

Desert Ramblings

the newsletter of the
Oregon
Natural Desert
association



Volume 9, Number 1

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OCSI hits the streets

Supreme Court approves ballot title

On January 19, the Oregon Supreme Court finally rejected a challenge to the Oregon Clean Stream Initiative's (OCSI) ballot title.

Last October, the Oregon Cattlemen's Association (OCA) and the Oregon Farm Bureau (OFB) had petitioned the Supreme Court, objecting to the ballot title use of the word "polluted" and attacking the initiative on various other grounds. Most likely, they simply hoped the proceedings would drag on for months, reducing the window of opportunity for collecting the nearly 100,000 signatures needed by July to place the initiative on the November ballot. The strategy worked for three months, but the court finally affirmed the original language by a 4-3 margin.

The ballot title is the question and summary you see in the voters' pamphlet and in the voting booth. It is extremely important because great numbers of voters read only the title and nothing else. According to Oregon's initiative procedure, the Attorney General drafts the ballot title after a proposed initiative is submitted. Anyone can comment on the title and, if not satisfied, appeal it to the Supreme Court. The Court cannot alter the language of the petition itself, but it can alter the descriptive title. However, unless egregious errors are made, it usually approves the Attorney General's title.

The attorney for the OCA and OFB claimed that streams not supporting beneficial uses, such as fish and wildlife habitat and drinking water, are not really "polluted" in the true sense of the word. Yet, according to the Natural Resources Conservation Service, agricultural pollution, primarily caused by livestock and run-off from farm fields, is the number one source of pollution in America's waterways.

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ELAINE REES

A volunteer collects signatures for the Oregon Clean Stream Initiative, which would keep livestock out of polluted streams and adjacent riparian zones.

ONDA Litigation Roundup

by Jack Sterne

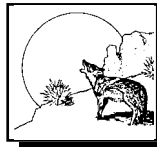
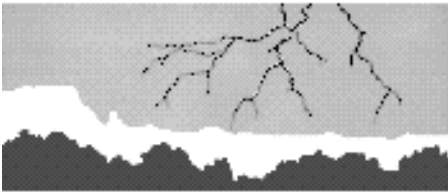
When agencies or parties ignore environmental laws, taking the matter to court may be the only way to ensure enforcement. Litigation can be part of the solution, and is only one tool ONDA uses to protect Oregon's desert wildlands and waters. Our litigation docket currently includes these three important cases:

- 1) our challenge to a Middle Fork John Day grazing permit under Sec. 401 of the federal Clean Water Act (CWA);
- 2) a suit in state court contesting the decision by Oregon's Division of State Lands (DSL) to withdraw state grazing lands on the Owyhee River from competitive public bidding; and
- 3) a case in federal District Court challenging the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Donner und Blitzen Wild and Scenic River Management Plan, which fails to protect the river corridor from grazing and other impacts.

Middle Fork John Day

The Sec. 401 suit under the Clean Water Act was profiled in our Fall '94 issue. At this writing, we still anxiously await a decision. Argued before Judge Ancer Haggerty in April 1995, this case could set a groundbreaking national precedent in the way the CWA is applied to *non-point* sources of pollution.

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FROM THE DEN

by Kathleen Simpson Myron

An abundance of water and support

Abundance and great timing: ONDA is off to a great start in 1996 with much to be thankful for. In this new year, ONDA has already received six grants. For their generous and timely financial support, we wish to thank the McKenzie River Gathering Foundation, Peradam Foundation, the Rockwood Fund, the Center for Respect of Life and Environment, the Kirby Foundation, the National Rivers Coalition / REL, and the Bullitt Foundation. These grants will support ONDA's educational and public outreach efforts.

After living through the 1996 flood, clean water is often on my mind, as is the Oregon Clean Stream Initiative (OCSI). Now, the sun is shining and polluted floodwaters have receded. But for a time, neighboring communities were under orders to conserve water, while others surrounded by raging brown water had none.

You might say Mother Nature is actively "campaigning" for clean water by demonstrating how vulnerable our drinking water sources are. OCSI now has the go-ahead from the Oregon Supreme Court to give voters a chance to reduce a major cause of non-point source water pollution (see p.1). A teachable moment is here. Clean water is a statewide need.



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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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Newsletter

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

In Bend...

"Evenings with Nature," a lecture series co-sponsored by ONDA, Central Oregon Audubon Society, Native Plant Society and Sierra Club. Held at the COEC, 16 NW Kansas, with refreshments at 6:30 PM and program at 7 PM.

April 17 - "Blossoms Among the Sage," a slideshow by photographer and amateur botanist Elaine Rees.

May 15 - "Natural and Unnatural History of the Oregon Cascades," with geography professor Bob Frenkel.

In Harney County...

