

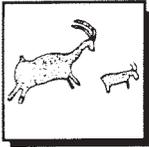
Desert Ramblings

the newsletter of the
Oregon
Natural Desert
association



- Inside:**
- Desert Conference
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 - *Literary Corner:* Edward Abbey

Volume 8, Number 2



FROM THE OUTBACK

by Bill Marlett

Anti-federal frenzy threatens desert lands

When conservationist Aldo Leopold arrived in the Southwest in 1909, the region had six roadless areas each containing a million acres or more. By 1922, the largest remaining roadless area was a half million acres, located in the headwaters of the Gila River National Forest. In 1924, with Aldo's initiative and support from local stockmen, the Forest Service created the first "wilderness" area in the country, now known as the Aldo Leopold Wilderness.

The day after the tragic bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City, Kit Laney, who runs cows in the Leopold Wilderness, threatened Forest Service officials that "[t]here will be a hundred people with guns to meet you" if the agency tried to move his cattle off the wilderness area.

Not coincidentally, Laney lives in Catron County, birthplace of the New Mexico militia and namesake of the "Catron County ordinances" adopted by numerous rural western counties. These illegal ordinances claim county jurisdiction over federal lands within their boundaries. In blatant disregard for federal law and the Constitution, these counties argue that the federal government has no right to tell ranchers what to do with their cows on federal

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3 ►

Grazing Myths: Old-fashioned elixirs

Savvy scientist critiques agency documents

We have to insist on the best available science, not the most convenient," argues grassland ecologist Dr. Beth Painter.

As someone who pores over agency planning documents (Environmental Assessments, Environmental Impact Statements, Comprehensive Management Plans, Allotment Management Plans, etc.), Painter should know. The agencies, she says, tend to justify grazing by citing myths, which



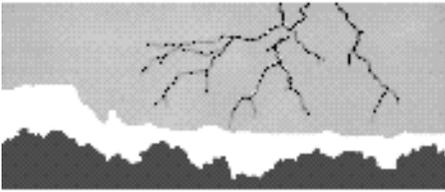
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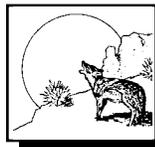


Avocets on Lake Abert's shore.

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Oregon Natural Desert Association



FROM THE DEN

by Elaine Rees

Mission

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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- Copy Editor: Elizabeth Claman

This summer issue marks a transition for *Desert Ramblings*. After years of

depending primarily on volunteers to get our newsletter to press, we have hired Chris Orsinger of Communication Strategies as our editor and design guru. Chris is a fellow desert rat and not new to ONDA. He produced our special *Desert Notes* tabloid describing the Oregon High Desert Protection Act back in 1992. At this year's Desert Conference, Chris led a workshop on utilizing the media to empower grassroots organizations. His expertise in production and design, as well as his strong environmental ethic, makes him an invaluable addition to the ONDA team.

Elizabeth Claman, a Eugene ONDA member and editor/publisher herself, has generously volunteered to assist with article preparation and proofreading. Thanks, Elizabeth — and you can be sure we'll keep you busy!

Many thanks to those in Bend and elsewhere who have made earlier incarnations of *Desert Ramblings* possible over the years, especially to Hanneli Francis, our most recent editor, and Miss Sequeira, who set the standard of excellence for which our quarterly is known.

Newsletter inquiries or submissions can be made to: Elaine Rees, 440 W. 17th Ave., Eugene, OR 97401.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

AUG 24-27: HART MOUNTAIN REFUGE WORK PARTY

ONDA volunteers will help remove fencing that has become a hazard to wildlife on Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge. Bring work gloves, mosquito repellent, and come fully prepared to camp. We'll also take time for hikes and hot springs. Call 385-6908 to register.

SEPT. 16-17 EUGENE CELEBRATION BOOTH

ONDA will have a booth at this festive city party. We hope to make the booth even better than last year's. Eugene-Springfield area ONDA members and supporters are invited to help plan and staff the booth. This is a great opportunity to help educate friends and neighbors about the high desert and ONDA's role in its protection! Call Dave Stone at 683-6127 to sign up.

CALL FOR POETRY

All who shared their poetry with us at Desert Conference's First Annual Desert Poetry Festival are invited to send copies for possible publication in *Desert Ramblings*. Send manuscripts or "text" files on Macintosh disk to: Elaine Rees, 440 W. 17th, Eugene, OR 97401. We hope to compile the entire set of poetic offerings from DC XVII. Remember, it's not too early to begin penning verses for next year's festival!

