

Desert Ramblings

the newsletter of the
Oregon
Natural Desert
Association

Inside:

- Legal Victory 5
- Redband Trout .. 6-8
- Who Killed
Wilderness? 9
- Action Alert 12

Volume 10, Number 4



Boaters enjoy the wild and scenic Owyhee River. ONDA has sought to lease state lands to rest this river from grazing impacts.

Grazing phase-out could save \$1.3 million

Economic impacts of OHDDPA assessed

Three years ago, the Oregon Natural Desert Association and other conservation groups involved in developing the Oregon High Desert Protection Act (OHDDPA) commissioned an economic study of the impacts of removing livestock grazing from the more than 6 million acres managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) encompassed by this citizens' wilderness proposal. Dr. Hans Radtke, a recognized leader in natural resource economic research and an associate professor at Oregon State University, is performing the analysis. Below are highlights from Dr. Radtke's study, the draft of which is now available (see pg. 11).

The Oregon High Desert Protection Act identifies 47 areas suitable for addition to the National Wilderness Preservation System, envisions a national park/preserve for Steens Mountain, identifies three new national monuments and one new national wildlife refuge, expands the existing Hart Mt. National Wildlife

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3 ►

Retiring grazing permits

Modest reforms could help protect wildlands and sensitive habitats

In 1994, ONDA attempted to lease a state grazing permit in the Owyhee Canyonlands to rest these public lands located along a wild and scenic waterway from livestock impacts. The opportunity for non-ranchers to bid on state land leases resulted from a policy shift by the State Land Board that year. Following-up on a campaign pledge, however, Gov. Kitzhaber led the State Land Board to reverse its policy in 1995. In spite of the state's reversal in favor of the livestock interests, ranchers challenged the rules in court and recently lost (see pg. 5). While ONDA's litigation against the state awaits final resolution in state court, this is a good time to explore a related proposal to "retire" federal land grazing permits from willing sellers.

Background

Federal permittees are required to operate from a privately-owned "base ranch." If the private ranch is sold, the associated grazing permit is normally transferred to the new owner. If a rancher instead could "sell" his grazing permit, say, to a conservation organization, a number of mutual benefits could occur.

On the one hand, income from selling a permit may allow a rancher to retire without having to sell and abandon the ranch, which can stay in the family. The likelihood (and negative impacts) of subdividing a large ranch into "ranchettes" is



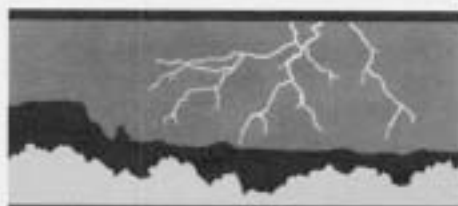
FROM THE OUTBACK
by Bill Marlett

reduced. Instead, the rancher may choose to raise hay, run a smaller livestock operation on private lands, or begin a new ranch-based business (e.g., specialty livestock, a bed and breakfast, guided wilderness tours, fee hunting, etc.).

On the other hand, conservationists could target the removal of livestock grazing in wilderness areas, in habitat for sensitive species, or along important fish-bearing streams or wild and scenic rivers.

But why should we buy grazing permits since ranchers

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4 ►



Oregon Natural Desert Association

16 NW Kansas, Bend, OR 97701

VOICE: 541-330-2638 • FAX: 541-385-3370

E-MAIL: onda@onda.org

WEBSITE: www.teleport.com/~onda

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

Dave Funk, President (Eugene)
Craig Miller, Vice President (Bend)
Stu Sugarman, Secretary (Portland)
Craig Miller, Treasurer (Bend)
Rudy Clements (Warm Springs)
Alice Elshoff (Frenchglen)
Craig Lacy (Bend)
Connie Lonsdale (Waldport)
Kathi Myron (Canby)
Elaine Rees (Eugene)

Staff

Bill Marlett, Executive Director
Joy Belsky, Ph.D., Staff Ecologist
Gillian Lyons, Grassroots Coordinator
Jonathan Gelbard, Intern

Advisory Council

Ron Cronin (Portland)
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

Chris Orsinger, Editor
Communication Strategies, Design
Elaine Rees, Board Liaison
Elizabeth Claman, Copy Editor
Peggy Robinson, Copy Editor



FROM THE DEN

by Dave Funk



Dave Funk, Board President, submitted this cartoon in lieu of a written report.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Hart Mt. Fence-Out a Success

During the last weekend of July, seventeen die-hard fence removers joined with staff from the Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge to dismantle nearly four miles of barbed-wire fence. Approximately 150 miles of obsolete fences within the now cow-free refuge pose a hazard to wildlife and are gradually being removed, largely with volunteer help from conservation groups like ONDA. This is the refuge's seventh year sans livestock grazing, and the mountain looks great!

