

# Desert Ramblings

the newsletter of the  
Oregon  
Natural Desert  
association

Volume 7, Number 3

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## FROM THE OUTBACK

### Cows Kill Salmon

by Bill Marlett



The life of the salmon is a biological gauntlet. While there is no doubt about the impacts from the over 200 salmon killing dams in the Columbia River Basin, the effects of livestock grazing are equally efficient at killing salmon. Cattle and sheep graze on over half of the Columbia River Basin, primarily east of the Cascade Mountains, mostly on public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the U.S. Forest Service.

By the 1880s, livestock were actively unraveling the fabric of Columbia Basin watersheds fifty years before Bonneville Dam was built. It is no coincidence that the onset of decline for most salmon populations can be traced to that time. The peak commercial chinook salmon catch occurred in 1883, and the slide toward extinction for many stocks was well underway by the turn of the century.

The John Day River in Central Oregon typifies the maze of habitat problems found in Columbia River basin east of the Cascades. One of the longest un-dammed rivers in the West, the John Day historically was home to an estimated 100,000 chinook salmon. With over 100 years of hammering hooves and chomping mouths, the river now supports only 3,000 spring chinook; the fall

chinook are likely extinct.

Little has been done to reign in this abuse of Nature. Under a veil of public relations poppycock, the Forest Service and the BLM parade postage stamp demonstration plots showing how "grazing management" can improve stream habitat. The agencies euphemis-



ARTWORK COURTESY OF LARRY MILAM

tically refer to these bovine bulldozers as "management tools". What they don't mention is reduced grazing pressure is responsible for upgraded conditions. Restoring fish habitat by grazing livestock is like a triple bypass patient eating steak three times a week instead of seven.

Salmon need clean, cool water, natural spawning and rearing habitat, and unrestricted and timely access to the ocean. Hatcheries cannot mitigate the loss of natural habitat anymore than a zoo can provide a home for grizzly bears.

Walk around the ubiquitous cow pies that litter the tributaries of the John Day, or any stream in the West, and you will see the signs of cow-bashed habitat: muddy water, stream sides devoid of vegetation, high water temperatures, eroded stream banks, algae blooms and dried-up springs and meadows. And dead fish.

We have had no real success restoring stream habitat from the ravages of livestock. Most streams in the West are biologically "dead." According to one EPA report, riparian areas in the West are in their worst condition in history. Cattle and sheep continue to trash fish habitat with impunity, abetted by the BLM and the Forest Service, under watchful eyes of ranchers and their political minions from the West.

If we don't fix the dams soon, they will become the tombstones for the salmon. Assuming we do, we must ensure that salmon have a "home" to return to. Treating streams as open sewers for livestock and watersheds as feed lots in order to maintain a "way of life" for ranchers is not acceptable. The least costly and quickest way to restore cow-burnt habitat is simply to stop the abuse. But cows will jump over the moon before land management agencies give bovines the boot.

Fencing streams to prevent access by livestock is one alternative, but is costly and impractical. For example, ten million

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## Oregon Natural Desert Association

### Mission Statement

The purpose of the Oregon Natural Desert Association is to promote the preservation, protection and rehabilitation of Oregon's arid-land environment and to educate the general population on the values of preserving the natural arid-land environment.

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### Newsletter

Design & Layout: Hannell Francis  
 Editors: Alice Elshoff  
 Bill Marlett

### PLEASE NOTE:

ONDA wishes to apologize to Douglas Moore, for lack of crediting his artwork in the Fall '93 issue of Desert Ramblings. Thank you, Doug, for your artwork and your understanding.

## FROM THE DEN



by Alice Elshoff

Congratulations are in order to Portland Audubon Society for hosting another excellent Desert Conference last April. As the world turns, it now falls to ONDA to plan the 17th Annual Desert Conference, scheduled for April 28-30, 1995 at the Malheur Field Station. The planning committee has met and initial speaking invitations have been mailed. If you would like to be involved or have suggestions to offer, please let us know.

Readers will note four new members have been added to our Board of Directors (see the "Chats with Desert Rats" on page 10). ONDA welcomes these long-time, hard-working conservationists for the valuable contributions they have already made and for those yet to come. At the same time, we wish to express our thanks to Gary Brown for outstanding service during his board tenure. Gary

started Citizens for Responsible Mining, and is the main reason the people of Oregon will get to vote in November on the Chemical Mining Initiative (see related article). He and desert activist spouse Carolyn Brown will continue to be our eyes and ears out in that other time zone of far Eastern Oregon.