Anti-federalism fuels assault on public lands

OUTBACK, CONTINUED FROM PG. 1

lands. For example, Nevada's Nye County Commissioner Dick Carver wanted a closed Forest Service road reopened, so he mounted a bulldozer, threatened and then ran a Forest Service employee off the road.

How can we take such county ordinances seriously? It was the federal government that made the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 (unknown to the Native Americans in the region), bringing most western lands into the United States. It was the federal government that negotiated (and violated) treaties with Native American nations, allowing white settlers the right to occupy these lands in the first place. And it was the federal government that

stand ready to assist any rancher who voluntarily gives up a federal grazing permit, if the government is willing to put the allotment into conservation use. Critics claim this is just an excuse to get the cows off public lands. We agree. That's our mission, and it is also a humane way to address the social impacts of transitioning from an ecologically unsustainable lifestyle. After all, our basic duty is to respect all life, not all lifestyles. Until we find some common ground with ranchers on how to begin phasing out public lands grazing, conservationists will be boxed into a steady stream of lawsuits, and some ranchers may continue to fuel the militia movement.

Less than 2,000 Oregon ranchers run livestock on public lands. Their average age is 60, and it's unrealistic to expect them to do anything different. We should focus on weaning the next generation of ranchers from the public trough by preparing them for new, family wage jobs right here in Oregon. For example, a recent article in *The Oregonian* predicts expansion of high tech jobs will create a demand for nearly 7,000 new work-

ers, and a shortage of skilled workers by 1999 in Oregon and southwest Washington.

Grazing subsidies should be invested in making the transition to an ecologically sustainable economic base. In 1993, BLM expended \$100 million on range management but collected only \$22 million in grazing fees, half of which was given back to individual grazing districts for range improvements, as required by law. "Not only is the

grazing program running deeply in the red, but millions of dollars in annual savings could accrue to taxpayers if the federal government paid ranchers not to graze federal lands," argue Jerry Holechek, professor of range management, and Karl Hess in *Rangelands*.¹

For ranchers who want to stay on the land, our priority should be

Our basic duty is to respect all life, not all lifestyles.

to shift government spending from subsidies for ranching operations to resource enhancements that will create jobs for the next generation. Jobs can be created introducing grizzly bears and wolves into the backcountry, tearing down unnecessary fences, policing for poachers, and teaching school kids the intricacies of salmon's life cycle or microbotic life in the soil.

We also need to ask the visiting public to ante up. Grazing fees on Steens Mountain gross about \$120,000 in federal revenues. If the 50,000 people who visit the Steens each year purchased a \$5 annual visitor pass that funded wildlands restoration, we could generate \$250,000 per year, doubling BLM grazing receipts and contributing to job creation.

How shall we respond to the arrogance of people like our Senator Bob Packwood, who believes human induced extinctions are okay? After all, he says, species



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The sage grouse, a candidate for the federal Endangered Species List, is declining throughout the West. Recent scientific research suggests livestock grazing negatively impacts its breeding habitat.

granted certain lands to the states and homesteaders.

While citizens must always be vigilant against government tyranny, we must equally oppose the tyranny of the livestock industry, resource extraction corporations and others who claim the right to degrade and destroy our public lands for private profit.

What about the future?

Conservation groups should

Grazing myths

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

she defines as "misinformation, inaccurately presented information, scientifically unsupported concepts, or unsubstantiated opinions presented as if there is scientific credibility backing them up."

Such myths are like old fashioned elixirs, says Painter. Their purpose is to dull the senses and provide a false sense of well-being while potentially causing severe negative impacts. Her other degree in English helps her sift through the muddled reasoning employed in many government documents. Here are some of her favorite myths and her rebuttals.

Myth: *Herbivory is a natural part of all terrestrial systems.* This statement is often at the beginning of government documents. But, Painter warns, while this is basically true, it can be misleading because it implies a similarity between grazers that bear no resemblance to one another. For example, cattle cannot be compared to grasshoppers, nor burros to desert tortoises. Their impact on the land is far dif-

ferent. Often a document will subtly shift from using "herbivory" to "grazing," and then justify livestock use based on this inaccurate substitution of terms.

Myth: *Grasslands evolved with grazers and therefore are adapted to them.* Ecosystems do not evolve, they develop; it is the populations or species within ecosystems that evolve. Unless solid scientific evidence demonstrates that grazing is the single driving force behind the development of the ecosystem or biome, basing management decisions on this statement is precarious at best.

