

OREGON NATURAL DESERT ASSOCIATION

DESERT RAMBLINGS

FALL + WINTER 2019 | VOLUME 32 • NO. 2



TRIBAL STEWARDS

NATIVE YOUNG ADULTS PRIMED FOR
CAREERS IN NATURAL RESOURCES



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OVERHEARD

“Just add water and a palate of color paints the land, one only has to look closely to see it teem with life ... every season brings change to delight in.”

SUSAN LONG

on why she loves the desert

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YOU SPOKE UP FOR THE OWYHEE

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Cover: Mo Moody and Dakota Pablo at work on the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. Photo: Sage Brown

ON ONDA'S BLOG

ANTI-PUBLIC LANDS ACTIVIST
NOW RUNNING BLM

AN OWYHEE MIS-ADVENTURE
INSPIRES LIFE-LONG MISSION

For these stories and more, visit ONDA.org/blog.

Going the Distance

Dear friend of Oregon's desert,

Intense temperatures. Rattlesnakes. Rugged terrain and isolation. Rife with obstacles, hiking the full 750 miles of the Oregon Desert Trail in one season is an epic feat of endurance that only a few among us will ever attempt.

The ambitious landscape-scale public lands conservation that Oregon Natural Desert Association supporters take on has a lot in common with a long, difficult hike. No matter if your speed is epic backcountry adventure, weekend warrior volunteering, armchair advocacy or annual giving, ONDA is grateful for your praise-worthy stamina, endurance and tenacity in protecting Oregon's desert.

The past few years have been full of defensive maneuvering as you have spoken out against increasingly bold attacks on public lands. This summer, we've seen politicians aiming to dismantle the Endangered Species Act and a long-time advocate for selling public lands appointed to lead the Bureau of Land Management. Through your tireless engagement and steady financial support, we are pushing back effectively. Your support brings vigilant watchdogging and compelling scientific and legal arguments that put a halt to many of these threats.

Thankfully, conservation work, like long-distance hiking, offers many rewards along the way. In the midst of our defensive efforts, some significant conservation opportunities are coming to the fore after decades of advocacy and outreach.

Senator Merkley has crafted a solid, broadly-supported proposal to protect 58,000 acres on Sutton Mountain near the John Day River. Senator Wyden has convened a dialogue about the future of the Owyhee Canyonlands, where ONDA, conservation partners and many others are sitting down with local community members to craft a vision for the future.

Your diligence and enduring commitment to Oregon's high desert has created these bright spots on the conservation landscape. Thanks to you, ONDA charges ahead to meet each new challenge that arises. Conservation work at this scale — across large landscapes and toward enduring protection — requires us to adopt a distance-hiking mentality: take one step at a time and have the stamina and determination needed to reach your ultimate goal.

Your dedication propels our collective journey to protect and defend Oregon's desert ever forward. Thank you.

Together for a wild desert,



Ryan Houston
Executive Director



A Forever Wild Sutton Mountain

by Ben Gordon, John Day River Basin Coordinator

You've seen Sutton Mountain if you've ever visited the Painted Hills. The mountain provides a stunning natural backdrop for these intriguing geologic features that lie within the John Day Fossil Beds National Monument. This rugged mountain is also key habitat for pronghorn, elk and mule deer and a wide range of other wildlife. And, in 2019, efforts to protect this iconic landmark of the John Day River Basin took a long stride forward.

In May, U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley of Oregon introduced the Sutton Mountain and Painted Hills Area Preservation and Economic Enhancement Act. Senator Merkley brought this legislation forward at the behest of local community members who are eager to tap into the economic potential of ecotourism and preserve the wild character of the public lands in their backyard. After Travel Oregon included the Painted Hills in its "Seven Wonders of Oregon" campaign, visitation has grown to nearly 75,000 people annually. Now the prospect before local communities is how to keep these visitors in the area overnight or longer in a way that gives an economic boost to small towns in need of new, non-extractive sources of revenue and still ensures the sanctity of the region's wild spaces.

