

Desert Ramblings

the newsletter of the
Oregon
Natural Desert
association



Volume 9, Number 2

Inside:

- **Insert:** Clean Stream Initiative
- **Ranching at a Crossroads** 5-7
- **Literary Corner** 9
- **Borax Lake** 10

Images of Western Rivers

The internalization of degraded streams as normal

By Suzanne Fouty

When most people think of a pristine stream in the arid and semi-arid West, they visualize a single, well-defined, meandering channel with a strip of thick vegetation lining its banks. The image of a single stream channel is the legacy of early surveyors' records, diaries and letters of pioneers, and the first Western photographs and paintings. It's also perpetuated by picture postcards one can buy in any grocery store.



COURTESY OF SUZANNE FOUTY

Degraded by grazing, this stream has little vegetation on its banks to hold the soil, causing erosion, sedimentation and warmer temperatures.

A pristine stream with beaver

But this image is not accurate for many streams. The journals of explorers and early trappers recorded a strikingly different portrait of western streams, one often dominated by beaver and beaver ponds. In 1806, for example, William Clark of the Lewis and Clark expedition described in his journal his crossing of the Gallatin River Valley (near present day Bozeman, Montana):

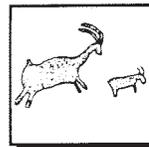
I struck the river...and attempted to proceed on through the river bottoms, which were several miles wide....I crossed several channels of the river running through the bottom in different directions. I proceeded on about two miles, crossing those different channels, all of which were dammed with beaver in such a manner as to render the passage impracticable, and after being swamped, as I may say, in this bottom of beaver...made my way to an open, low but firm plain which was an island....I proceeded up this plain 4 miles, and crossed the main channel of the river, having passed through a skirt of cotton timber....The river is much divided, and on all the small streams innumerable quantities of beaver dams, though the river is yet navigable for canoes.

The wholesale removal of beaver by fur trappers in the first half of the 1800s significantly altered and destabilized stream systems in the West. As the beaver dams failed and were not repaired, channels

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4 ►

Clean Stream Petitions Due ASAP!

The Oregon Clean Stream Initiative (OCSI) is making the final push to submit over 73,000 valid signatures on July 5 to Oregon's Secretary of State to qualify for the November ballot. **Please help by using the enclosed petition to collect ten more signatures!** Mail this and any other petitions (even partially completed ones) ASAP, or at latest by July 1 to: OCSI, 16 NW Kansas, Bend, OR 97701. **You'll feel good about doing your part for clean water in Oregon. Thanks!**



FROM THE OUTBACK

by Bill Marlett

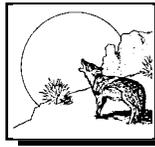
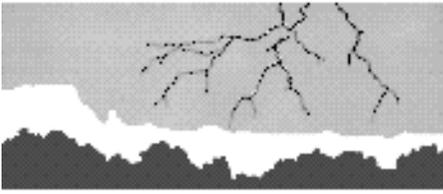
Initiative deadline nears Volunteers needed for final push

With more than 60,000 signatures in hand, the Oregon Clean Stream Initiative (OCSI) is well on its way toward qualifying for the November ballot. **But we need your help to push it over the top!** Please lend a hand and collect the signatures of ten registered voters on the enclosed petition, and mail it to OCSI (address above) by July 1.

This largely volunteer effort gives Oregonians the chance to say yes to clean drinking water, wild salmon, and safer water recreation. Even if you can only sign your own name, send it in. Every signature counts!

The industry continues to battle the initiative with hyperbole, labeling it the "Livestock Exclusion Act." However, the measure will ban livestock from less than 1% of land currently available for grazing in Oregon, based on the state's draft list of "water quality limited" (i.e., polluted) streams.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3 ►



FROM THE DEN

by Alice Elshoff

The productive benefits of leg irons

It's been busy here in the den this spring. The newly installed leg irons at each desk function well, and much work is being accomplished. To wit: Grassroots Coordinator **Gilly Lyons** organized a terrific Desert Conference. Many others volunteered to make the event a success. Participants appreciated the balance of contrasting ideas and the blend of environmentalism and spiritual renewal. Great job, Gilly. (You may slip your foot out for a day.)