April 12-14 - John Scharff Migratory Bird Festival and Art Show in Burns. For info, contact Harney County Chamber of Commerce, 18 West D St., Burns, OR 97720. (541) 573-2636

April 25-28 - Desert Conference XVIII - Malheur Field Station (see p. 12)

August 9-12 - Steens Mountain Retreat coincides with the Perseid meteor shower, led by ONDA member, Maitreya. Hiking, birding, star-gazing, and more. Call Gilly: (541) 385-6908.

Out of Portland...

Portland Parks and Recreation will offer two High Desert trips led by ONDA members Mary Garrard and Alice Elshoff. To register, call Bob Gandolfi, Portland Parks and Recreation, (503) 823-5132.

June 17-23: Owyhee Reservoir Canoe and Hike. Ken Barker teams up with Mary and Alice to guide you! Flat water paddling, canyon hikes, cave exploration, wildlife observation and more.

August 26-31 - Steens Mountain Full Moon Adventure. Day trips to Diamond Craters, Malheur Wildlife Refuge, and Steens Mountain (plus a soak at Alvord Hot Spring!) from your home base at Malheur Field Station.

In Lake County...

July 25 - 28 - ONDA's Annual Barbed Wire Round-Up at Hart Mountain Wildlife Refuge. Spend a weekend in the heart of the High Desert hiking, soaking in a hot spring, and helping remove fences that impede wildlife movement. Call Gilly: (541) 385-6908.

Supreme Court approves OCSI ballot title

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Justice Fadeley, writing the dissenting opinion, argued that use of the word "polluted" in the ballot title (instead of the bureaucratic euphemism "water quality limited") was derogatory, misleading, and "carried a heavy freight of negative connotations." (As if sediment-choked, overheated, oxygen-poor stream waters that kill fish are anything but polluted.)

But the majority opinion concluded: "We are not persuaded by any of [the] arguments [of representatives of the Oregon Farm Bureau and the Oregon Cattlemen's Association], and accordingly we decline to modify the Attorney General's ballot title."

This initiative is about clean water, saving salmon, and taking responsibility—not about putting ranchers out of business.

It wasn't too long ago that untreated human sewage went directly into many of our streams. Now we appropriately spend significant public resources to keep human sewage out of our rivers. And we have laws against draining septic systems into our streams.

So what about the wastes generated by Oregon's 1.2 million cows? It's common sense that cows cause water pollution. They defecate 2.6 billion pounds of manure annually on Oregon's range—10% of which is done while standing in and along our streams!^{1,2} Livestock denude streamside vegetation, increasing water temperatures, erosion and sedimentation into the streams. Countless studies have documented these impacts.



© GREG BURKE

Livestock grazing has severely damaged streams in the West. Riparian zones in the region are in their worst condition in history, according to a 1990 Environmental Protection Agency report.

Our polling data show that Oregonians simply don't want stream pollution and, if given a chance, will vote to stop it. The Cattlemen's Association probably knows this and is likely to try to confuse the debate by characterizing the measure as an attempt to "destroy their lifestyle."

But this initiative is about clean water, saving salmon, and taking responsibility—not about putting ranchers out of business. Realistically, livestock operators will need time and incentives to adjust their operations. OCSI's stream buffers are phased in over 10 years. In addition, the initiative makes ranchers eligible for a 25% state tax credit under an existing program to defray the cost of fencing cows out of streams. On top of that, ranchers can obtain a property tax exemption for the portion of their land (stream buffers) protected under the

measure. Furthermore, the initiative gives ranchers preferential funding under two other state programs. This is not about ranching vs. clean streams; it is about ranching *and* clean streams.

Please help clean up Oregon's rivers and restore habitat for wild salmon, steelhead and trout. Carry the enclosed petition (between pgs. 6 and 7, instructions on pg. 8) and ask your friends and neighbors for their signatures. Collecting twenty signatures is perhaps the easiest thing you can do to ensure a legacy of clean water for future generations.

All Oregonians want clean water. As one rancher put it as he signed the petition, "It's time to clean up our streams."

¹ U.S. Department of Agriculture Range-land Watershed Fact Sheet, 1994.

² Soil Conservation Service.

Oregon Clean Stream Initiative Ballot Title

Prohibits Livestock in Certain Polluted Waters or on Adjacent Lands

Result of "YES" Vote: Vote "yes" to prohibit livestock in or along certain polluted waters in state, with exceptions.

Result of "NO" Vote: Vote "no" to reject law prohibiting livestock in or along certain polluted waters in state.

Summary: Measure would prohibit livestock in certain waters in Oregon, and on adjacent land, if waters do not meet state water quality standards and the livestock would contribute to poor water quality. State Department of Agriculture may allow exemptions if certain criteria are met. Any person may sue to enforce law. Measure applies to state, federal and private waters and land. Persons required to comply may receive tax credit and state funding. Measure's operative dates are delayed, depending on land ownership and type of habitat affected."