A strong protective designation for Sutton would conserve 58,000 acres of the region's compelling public lands, while raising the profile of Sutton Mountain among prospective visitors. Designation would create an avenue for the BLM to develop trails and other recreational enhancements where appropriate, yet still preserve the alluring wild and remote character of the area. In addition to the dramatic expansion of protected wildlands in the area, Senator Merkley's act would also convey a parcel of land just under 2,000 acres to the City of Mitchell. The city could use this land to develop visitor amenities like a campground and interpretive center that would provide much needed revenue for community services. This is a win-win opportunity to protect lands with high conservation value and provide an economic engine for the local community.

As Wheeler County resident Bob Mair said, "Our community has worked for years to develop a vision for how the proposal to protect Sutton Mountain and convey the Golden Triangle to the City of Mitchell will improve our economic future. With Senator Merkley's leadership we are one step closer to realizing this dream."

Securing strong and enduring protection for public lands can take years, if not decades. Thanks to the passionate support of ONDA's members, local engagement and the guidance of Senator Merkley, Sutton Mountain stands a very real chance of achieving its permanently protected status. That will be a resounding eastern Oregon conservation success, and, it will have been earned through dogged determination and finding common ground — the ONDA way. ♦

Hiking in Black Canyon provides an intimate look at what makes Sutton Mountain so worthy of protection. *Photo: Jim Davis*





ONDA volunteers have installed dozens of beaver dam analogs in Hay Creek. *Photo: Maria Johnson*

Local Cooling

Your gifts add up to a drop in stream temperatures

by Jefferson Jacobs, Riparian Restoration Coordinator

Climate change. It's an insurmountable problem, right?

Not if you ask the volunteers who are restoring places like Hay Creek. They know a secret. There is a way to work in concert with natural systems to restore local environments to withstand the impacts of climate change.

Hay Creek, located within Cottonwood Canyon State Park in the John Day River Basin, offers a prime example of this principle.

Due to a cascade of events starting 150 years ago, the native fish that remain in Hay Creek today can just barely survive. First, fur trappers all but wiped out Oregon's beaver population in the early 1800s. This action eliminated a critical ecosystem engineer and radically diminished the amount of water stored in the watershed. Then, with the advent of settlement, grazing and agriculture, the stream lost its native vegetation cover and straightened into a deeply eroded narrow channel. With only a fraction of its original flow of water, no shade and a lack of habitat diversity within the stream, Hay Creek is stressed, with little room to give.

Add rising water temperatures and changing precipitation regimes fueled by climate change and you can see how this desert waterway and all of the fish and wildlife that depend upon it are at grave risk.

Thankfully, encouraging research conducted in eastern Oregon watersheds shows that establishing a mature and diverse streamside community of shade-providing trees and shrubs will drop water temperatures significantly, offering a direct counter measure to climate change. Planting streamside vegetation also provides another critically important benefit as it allows beaver — the real restoration experts — to return.

Research has shown that creeks that host healthy beaver populations and the abundant dams they create can store as much as 200 times more water than beaver-less streams. That means with continued plantings and restoration to promote beaver activity, Hay Creek will hold a ready and abundant supply of cool water, even in dry summer months. Each dam that ONDA volunteers can encourage will act as a fresh underwater spring and drop the temperature of the stream to one in which native fish can not only survive, but thrive.

Thanks to your investment in restoring desert waterways, Oregon's high desert will benefit from a self-sustaining system where natural processes can adapt along with the continuing changes. ♦

Making Your Case

Wins on Steens and in Salem ensure that agencies hear your concerns

by Mac Lacy, Senior Attorney

Open spaces and wildlife in the high desert are safer, thanks to two recent court victories.

Keeping Steens safe from motorized disruption

In April, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit ordered the Bureau of Land Management to redo its motorized travel plan for the mountain because the agency had failed to gather the necessary information to ensure meaningful public participation and an informed agency decision.