Community Organizer **Ashley Henry** is going full steam ahead, making things happen for the Oregon Clean Stream Initiative, organizing educational events and speaking around the state on behalf of clean water. (We've had to lengthen her chain.) And Executive Director **Bill Marlett** continues to create and implement ideas for advancing desert protection. The next office improvement under consideration is a phone implant for his ear. Attorney **Jack Sterne** keeps his computer humming with legalese, advocating for much needed protection for places like Sutton Mountain and the Donner und Blitzen River Valley.

The **Native American Speakers Tour** is shaping up. Anyone interested in having a speaker on clean water and fish issues, please contact Gilly at (541) 385-6908.

Oregon Natural Desert Association
16NW Kansas, Bend, OR 97701
VOICE: 541-385-6908 • FAX: 541-385-3370

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.

Board of Directors

- Kathi Myron, President** (Canby)
- Alice Elshoff, Vice President** (Bend)
- Lynn Premelaar, Secy./Treasurer** (Sisters)
- Rudy Clements** (Warm Springs)
- Dave Funk** (Eugene)
- Craig Lacy** (Bend)
- Connie Lonsdale** (Bend)
- Craig Miller** (Bend)
- Elaine Rees** (Eugene)
- Stu Sugarman** (Portland)

Staff

- Bill Marlett, Executive Director**
- Gillian Lyons, Grassroots Coordinator**
- Denzel Ferguson, National Outreach Coordinator**
- Ashley Henry, Community Organizer**

Advisory Council

- Joy Belsky, Ph.D.** (Portland)
- Ron Cronin** (Portland)
- Denzel Ferguson, Ph.D.** (Bates)
- Nancy Ferguson** (Bates)
- Paul Fritz** (Boise, ID)
- Steve Herman, Ph.D.** (Olympia, WA)
- William Kittredge** (Missoula, MT)
- Reed Noss, Ph.D.** (Corvallis)
- Al St. John** (Bend)
- Caryn Throop** (Lander, WY)
- Harold Winegar** (Prineville)
- George Wuerthner** (Eugene)

Newsletter

Editor & Production: Chris Orsinger,
Communication Strategies
Board Liaison: Elaine Rees
Copy Editor: Elizabeth Claman



ANNOUNCEMENTS

July 25-28 - Hart Mt. Barbed Wire Round-Up, Hart Mt. National Wildlife Refuge. Join ONDA members and help refuge staff remove unneeded fencing that impedes wildlife movement. A great weekend that combines conservation work, desert hikes, and soaks in the hot spring! For more info, call Gilly at (541) 385-6908.

August 9-12 - Steens Mountain Field Trip, led by ONDA member Maitreya, will coincide with the Perseid meteor shower. Hiking, birding, stargazing, and more. Call Gilly at (541) 385-6908.

August 26-31 - Steens Mountain Full Moon Adventure. This trip, led by ONDA members Mary Garrard and Alice Elshoff, is organized through Portland Parks and Rec. Dept. Day trips from Malheur Field Station will take you to Diamond Craters, Malheur Wildlife Refuge, and Steens Mountain (with a soak at Alvord Hot Spring). Call Bob Gandalfi to register: (503) 823-5132.

September 28-29 - ONDA Annual Meeting, Hancock Field Station (near Fossil). Spend an autumn weekend in the High Desert along the wild and scenic John Day River. Hikes, slide shows, and good company. For details, call Gilly at (541) 385-6908.

October 24-26 - "Our Home in the Landscape," a conference at Central Oregon Community College in Bend. Invited speakers include authors Stephen Trimble (*The Sagebrush Ocean*) and Kathleen Dean Moore (*River Walking*). For info, call Bill Buck: (541) 383-7523.

"The First Thousand Days of the Next Thousand Years: The Wildlands Project at Three," a special issue of *Wild Earth*, is an overview of the organization's effort to map and design a North American wildland reserve system. Copies available for \$5 from Wild Earth, PO Box 455, Richmond, VT 05477.