Myth: *The Pleistocene extinction (10,000 years ago) of large herbivorous mammals left a vacuum which can be filled with cows and sheep.* This statement is scientifically insupportable. Evidence from the La Brea Tar Pits

Grazing myths, like old fashioned elixirs, dull the senses, provide a false sense of well-being, and can cause severe negative impacts.

suggests that early western bison were browsers, or possibly browser-grazers. Modern domestic livestock, being almost exclusively grazers, do not fit neatly into this niche.

Myth: *Huge herds of bison roamed the Intermountain West.* There is no scientific evi-

dence of continual occupation by large bison herds west of the Rockies. At best, we can surmise from excavated bison skulls and bones that occasional bands would wander over the mountains from the Great Plains, but probably didn't survive. Bison skulls found at Malheur Lake all showed the same dental anomaly, strongly indicating that the herd was isolated and inbred.

Myth: *Grazing systems in the United States should be modeled on some natural system.* On the surface, this seems an enlightened point of view, but some agency documents use as a model a natural system totally dissimilar to our arid and semi-arid West: tropical Africa!

In addition to these pseudo-scientific statements, many planning documents contain insupportable assertions, such as "Public land grazing is an economic force to the nation." To refute this statement, Painter cites government statistics which paint a contrary picture. For example:

- 15% of the cattle produced in the U.S. come from public land ranches (i.e., they consume public forage at some time during their lives)
- 8% of U.S. cattle herds are authorized to graze on the federal lands (the other 5% presumably graze illegally!)

Tuttle treks for mining reform

Decked out in blue nylon pants, an ORLOT-shirt ("Big Tree Service—We leave 'em standin'"), and a fanny pack holstering two water bottles, long-time environmental activist Larry Tuttle set out May 10 from the State Capitol in Salem on an 1,872-mile walk aimed at reforming the 1872 Mining Act. This antiquated law allows mining companies, including foreign-owned companies, to reap huge profits by extracting gold and other minerals from federal land, paying as little as \$2.50 per acre. Meanwhile, the federal Treasury receives not a dime in royalties, and abandoned mines pollute water with toxic wastes.

Larry's route will take him through Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, and Colorado, where he will visit the state capitals, and deliver his message on

the desperate need for mining reform to communities along the way. He will end at the Denver headquarters of Newmont Mining Company, which plans to open Oregon's first cyanide heap leach mine.

"We need a message with spiritual punch," said Tuttle at April's Desert Conference. His message is simple: "Preserving, protecting, and repairing the natural world means a better life for us, for our children, and for our grandchildren and is the fundamental step in promoting justice for everyone, everywhere."

When pressed on his departure about the spiritual component, he replied, "If this were really a Zen trip, I'd be towing the van instead of sleeping in it."

Good luck, Larry, and thanks for the inspiration. We're with you all the way.



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For thousands of years before European settlement, Native Americans used fire to increase game and edible plant populations.

DESERT FIRES

An historic Native American land management tool

PART I

Native American Fire Management

Native Americans in the Pacific Northwest had been using fire for thousands of years before Euro Americans arrived, explains Western historian William G. Robbins. A primary purpose for burning was to increase forage, game and edible plant populations.

Early white explorers recorded numerous observations of the Native American use of fire, according to Robbins, a professor at Oregon State University. On the evening of Sept. 3, 1835, Philadelphia-based naturalist John Kirk Townsend, writing from his vantage point on the Columbia, about 15 miles downstream from the mouth of the Umatilla River, recorded that on the other side of the river the Indians had fired the prairie:

Here I am sitting cross-legged on the ground, scribbling by the light of the vast conflagration with as much ease as if I had a ton of oil burning by my side. But my eyes are every moment involuntarily wandering from the paper before me to contemplate and admire the grandeur of the distant scene. The very heavens themselves appear ignited and the fragments of ashes and burning grass blades ascending and careening through the glowing firmament look like brilliant and glowing birds let loose to roam and revel amidst this splendid scene.

This special section highlights some of the ideas and scientific findings presented by speakers and participants at Desert Conference XVII. See also the article about keynote speaker Dr. Beth Painter on page 1.

Indian-caused fires contributed to the diversity of landscapes, to particular vegetation patterns, and to the recycling of nutrients in the soil.

— DR. WILLIAM G. ROBBINS, WESTERN HISTORIAN

In his book in progress, Robbins cites numerous primary sources to

demonstrate that Indians managed the forests and grasslands of the Pacific Northwest to a greater degree than has been previously recognized. “The grass is very green and very good, the old grass having been burnt off in late autumn,” wrote John Fremont as he traveled in 1843 along the Walla Walla River.