Steens Mountain is a half-million acre, congressionally protected landscape prized for its roadless areas and wildlands essential to the survival of the imperiled Greater Sage-Grouse. The court held that the BLM must thoroughly survey existing route conditions on the mountain, provide clear reasons for its travel decisions, and conduct a more detailed analysis of environmental impacts. Federal regulations require BLM to “minimize” impacts to soils, watersheds, and other resources, for each route designated in a travel plan. The Steens plan has been in dispute since first released in 2007, although court injunctions have protected 121 miles of disputed, largely nonexistent routes from destructive driving and maintenance since that time.

BLM’s plan would have created hundreds of miles of routes that are not used, do not lead anywhere, and cannot be found on the ground. Allowing driving and maintenance in these places would have threatened wilderness values and intact sagebrush plant communities.

The ruling affirms two decades of citizen-led efforts to demonstrate the importance of Steens Mountain and ensures that the mountain will continue to be protected until BLM, working with the public, develops a more reasonable proposal.



Thanks to your support, ONDA preserves habitat, fragile wilderness areas and transparency in government decision making. You defend Oregon’s desert against poor land management decisions. *Photo: Steve Loebner*

Protecting your say in where Oregon gets its energy

In August, the Oregon Supreme Court invalidated a set of controversial rules adopted by the Oregon Energy Facility Siting Council (EFSC) that had curtailed public participation in permitting decisions for industrial-scale energy facilities.

ONDA joined Friends of the Columbia Gorge and other conservation organizations in court back in 2017 to challenge EFSC’s move to curtail public participation in their permitting decisions. Ignoring calls for more transparency, the state agency rules hid decisions to expand power plants from the public and restricted the public’s right to challenge the council’s permitting decisions.

Oregonians want to be engaged in the effort to clean up our state’s energy system, and rules that limited, rather than encouraged, involvement are out of step with public interest. Prevailing in this case will lead to immediate impacts. For example, the controversial Summit Ridge wind project proposed for a canyon rim overlooking the Lower Deschutes, a Wild and Scenic River, will receive a more meaningful public review. ♦



ONDA'S TRIBAL STEWARDS PROGRAM: A SUMMER OF LEARNING. Over the course of eight weeks in the field, these young adults learned about wildlife biology, explored wild landscapes throughout the high desert, gained practical job experience and received mentorship from 30 different professionals working in natural resource conservation. *All photos: Sage Brown*

One Day in the Desert

ONDA's restoration program takes on a new dimension as Native young adults participate in a summer-long career mentorship program

by Lace Thornberg, Communications Manager

6:19 am

"Ms. Thornberg, we rise with the sun here. And the sun is ... UP!"

The tone of Mo's voice as it filtered through my tent was equal parts friendly, serious and chiding.

The next sound I heard, as I strode across a broad grassy meadow looking for coffee, was traditional music of the Warm Springs tribe, played through small speakers set on the back of a pickup truck tailgate. Here Tiyana greets me with a broad smile and the words "Níix maitsí." Seeing my blank face she adds, "That means 'Good morning.'" My not-yet-cafeinated brain wasn't wired to expect Ichishkiin, a dialect of the Sahaptin language spoken fluently by fewer than 50 people.

Dawn had broken, the sun was warming Logan Valley and my immersion into ONDA's newly launched tribal stewards program was well underway.

7:10 am

After stretching and a light breakfast, program participants Monique Moody, Dakota Pablo and CeCe Andy are seated around a picnic table, notebooks open and pens in hand. These young adults listen intently as Tiyana Casey, the tribal stewards program crew leader, outlines the various requirements for and merits of applying for government jobs.

Her lesson is peppered with thoughtful advice to help them become efficient job-seekers. "Keep a full resume with every job you've ever had," Tiyana advised, "but make a copy that you tailor for each position you apply for, highlighting only what is relevant to that role."

When she said, "You can use me as a reference," it felt more like "I expect you to" and seemed to carry the implication "don't let me down." After four weeks together day in and day out, she was clearly invested in their futures and had high expectations for them.

9:25 am

After nearly an hour of bumpity-bump-bump bumping our way down dusty gravel roads, we reach the jumping off point for our daytime project, a spot on the banks of the Malheur River. It's still early in the day, but the temperature has already scratched its way up into the 90s. But, since we are about to start walking up the river, at least our feet would be staying cool.