ONDA volunteers enjoyed two work parties this summer, both doing what we like best, ridding the desert of barb wire fences. Along with Central Oregon Audubon, we removed over a mile of fence on the Malheur Wildlife Refuge while also enjoying the excellent birding.

With that experience behind us, we tackled a tough job at Hart Mountain Refuge, removing fence and wood corral which had, over the years, been half buried by a wet meadow and new aspen trees. It looked great when we left and it felt good to have flexed our muscles to make the world a little safer for wildlife.

If you missed out, plan to join us next year.



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### MALHEUR FIELD STATION NEEDS OUR HELP

Can anyone imagine Desert Conference anywhere but at the Malheur Field Station? Of course not; it's unthinkable that one of these days it may not be there. Now, more than ever, the station needs our help.

The Station is working on a program to use community workers to furnish labor, but materials are badly needed, either donated or at cost. Also needed are trades people who could help train and supervise these people.

First priority is roofing. Composition shingles and accompanying materials are needed for Spring 1995. A close second is all manner of electrical and plumbing supplies and fixtures, including fluorescent tubes. Also needed are plywood, 2x4s, sheetrock and wood-seal. Borrowed scaffolding to replace high bulbs in the gym.

Expertise is needed to maintain, fix and upgrade the heating system. ONDA would be glad to organize some work parties if any of these materials could be found.

Anyone visiting the station, please consider taking along no-longer-needed household items. Furniture, lawn mowers, linens, kitchen items, painting supplies. It's easier than a yard sale and would really be appreciated. For more information call Jeanine or Gloria at the station, (503) 493-2629, or give us a call at (503) 389-4566.



## NATIONAL MINING ALERT

### 1872 Mining Law: Reform, at last?



Efforts to reform the 1872 Mining Law are entering a critical stage in Congress and your help is needed to counter an assault aimed at scuttling legislation through a filibuster. Senator Hatfield is needed to win this fight.

The 1872 Mining Law which governs hardrock mining on public lands makes mining the highest and best use of these lands. It gives mining companies the right to buy mineralized public land for \$5 or less, and collects no royalties for extracted minerals. The law contains no environmental or reclamation standards.

*'The 1872 Mining Law ... gives mining companies the right to buy mineralized, public land for \$5 or less'*

It is a wasteful and dangerous law that must be reformed.

A House-Senate conference committee is meeting to work out differences between a strong House bill, H.R. 322, and a much weaker Senate bill. House approval is anticipated.

Senate approval, however, may be difficult. Reform opponents intend to block the Senate from ever getting to vote on the measure by staging a filibuster. If the anti-reform Senators can hold forty votes, they

can block a vote from being taken on the bill.

Sixty Senators are needed to stand up against a filibuster. We believe we can do this. Senator Hatfield is one of the critical Senators we will need for this victory.

We ask you to take a moment to write Senator Hatfield and urge him to support comprehensive mining law re-

form and vote against a filibuster. A sample letter follows.

To: The Honorable Senator Hatfield  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

I am writing to urge you to support comprehensive legislation to reform the 1872 Mining Law and oppose a Senate filibuster aimed at killing the process. As a taxpayer, I am outraged by the Mining Law and want to see it reformed.

I believe the House bill, H.R. 322, is a good foundation to stop the wasteful giveaway provisions of the Mining Law and prevent continued environmental problems created by mining. I am concerned by reform opponents who are threatening to filibuster this legislation. Please do not let this small minority prevent Congress from voting on this matter.

Please stop the gridlock by opposing a Senate filibuster.

## STATE MINING ALERT

Congratulations to the STOP'M campaign and all the ONDA members that help put the Chemical Mining Reform Initiative on the November ballot. If passed by Oregon voters, the measure will:

- Require mining companies to backfill pits and restore surface waterways and subsurface aquifers destroyed by mining;
- Remove subsidies and require companies mining in Oregon to pay full costs, and;
- Insure perpetual care and monitoring of sites.

This initiative is sensible, prudent and responsible. Please do what you can to help us win:

- Request a speaker from STOP'M for your group, and suggest groups that should receive a speaker.
- Write letters to the editor and send STOP'M news clips so they can refute phony arguments and factoids.
- Contribute to the campaign. Oregon's Political Tax Credit allows individuals to take a tax credit of up to \$50

(\$100 for couples filing jointly) that you've contributed to a political campaign. Newmont Gold Mining is saying that they'll spend whatever it takes to open the Grassy Mountain mine near the Owyhee River. Your contribution will help STOP'M run an effective grassroots campaign to pass this initiative.