OCSI needs volunteers

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The livestock industry's extreme rhetoric underscores the weakness of their position. Believing regulations unnecessary, they argue that education is the only way to improve livestock grazing practices in Oregon. But most Oregonians believe it is only fair that the livestock industry be held accountable, like other industries, for the significant pollution its activities cause to Oregon's rivers and streams. For example, private forest landowners and dairy farmers must follow rules to prevent or reduce water pollution caused by their activities. Why shouldn't ranchers?

Another tired argument the livestock industry trots out is that ranchers will go out of business. But the measure gives tax incentives to defray the cost of fencing, and is phased in over ten years, not affecting private lands for five years. The measure will allow access points for watering cattle. As range scientist Dr. Jerry Holechek explains (see pg. 5), larger economic forces, such as a worldwide oversupply of beef and the comparative inefficiency of desert cattle operations, are the main reasons ranches are failing.

Meanwhile, a draft report on OCSI's economic impact concludes that over time the new law will generate significant economic returns—primarily from increased salmon production—on investments made to fence livestock out of streams. A more appropriate question is not how many jobs might be lost in the desert ranching industry, but what that industry is costing the public in terms of polluted water, lost salmon and degraded wildlife habitat to maintain a lifestyle that provides fewer than 1% of the jobs in the Columbia River basin.

The cattle industry knows, and our polling data concur, that the public, if given a chance, will vote to stop water pollution. OCSI gives Oregonians a chance to save salmon, restore streams, and protect clean water. It's only fair that the livestock industry take responsibility for its pollutants. Removing cattle from polluted streams is simply common sense, given the critical importance of water in the arid West. 

Tribes support Clean Stream Initiative

This statement was made by Ted Strong on behalf of the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC) on February 16, 1996 in Portland, Oregon.

Water is the land's blood. If the blood is diseased, the land cannot live. The health of the land and the water are as intimately connected as the health of our own flesh and blood. Whether we recognize it or not, we are a part of the land. If we poison the blood of the land, we cannot remain healthy. To poison the earth's blood is to steal the health of this land from our children.

The Clean Stream Initiative is fully in keeping with the Tribes' salmon restoration plan, *The Spirit of the Salmon*.

We have heard much about the forest health crisis. Important as forest health is, it will be nothing compared to the looming aquatic health crisis. As our population grows, so does our demand for clean water. At the same time as demand grows, we are diminishing fresh water sources.

We have seen that up to now, our regulatory agencies have failed to keep the blood of this land pure. As tribes and as peoples whose heritage is respect and reverence for the

earth, the four Columbia River tribes support the efforts of the Oregon Natural Desert Association to return clean, healthy streams to Oregon's natural landscape. The Clean Stream Initiative should serve as a model for similar initiatives in other Columbia Basin states for addressing the serious problem of stream degradation. The Clean Stream Initiative is fully in keeping with the measures that the tribes call for in the salmon restoration plan, *Wy-Kan-Ush-Mi Wa-Kish-Wit, Spirit of the Salmon*.

The blood of this land will not be healthy until it flows cold and clear, even on the hottest day in the deepest desert; until it flows over clean gravel under a canopy of shade; until its flow is bounded by stable stream banks; and until its flow bathes thirsty wetlands with its nourishment.

The time for us to quarrel and fight is long past. For the sake of our children and our individual honor and integrity, and for the sake of all earth's creation, we must now work together to put things right with the body and blood of this land. 

To volunteer to circulate petitions, call:

Portland Area:

Donna Rosen 503-232-8478

Salem Area:

Jerrold Martisak 503-588-7236

Corvallis Area:

Craig Lacy 541-758-6148

Lane County:

Elaine Rees 541-683-2147

Southern Oregon:

Evelyn Strauss 541-482-9138

Bend & Central Oregon

Ashley Henry 541-389-8367

Eastern Oregon:

Patrick Shipsey 541-575-1628

Images of Western Rivers

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

began to incise (erode downward) and streams began to develop many of the characteristics we know today.

When settlers and government surveyors arrived, they saw landscapes that were in the process of changing or were already dramatically altered. Removing beaver from streams was thus the first of a number of significant changes Euro-Americans wrought upon this continent's watersheds, but it largely predates much of our written and visual records.