ONDA's Litigation Roundup

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Sec. 401 of the Clean Water Act requires "[a]ny applicant for a Federal license or permit to conduct any activity...which may result in any discharge into the navigable waters" to obtain certification from the state (i.e., Oregon Department of Environmental Quality) that the discharge will not result in a violation of state water quality standards. In this case, the "applicant" is the grazing permittee, the "permit" is the grazing permit, the "activity" is cattle grazing, and the "discharge" is the 43 pounds of manure produced daily by the average cow, as well as the sedimentation and high water temperatures caused by cattle trampling streambanks.

The central question in the case is whether the "discharge" produced by cattle grazing was meant to be regulated by the CWA. In other words, should polluters whose pollutants can't be traced to a pipe be held accountable under the CWA? The government argues that a "discharge" can only come from a "point source," which essentially means a pipe or other discrete point from which the outfall of pollution can be measured. ONDA, represented by Mike Axline of the Western Environmental Law Center, argues that a "discharge" can come from non-point sources of pollution and includes erosion (or manure "discharge") resulting from grazing, clearcutting, and other destructive land management activities.

If Judge Haggerty rules in our favor, federal grazing permittees will be required to obtain certification from state water quality agencies that their activities will not contribute to the violation of water quality standards. Permittees will find it very difficult to prove their operations don't. A positive decision could profoundly improve water quality by changing the way livestock are managed on public lands.

Competitive bidding for state lands

The Oregon Division of State Lands (DSL) leases about 600,000 acres of state-owned lands in eastern Oregon to ranchers for grazing. Proceeds are intended to benefit state schools, but the program operates at a loss, a de facto subsidy for ranchers. In 1994, the State Land Board (comprised of the governor, treasurer and secretary of state), rather than just renewing the below-market leases, instituted a new policy to open the leases to competitive bidding.

The new policy touched off a lawsuit from affected ranchers, who argued that the DSL was obligated to renew their twenty-year grazing leases, based upon a 1983 State Land Board policy. ONDA, represented by attorney Jim Coon, intervened in the ranchers' suit. In November 1994, Harney County Circuit Court Judge Frank Yraguen agreed with the ranchers; ONDA and the State appealed. Meanwhile, when Gov. John Kitzhaber took office in 1995, his vote created a 2-1 majority on the land board that abruptly scrapped the competitive bidding policy, fulfilling a campaign pledge to the ranchers.

ONDA filed its appellate brief on August 4, 1995 and we are still awaiting oral argument before the Oregon Court of

Appeals. In the appeal, ONDA argues that the 1983 policy is just that, a policy, and therefore does not have force of law. ONDA also argues that the new lease rules violate the the 1859 Admission Act, which admitted Oregon into the United States and transferred these lands from federal to state ownership. The Admission Act requires that these state lands be managed as a trust for the benefit of state public schools. The newest grazing rules violate this act, because they do not require that the state receive market value for the leases. In addition, by allowing overgrazing, the state has not maintained the land in good condition, and has therefore violated its fiduciary responsibility as administrator of the trust.

ONDA, joined by Oregon Natural Resources Council and again represented by Jim Coon, raised similar arguments in a separate but related lawsuit challenging the state's denial of ONDA's bid for grazing lands along the Owyhee River. It appeared that ONDA would indeed be able to acquire the grazing leases, until Kitzhaber's vote reversed the open bidding policy. The lawsuit also challenges the state's newest policy allowing ranchers the right of first refusal if the state puts the land up for sale. This latter point could be extremely significant considering the DSL's recent proposal to sell much of the state grazing land. The case is still in the trial court and ONDA recently moved to amend its complaint to reflect new grazing rules issued by the state in November 1995.

Donner und Blitzen Wild & Scenic River plan

The newest case on the docket challenges the BLM's Donner und Blitzen Wild and Scenic River Management Plan and was filed on December 27, 1995 in U.S. District Court in Portland. The Donner und Blitzen drains a significant portion of Steens Mountain in southeastern Oregon. ONDA and a coalition of other groups are represented by Pete Frost of the National Wildlife Federation and Todd True and Adam Berger of the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund.

The suit argues that the BLM plan violates the federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (WSRA), the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and the Administrative Procedures Act (APA) because it allows grazing and associated man-made developments to proceed in the river corridor. Under the WSRA, BLM must prepare a "comprehensive management plan" for the river which "provide[s] for the protection of river values." However, the BLM plan fails to protect such river values as fisheries; rare, endemic, and sensitive plant communities; and recreation. The plan also allows the construction of river access facilities and vehicle crossings, which are incompatible with the designation of the Donner und Blitzen as a "wild" river (the most restrictive category compared to "scenic" and "recreational"). BLM also proposes to allow a diversion from the Little Blitzen to irrigate cattle pastures. ONDA plans to file a motion for summary judgment this spring.