Our mission: count every Chinook salmon we come across.

Historically, generations of Indigenous families living in this area gathered roots, hunted and fished throughout the Logan Valley, which holds the Malheur River headwaters. Over the past seven years, ONDA has assisted the Burns Paiute Tribe in their efforts to restore these streams — work that will enable tribal members to resume traditional practices and use the culturally important resources found within the area.

Today, we're checking to see how many of the 100 Chinook salmon which were released into this tributary in June, specifically to support the annual tribal fishing event, are still in the creek.

10:42 am

"There!"

ONDA's stewardship director Ben Gordon spotted our first salmon of the day and, a silver instant after his excited cry and point, the fish was out of sight again. Rebecca Fritz, fisheries biologist for the Burns Paiute natural resources department, thrusts a GPS device into Mo's hands to collect this data point. CeCe and Mo quickly develop an efficient data collection system, with one of them reading out GPS coordinates while the other records the location in the data form and jots down an "S" to indicate a live salmon to a "C" to denote a carcass.

Mo grew up on the Warm Springs reservation,



MEET TIYANA CASEY

ONDA was extremely fortunate to recruit Tiyana Casey (Wasco) to serve as crew leader for the inaugural year of our tribal stewards program. Trained as a geologist, with a passion for Traditional Ecological Knowledge, Tiyana had tremendous knowledge to share with program participants. Having worked for several strong non-profits, including Native American Youth and Family Center and Wisdom of the Elders, and participated in many unique efforts, from developing lesson plans about Indigenous first foods, to creating films about climate change, to testifying before U.S. House of Representatives, she had unique insights to add as a career mentor.

At summer's start, we asked Tiyana if there was a particular role, skill or experience that she thought would help her most. Here's what she had to say:

"It is always a pleasant surprise when I realize that nearly each chapter of my life's experience has provided some learning which strengthens my interactions with young people. From the deeply personal to the most professional experiences, I strive to keep that momentum going so that I am always better than I was yesterday. These youth are most deserving of that because not everyone in their lives is able to contribute that attentiveness. ... My greatest teachers have been children and elders. They have taught me how to listen, how to speak, and how to see."

You can read our full Q&A with Tiyana on ONDA's blog. *Photo: Sage Brown*

attended Chemawa Indian School in Salem, and is currently majoring in American Indian Studies at Haskell Indian Nations University. Mo is serious and sincere, with a sassiness that reveals itself gradually.

CeCe, who is Wasco and Yakama, is finishing up her generals at Central Oregon Community College. She is the old soul in this group of 20-year-olds, and Tiyana calls her 'Kuta' — Ichishkiin for grandmother.

Noon

We've been wading through ankle- to calf-deep water up until now, but around noon we come to a four-foot deep pool and find several salmon taking advantage of the colder, higher water. "Hey, two more!" someone cried. Then, "Another one!" In all, six salmon rush past us.

With all the salmon flashing about, this bend in the Malheur River feels like the right spot for our lunch break. Plus, Dakota could use a chance to dry out. Rebecca, who is beyond enthusiastic about luring these stewards into fisheries management, had convinced Dakota to don a snorkel and mask and take a look around underwater and his jeans and work shirt are soaked through.

Dakota is Pima and Navajo. He met Monique at Chemawa and they have been sweethearts ever since. Dakota also attends Haskell, where he is studying sociology. His trademark is a wry sense of humor with deadpan delivery that makes people smile whenever it is deployed.

2 pm

At a gravel bar, we encounter a baby Spotted Sandpiper. This adorable wisp of a creature, seemingly just one downy feather connecting its small head to its almost invisible feet, stops us all in our tracks. We watch the wisp dart across the bar, sorry to have frightened it by stumbling into its quiet home.

4:40 – 5:30 pm

After wading and hiking several more miles, we arrive back at camp, wolf down some watermelon and cherries, and hand a pair of binoculars back and forth as we watch a herd of elk descend into Logan Valley from the hillsides above. Our break is short, as it's soon time to start preparing dinner which we'll have later, after our field work is done.