East of the Cascades and throughout the Willamette Valley, Native Americans used fire to improve habitat not only for game animals, but also for the grass seeds which provided one of their dietary staples. In addition, burning cleared out heavy brush, making travel easier, and promoting new willow shoots and other woody plants, which they used to make baskets and other vessels. In the 1700s, when native peoples began keeping horses introduced by the Spanish, they would burn areas to stimulate and sustain pasturage for these animals as well.

Robbins suggests that human-caused fires may have been much more prevalent than natural fires in Oregon’s history. He implies that throughout the region this intentional burning

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"Today our human task is to do what has been impossible... we [Native peoples and environmentalists] must have dialogue or we won't save the salmon.... We have an incredible path ahead of us."

SUSANA SANTOS
TYGH FISHERWOMAN



A work party to remove unnecessary fencing from the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge was among the field trips offered at Desert Conference. Elaine Aguada hauls barbed wire off the Hart Mountain Refuge.

acted as a relatively benign manipulation of natural processes. In contrast, white settlers introduced a "...rapid pace of human-induced environmental disturbance over very extensive areas in a very brief span of time."

Because these rapid changes were delayed in the Pacific Northwest until just a century ago, historians are able to reconstruct a realistic and viable profile of Northwest landscapes. But these landscapes, says Robbins, were not "pristine," "unmanaged," or "natural" as is the common misconception (for which Robbins chides other academics who continue to use these terms). Instead they were shaped and controlled by the Native peoples of the area.

"An abundance of data indicate that humans have influenced the composition and structure of most North American ecosystems for several millennia," Robbins concludes. Indian-caused fires "...contributed to the diversity of landscapes, to particular vegetation patterns, and to the recycling of nutrients in the soil."

Remarks Desert Conf

"We have to be out there in front.... We can no longer afford to be shrinking violets."

MARGE SILL
NEVADA ACTIVIST

"You see, we are all related. We're related to the plants. We're related to everything that's growing here on the Earth. We are related to the animal life and everything. It's up to us to see that this is taken care of. We can't stay around and shirk our duty [although] we try to avoid doing the things we need to do to take care of what's here.... The Creator expects something in return from us for what we get."

WILLIAM ROSSI, SR
SHOSHONE ELDER (NEVADA)



Hugh Kern points to a pictograph near Harney Lake during a Desert Conference field trip.

PART II Grasslands thrive on fire

Drs. Jane and Carl Bock are grassland ecologists who would undoubtedly agree with Robbins' conclusion that fire contributes to landscape diversity, but would also cite benefits of natural as well

as human-set fires.

"Grasslands thrive on fire," Carl emphasizes. The Bocks, affiliated with the University of Colorado, have studied grasslands throughout the West. As stewards of the Audubon Society's Appleton-Whittell Research Sanctuary in Northern Arizona, the Bocks have researched the effects of fire (both natural and hu-