After Euro-American settlers came to Oregon in the 1840s, domestic livestock herds, logging, and intensive agriculture were introduced to this already altered landscape. Livestock trampled stream banks and consumed riparian vegetation. Floodplains were cleared for agriculture, side channels filled and water diverted for irrigating feed crops. Clearing upland forests tended to increase peak flows. The loss of streamside vegetation made banks more susceptible to being eroded during floods. As stream banks eroded, their channels changed to the wide, shallow, relatively straight and incised streams we know today.

A healthy stream without beaver

Western streams flowing through wide, flat valleys (as opposed to those flowing down steep slopes) should have well-vegetated, overhanging banks bound with deep root systems. The channel should contain distinct pools, fairly well-sorted channel bottom sediments, and dense, lush riparian vegetation on the adjacent valley floor, a result of frequent flooding and high water tables. The stream channel should also be narrow, deep and "sinuous" (meandering), *not* wide, incised and shallow.

A healthy stream also has rapid access to a wide floodplain, which is critical for reducing the erosive power of a stream. During high flows, the water spills over the stream banks onto the floodplain, where its velocity drops suddenly and dramatically. This drop occurs because the water's depth on the floodplain is shallower than in the channel, and because the friction encountered by the water (against thick vegetation) is greater. As friction goes up velocity drops. Consequently, water has a chance to infiltrate into the floodplain soils and water table.

Dense vegetation along the channel edges decreases the stream's erosive power. The more the stream meanders, the slower the velocity of the water flowing within its channel.

In contrast, a degraded stream that is straighter and lacks ready access to its floodplain (two results of an incised channel) can cause severe property damage downstream during high water events due to its increased velocity and erosive power.

Signs of a degraded stream

The tell-tale signs of degraded valley streams include:

- 1) stream banks with exposed soils along straight sections of the channel;
- 2) sparse stream bank vegetation with shallow root systems;
- 3) wide channels with very little overhanging vegetation to shade the stream and keep water cool;
- 4) a nearly straight channel with few meanders;
- 5) a downcut or incised stream, caused by the erosive force of a single channel;
- 6) "abandoned" floodplains, indicated by the dominance of drought tolerant plants (sagebrush, grasses, forbs, etc.) on the valley bottom adjacent to a stream;
- 7) a lack of pools or little difference in depth between the pools and the riffles;
- 8) unsorted sediments along the channel bottom (lots of fine sediment mixed in with gravel and cobbles); and
- 9) a large number of unvegetated gravel or sand bars.

Numerous unvegetated channel bars, combined with a lack of pools, indicates that the stream is receiving more sediment than it can carry out of the system. The excess sediment fills in the pools and covers spawning gravels used by fish. If channel bars and stream banks can be restabilized with vegetation, the erosive power of the stream will begin recreating pools.

Stream restoration

The re-establishment of vegetation is the first key step in restoring streams and decreasing flood damage. If we value clean streams, good water quality, healthy fish and wildlife populations, and decreased flooding and property damage, then livestock grazing and other activities that damage riparian areas should be halted, reduced or relocated to less sensitive areas. The damage our streams and watersheds suffer is a predictable outcome of poor land management practices. Fortunately, the degradation is still somewhat reversible, if we, as a society, can muster the collective will to make needed changes. 

Suzanne Fouty is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Geography at the University of Oregon.



COURTESY OF SUZANNE FOUTY

A healthy stream has dense vegetation on banks that overhang the channel, providing cooling shade and friction to reduce erosion.

SANDY LONSDALE



"Cowboys aren't out there to make money," says Holechek. "They're out there because they like to ride the horses and chase the cows around....Ranching right now is much more of a lifestyle than a serious source of income."

Range Scientist says smaller herds make economic sense
AT A CROSSROADS
RANCHING

Dr. Jerry Holechek grew up on a cattle ranch in central Oregon and received his Ph.D. in Range Livestock Nutrition from Oregon State University. Now at New Mexico State University (Las Cruces), his research has emphasized the effects of grazing management on range livestock production, wildlife populations and financial outcomes. After introducing himself as "much more of a cowboy than an environmentalist," Dr. Holechek addressed the Desert Conference. Here is a synopsis of his presentation.