7 pm

"Who's going to be the lead?" Carter Crouch, a wildlife biologist with the Burns Paiute Tribe asks.

CeCe volunteers and begins striding out across the marshy field we are standing in. I've been handed a stack of lightweight metal thingies and ten balls of peanut butter and grain wrapped in wax paper. I am a bit lost as to why, but this crew has done a small mammal survey once already and they know the drill. They are soon standing ten paces apart in a single file line, ready to set 100 live traps in a 100-by-100 meter grid.

To ensure that any rodents that venture into these live traps do not suffer unduly in mid-day sun, we've waited until the cool of evening to distribute the traps; the crew will be back at dawn to empty them.

8:30 pm

Several deer stride quietly through our campsite just as we sit down to dinner.

Our picnic table is full, with chairs added at each end. Carter has stayed and Eric Hawley, Tribal Chair for the Burns Paiute Tribe, and Trutan Sapp, a Burns Paiute Tribe Youth Opportunity Program member, have joined us. Thanks to the crew's prep work, there is plenty of tasty pasta to go around.

As we all chat, I am reflecting on everything I've learned and experienced today. I feel pleased to see high desert landscapes that have withstood decades of overuse being carefully monitored and restored, but I feel a deeper sense of gratitude to see the restoration that is happening on the personal level. Working this long day together in this quiet valley has offered the instructors and participants alike a chance to immerse in nature and to connect honestly and openly with one another.

Sometime after 10 pm

The Milky Way is indescribably spectacular as the group heads off to bed.

In a few more hours, the Sandhill Cranes will begin squawking with the first rays of morning light and another day of learning and working will unfold.

Poised for growth

All of this work and learning happened on just one day out of 45 days in the field. Before this Logan Valley trip, this crew had already maintained trails in the Ochocos, thinned juniper near Pine Creek and helped band American kestrels on Denny Jones Ranch. In the coming weeks, they would inventory

perimeter fence to keep cattle off of Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge, conduct duck brood surveys on the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, gather culturally significant native plant seeds and construct fence to keep cattle out of streamside habitat on the Malheur National Forest.

ONDA's intent in developing this program was to respond to a need we'd heard from our tribal partners: tribal youth needed more opportunities to gain professional experience in conservation, restoration and natural resource management. As it grows and evolves, this program can also help to restore and deepen young adults' connection to Oregon's high desert landscape and the places, plants and wildlife described in their elders' stories.

This year's participants felt there was a high value in this initiative to get more Native youth involved in natural resources, and all wanted to see it involve more youth in the coming years.

As CeCe said, "It was our land. We can help take care of it now." ♦



ONDA's inaugural crew of tribal stewards (clockwise from top left): crew leader Tiyaana Casey and participants Darin Kisto, Monique Moody, Dakota Pablo and CeCe Andy.

Darin Kisto, a member of the San Carlos Apache Tribe from Arizona, graduated from the Chemawa Indian High School in Salem, Oregon and had been working for Northwest Youth Corps thinning juniper on the Fremont National Forest before joining the tribal stewards crew mid-way through the season.

Photo: Sage Brown

This summer, thousands of people urged the BLM to adopt a resource management plan for the Owyhee that would ensure that these awe-inspiring public lands remain undeveloped and wild. *Photo: Chad Case*



by Corie Harlan, Owyhee Coordinator

As a member of ONDA's passionate, powerful community of desert public land users and advocates, you know what is at stake for conservation in the far southeastern corner of Oregon: the Owyhee Canyonlands — a land shaped by wild rivers, held sacred by the Upper Snake River Tribes and home to 350 species of flora and fauna.

So when a once-in-a-generation opportunity to influence how nearly five million acres of public lands in the Owyhee will be managed for decades, you make the most of it.

This summer, during the 90-day comment period for the Bureau of Land Management's Southeastern Oregon Resource Management Plan, members of ONDA's community sent in a staggering 4,200 individual comments, each one calling for conservation-focused management for this vast and irreplaceable area. Members of like-minded groups added thousands more comments.