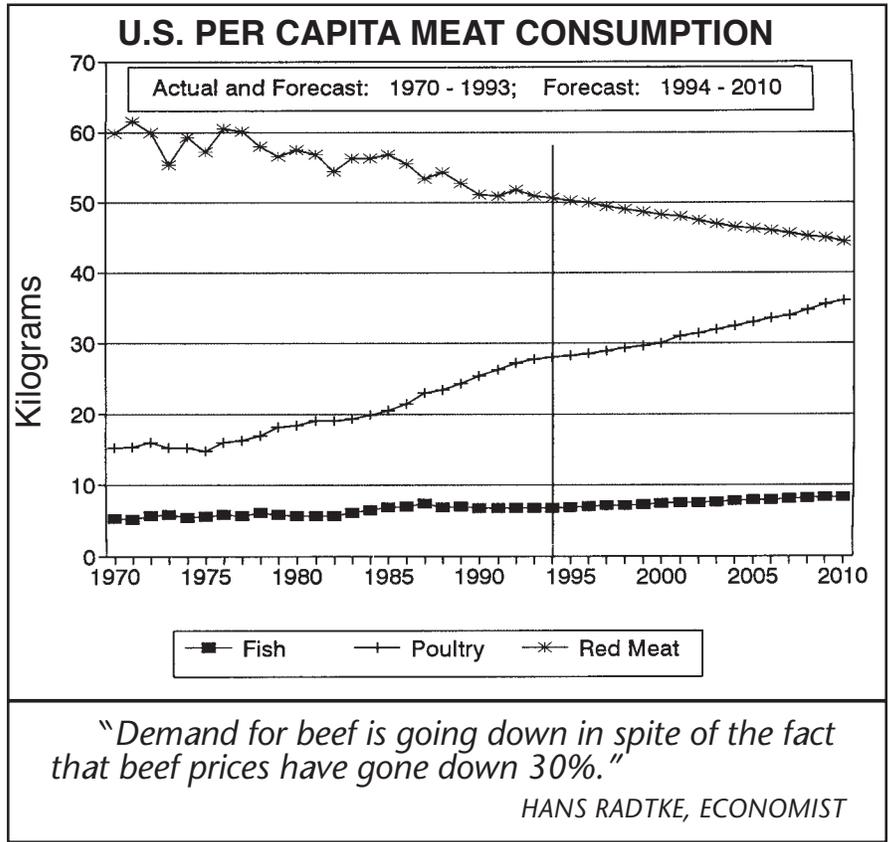
heard at Conference XVII

"It won't do us any good to protect all these places if the next generation doesn't have any sense of the same ethic."

SUSANNA DEFAZIO, OREGON

"Congress is now talking about 'takings.' They see the Earth as a big feedlot, an open pit, a clear-cut. But what about the taking away from nature? Who's asking us whether or not they can take the salmon from us?"

BILL MARLETT
ONDA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



man-induced) for years. The sanctuary, an 8,000-acre former cattle ranch, has not been grazed since its purchase by Audubon in 1968. Consequently, the preserve has plenty of grass cover, and where there is cover, there is fire.

In contrast, heavily grazed lands adjacent to the sanctuary function as effective fire barriers. He illustrated the point with a photograph of a sanctuary fenceline where the vegetation removed by grazing stopped a fire at the boundary.

Desert flora, fauna, and fire

The Bocks also compared the number and distribution of plants and animals within the sanctuary to grazed plots on adjacent cattle ranches. Their data demonstrate that overall, there was more grass on the ungrazed land than on the adjacent grazed land. No surprise there. But, says Carl, certain grass species respond to grazing differently than others.

In the mixed grasslands of southeastern Arizona, this means that grazing favors the short grasses by removing the canopy of tall grasses, thereby reducing

competition for sunlight or water. On the sanctuary, one finds greater populations of tall grass species.

"When you graze a piece of property, you're not just subtracting things, you're changing things," says Carl. "You're favoring some species over other species."

When you graze a piece of property, you're not just subtracting things, you're changing things. You're favoring some species over other species."

— DR. CARL BOCK,
GRASSLAND ECOLOGIST

As one might expect, animal populations are also affected. Kangaroo rats, which favor living among short grasses, were abundant on the grazed plots, while cotton rats, which prefer tall grass habitats, preferred ungrazed areas. Likewise, black-throated sparrows, which forage best in open areas, joined ranks with the kangaroo rats in the cow pastures, but grasshopper sparrows, which feed on grasshoppers which are more prevalent among tall grasses, preferred the sanctuary.

Bunchgrass lizards provide another example. The renowned herpetologist Robert Stebbins reported finding them only in isolated bunchgrass meadows in high mountains. But these rare lizards were "everywhere" in the lowland sanctuary, suggesting that even in Stebbins' time, their distribution had been drastically reduced by livestock grazing. By contrast, Bock unequivocally stated that neither grasshopper sparrows nor bunchgrass lizards were found in the grazed areas outside the sanctuary. New Mexico has designated both species as endangered under its state Endangered Species Act. 🐢

Are terminal desert lakes terminal?

Water diversions increase salinity, stress lake ecosystems

Aquatic entomologist

Dr. David Herbst and hydrologist Dr. Tom Myers came to Desert Conference armed with slides and data to explain how the closed lake systems of the Great Basin are in jeopardy. These "terminal desert lakes" — lakes with no natural outlet for their waters except by evaporation — are remnants of huge Pleistocene era lakes and include Great Salt Lake, Mono Lake, Pyramid Lake, Walker

Lake and Lake Abert. Water diversions for agriculture often reduce fresh water inflows, increasing the salinity of these lakes and threatening their biological diversity and productivity.

WALKER LAKE

Nevada's 30,000-acre Walker Lake is very deep, and renowned for the huge Lahontan cutthroat trout it once produced. After extensive research in the Walker Lake Basin, Myers is extremely concerned about the effects of water withdrawals for agriculture. Until this year's wet spring, Walker Lake had not received a drop of river water since 1986, according to Myers.

"Total water rights in the basin are almost 150 percent of the annual average river flow," he says. At least two-thirds of the water diverted from Walker Basin tributaries is used to irrigate livestock pastures and feed crops, such as alfalfa.