"Ranching in the West is at a crossroads," proclaims Dr. Jerry Holechek, range scientist.

"Real cattle prices, adjusted for inflation, are probably the lowest in the history of the country....Not only are cattle prices depressed, the cost of corn, wheat, fuel, and other commodities necessary to stay in business are rapidly rising." Consequently, Holechek fears that "We'll probably lose half or more of our ranchers in the Southwest."

Holechek places partial responsibility for the current state of affairs on range scientists like himself, but is not one to sit back without offering

solutions. "One of the big problems Western ranchers have had to deal with is the range profession itself. We never taught them how to manage risk," he asserts. "We [range professionals] dropped the ball by not doing more to try to get ranchers to sell off a large part of their herds during drought."

Drought and herd reductions

Drought is one recurring risk Western ranchers inevitably face. Holechek has researched past climatic data and concludes that drought is fairly predictable in the Southwest. Heavy stocking rates during periods of drought, he argues, are not only environmentally devastating to the land, but also financially dangerous to ranchers. Holechek

This section contains highlights from Desert Conference XVIII, held in late April. Also, see pg. 1 for "Images of Western Streams," by Suzanne Fouty, a conference speaker.

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE ►

RANCHING AT A CROSSROADS

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

advocates herd reductions at the beginning of a drought cycle. This, he says, helps minimize the economic risk of arid land ranching, while maintaining the ecological health and forage productivity of the range.

With per capita consumption of beef falling, worldwide beef production on the rise, and the increasing efficiency of beef production elsewhere, "It's going to be very hard for the public land ranchers to stay in business," says Holechek. Midwestern cattle producers have a great competitive advantage because the land in that region is more productive, flatter, and the rain comes in the right season. Also, new technologies that produce more beef per animal work better in humid than in dry areas, putting desert ranches at a further disadvantage compared to midwestern and southeastern cattle producers.



SANDY LONSDALE

A healthy grassland on an ungrazed enclosure near Hayes Spring on BLM land near Prineville.

the least risk. It also has a lot of benefits for soil, vegetation, and wildlife."

Holechek cites numerous studies demonstrating that low input ranching and conservative stocking rates consistently show 20 to 60% higher economic returns per acre.

A blade left is not a blade wasted

Holechek believes that 35 percent utilization of forage (the portion of grass eaten by livestock) is better for ranchers and the range than the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) usual prescription of 50 percent. "Conservative grazing, removal of about one-third of the vegetation in these arid areas, is quite sustainable on the uplands," although he conceded that "it won't solve the riparian area problems."

"Ranchers ought to recognize how important residue levels are in getting the water into the soil... Infiltration rates are much higher when you have higher residue. A blade left is not a blade wasted." Increased infiltration of rainwater recharges underground aquifers, increases vegetative growth, and improves year-round stream flows, critical to arid areas.

Low input ranching

According to Holechek, the range profession has historically focused on biological risks, and has advocated range "improvements," such as controlling brush, implementing different sorts of grazing systems, developing more watering sites, etc. Holechek favors a "low input" approach to ranching, which centers around conservative stocking rates, avoiding debt, reducing or eliminating costs for brush control, "fancy grazing systems and all this other stuff." According to Holechek, "In most of the western United States, a low input approach to ranching and range management will provide the most profit with

"Ranchers ought to recognize how important [grass] residue levels are in getting the water into the soil... Infiltration rates are much higher when you have higher residue. A blade left is not a blade wasted."



SANDY LONSDALE

On an adjacent area, a subsidized "range improvement" has diverted Hayes Spring into a water trough for cattle. The result: an ecological sacrifice zone.

ply of beef because ranchers do not reduce their herds, ultimately lowering profit margins. The Emergency Feed Program... "is one of the most air-headed programs you could ever imagine. I was against it because some ranchers were collecting \$50,000 a year in half the years." The FY 1996 budget signed in April by President Clinton eliminated funding for the Emergency Feed Program. Some legislators are trying to revive it.