Working on your behalf, ONDA submitted a comprehensive 148-page formal comment on this

plan which urged the BLM to manage these lands in a way that would preserve their wild character. Several other conservation groups — representing over 1.8 million individuals — signed on to ONDA's comment letter, further amplifying your voice.

This impressive body of work is yet another way ONDA continues to use all available tools to conserve the Owyhee. The BLM now is tasked with reviewing and responding to the thousands of public comments that were submitted. ONDA remains eager to work with the BLM to correct the significant deficiencies identified by public comments and ensure that the resource management plan for Southeastern Oregon protects important desert resources and fairly allocates and balances recreational and extractive uses.

Today, the Owyhee is an enormous, intact and undeveloped expanse of sagebrush sea and saffron-hued canyonlands. By speaking up for the Owyhee when called upon, you're ensuring it can stay that way for many tomorrows to come. ♦

Hello Again, Kirk Richardson



A familiar face appeared at board meetings this summer. After coming out of retirement to resume leading supply chain sustainability efforts at KEEN, Kirk Richardson has also returned for a second go on ONDA's board. Some people, it seems, aren't content to relax.

Welcome, Susan Strible



A longtime fan of ONDA's work for the desert, Susan Strible is now officially part of the effort to protect and restore valuable open spaces as an ONDA board member. Susan has been on Ruffwear's marketing team since 2008, and has over 20 years of marketing experience working for consumer

products companies and a business degree from Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. Working in the outdoor industry offers Susan many chances to advocate for public land access and protections for critical wildlife habitat — two issues close to her heart. Outside of work, Susan enjoys being outdoors on skis, on the golf course or on the trail with her husband and black lab.

Farewell, Dan Morse

After serving as ONDA's Conservation Director for six years, Dan Morse took on a new role with a D.C. based consulting firm this spring. During his tenure, Dan made innumerable contributions to our organization, the conservation community and to the preservation of Oregon's high desert. His deep expertise on a wide range of public land issues and policies, unflappable nature and thoughtful engagement across all of our work made him a fabulous colleague and an effective leader who raised the bar for public lands conservation in eastern Oregon.

ONDA Forms Justice Committee

ONDA recognizes equity, inclusion, justice and diversity as core values in our organization that are important to our long-term strength, relevance and effectiveness. ONDA recently established a Justice Committee to genuinely connect with people of color, Indigenous communities and others historically left out of the conservation movement. We believe that our conservation efforts will be most effective when we engage, inspire, and empower supporters from our entire community. You can read more about our commitment at ONDA.org/justice.



MEET FELICE KELLY

PASSIONATE DESERT ADVOCATE

by Corinne Handelman, Outreach Coordinator

After moving to Oregon in 2016, Felice Kelly soon discovered Oregon's dry side and was immediately inspired, saying, "Once I made it out to the high desert, I knew that I wanted to play a part in the conservation of the landscape."

Felice's advocacy has now taken many forms. She's hosted a house party where she invited friends to submit postcards in support of desert conservation and written a letter to the editor published in The New York Times! To make desert advocacy easier, Felice shared, "put your elected officials in your contacts list on your phone, and when you hear about something that is happening that you want them to support or oppose, just call their office and tell them." She added, "decision makers do notice when citizens speak up for public lands and wildlife."

Her biggest goal for Oregon's high desert? Felice would love to see Greater Sage-Grouse populations rebound. And that's why she's a proud ONDA member, stating, "It's great to feel like I can support the boots on the ground conservation and restoration, and be personally involved as well." ♦ Photo: Kyle Meck

Want to write a great Letter to the Editor? Find tips at <http://bit.ly/Write-an-LTE>



BULL TROUT & WHYCHUS CREEK

Lower Whychus Creek is a critical stronghold for salmon and steelhead, which were cut off from the Upper Deschutes Watershed by the construction of hydroelectric dams downstream. A community-led reintroduction effort is now driving the return of native fish to their historic spawning grounds, and it would not be possible without the consistently cold water that gushes out of numerous springs along Whychus Creek, as well as the Deschutes and Crooked Rivers.