Water overappropriation in the



Reduced freshwater inflows can harm terminal desert lakes by increasing salinity to toxic levels. Shown is Lake Abert and Abert Rim in south central Oregon, a recently proposed "Area of Critical Environmental Concern" (see backpage).

Walker Basin increases the salinity in the lake, which jeopardizes its aquatic life. With little or no fresh water entering the lake from Walker River, the accumulated salts left after evaporation are not diluted, as they would be under natural conditions. Myers believes it would take 10 years of normal river flows to recharge groundwater and raise lake levels to normal.

LAKE ABERT

The health of most bodies of water can be measured by the health of their invertebrate populations (e.g., alkali flies, brine shrimp, etc.) says Herbst. An expert on aquatic invertebrates in salt lakes, Herbst has researched the impacts of increasing salinity on Mono Lake in eastern California and Lake Abert in south central Oregon.

Because Lake Abert is very shallow, changes in the fresh water inflows cause salinity levels to fluctuate wildly, making life difficult for resident organisms. Many of these

organisms maintain the proper salinity level in their blood by pumping out the excess salts, Herbst explains, a process which requires lots of energy. The higher the level of salts in their aquatic environment, the more energy they must expend regulating their blood salts, resulting in less energy available for growth and reproduction.

Much of the recent research on terminal desert lakes has focused on identifying

the threshold of salt concentration beyond which organisms cannot survive. Herbst warns that we should not base management decisions on these toxicity thresholds, because stress on the insects even at sub-lethal salinity levels will reduce their numbers and fail to sustain the birds, fish and other creatures which feed on them. Instead, agencies and conservation groups need to monitor salt lake habitats and see to it that lake levels and salt concentrations are maintained within limits which support biological health.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Myers believes that there are solutions for Walker Lake, such as purchasing water rights from willing sellers and promoting conservation. Both of these solutions avert disaster without requiring the wholesale shutdown of irrigation. "If we can solve the problems here," Myers says, "we can solve them anywhere."

Despite the severity of the damage they have observed in these terminal desert lakes, both Myers and Herbst injected a note of optimism. The Bureau of Land Management has proposed designating



Abbey's insight

The late Edward Abbey has been called the "Thoreau of the American West." His love of desert wildlands inspired his writing, which continues to illuminate the mysteries and grandeur of arid landscapes. The following are excerpts from his classic first book, Desert Solitaire.

The sun reigns, I am drowned in light. At this hour, I am sitting alone at the focal point of the universe, surrounded by a thousand square miles of largely uninhabited no-man's-land—or all-men's-land—I cannot seriously be disturbed by any premonitions of danger to my vulnerable wilderness or my all-too-perishable republic. All dangers seem equally remote. In this glare of brilliant emptiness, in this arid intensity of pure heat, in the heart of a weird solitude, great silence and grand desolation, all things recede to distances out of reach, reflecting light but impossible to touch, annihilating all thought and all that men have made to a spasm of whirling dust far out on the golden desert.



Hot and tired, I stop in the shade of an overhanging ledge and take a drink from my canteen. Resting, I listen to the deep dead stillness of the canyon. No wind or breeze, no birds, no running water, no sound of any kind but the stir of my own breathing.

Alone in the silence, I understand for a moment the dread which many feel in the presence of primeval desert, the unconscious fear which compel them to tame, alter or destroy what they cannot understand, to reduce the wild and prehuman to human dimensions. Anything rather than confront directly the antehuman, that other world which frightens not through danger or hostility but in something far worse—its implacable indifference.



Another half mile and I come to a "dripping spring." This is a seep high on the canyon wall, two hundred feet above my head, where ground water breaks out between beds of sandstone and slides over the contours of the cliff, nourishing the typical delicate greenery of moss, fern, columbine and monkeyflower. Below the garden the cliff curves deeply inward, forming an overhang that would shelter a house; at this point the water is released from the draw of surface tension and falls free through the air in a misty, wavy spray down to the canyon floor where I stand, as in a fine shower, filling my canteen and soaking myself and drinking all at the same time.



Wilderness is not a luxury but a necessity of the human spirit, and as vital to our lives as water and good bread. A civilization which destroys what little remains of the wild, the spare, the original, is cutting itself off from its origins and betraying the principle of civilization itself.

Saving Myself

I will go to the High Desert
To the Great Basin, which is really a bunch of sinks
Without drains, where no water ever reaches the sea
I will go there to escape the forest with its oppressive habits
Of blocking the sun, hiding the stars, trapping the fog, cooling
The summer air
I will go to the high desert to feed
On sunlight until my skin cracks. Until my eyes blister for want
Of something green to look at.