- Send STOP'M your gold. One way to protest the environmental destruction of cyanide mining is to show just how easily gold can be recycled. We'd like to collect enough gold from STOP'M's supporters to equal several days' production at the proposed Newmont mine. If you have gold you no longer need - single earrings, or other jewelry - and you're willing to contribute it to the campaign, we'll arrange to pick it up, and send you a contribution receipt for the amount it's eventually sold for. Call STOP'M at 221-1683 to arrange your donation.

We can win. But we need your help! Please don't delay your response. And don't forget to vote!



## "COWYHEE" WITHOUT THE "C"



ONDA recently helped convince the State Land Board to approve a new rule allowing the public to lease state owned lands for conservation use. ONDA is preparing to lease 29,000 acres in SE Oregon's Owyhee Canyonlands from the Oregon Division of State Lands (DSL) that will be auctioned this fall.

The land ONDA will bid on belongs to a category of lands that Congress set aside for support of the state's public schools. These lands, by terms of their grant, must be managed to maximize long-term financial gain to the Common School Fund. These lands have historically been used exclusively for grazing livestock and as a consequence, have only returned the annual equivalent of 0.5% to the School Fund. The new rules were designed to correct this subsidy to the ranchers and provide maximum return to the School Fund.

While ONDA believes the new rules are a step in the right direction, ONDA is challenging the rules in court to remove the remaining subsidies to the ranchers. ONDA also intervened in a lawsuit filed by Oregon ranchers against the state claiming the state must renew the leases with the ranchers and provide them compensation if they lose their leases through competitive bidding.

Although the rules recognize "conservation use" (i.e., no grazing) of the land, they still favor the ranchers who currently hold state leases. For example, existing lessees have an exclusive right at a "sealed-bid" auction to top the high bid. In addition, profits ranchers derive from grazing the land will help offset rent increases; by contrast, if conservation use by ONDA increases the land's grazing capacity, as is likely, ONDA will pay higher rent without receiving any corresponding financial benefit. These are but two examples of how the rules effectively discourage conservation users.

As many of you know, ONDA has embarked on an ambitious campaign to endow a Wilderness Fund to finance our

lease payments until we achieve our long term vision. As an interim measure, we are looking at possible designation of the Owyhee Canyonlands as a state wilderness park and have requested the DSL to nominate the land for placement on Oregon's Natural Heritage Register which recognizes ecosystems worthy of protection.

ONDA's long term vision is to protect the entire Greater Owyhee Canyonlands Ecosystem. Some conservation groups have already proposed that the Owyhee be managed by the National Park Service. Along the same lines, designation as a National Conservation Area, managed by the BLM, is another option depending on whether BLM is open to managing the land without

livestock. In either case, ONDA will request that state lands in the Owyhee Canyonlands be traded or sold to BLM and designated as wilderness as is being recommended for adjacent BLM lands.

We believe these and other efforts will allow us to bid a fond farewell to the cows and restore this pocket of Oregon's Outback.



PHOTO BY G. TEPFER

## Feed Lots on a Wild and Scenic River?

by Jim Borwick

That's what the Oregon Department of Parks and Recreation had in mind, not to mention its plan to irrigate 30 acres from the John Day River, a state-designated scenic waterway and federal wild and scenic river that already suffers from low stream flows (caused by upstream diversions).

ONDA intervened, firing off a letter to the Department questioning the propriety of leasing the land at all, let alone to Billy Cross, a rancher whose land ethics are dubious. ONDA asked that the Department not sign a new lease until it could be determined that the area is being managed to protect and preserve the ecological values of the land and the John Day River.

ONDA cited the rancher's history of land abuse as a key reason for the state to use caution. Cross, who holds a BLM grazing permit for the Black Rock Allotment bordering the John Day River just south of the Spring Basin Wilderness Study Area (WSA), was investigated by the BLM in 1990 for cattle trespass and unauthorized clearing and road construction in the Black Rock Allotment. A road had been bladed into the John Day River, among other damage. The BLM recommended prosecution but the case did not go to trial, according to the BLM.