Together, these lawsuits should help protect our public desert wildlands and waters. 



“A healthy environment is a major stimulus for a healthy economy.”
 - Consensus Report by Pacific Northwest Economists

ECONOMIC WELL-BEING & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

The following article is excerpted and adapted from a new consensus report prepared by 64 respected Northwest economists.

By almost any measure of economic vitality, the four states of the Pacific Northwest—Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Montana—have been remarkably healthy over the past decade. For example, between 1988 and 1994

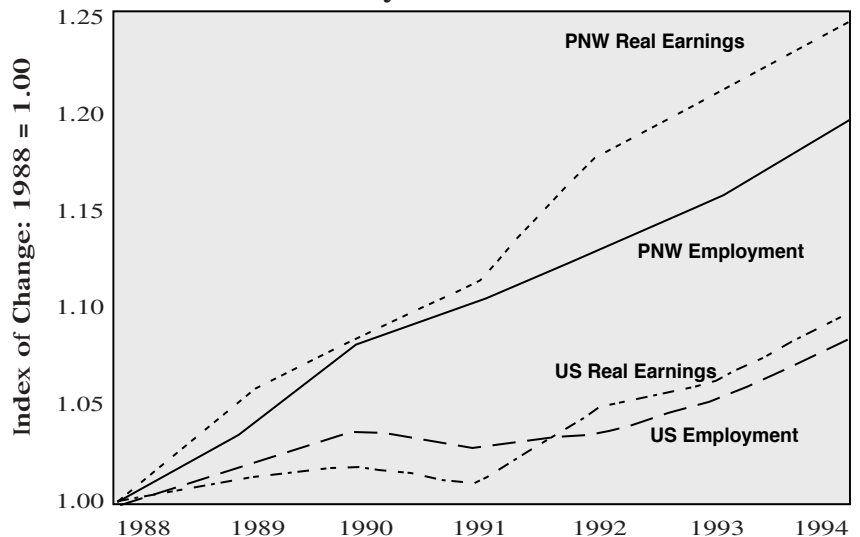
- the number of jobs in the region increased 18%,
- total personal real income of households increased 24%,
- total real earnings of workers increased 24%, and
- the average real income of residents increased 9%.

For each of these variables, the growth in the Pacific Northwest was two to three times the national rate, and economic projections indicate that growth in jobs and incomes in this region should continue to outpace the rest of the nation for the foreseeable future. Although some areas will see much more growth than others and some will struggle to maintain existing levels of economic activity, virtually all communities within the region will enjoy some of this growth.

Despite this exceptional performance, many residents feel uneasy about the regional economy and have the impression that it is about to collapse. Both the region's strong economic performance and a significant part of the unease that is felt by the public stem from the same origin: The Pacific Northwest's economy is undergoing a profound transition. During the last decade the

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Economic Vitality: Pacific Northwest vs. U.S.



ECONOMIC WELL-BEING & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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industries once central to the region's economy—agriculture, timber, fishing, mining and the aerospace industry—have experienced significant declines....But as these industries have declined, others have stepped forward, notably high-tech design and manufacturing industries as well as a wide range of medical, business, and professional services. Furthermore, parts of our historical base have diversified into additional value-added manufacturing. The net result is that the region is successfully navigating from being dependent on a few extractive industries to having a modern, widely diversified economy.

Quality of Life

The forces driving this transition are complex, but the two most important factors are the region's *quality of life* and the *increasing mobility* of people and businesses.

The Pacific Northwest is outperforming the



ONDA FILE PHOTO

rest of the nation in the growth of jobs and incomes primarily because people want to live, work, and raise a family here. Quality of life is especially important in a world where many economic activities have the ability to locate wherever there is a growing pool of productive workers and expanding consumer markets.

As quality of life becomes more important and natural resource extraction becomes less important to the region's economy, a shift is taking place in the economic role that natural resources play. Our natural landscapes no longer generate new jobs primarily by being warehouses from which loggers, farmers, ranchers, fishermen, and miners extract commercial products. While traditional extractive activities will continue to be important elements of the economy, they will not be the source of new jobs and higher incomes. In

What's causing job losses in the resource industries?

Because jobs in the natural resource industries have declined at the same time that there have been bitter battles associated with protecting endangered species, it has become common place to assume that environmental protection necessarily caused all of the job loss. This represents a serious misunderstanding, both within the region and across the nation.

For reasons that have little to do with environmental protection, all of the industries that historically made up the region's economic base have been in relative or absolute decline as sources of jobs and income. All of the natural resource industries—agriculture, fishing, mining, and timber—are mature industries where technological developments have dramatically raised productivity and reduced labor requirements.

In addition, all of these industries faced international markets where the demand for the product was limited and often weak because of both competition from other sources and cyclical fluctuations in demand. As a result, the percentage of our workforce engaged in these activities has steadily declined, while output levels have remained high enough to keep prices depressed.