I will escape the industrial forest of the Coast Range
Where the approach of day is announced by crunching
Heavy wheels on gravel. Downshifting
Of road building and timber hauling machines that grind
Up the infinitely expanding network of logging roads
The beep beep of the yarder. The hungry noise
Of the chainsaws
And the most fearful sound of all
Silence
Then chink chink chink
Metal wedge hammered into moist incision
Tense crackle of wood fiber snapping
Ripping through stillness to end in the shuddering thud that
Shakes me out of bed.

I will leave this hurting place. My doomed forest
I will seek relief in naked sky. Scantily clad earth. Rimrock
Canyons. I will begin each day comfortably
Perched on some rim or other losing myself in the desert
Vastness. I will learn to let it in. The coyotes
Saying good morning to each other. Riotously colored rocks
Mysteries
Hidden in purple folds of the distant ranges. I will
Swallow it all. It will forever become a part of me

I will make my daybed under a willow shrub by a desert stream
If I am lucky.
If, by chance, the middle of the day finds me on a desiccated
Playa, I will curl up under a brittle, thorny, leafless shrub
Of course
There will also be days when I will ease myself into a canyon
Pool. My neck and shoulders under a waterspout

As I sit on the Eastern Rim of Steens Mountain, I will
Contemplate the dilemma. What a sorry race of beings
We have become. I will make every effort
To save myself. I will allow myself to be
Nourished by the immeasurable feast laid out before me. I will
Grow bigger inside. I must
I must become very big
In order to face the foolishness of my people. To know
The sickness that afflicts us

BY SUSANNA DEFAZIO



HATS WITH DESERT RATS

by Sandy Berry

Paul Fritz

When speaking of his love for wild places of the West, ONDA Advisory Council member Paul Fritz is ebullient. "The scenery and landscape in so many places gives me goosebumps just thinking about them!" He spent his childhood on the streets of Yonkers, New York, but his expertise about the western landscape and its limitations is astounding.

Between 1954, when he graduated from Utah State University as a Landscape Architect in Environmental Plan-

ning, and 1980, when he retired from the National Park Service (NPS), Paul gained intimate knowledge of the workings of the BLM, Forest Service, and NPS. During his tenure at California's Lassen National Park in the early 1960s, he contributed extensively to Congressional hearings regarding the establishment of the nearby Redwood National Park. Paul remains involved with the development of Redwood National Park and Utah's Natural Bridges National Monument, as well as in the creation of other parks and preserves.

Paul continues his involvement in natural resource issues by contributing his expertise to grassroots environmental groups. In addition to being on ONDA's Advisory Council, he serves on several other boards and has become an example to many younger activists. His dedication to grassroots campaigns throughout the West serves to inspire all of us.

Welcome Gilly!

A few months ago, ONDA's Board of Directors decided it was time to hire a second staff person to assist Executive Director Bill Marlett broaden our base of support, coordinate volunteer efforts, organize events, and do a zillion other things that need doing. In June, Gillian Lyons was hired as our new Grassroots Coordinator.

Gilly, as she is known to friends and colleagues, just completed her masters in environmental studies at the University of Montana. She has conducted legal research for an open space advocacy group in California, managed a field office for environmental and wilderness education in Rocky Mountain National Park, and recently helped coordinate a conference on gender, justice, and the environment in Montana. "I'm entirely committed to effecting constructive change through grassroots activism," says Gilly, who emphasizes her interest in protecting western wildlands.

ONDA on the move in 1994

by Dave "Rimrock" Stone

Six years after several Bend residents brought desert activists together to form the Oregon Natural Desert Association, ONDA is hitting its stride and has moved ahead in every area.

Learning about the land: ONDA volunteers continued to gather information on proposed wilderness areas in the Oregon High Desert Protection Act (OHDP). All OHDP lands have been entered into a Geographic Information System (GIS) computer mapping program. We can now produce transparent overlays for almost any map scale. ONDA also helped fund an economic study of grazing on OHDP lands.

Educating the public: ONDA volunteers have been out in the community rousing the rabble (and respectable folk, too) all over the state, from the Rotary Club in Sisters to the Lane County Audubon Society, from the Skamania Lodge in the Columbia Gorge to the Eugene Natural History Society. ONDA

members also led desert field trips through the Portland Parks and Recreation District and Lane Community College.