More recently, Cross mounted his trusty bulldozer and rearranged lands within the WSA, including blading a new road. Through the U.S. Attorney's office, the BLM has signed a stipulated agreement with Cross pleading guilty to charges of destruction of natural features in and adjacent to the river and WSA. It requires him to fully restore the land he bulldozed. Cross will also be placed on bench probation

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by Elaine Rees

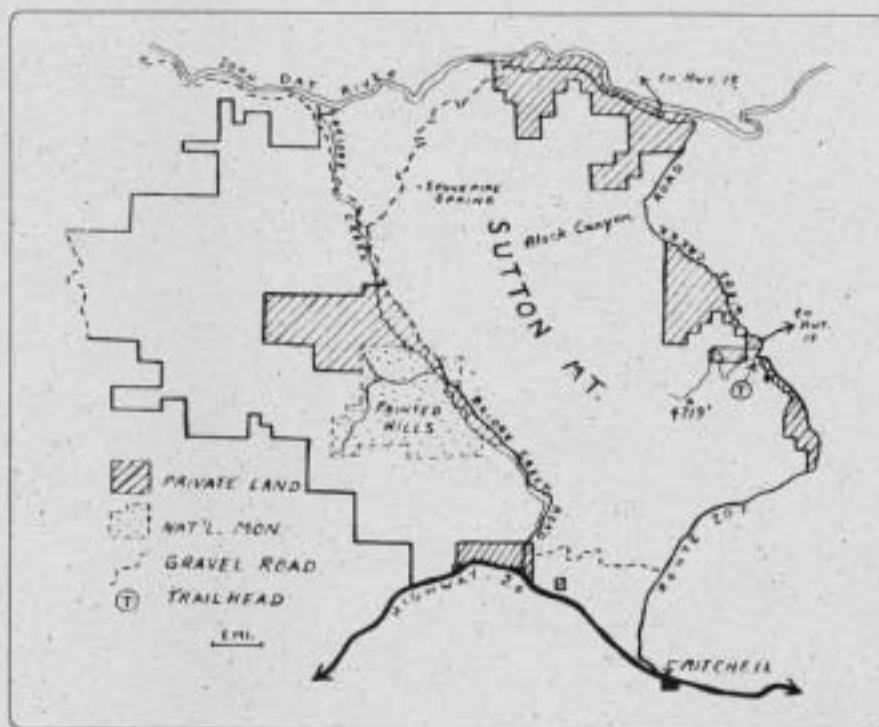
The John Day region of North Central Oregon offers a wonderful variety of opportunities for studying and enjoying the great outdoors. Of course there is the John Day River itself, which has carved a tortuous channel through several hundred feet of basalt and ash, and is one of Oregon's most spectacular Wild and Scenic Rivers. Here too, the green, red, and buff hues of the John Day Formation are exposed to scientific and artistic scrutiny.

The newest addition to the Oregon High Desert Protection Act, Sutton Mountain has reverted from private to public ownership. This 62,000 acre proposed wilderness area is definitely a place worth experiencing.

Sutton Mountain is a massive ridge separating the John Day River from one of its main tributaries, Bridge Creek. The Painted Hills Unit of the John Day Fossil Beds National Monument lies in its early morning shadow. From anywhere along its sinuous ridgeline, the views over the ruggedly beautiful landscape of Wheeler, Jefferson, and Crook Counties are nothing short of breathtaking.

I visited Sutton Mountain in early May, spending the first night at a primitive campground on Bridge Creek approximately one mile north of Highway 26. The paved road past this camping spot continues on to the entrance to the Painted Hills; the public lands of Sutton Mountain abut the road on the east. Hiking along Sutton Mountain's sandy draws on this side is a great way to get acquainted with the tracks of the local wildlife (mule deer, elk, coyote, chukar, and a myriad of rodents and reptiles) and to observe the stunted prickly pear cactus which grows thickly in some areas. Further north, after the pavement has given way to gravel, there is a photogenic pocket of eroded tuff not far from Stovepipe Spring.

It is possible to traverse the winding



gravel road along Sutton Mountain's north flank in a regular passenger vehicle. This route will take you down to the John Day River where the land is privately owned. Gird's Creek Road takes you back along the mountain's east

*'Sutton Mountain is a massive ridge separating the John Day River from one of its main tributaries, Bridge Creek.'*

side through another scenic canyon. There is both public and private land along this road, as illustrated on BLM's map, *Lower John Day River Public Lands*. You can pick one up at the Prineville BLM Office or at the National Park Service Office in John Day.

A great day hike—or the perfect first leg of a backpacking trip—is a trek up Carroll Rim to Sutton Mountain's southern summit. This trail is an old road now gated against unauthorized vehicle use. The trailhead is approximately one quarter of a mile south of the junction of State Route 207 and Gird's Creek Road. Go very slowly around the sharp curve there and you will see a gate in the fence on the west side of the road. You can park inside the gate. From here you'll

hike steadily uphill for about four miles, mostly through lush grasslands where spring wildflowers endlessly entertain the eye.