-Consensus Report by Pacific Northwest Economists

Traditional extractive activities... will *not* be the source of new jobs and higher incomes."

today's world, natural landscapes often may generate more new jobs and income by providing water and air quality, recreational opportunities, scenic beauty, and the fish and wildlife that make a region such as ours an attractive place to live,

Wildlife Refuge Brings Millions to Harney County

Malheur National Wildlife Refuge generates several millions of dollars for the local economy of Harney County, according to an independent study released this summer. Tourists spent \$1.3 million on lodging, food and gas, and another \$1.6 on groceries, clothing, books, souvenirs, and other items between June of 1993 and May of 1994 alone.

"Without the national wildlife refuge, several millions of dollars would not boost the local economy," says Dr. Paul Kerlinger of the New Jersey Audubon Society, which helped to fund the study. Kerlinger points out that the positive economic effect of the refuge is dependent on clean, open space and an abundance of wildlife. "Without these things, the tourists will not come, nor will their dollars benefit the community. A healthy environment translates into a healthy economy," he concludes.



ALAN D. ST. JOHN

Malheur National Wildlife Refuge.

In many instances, the highest-value use of a forest, river, or other resource will be to protect and enhance it..."

work, and do business. Overall, new jobs outside of the historic extractive base have paid high enough wages for real earnings per job to rise almost four times as rapidly as in the nation as a whole.

In short, our choice is not between jobs and the environment. Rather, a healthy environment is a major stimulus for a healthy economy.

Two threats

However, if we want a healthy economy, we will have to make the economic and political investments necessary to guard against two types of environmental degradation which could accompany this economic transition:

1) The allocation of natural resources to low-value uses when protecting them has a higher value. In many instances, the highest-value use of a forest, river, or other resource will be to protect and enhance it so that it reinforces the region's natural environment, because doing so also will

strengthen one set of forces that is creating new jobs and higher incomes.

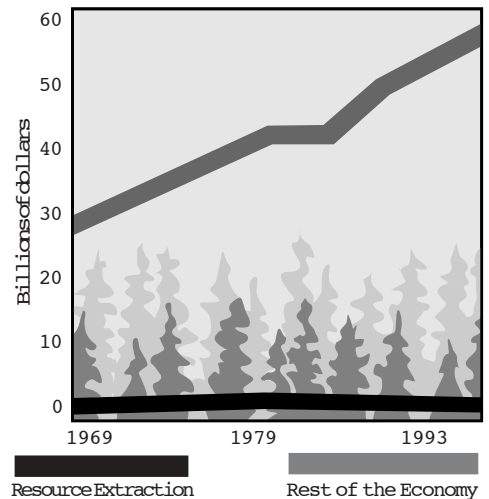
2) Overwhelming the environment with more people, congestion, and urban sprawl.

Conclusion

Protecting the environment, by itself, cannot ensure that everyone in the region has a bright future. As in the rest of the nation, workers with less education, experience, and skill are seeing their earnings shrink relative to those with more education, experience, and skill. The best way to help those at risk of being left behind as our economy develops is to help individuals and communities acquire the capability and flexibility to take advantage of the opportunities that are being generated in the new economy and to assist those disadvantaged by the changes to successfully negotiate the transition. But as long as the Pacific Northwest is able to provide a quality of life that many people find attractive, it should continue to prosper. 🐾

From "Economic Well-Being and Environmental Protection in the Pacific Northwest: A Consensus Report by Pacific Northwest Economists," (December 1995), edited by T. M. Power. Available from Pacific Rivers Council, PO Box 10798, Eugene, OR (541) 345-0119.

Personal Income: Resource Extraction Industries vs. Rest of the Economy



"Between 1969 and 1993, personal income generated by natural resource extraction dropped from seven percent of the region's personal income to five percent, while farming, ranching, and agricultural services dropped by nearly half, from 11 percent to six percent."

From "A New Home On The Range: Economic Realities in the Columbia River Basin," (The Wilderness Society, 1995).