Sincere thanks to the following ONDA members, board members, and staff who sustained the occasional scratch and scrape to bring down those fences: Amy Anderson, Jon Cain, Jim Davis, Dale Deason, Alice Elshoff, Cal Elshoff, Ryan Hassenein, Greg Holmes, Justin Liversedge, Gilly Lyons, Bill Marlett, Craig Miller, Dale Sarkkinen, J.K. Sarkkinen, Fred Sawyer, Eric Sawyer, and Carrie Stilwell.

Fence Removal Work Party at Malheur National Wildlife Refuge

Fri-Sun, Oct. 31-Nov 2

Join ONDA for a rewarding weekend of pulling fence at the southern end of Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. The second of ONDA's "Don't Fence Oregon" work parties, this one promises to be a great weekend of habitat enhancement during the fall bird migration in this scenic area near Steens Mountain.

Bunk-like accommodations are limited to 20. Camping and RV parking are available nearby. Camping at BLM's Page Springs campground is free, as is the event to volunteers! For more information and to register, please contact Gilly Lyons at glyons@onda.org or (541) 330-2638.

Desert protection proposal would save tax dollars

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Refuge, and advocates for the addition of 54 eastern Oregon waterways to the federal Wild and Scenic River System.

If enacted, OHDPA would phase out livestock grazing over ten years from about 6 million acres of public lands (leaving 18 million acres of BLM and U.S. Forest Service lands in eastern Oregon open to grazing, mining, motorized recreation and other uses). Removing livestock from the newly designated lands would retire 400,296¹ Animal Unit



Increasing recreation in southeast Oregon is creating economic growth that can replace relatively modest losses from a grazing phase-out on BLM wildlands.

Income generated from increased recreation on OHDPA lands will exceed the potential income loss from reduced grazing within four to five years.

Where do grazing fees go?

400,000 AUMs x \$1.35 (1997 BLM grazing fee) =
\$540,000 in Grazing Receipts¹
 (from proposed OHDPA lands)

To Federal Treasury

37.5%

\$202,500

To BLM for Range Betterment Fund

50%

\$270,000

To Lake, Harney & Malheur Counties for Range Improvements

12.5%

\$67,500

62.5% of grazing receipts are directed back to "range improvements" that benefit the livestock industry.

Months (AUMs) of forage consumption annually. (An AUM is the amount of forage a cow and her calf consume in one month, approximately 800 pounds.)

In determining the economic impact of implementing OHDPA, the study investigated the level of support (or subsidies) that the BLM provides for each dollar the agency receives from its grazing leases. The BLM reports spending between \$5 million and \$6 million annually for range management in Oregon. The Oregon BLM spends \$6.10 per AUM for its livestock grazing program. Permittees currently pay only \$1.35 per AUM, yielding a subsidy for authorized grazing on BLM lands in Oregon of \$4.75 per AUM.

OHDPA would save \$1.3 million

The estimated rangeland management cost for the portion of public lands included in OHDPA is just under \$1.66 million. After subtracting the known


\$367,200¹ paid by permittees for use of these public lands, the federal livestock program in the OHDPA area is subsidized by about \$1.29 million annually. Therefore, BLM would save this amount annually by eliminating grazing on OHDPA lands.

How would OHDPA effect local personal income? Based on 1993 figures, 9% of the total personal income of southeast Oregon is derived from the beef cow livestock industry. The removal of livestock grazing due to passage of OHDPA would reduce total personal income in southeast Oregon by about \$7.2 million—a reduction of about 1.1%.

¹ 400,296 AUMs are "permitted," but only 272,000 AUMs are "authorized," which at \$1.35 per AUM yields the \$367,200.

Tourism offsets losses

Visitors enjoying BLM lands spend an average of \$20 per day, and each \$20 spent generates \$10 in local personal income. Dr. Radtke's figures show that the loss of total personal income due to the decrease in grazing would be offset if the total recreational "visitor days" to BLM lands each year were increased by 730,000, a 16% increase from current levels.

Based on current trends in the Great Basin, visitor recreation days in the OHPDA area are expected to increase three to four percent annually. At this rate, the income generated from increased recreation on OHDPA lands will exceed the potential income loss from reduced grazing within four to five years. 

Retiring Grazing Permits

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

don't own them in the first place? Indeed, the Supreme Court has affirmed that grazing permits are privileges, not private property. But the fact remains that the rancher paid for the value of the grazing permit when he or she purchased the ranch. Banks also use the permit's value as collateral when extending loans to finance ranch operations.

As leases are retired, the agencies will realize savings as they administer fewer leases and build fewer rangeland "improvements" for livestock.

Enabling conservation groups to offer cash to retire grazing permits benefits everyone. It provides the rancher income and saves taxpayer dollars (by reducing government subsidies), while simultaneously helping to restore wild landscapes.

Legal changes needed

Three changes in existing law must be made before a grazing permit retirement program can be implemented:

1) Eliminate the "use-it-or-lose-it" requirement. Currently, ranchers can choose not to graze their leased federal lands for only two years. After that, someone can challenge the rancher's control over the permit. We need to give any permit holder the flexibility to voluntarily rest part or all of their leased lands from grazing for an unlimited period.