One of the highlights of this route is the likelihood of finding *Simpson's pediocactus* in bloom. Look for the pink flowers of this small barrel cactus on rocky exposures at the higher elevations in April and early May. During this season you may also see grass widow (*Sisyrinchium douglasii*), an elegant member of the iris family, nodding its purplish flowers in the wind.

Much of Sutton Mountain has been spared from the worst ravages of livestock grazing. In 1992 ONDA took BLM to task for illegal grazing, resulting in fines levied against the outlaw rancher.

Black Canyon, a northeastern drainage of the mountain, has been nominated as a Research Natural Area because of its high-quality low sage/bluebunch wheatgrass and Idaho fescue/bluebunch wheatgrass communities. Black Canyon also harbors several populations of *Thelypodium eucosmum*, a candidate species for Threatened and Endangered status.

So, the next time you find yourself on Highway 26 in the vicinity of Mitchell, be sure to stop and explore Sutton Mountain. Better yet, plan a trip just for that purpose. You will not be disappointed.



# Salmon – Poached or Iced, the Clean Water Act Will Decide

by Ellen Mendoza

In a lawsuit filed in federal court in May, ONDA is challenging a grazing permit on the Middle Fork of the John Day River, which is a spawning stream for wild spring chinook salmon and steelhead. The lawsuit was filed under the Clean Water Act to require the grazing permittee to secure state water quality certification before the Forest Service issues a grazing permit. If successful, the Clean Water Act will be a major tool in the West to protect fish habitat from the deleterious effects of livestock grazing.

It is not too hard to understand that cows eating vegetation around streams, trampling banks and streambeds, and defecating in the streams are a nightmare to fish. The loss of vegetation around riparian areas, which allows more sunlight to hit the water, results in lethal water temperatures for salmon who need cool, clean water to live and spawn in.

Although the state has never required water quality certifications for federal grazing permits before, they are responsible under the Clean Water Act for assuring that water quality standards for temperature are met. In the Middle Fork, the standard is 68° Fahrenheit. However, measurements have shown that the actual temperature of the Middle Fork and Camp Creek, a tributary also affected by the grazing permit, exceeds that standard throughout July and August.

August is the month that the chinook salmon spawn in these streams. In past years, 90% of juvenile salmon died in the Middle Fork due to high water temperatures.

The John Day basin is ceded land of the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Indian Reservation who have filed a motion to intervene in support of the suit. Likewise, a coalition of ranchers

have moved to enter the lawsuit in opposition.

ONDA is being represented by the Western Environmental Law Clinic in Eugene.

*From the Outback, continued from page 1*

dollars would be required to fence the nearly 1,000 miles of stream habitat in need of restoration just on the John Day. Thousands of miles of streams simply can't be fenced, much less maintained. Nor does fencing address the entire watershed; they can kill and impair movement of wildlife; and they are ugly.

Past attempts to reform grazing practices, including the current Range Reform '94 debacle, have been made nearly impossible by politicians who are slaves to the ranching industry. Offering incentives to ranchers for "retiring" from the public lands may be the best way to address this political impediment.

In the Snake River Basin, home to the endangered Snake River salmon, over 80% of the grazing occurs on public lands, mostly in the Salmon and Grande Ronde watersheds. If the 405,000 animal unit months (AUMs) in the basin were retired at \$50/AUM, vast areas of salmon habitat could be restored for just over \$20 million – a bargain. Half of the approximately two million AUMs on public lands in the Columbia River Basin could be retired for \$50 million.

Ranchers deserve a little money and time to make the transition. But the cows must go.



## ACTION ALERT

### Limit RS 2477, and Save Our Public Lands

Your help is needed to limit the harmful effects of an archaic, 100-year-old law, known as RS 2477, that allowed counties and states to claim rights-of-way on public lands, even if they are in wilderness areas, national parks, or wildlife refuges.

This obscure statute was designed to give the public access to federal lands without any red tape. It has the potential to be a disaster as groups opposed to land protection, such as the "wise use" people, have picked up on its potentially damaging impacts to these special areas.

Although repealed in 1976, rights-of-way existing before then were grandfathered in. Now, the Department of Interior is drafting rules to regulate these grandfathered right-of-ways, which include old jeep trails and other innocuous routes in wilder-

ness areas. Developers are using the law to get around laws protecting these special lands. In Utah alone, nearly 4,000 roads have been claimed under RS 2477. The effect of such a free-for-all will seriously hamper efforts to protect parks, wildlife refuges and wilderness areas.