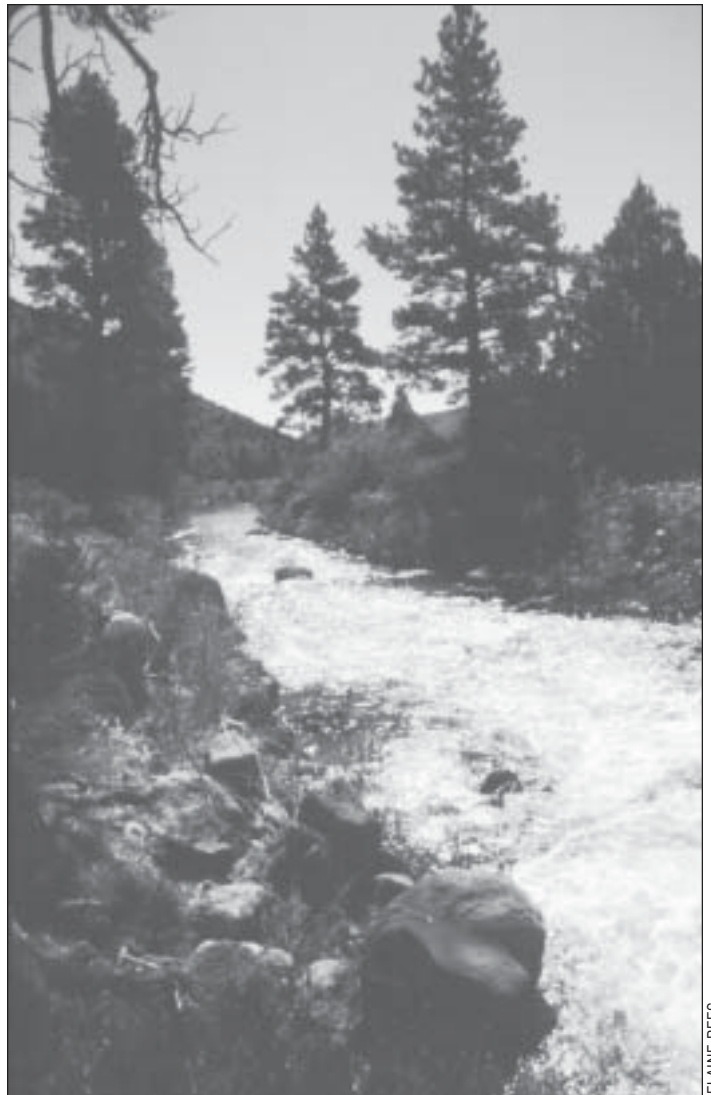
CIRCULATOR'S INSTRUCTIONS

for the

OREGON CLEAN STREAM INITIATIVE

Thank you for your help. Please take time to read the following instructions carefully. Strictly following the guidelines will minimize the number of signatures rejected and ensure that this initiative qualifies for the ballot.

- **Only persons registered to vote in Oregon may sign or circulate a petition.**
- **Do not copy petitions.** They will be disqualified. Contact a coordinator in your area (see numbers below) if you need more petition sheets.
- **Only one circulator may collect signatures on any one sheet.** After you have completed the sheet, sign the "Circulator statement" at the bottom of the petition, verifying that you personally witnessed each signature.
- **One county per signature sheet.** State law requires all signatures on a sheet be from the same county. Ask signers what county they are registered in before signing. Carry several petitions if necessary.
- **Print legibly.** Make sure signers print legibly. Use a pen for signing petitions. A woman should sign her own name, not her husband's name or initials.
- **Do not use ditto marks.** Have the signer write out their address in full.
- **Registration address.** Signers must sign their full name, as they did when they registered to vote, with their current residential address.
- **Signing twice.** Do not allow signers to sign another person's petition sheet.
- **Invalid signatures.** If you are absolutely certain that a signature is not valid, cross it out (for example, if the signer is from the wrong county, cross it out).
- **Returning petitions.** Send completed petitions to the Bend office (the address is on the bottom of the petition) as soon as you complete them. Don't sit on your sheets thinking you'll get to it later. You probably won't. Sending them in promptly also lets us keep an up-to-date signature count. All petition sheets are due on June 30, 1996.
- **Giving out petitions.** Talk to friends, relatives, and neighbors about circulating petitions. Also keep track of people who sign that are eager to help. Keep track of their names so you can follow up with them later.
- **Partially filled petitions.** Send them in even if they only have one signature!



ELAINE REES

Deep Creek in eastern Oregon.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS...

Call one of the area coordinators listed below or the Bend or Portland offices.

Portland Area:

Donna Rosen: 503-232-8478

Salem Area:

Jerrold Martisak 503-588-7236

Corvallis Area:

Craig Lacy: 541-758-6148

Lane County:

Jason Seivers 541-686-4365

Southern Oregon:

Evelyn Strauss 541-482-9138

Bend & Central Oregon

Ashley Henry: 541-389-8367

Eastern Oregon:

Patrick Shipsey 541-575-1628

Hole in the Sky

by William Kittredge

Excerpted from Hole in the Sky, a memoir by William Kittredge about his years growing up in the family that owned the MC Ranch, which owns and leases over a million acres of private and public lands in the Warner Valley of southeast Oregon. His latest book is Who Owns the West? (Mercury House, 1995).