BLM's "Vale Project" in Malheur County, Oregon, is another example of "a disastrous taxpayer-supported range improvement program," asserts Holechek. The \$92 million project, which ran from 1962-1972, among other activities converted 200,000 acres of livestock degraded desert grasslands to crested wheatgrass, an exotic feed grass. It also built 2,000 miles of fences and 500 reservoirs for watering livestock.

The Vale Project was "insidious," says Holechek. "It didn't do anything....[but] give the ranchers a lot of extra feed for a short period of time. In the end the country reverted right back to...sagebrush. The Vale Project was bad for ranchers and for the environment. Right now it is estimated that the area is supporting 25-40 percent more cattle than it will carry. The cost of the Vale Project averaged \$350,000 per rancher (1992 dollars). That's a hell of a subsidy!"

Western ranching today does not have so much to do with making a living as living a dream, says Holechek. "Cowboys aren't out there to make money. They're out there because they like to ride the horses and chase the cows around....Ranching right now is much more of a lifestyle than a serious source of income." 

"The Vale Project averaged \$350,000 per rancher. That's a hell of a subsidy!"

The problem with subsidies

Government subsidies for ranchers are a major political risk for ranchers, argues Holechek. "I'm against almost all subsidized range improvement, rancher-help programs." One reason is that government programs often encourage or force ranchers to overstock, increasing financial exposure.

For example, the federal Emergency Feed Program, which pays 50 percent of the ranchers' feed costs in dry years, contributes to an oversup-

Heard at Desert Conference XVIII

Comments from Desert Conference participants at the "Open Mike"

"...many people in the Willamette Valley don't know anything about desert grazing. I find that sharing stories of the land—focusing on clean water, the condition of the land, the native fish and plants—brings people to value this land."

Kathi Myron, Canby, OR

"It's amazing how many people are absolutely clueless about the impact livestock have on streams."

Ashley Henry, Bend, OR

"Bridge-building is probably the most important job we [environmentalists] have...even bridge-building among ourselves."

Karl Anderson, Hermiston, OR

"For everything there is a season. There is a time to mend fences and there's a time to display some righteous indignation. And if there hadn't been a hell of a lot of righteous indignation in Idaho over the last few years, we'd be getting bombed right now."

Randy Morris, Mountain Home, ID

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE ►

Native American Voices



MAITREYA

Lehua Lopez, president of the Native Lands Institute, addresses Desert Conference XVIII.

Wildlands: Another view

"In my [Hawaiian] language, there is no concept of wilderness; there is no word for wilderness.... We say 'Ua mau ke'ea ka aina i ka pono,' which translates as 'The life of the land is perpetuated in righteousness.' The right way of doing things is based on what's right for the land, not for the economy because the economy is not going to last. There will be a collapse of your economy as sure as there have been collapses of economies in the past."

"The cosmology of the Hawai'ian Pele volcano religion... is one example in the world where humans fit into the equation of nature.... The word "wild" has no place—it has no meaning—in Hawai'ian cosmology. It is not the 'wildlands equation,' it is the 'land equation.' The land equation is unity and balance."

"The Western world divides life and land into categories...and you set wilderness apart from everything else you have in your life. And you leave the profanity of your life to experience the sacredness of wilderness. You leave the insanity of your life to find healing in wilderness. And then you come here to this beautiful place, and here is where you treat things with respect, and here is where you commune with nature, and here is where you and your fellow human beings come together to pray...and then you go back to your separate, profane lives.... What I would like to see is for this place to be part of the spectrum of [your] life. It is not something that is maintained separately, but part of your life.... I think it is necessary to bring part of this back into your life.... It is now time to literally remake your world."

Lehua Lopez, president & founder, Native Lands Institute

The long arms of consumerism

"There was a time I didn't know what a cow was. All I knew was the bear, the elk, the deer, the rabbits, and the birds. Then another culture came, the American culture of consumerism. That beast has many arms reaching all around the world, tearing up the land, destroying villages, all for the sake of Burger King, McDonald's, the beef industry.... From so many places the eagle is gone, the trees are gone, the plants are gone."

Calvin Hecocta, Klamath Tribe

"The life of the land is perpetuated in righteousness."