Tough new rules are required to stop this threat to our public lands. Even though the statute has been repealed, many existing claims must be addressed.

Write to Secretary Bruce Babbitt. Ask him to:

1. continue to push for strong regulations that will protect significant federal lands and resource values from any new roads;
2. make sure the new rules don't allow



- valid, existing rights-of-way to exceed what was originally granted;
3. ensure that federal land managing agencies are given authority to manage these rights-of-way in order to avoid conflicts with special lands such as wilderness areas and national parks.

Send your letter to:  
The Honorable Bruce Babbitt  
Secretary of the Interior  
US Department of Interior  
1849 C Street

### It's not Wild without Bears and Cougars

The Oregon Bear and Cougar Coalition (OBCC) placed a measure on the 1994 November ballot to stop unethical hunting of bears and cougars. Measure 18 would ban the use of bait when hunting bears and the use of hounds when hunting bears and cougars.

Current state law allows hunters to use these biologically unsound methods to hunt cougars and bears. On a typical bear or cougar hunt, a trophy hunter releases a pack of hounds. Equipped with radio transmitters the hounds chase the bear or cougar until eventually the exhausted animal climbs a tree to escape the baying dogs. The hunter picks up the radio signal on his hand-held directional antenna and follows the signal to the animal, then shoots it at point-blank range.

The measure the OBCC proposes

would also prohibit the baiting of bears. In this case, the hunter dumps rotting meat, jelly doughnuts and candy in the woods, then waits behind a blind or in a tree until the bear discovers the bait. While the bear feeds, the hunter then shoots the animal.

Aside from the ethics issue, ONDA opposes the ecologically unjustified removal of predators from ecosystems, especially considering the long history of abuse these animals have been subjected to through Animal Damage Control. The OBCC expects strong opposition from various trophy hunting organizations. A YES vote on Measure 18 November 8 will help keep the "wild" in Oregon.

Oregon Bear and Cougar Coalition  
4511 SE Hawthorne #204  
Portland, OR 97215  
(503) 232-8626

*Feedlots, continued from page 4*

for three years and be required to cover the BLM's costs for administering the violations. In turn, the BLM's \$1,000 fine was suspended.

The Department now must determine if Cross' use of the land is inconsistent with the designation as a state scenic waterway. Perhaps when they see the abuse, they'll conclude as we have that both Mr. Cross and the cows must go.

If you don't like this either, write to:

Parks and Recreation Director Bob Meinen  
OR Dep't. of Parks and Recreation  
525 Trade St., SE  
Salem, OR 97310.

Tell him in no uncertain terms that you don't appreciate state park lands being managed as feed lots. Tell him to kick the cows out, leave the water in the John Day River, and manage the land for its wilderness values.



## ACTION ALERT

### California Desert Bill Threatened by Gridlock

In April, the U.S. Senate passed the California Desert Protection Act (S.21) by a solidly bipartisan margin of 69-29. Last month, the U.S. House of Representatives passed similar legislation. For the President to sign this bill into law, the differences between the two bills need to be worked out in what is known as a conference committee, with the compromise bill sent back to the House and Senate for final approval.

This historic legislation, the largest lands protection bill since the Alaska Lands Act of 1980, would protect nearly 7 million acres of the beautiful and fragile California Desert, including some of the nation's most outstanding scenic, ecological, cultural and recreational lands. The increasing population of the region, spreading developments, off-road vehicle use, mining, grazing and other activities have had a profound impact — only Congressional protection can prevent further irreversible damage to this fragile landscape.

Gridlock thrives on Capitol Hill. Not only have major legislative initiatives been stopped, but all parks legislation is being threatened with

killer amendments and filibusters. Opponents are targeting the California Desert bill (S.21) for defeat through gridlock. Time is running out. If the Senate does not act soon the opportunity to protect these lands will have passed.

*'This historic legislation... would protect nearly 7 million acres of the beautiful and fragile California Desert.'*

#### What You Can Do

1. Call President Clinton's office immediately! Phone (202) 456-1414. Ask him to please help resolve the gridlock on S.21 so he can sign it this year.
2. Call Senator Hatfield's office (phone 202/224-3753) and thank Senator

Hatfield for supporting Senate passage of the California Desert Protection Act S.21, including a Mojave National Park;

Because Senator Hatfield's leadership will be crucial,

- Ask Senator Hatfield to oppose any effort to block further movement of the legislation, don't let Washington gridlock prevent the protection of parks and wilderness;
- Ask for Senator Hatfield's vote in support of final approval of the California Desert Protection Act in the Senate.