For eight years I was the farming boss at the MC. Those crops and that irrigation system were the finest playthings of my life. We were making something be as perfect as it could be in our notion of the world, and for a long time I loved it. All at once we were the adults, entrusted with power. We thought we were doing hugely important work, remaking the world on an image borrowed from efficiency experts. We drained the wetlands and thought that made them ours. We made ditches and named the ditch corners—Four Corners, the Big Pump, Center Bridge, Beatty Bridge—and we thought such naming made the valley our own. The road into the valley was paved; we had electricity and television, and the animal-centered agricultural world I had grown up in was mostly gone just like that. That quickly.

The ranch was being turned into a machine for feeding livestock. We had leveled thousands of acres for alfalfa, and we kept leveling more; the swamps were drained, and the thronging flocks of hundreds of thousands of waterbirds were diminishing year by year; the hunting was still fine if you had never seen anything else, but we knew better.

Our irrigation system was a masterpiece of complexity with more than five thousand water control devices, headgates, valves, eighteen inch pumps. We could run the water around and around in that system on a dry year, pumping it back up to re-irrigate with—until it wore out, was the joke. For a number of years the main part of my work in the spring of the year was that system, a twenty-four-hour-a-day job called “balancing water.”



We cut our alfalfa with swathers, baled it with five-wire balers. Harrow-Beds picked up the bales from the field and stacked them mechanically. We sprayed 2-4-D ethyl and malathion and the World War II German nerve gas called parathion (for clover mites in the barley), working to shorten our own lives. We baited the coyotes with 1080 and hunted them from airplanes; we wiped them out. The rodent population [which coyotes prey upon—Ed.] exploded and field mice destroyed our alfalfa. We irrigated and re-irrigated, pumped and drained; our peat soil began to go saline.

This poem was presented last April at Desert Conference's First Annual Desert Poetry Festival. Don't forget to bring your original verses to read at Desert Conference XVIII, April 25-28 at Malheur Field Station (see pg. 12).

The Children of Father Sky

by Tommie Marsters

Rapidly,

Lightning repeats his staccato message.

Sometimes he comes with Sister Rain;

always he comes with Brother Thunder.

Slowly,

sometimes

deliberately,

they journey overhead.

Suddenly—Thunder strikes his drum!

Regiments of raindrops

fall into formation

twinkling, then tumbling to Earth,

filling the lakes to overflowing

and the rivers to restless runnings.



The ecology of the valley was complex beyond our understanding, and it began to die as we went on manipulating it in ever more frantic ways. As it went dead and empty of the old life it became a place where no one wanted to live. In our right minds we want to seek out places that reek of complexity. Our drive to industrialize soured and undercut the intimacies that drew most people to country life in the first place. God knows, we used to say, nobody but a fool would go into the cow business if he had it in mind to get rich. You'd be a hundred times better off with your money in a string of shoe stores or Dairy Queens.



But there was an obvious string of crimes. Maybe we should have realized the world wasn't made for our purposes, that Warner Valley wasn't there to have us come along to drain the swamps and level the peat ground into alfalfa land. No doubt we should have known the waterbirds would quit coming. But we had been given to understand that places we owned were to be used as we saw fit. The birds were part of all that.

Donner und Blitzen Wild and Scenic River

by Scott A. Moore

When Captain George B. Curry and his command traversed the northern edge of the Great Basin in 1864, a thunderstorm accompanied their crossing of a river on the west side of Steens Mountain. Inspired by the storm, Curry named the river "Donner und Blitzen," German for "thunder and lightning."

This historic river, along with its five major tributaries (South Fork Blitzen River, Little Blitzen River, Big Indian Creek, Little Indian Creek, and Fish Creek), drains the west side of Steens Mountain, supplying year-round water to the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge at its base. Within its waters are found the redband trout and the Malheur mottled sculpin, two fish species designated "sensitive" by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Water erosion and glacial action over many thousands of years have created deeply cut drainages and a spectacular geologic display of color and form. The scenic landscape, outstanding wildlife viewing opportunities (over 250 wildlife species have been tallied in the watershed), and hiking and horseback riding

opportunities of this remote and rugged terrain led Congress to designate the 75-mile Donner und Blitzen river system as a National Wild and Scenic River in 1988.

The river corridor offers a rare two-to-four-day backpack trip. A spring stroll through the sagebrush, juniper, or aspen communities along the river's 75 streamside miles is not only moderately strenuous exercise, but affords opportunities for sighting ravens and turkey vultures nesting on cliffs, coyotes patrolling the meadows, and mule deer browsing on tender twigs. One can traverse portions of the Oregon High Desert National Recreation Trail as it skirts some of the river's canyons. Anglers can hook their own meals from the Donner und Blitzen's rushing waters. Due to its small size, however, the river is not considered navigable.

How to Get There

From Burns, drive approximately 60 miles south on Highway 205 to Frenchglen. Turn east, driving another 5 miles on a maintained gravel road to



BLM/W. ARMSTRONG

Donner und Blitzen Wild and Scenic River above Page Spring Campground.