A Hawaiian view

Heard at Desert Conference XVIII

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

"You can disagree with a person profoundly and argue with them intensely, and still respect them deeply. Please, be radicals in what you believe...advocate radical positions. Don't compromise. But you can advocate radical positions while being a respectful human being and respecting other people's human dignity."

Joseph Minato, Eugene, OR

"We environmentalists are guilty of curling up and allowing ourselves to be abused...and I think it's time for us to stand up on our hind legs and fight for what is right.... The press has fostered a notion of 'balance,' but there is no balance in this argument.... If the logging industry or the livestock industry wins an argument, they stand to make billions of dollars. If I win an argument, I don't get one penny. Is that balance? Whenever reporters talk about balance, let's say, 'Hey, let's define balance.'"

Denzel Ferguson, Bates, OR

"There's a tendency within the environmental community for self-censorship because we tacitly discourage others from voicing ideas that don't fit the pure model of environmental correctness. I feel this is an unhealthy tendency."

Chris Orsinger, Eugene, OR

"Thank you to all of you who are older than I am for being an inspiration.... Your example has not been lost on those of us in the younger generation."

Jason Seivers, Eugene, OR



Read at Desert Conference's Second Annual Desert Poetry Festival.

The Wider Lens

by Amy Klauke

Although the way we study detaches
 bud from twig, fossil from lake, still
 I have not learned to separate
 the dropped pine cone from its quilt
 of river rock, birdsong from
 dawn light. Nor could I sever
 rainsmell from bare feet, snowfall from red cheek, or the lake
 from the wind combing its skin.
 I can not seem to untangle
 the arms of the manzanita,
 from the horizon's grey waist. Because
 the speckled gall changes once it slips
 from its shelf of oak bark to rot
 on mud ridge and twig scatter. And
 the curled fawn isn't the same without
 the calyx of grass against which it rests,
 or the hemlock beyond that, any less the owl
 in its high branch with yellow eye open
 on the mouse to be churned into a furred
 pellet and spit out beneath
 the dark cape and its
 circling aperture
 taking it all in.



Life Among the Paiutes

Sarah Winnemucca was the daughter of Chief Winnemucca of the Northern Paiutes. Born around 1844 near Humboldt Lake in Nevada, Sarah was given the name Thocmetony, "Shell Flower." Her people, who called themselves "Numa," had to move away from their accustomed food gathering areas because cattle herds of the white settlers decimated the grass seeds that were an important part of the Numa's diet. Sarah became a spokeswoman for her people during the years of negotiations with the U.S. government and its army. This is an excerpt from her autobiography *Life Among the Paiutes*, by Sarah Winnemucca Hopkins.

"Those who have maligned me have not known me. It is true that my people sometimes distrust me, but that is because words have been put into my mouth which have turned out to be nothing but idle wind. Promises have been made to me in high places that have not been kept, and I have had to suffer for this in the loss of my people's confidence. I have not spoken ill of others behind their backs and said fair words to their faces. I have been sincere with my own people when they have done wrong, as well as with my white brothers.... My people are ignorant of worldly knowledge, but they know what love means and what truth means. They have seen their dear ones perish around them because their white brothers have given them neither love nor truth. Are not love and truth better than learning? My people have no learning. They do not know anything about the history of the world, but they can see the Spirit-Father in everything. The beautiful world talks to them of their Spirit-Father. They are innocent and simple, but they are brave and will not be imposed upon. They are patient, but they know black is not white."

Project cancelled: Borax Lake spared

By Gilly Lyons

Since 1990, ONDA, the Oregon Natural Resources Council, The Nature Conservancy, the Sierra Club, and other conservation groups have been opposing a proposed geothermal energy development on BLM land in the Alvord Desert.

The project was near Borax Lake, a rare "hot lake" which supports the unusual and federally endangered Borax Lake chub. ONDA's opposition grew out of concerns about the project's impacts on the small fish, which lives in the 100° waters.

The conservation community's efforts have paid off. Portland General Electric, a potential buyer of the geothermal energy, pulled out of the project in November 1995, followed two months later by Anadarko, the energy exploration company that had planned to drill at Borax Lake. The chub can now breathe a sigh of relief!



