
Coordinator

Renee Patrick
Oregon Desert Trail
Coordinator

Lace Thornberg
Communications
Manager

AT LARGE

Bill Marlett
Senior Conservation
Advisor

Craig Miller
GIS Specialist

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ray Hartwell
Bend
President

Allison Mace
Portland
Vice President

Justin Rae
Bend
Treasurer

Gilly Lyons
Portland
Secretary

Kirsten Blackburn
Bend

Bob DenOuden
Bend

Helen Harbin
Bend

Teague Hatfield
Bend

Alan Hickenbottom
Portland

Ken Rait
Portland

Chris Van Dyke
Tumalo

OFFICES

50 SW Bond Street,
Suite 4
Bend, OR 97702
(541) 330-2638

917 SW Oak Street,
Suites 419 & 300
Portland, OR 97205
legal:
(503) 525-0193
outreach:
(503) 703-1006
www.ONDA.org



VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR: **BONNIE OLIN**

Read Bonnie Olin's book, *The Owyhee River Journals*, and you'll wonder when you, too, might be able to scramble through the West Little Owyhee, or sit atop a rock buttress and take in a tremendous view of the canyon and undulating uplands beyond.

In 2017, Bonnie crisscrossed the state speaking about the region, her adventures and the need to protect this place. A born storyteller, Bonnie's eyes literally sparkle when she relates the natural, geologic and cultural history of the Owyhee Canyonlands. Bonnie didn't forcefully advocate for a single point of view, but gently suggested factors one might consider caring about and matter-of-factly noted threats the regions faces. She is a strong ambassador and an effective voice for the conservation of this vast, biologically rich region.

Thanks to Bonnie's passion and dedication, hundreds of people have become more deeply invested in securing permanent protection for the Owyhee.



ALICE ELSHOFF DESERT CONSERVATION AWARD: **JULIE WEIKEL**

Few people appreciate the raw wildness that defines the Owyhee as deeply as Julie Weikel does. And, fewer still have put their heart, soul and career on the line the way Julie has in order to protect it.

As a deeply rooted life-long resident of the Great Basin, she possesses an intimate knowledge of the people and this place that made her an endlessly insightful board member. Julie knew she was uniquely suited to represent the viewpoints of two camps – ranchers and conservationists – who share many common values, but don't always see eye-to-eye and her perspective strengthened ONDA's work to protect the Owyhee at every juncture.

With her generous spirit and infectious zeal for pure adventure, she's inspired hundreds of people to appreciate the Owyhee almost as deeply as she does.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Your dedicated generosity supports each bit of progress made, each milestone reached, and every accomplishment realized. Thank you. The following information reflects the scope of your giving and the essential programs these contributions support.

Assets

Total Current Assets	\$1,947,141
Total Fixed Assets	\$47,875
Total Other Assets	\$206,144
Total Assets	\$2,201,160

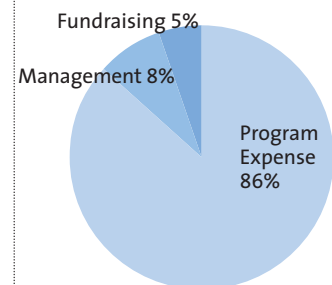
Liabilities & Equity

Total Liabilities	\$18,570
Total Equity	\$2,182,590
Total Liabilities & Equity	\$2,201,160

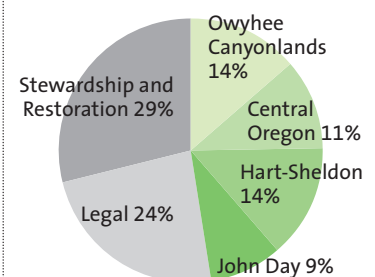
Revenue

2017 Total Revenue	\$1,741,868
--------------------	-------------

Expenses



Spending by Program



OUR VISION

We envision a high desert in Oregon where eight million acres of public lands are conserved to ensure that fish and wildlife thrive and wild places exist for all people to treasure and explore, now and always.



Steens Mountain Wilderness Last Fence Pull. Photo: Sage Brown

FOR 2018, OUR KEY GOALS INCLUDE:

Challenging any effort to undermine our public lands.

Public lands provide us all with tremendous benefits. We will advocate passionately for sound policies to preserve our unique legacy of public lands.

Protecting habitat for Greater sage-grouse, pronghorn and more. As land managers develop plans and policies that will guide land use for decades to come, we will advocate for habitat and wildlands protection.

Listening to diverse perspectives to conserve wild places. Many communities value eastern Oregon's inspiring public lands, like the Owyhee Canyonlands and Sutton Mountain. We will work to give everyone who cares about this landscape chances to be heard and a role in finding thoughtful solutions.

YOU CREATE A THRIVING DESERT

GIVE: Every contribution keeps Oregon's high desert wild. [ONDA.org/give](https://onda.org/give)

INVITE: Take a friend on a hike or to an ONDA event. [ONDA.org/events](https://onda.org/events)

VOLUNTEER: Whether in the field or in the office, ONDA offers many opportunities to support the wild places you love. [ONDA.org/volunteer](https://onda.org/volunteer)

SPEAK UP: Your voice is critical in propelling desert conservation forward. [ONDA.org/takeaction](https://onda.org/takeaction)

THANK YOU

for your enduring commitment to the lands, waterways and wildlife of Oregon's high desert.