BLM's Page Springs Campground. From the campground, hike upstream along the Donner und Blitzen. Maps and suggested trail routes may be obtained from the Burns District BLM Office, located on Highway 20 just west of Hines, Oregon. Maps of the Desert Trail which pass through the area may be obtained from the Desert Trail Association, P.O. Box 34, Madras, OR 97741. USGS topomaps for the area are: Page Springs, Fish Lake, Tombstone Canyon, Wildhorse Lake, and Alvord Hot Springs.

Remember, when camping always practice "Leave No Trace" principles.

Carrie Stilwell, Attorney at Law

Carrie Stilwell brings her legal expertise to ONDA by helping with appeals, FOIA requests, and comments on BLM documents and state management plans. Carrie holds an undergraduate degree from Ohio State University, and graduated with honors from the University of Oregon Law School.

Carrie is attracted to ONDA because it is the only group in Oregon that focuses on desert lands. In the ONDA office, "Everyone feels like an important part of the organization," says Carrie. "Volunteers feel valued and like getting something accomplished." Working with ONDA's staff and Board is "marvelous," according to Carrie.

But Carrie's volunteer work has not been all at a desk. Last August she was an enthusiastic participant in ONDA's



ELAINE REES

Carrie volunteers writing legal appeals for ONDA.

Annual Barbed Wire Round-Up at Hart Mountain, a "great, hands-on restoration experience." (See pg. 2 for info about this year's Barbed Wire Round-Up.) Thank you, Carrie!

ONDA's Wish List

The following items would be welcome additions to our office and increase our effectiveness. If you can help shorten our list, please call Gilly at (541) 385-6908.

- Desklamps
- Hi-8 video camera

and the big one:

- A reliable vehicle (for our national outreach coordinator, Denzel Ferguson, to do education work around the country)

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

Etc.

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

Spread the truth!
Bumper Stickers only \$1 each



ONDA Marketplace Order Form

ITEM DESCRIPTION	COLOR (1st & 2nd choice)	SIZE	QUANTITY	ITEM PRICE	TOTAL
				x	=
				x	=
				x	=
GRAND TOTAL					

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 (541) 385-6908.

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

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

Pass my name to the Oregon Clean Stream Initiative so I can help collect signatures

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

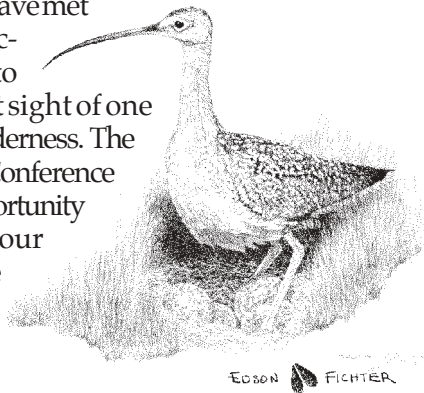
Mail this form with check to ONDA, 16 NW Kansas, Bend, OR 97701

18th Annual High Desert Conference

April 25-28 • Malheur Field Station

Mark your calendar! The 18th Annual High Desert Conference is set for April 25 - 28, 1996 at Malheur Field Station. The conference takes place adjacent to the 86,000-acre Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, a veritable birder's paradise. This year's conference, "A Desert Wildlands Revival: Wilderness, Water, and Wildlife in the High Desert," is sponsored by the Committee for Idaho's High Desert, the Toiyabe (Nevada) Chapter of the Sierra Club, and ONDA.

During the past year, we've struggled long and hard to keep certain members of Congress from taking the "public" out of public lands. We've rallied in support of stronger environmental regulations and raised our voices against attempts to gut current laws. Our efforts have met with a combination of success and loss, but it's safe to say that we've never lost sight of one sustaining ideal: desert wilderness. The 18th Annual High Desert Conference will provide us with an opportunity to share and learn from our victories and setbacks, while we celebrate the lands and waters that inspire and motivate us.



Explore the desert with your choice of fascinating day trips on Friday. Highlights of the speakers, topics, and events include:

- Karl Hess, economist with the Cato Institute
- Lehua Lopez, president of the Native Lands Institute
- Rick Clugston, director of the Center for Respect of Life and Environment
- Lessons from Red Rock Country: Utah's Wilderness Struggle
- Protecting species in the absence of the Endangered Species Act
- Victory in Owyhee: Staving off a bombing range
- Our popular Desert Poetry Festival
- Dirty Cow Photo Contest
- Gorgeousslideshows
- Field trips to explore and learn about the magnificent desert

If you have not yet received a registration form or have questions about Desert Conference XVIII, call Gilly at (541) 385-6908. See you at Malheur Field Station!

CHECK MAILING LABEL FOR YOUR MEMBERSHIP EXPIRATION DATE

OREGON NATURAL DESERT ASSOCIATION
16 NW KANSAS STREET
BEND, OREGON 97701

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