Borax Lake, a hot lake in Harney County, is one of the natural wonders of Oregon's High Desert

ALAN D. ST. JOHN

John Day placed on nation's "10 Most Endangered Rivers"

By Gilly Lyons

American Rivers, a national river conservation group, recently released "North America's Most Endangered Rivers of 1996," its annual assessment of the nation's most beleaguered waterways. The good news—and bad news—is that central Oregon's John Day River made the list.

ONDA nominated the John Day, the longest undammed river in the Columbia Basin, to draw attention to the river's myriad threats, which include livestock grazing, logging, and irrigation diversions. ONDA's precedent-setting lawsuit against the Forest Service, filed under the federal Clean Water Act (see Desert Ramblings, Spring 1996), will hopefully bring relief for the endangered John Day.

ONDA Receives Grants

ONDA is pleased to acknowledge receipt in March of a very generous grant from the Outdoor Industry Conservation Alliance, a coalition of outdoor businesses that supports conservation groups throughout North America, as well as grants from the Eugene-based McKenzie River Gathering and the Fund for Wild Nature of Corvallis. These grants will help fund ONDA's Clean Water Education program.

We are honored and extend our thanks to the Conservation Alliance, McKenzie River Gathering, and the Fund for Wild Nature!

Volunteer Profile

Debra Burke

By Gilly Lyons

When Debra Burke moved from Vermont to central Oregon in 1989, it wasn't long before she discovered she was a desert rat in East Coast garb. She found herself called to the canyons, buttes, and other geologic features in short supply back East. Debra's love of desert landscapes led her to become a dedicated ONDA volunteer, coordinating our press clippings, organizing volunteer work parties and fielding phone calls.

Debra's love of the High Desert also brought her in contact with degraded streams and rivers. "Seeing the state of desert streams, and knowing how much damage livestock grazing can do to these streams, made me realize that we can't let things continue this way," says Debra. She credits her husband Greg, an avid fisherman, with helping her understand livestock's impacts on delicate desert streams. She now volunteers as the Bend coordinator of signature gatherers for the Oregon Clean Stream Initiative. Thank you, Debra!



ELAINE REES

Debra Burke, tireless volunteer for ONDA and the Oregon Clean Stream Initiative.

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



Senate passes Livestock Grazing Act by slim margin

In March, the U.S. Senate approved 51 to 46 the "Public Rangeland Improvement Act," also known as the Livestock Grazing Act. The legislation, sponsored by Sen. Pete Domenici (R-NM), could be called the "Rangeland Destruction Act."

The bill, opposed by conservationists, sports persons and the Clinton Administration, aims to lock the public out of rangeland management decisions and establish grazing as the "highest" use of 250 million acres of public lands. Rep. Wes Cooley (R-OR) is sponsoring a companion bill in the House (HR 1713), which the House Natural Resources Committee recently approved.

Urge your legislators to vote NO on HR 1713:

- Rep. Elizabeth Furse (Dist. 1)
- Rep. Wes Cooley (Dist. 2)
- Rep. Earl Blumenauer (Dist. 3, formerly Ron Wyden's seat)
- Rep. DeFazio (Dist. 4)
- Rep. Jim Bunn (Dist. 5)

Write: US House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Call: Congressional Switchboard: (202) 225-3121
(Calls before 8 AM are less than 25¢ / min.)

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Join us for two great desert gatherings:

Hart Mt. Barbed Wire Round-Up

Thur - Sun, July 25-28

Hart Mt. National Wildlife Refuge

Join us as we help refuge staff remove unneeded fencing that impedes wildlife movement. Conservation work, desert hikes, and hot spring soaks!

ONDA Annual Meeting Sat - Sun, Sept. 28-29

Hancock Field Station (near Fossil)

An autumn weekend in the High Desert along the wild and scenic John Day River. Hikes, slide shows, and good company.

For more info on either event,
call Gilly (541) 385-6908.

CHECK MAILING LABEL FOR YOUR MEMBERSHIP EXPIRATION DATE

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

Forwarding and Return Postage Guaranteed
Address Correction Requested

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
EUGENE, OR
PERMIT NO. 532