## Military Chaff - It's Not Dental Floss

by Ellen Mendoza

Since at least World War II (according to my veteran father) the military have had the idea that dropping slivers of metal, known as chaff, from the air will confuse enemy radar. Despite the experience it got 50 years ago, the military still apparently feels the need to practice this routine over current enemy territory — the public lands of the West.

For the last 20 years, according to a March 1994 memo from the BLM District Manager of Carson City, Nevada, the Fallon Naval Air Station has littered adjacent lands with an estimated 1.2 trillion chaff fibers. There is no estimate for how much of the stuff has been dropped throughout the military overflight areas that include the Owyhee Canyonlands. And there has never been an environmental assessment of the effects of these releases on the land, water, or living creatures of the desert (wild or soon to be barbecued). After bundles of chaff were found in a Nevada wilderness study area by BLM staff, the Nevada BLM State Director recommended to the National Director that an environmental assessment be prepared by the military.

Chaff are fiberglass-coated micro-fine aluminum fibers. The fibers are small enough to be classified as inhaleable particulates. The unknown effects of chaff were one of the grounds for appeal of the Owyhee River Management Plan to the Interior Board of Land Appeals by ONDA this past May. The plan revealed that chaff releases were occurring in the Owyhee Canyonlands and would be permitted to continue. □





# ANIMAL DAMAGE CONTROL

## Report Available

Wildlife Damage Review's *Waste, Fraud & Abuse in the U.S. Animal Damage Control Program* documents that funding of the ADC is not justifiable, especially in view of our enormous federal deficit. This 31-page report, compiled by Pat Wolff of New West Research, details an unwarranted subsidy of a federal program that resists reform. The report is available for \$10 from WDR, PO Box 85218, Tucson AZ 85754.

## ACTION ALERT:

### EPA Can Ban M-44s!

The Environmental Protection Agency is currently investigating M-44s, the poison guns that inject lethal sodium cyanide into the mouths of any animal that takes the bait. You can make a difference by writing the EPA

and urging them to immediately ban the production and use of M-44s. Stress that they do this by executive order. Let them know that M-44s:

- Pose a serious threat to public health and safety — especially to children on public land
- Kill or harm wildlife indiscriminately and non-selectively — including threatened and endangered species
- Are a threat to domestic dogs, especially on public lands used by hikers and hunters
- Are not used by most ranchers— only by an irresponsible handful
- Are not necessary to protect livestock
- Are being illegally used and abused by individuals and by ADC

Write to Carol Browner, Environmental Protection Agency, 401 M Street, SW, Washington, DC 20460. □



## THANKS! We needed that

Dear Bill;

I enjoyed very much getting the opportunity to meet with you during your visit to San Francisco last Thursday, and learning first hand about ONDA's important work in defense of Oregon's marvelous desert regions. By now I have read through the newsletters, clippings, and other material you sent me, and I continue to be in awe of how much can be accomplished by a tiny organization operating on a minuscule budget. All it takes, evidently, is vision and tireless dedication — ONDA, it seems, has both.

I have been able to share what I learned from you with the board of our Foundation, and I am pleased to inform you that we have decided to contribute \$7,500 in support of ONDA's tax deductible activities. A check in that amount is enclosed with this letter. I hope you are able to build your membership, and find at least some of the foundation support you deserve. Keep up the good work!

Please put us on the mailing list for "Desert Ramblings." We'd be interested in hearing of new developments with ONDA, the Oregon desert, or the western deserts in general.

Sincerely,

Bob Spertus, Treasurer  
Peradarn Foundation



The following poem from *An Unspoken Hunger*, Pantheon, 1994, is reprinted with permission of the author.

Terry's encounter took place on the way to view the sagegrouse courtship at Foster Flats during the 1993 Desert Conference.

## REDEMPTION for Wendell Berry

BY TERRY TEMPEST WILLIAMS

*Driving toward Malheur Lake in the  
Great Basin of southeastern Oregon,  
I saw a coyote. I stopped the car,  
opened the door, and walked to him.  
It was another crucifixion in the West,  
a hide hung on a barbed-wire fence  
with a wrangler's prayer:  
Cows are sacred. Sheep, too.  
No trespassing.  
The furred skin was torn  
with ragged edges,  
evidence that it had been pulled away from  
the dog-body by an angry hand  
with a dull knife.*

*Standing in the middle of the High Desert,  
I looked up. Sky all around.  
I thought about Coyote Butte,  
a few miles south—  
how a person can sit on top  
between two sage-covered eurs and watch  
a steady stream of western tanagers  
fly through during spring migration:  
yellow bodies, black wings, red heads.*