Influencing the policymakers: This is where the payoff can come. For example, ONDA convinced the managers of the Hart Mountain National Wildlife Refuge to remove cows from the refuge, setting a major precedent in grazing practices on public land in the West.

Rehabilitating the land: ONDA led fence removal work parties at Hart Mountain and Malheur National Wildlife Refuges and participated in the construction of a temporary fence for the Corner Aspen Project on the Prineville BLM District.

Growing the organization: Effective policy initiatives and increased public visibility resulted in a 300 percent membership increase. In a step towards stabilizing funding, ONDA initiated the High Desert Defense Fund, a convenient vehicle for supporters to give regu-

larly through automatic checking account withdrawals. Foundations supporting ONDA's efforts include the REI Rivers Coalition, Harder Foundation, The Flow Fund, Patagonia, Acorn Foundation, Mazamas, Peradam Foundation and others. Increasing membership and support finally allowed ONDA to pay our Executive Director Bill Marlett a living wage and to hire a grassroots coordinator (see sidebar above).

Looking to the future: Carrying this momentum into 1995, ONDA sponsored the highly successful Desert Conference XVII, attracting a record number of participants. A two-year strategic plan has been put in place.

ONDA's development as an effective grassroots environmental organization has come with the efforts of dedicated staff, board members, and member/volunteers. We thank all of you who have contributed to our success and look forward to even more exciting years to come. 

M ARKETPLACE

Books

- The Sagebrush Ocean: A Natural History of the Great Basin*
by Stephen Trimble \$24
- Waste of the West: Public Lands Ranching*
by Lynn Jacobs \$28
- Sacred Cows at the Public Trough*
by Denzel & Nancy Ferguson \$9
- Hole in the Sky*
by William Kittredge \$20

T-Shirts/Sweatshirts

- ONDA T-shirts (shortsleeve) \$12
- ONDA Sweatshirts (longsleeve) \$22
- Specify size (S, M, L, XL) and color (Grey, navy, sage or white).*
- "Boycott Beef" T-shirt (shortsleeve) \$12

Etc.

- Stunning 18"x28" color poster of Big Indian Gorge ... \$10
- "Cows Kill Salmon" bumpersticker \$1
- Road Map to OHDP lands \$5



ONDA Marketplace Order Form

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YES!! I'LL JOIN OREGON NATURAL DESERT ASSOCIATION!

Annual membership levels:

- \$25
 \$50
 \$100
 \$250
 \$500

The High Desert Defense Fund Monthly Contribution Program:

Automatic bank deductions are convenient, cut down on paper use and mail solicitations, and are hassle free. Deductions from your account may be stopped or adjusted at any time by simply sending a written notice or by phoning ONDA at (503) 385-6908.

High Desert Defense Fund monthly membership levels: (enclose a signed, voided check)

- \$5
 \$10
 \$25
 \$50
 \$100

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Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Mail this form with check to ONDA, 16 NW Kansas, Bend, OR 97701

BLM proposes special status for Lake Abert

Send letters supporting Alternative 2

The BLM's Lakeview District has proposed that Lake Abert be designated an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) in recognition of its significant cultural and biological resources. Your comments are needed now on the "Draft Plan Amendment and Environmental Impact Statement."

ONDA supports Alternative 2, which would 1) designate 99,900 acres of the Lake Abert basin as an ACEC, 2) close the ACEC to mining and predator control activities, 3) allocate all forage on Abert Rim to bighorn sheep and other wildlife, 4) expand the existing archaeological district, and 5) allow reintroduction of sensitive plant and animal species.

The agency, however, has selected Alternative 7 as its preferred alternative, which would create a significantly smaller ACEC and would offer fewer protections for the lake basin's rich biological and archaeological resources.



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Lake Abert's wildlife and scenic beauty will be better protected if the BLM designates it as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern. Please write letters supporting this designation.

Please write letters today (comment period closes August 16, 1995). Compliment the BLM on their foresight in proposing special management for the unique Lake Abert area. Express support for Alternative 2 and recommend that they make the following revisions to the final document:

- ◆ specify limits on total dissolved solids and minimum lake levels to ensure the lake's biological health;
- ◆ place a higher priority on completion of the Class III archaeological survey (current wording is "a time and funding permit");

- ◆ specify that disturbances be reseeded with native species only;
- ◆ restrict Off Highway Vehicles to existing roads; and
- ◆ eliminate livestock grazing to protect cultural sites and native plants.

Act now!

Send your comments to:
 Scott Florence, Area Manager
 Bureau of Land Management
 Lakeview Resource Area
 PO Box 151
 Lakeview, OR 97630

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