Even more dependent on cold water than salmon, bull trout seek out consistently cool and clean water when they spawn in the fall. Nicknamed “the grizzly bear of the fish world,” bull trout feed mainly on other fish, a characteristic that made them the target of predator control efforts by wildlife managers during much of the 20th century. Now, bull trout are making a comeback thanks to restoration and protection of critical habitat like Lower Whychus Creek. *Photos: Whychus Creek, Cregg Large; bull trout, Joel Sartore (National Geographic) and Wade Fredenberg (USFWS).*



See the lineup for the **Wild and Scenic Film Festival** and get tickets at onda.org/wsff

Learn more about the **High Desert Speakers Series** at onda.org/speakerseries

UPCOMING EVENTS

For all details and our full list of events, visit onda.org/events

2019

- Oct. 4 Wild & Scenic Film Festival | Bend, OR
- Oct. 6 “The Beaver Believers” film screening | Bend, OR
- Oct. 7 Boots, Bikes and Boats in Eastern Oregon | Bend, OR
- Oct. 8 Discover Oregon’s Desert Rivers | Eugene, OR
- Oct. 16 Discover Oregon’s Desert Rivers | Portland, OR
- Nov. 1 2020 Wild Desert Calendar Release Party | Bend, OR
- Nov. 15 High Desert Hootenanny | Portland, OR
- Nov. 20 Oregon’s Unique High Desert | Portland, OR
- Dec. 6 High Desert Hootenanny | Bend, OR

2020

- Feb. 11 High Desert Speaker Series | Bend, OR
- Feb. 24 High Desert Speaker Series | Portland, OR
- Mar. 13 Hiking Oregon’s High Desert | Salem, OR
- Mar. 26 Discover the Oregon Desert Trail | Condon, OR
- April 17-19 Annual General Meeting | Clarno, OR



HOT SPRINGS CAMPGROUND

by Jeremy Austin, Hart-Sheldon Coordinator

As the name implies, you'll find a soothing soak at the Hot Springs Campground located on the eastern flank of Hart Mountain. Soakers can choose between two hot springs — the protected comfort of a 6-foot deep pool surrounded by wind-blocking stone walls, or a primitive pool hidden off a closed road on the backside of the parking area.

In a short stroll from this 29-site campground, you're likely to see many birds, including Northern Harriers, Bullock's Orioles, Yellow Warblers and Greater Sage-Grouse. Cold Creek and Bond Creek flow in from the south and southeast respectively, joining forces to create Rock Creek. Each of these stream corridors extends out from the center of the basin and holds an abundance of designated campsites and hiking opportunities, which you can learn more about by visiting the refuge's website and downloading the refuge brochure.

Autumn is a particularly pleasant time to visit, as the aspen trees that fill Hart Mountain's numerous draws and basins turn fiery red, orange and yellow, accenting the already dramatic topography of the fault block mountain's eastern flank. At 5,600 feet in elevation, this time of year brings the possibility of snowfall, creating stark contrasts between the red rocks, green lichens and golden foliage. *Photo: Mark Darnell*

DRIVING DIRECTIONS From the Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge headquarters, head south following signs for the Hot Springs Campground. About 1 mile down the well-graded gravel road, the road splits. Stay right, following signs for the Hot Springs Campground, which is roughly 4 miles south of headquarters.

TRIP DETAILS

Drive time: 5 hours from Bend, OR

Season: Year-round, although winter snows periodically close the campground road

Fall highlights: aspen, hot springs, birds

For more desert outings, check out our Visitor's Guides at onda.org/guides.



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COMING UP ON INSTAGRAM

a photographer's first Oregon desert trip



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PLAN YOUR LEGACY IN 3 SIMPLE STEPS.

1 REFLECT

How will you continue to support the places you love after your lifetime?

2 CONNECT

Call ONDA. We'll talk you through how to include ONDA in your will.

3 PERFECT

How you feel knowing you stepped up today to sustain Oregon's high desert tomorrow.



Photo: © Greg Burke

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Protecting, defending and restoring Oregon's high desert since 1987. Learn more at onda.org.