*And how, a few miles west  
near Foster Flats, one can witness  
dancing grouse on their ancestral legs,  
even in rain, crazy with desire,  
their booming breasts mimicking  
the sound of water.*

*Down the road,  
I watched a small herd of pronghorn  
on the other side of the fence,  
anxiously running back and forth  
parallel to the barbed wire,  
unable to jump.  
Steens Mountain shimmered above  
the sage flats like a ghost.*

*My eyes returned to  
Jesus Coyote, stiff on his cross,  
savior of our American rangelands.  
We can try and kill all that is native,  
string it up by its hind legs for all to see,  
but spirit howls and wildness endures.*

*Anticipate resurrection.*



**MICHELE PENNER** – Michele is a founding member of ONDA but has just recently become active as Treasurer. She grew up wandering the deserts of California with her mother and brother and has loved the arid lands ever since. Her past includes a BS in Anthropology and a MS in Environmental and Occupational Health. One college semester she spent four months traveling 30,000 miles circumventing the Earth on a ship and visiting 21 countries. She has lived in Bend since 1978 and currently works for the Research arm of the Forest Service administering the USFS Silviculture Lab. She believes in what she calls "systemic synergy – that all things are deeply connected and in order to help the Earth, and thus ourselves, we must find the root of this connection and act out from it." In living this connection she believes we respect all life, take full responsibility for our actions knowing they will systematically affect our world and return to us, and anticipate and look for the "synergism" in our lives.



**DAVID FUNK** – David is president of Funk & Associates Marketing Communications in Eugene. One of the Northwest's largest design firms, the company specializes in corporate identity, advertising and printed material design. David was state chairman of the successful Oregon Rivers Initiative (Ballot Measure 7) in 1988, served on the board of the ONRC and is currently board president of the Native Forest council.

A long-confirmed desert rat, David roamed the canyons of the Mojave desert in California as a teenager and has hiked and rafted throughout the canyonlands of southern Utah and northern Arizona. Since he arrived in Oregon in 1970 and first visited the Steens, he has been an avid desert bird-watcher and hiker. Following the birth of his first child in 1976, David's interest in the outdoors turned from participation and enjoyment to political activism. "I wanted my children to have the same opportunities growing up in the outdoors as I did."

As David says, "As a kid growing up in the San Gabriel and Sierra Madre mountains outside of L.A., I watched the bulldozers and pavement destroy the land and wildlife around me. I don't want to see that happen to Oregon."



**KATHLEEN SIMPSON MYRON** – Growing up on her family's farm in the Willamette Valley provided Kathi with hands-on experience with sheep and cattle. Childhood through college days spent hiking Oregon's sandy beaches or salmon fishing from dories out of Cape Kiwanda shaped her passion for rolling wide open landscapes and skies without end shadowed by sunset flamed clouds – and a compassion and reverence for all creation.

When she met and married Jim Myron (Oregon Trout/WaterWatch) in 1975, Kathi was challenged by Jim's aversion to "mold and mildew" to expand her environmental attention to Central Oregon.

In August 1987, on her first trip to southeastern Oregon's Trout Creek Mountains, Kathi met the Lahontan cutthroat trout of Willow and Whitehorse Creeks – and lost her heart to the dry ocean land waves of Southeast Oregon.

"Alkali dust is addictive!" and no place to be grazing domestic livestock. Kathi's changing career path (newspaper work, insurance agent, school library, church office management, freelance photographer and writer) and her education background, (a BA in Human Resources Management) provide her with a variety of skills to contribute to desert advocacy.



**STU SUGARMAN** – Stu, a product of New York City's great swath of suburbia, has always been a desert rat waiting to happen. Stu first visited Oregon's high desert in 1980 on a bicycle trip he took from New York to San Francisco. Even today, he can still feel the brutal heat of Oregon's desert, with all its beauty, inviting wide open spaces, and utter indifference to biped (and bi-wheeled) mammalian thirst. The following year, Stu escaped from New York to pursue a career as a marine biologist near Miami, Florida. He graduated with a BS in Marine Science and Biology from the University of Miami, and worked for five years as a marine biologist.

He then decided he could more effectively protect the environment as a lawyer, so he moved to Portland, Oregon in 1988 to study law. Now he practices law in Portland, but visits the High Desert and his favorite place, Hart Mountain, as much as possible. He comes to ONDA to lend legal assistance as well as to provide active support to ONDA's various projects.