2) Eliminate the requirement that only persons involved in the livestock business can control grazing permit.

3) Eliminate the base ranch requirement, thereby allowing any person or organization to hold a grazing permit.

ONDA believes that the time has come for Congress to create a grazing permit retirement program. While not a sweeping reform of the public lands grazing, it does represent an incremental step forward in restoring our public lands.

A retirement program does not create a "right" on public lands or a market that doesn't already exist. It merely allows non-ranchers to participate in the buying and selling of grazing permits that already occurs among ranchers, and it gives the permit holder the option not to use the permit for grazing. It does not invalidate existing laws designed to protect fish, wildlife, biodiversity or the public's interest, nor does it absolve federal agencies from accountability for managing our public lands.

No new expense to the taxpayer would be required. In fact, over time the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Forest Service will realize savings as the agencies administer fewer leases and build fewer rangeland "improvements" for livestock.


Buying and retiring grazing permits allows cooperation between conservation interests and ranchers.



Lake County, Oregon.

A funding source

To facilitate the retirement of grazing permits in important fish and wildlife habitat or wilderness areas, the existing "range betterment funds" (currently funded with 50% of the grazing fees paid to the government or about \$15 million per year) should be redirected to retire grazing permits from willing sellers. A panel of scientists and interest group representatives could select the "best" permits to purchase based on ecological and/or recreation criteria.

Retiring grazing permits is a collaborative solution to address both the health of the land and the inevitable aging of the ranching community in the West. It is a painless approach to reducing livestock grazing problems on some public lands while providing some ranchers an opportunity to maintain their lifestyle. While it does not resolve all the conflicts over the management of our public lands, it would promote cooperation between conservation interests and ranchers. 

ONDA blocks bid to lengthen state grazing leases

Ranchers may appeal to Supreme Court

By Harold Shepherd

In June, the Oregon Court of Appeals handed ONDA a victory in a dispute with ranchers who graze state-owned lands in eastern Oregon.

The ranchers sued the state in 1994, claiming that, based on a 1983 State Land Board (SLB) policy, they were entitled to 20-year grazing leases with automatic 20-year renewals. In December 1994, a lower court in Harney County ruled in the ranchers' favor, finding that the leases were legally enforceable under the 1983 SLB policy. But in *Mendiotta v. Oregon*, the Appeals Court reversed the lower court's decision and threw out the ranchers' claim. This latest ruling was based on technical findings that the plaintiffs (the lessees) failed to file their complaint within the statutory time limits that provided the sole basis for relief.

Background

Oregon issues grazing leases on roughly 500,000 acres of state-owned lands east of the Cascades. These lands are typically called "trust" lands because federal and state laws require them to be managed "in trust" to generate income for the state's public schools. While important for their extraordinary aesthetic, cultural and natural values, Oregon trust lands often exhibit vivid examples of severe resource abuse. The only formal study of state-managed rangelands, conducted in 1970 by Oregon State University, found that 75% of such lands were in fair to poor condition.

In addition, bargain lease rates create an indirect but *de facto* subsidy to the livestock industry at the expense of Oregon's schools, taxpayers and others who might use and enjoy these public lands. In 1990, 44% of state trust lands were used for livestock grazing, but less than 1% of all state land income came from grazing fees. Between 1987 and 1994, annual lease revenues from these state lands sank as low as \$130,000, while the expenses of administering these lands have ranged from \$253,000 to \$466,000.¹

The 1983 SLB policy, which ranchers claim should guarantee them longer leases, would have continued these subsidies and resource damage by preventing these state



ALAN ST. JOHN

Iron Point in the Owyhee Canyonlands. A recent court ruling could help protect state-owned lands in eastern Oregon. ONDA hopes to lease and restore 10,000 acres along the Owyhee River.

lands from being used for anything other than grazing for the next 30 years. In 1994, the land board changed the policy and opened these lands to competitive bidding in an effort to increase revenues and allow non-grazing uses. ONDA attempted to lease 10,000 acres along the Owyhee River (see pg. 1), but a 1994 injunction, granted to the ranchers by the Harney County Court, blocked implementation of competitive bidding.


ONDA and other conservation groups have participated in the suit since the fall of 1994, arguing that a decision in favor of the lessees would be contrary to the state's legal obligations to protect its rangelands from further environmental degradation and to manage them solely for the benefit of the common school fund.

Legal Outlook

The ranchers are likely to appeal the latest ruling to the Oregon Supreme Court. At this time, ONDA's attorneys say the lessees have a "fair shot" at persuading the

Supreme Court to hear the case due to a potential conflict in case law regarding one of the statutes that was the subject of the Court of Appeals decision. If the Supreme Court decides to review the case, a final decision would probably be another year away.

Meanwhile, the 1994 injunction prevents DSL from terminating existing leases and writing new ones that better protect the land and water quality. That injunction will remain in effect until the Supreme Court decides the issue, according to Paul Kleary, Director of the Division of State Lands. As a result, the state will continue to renew those leases annually until the Supreme Court rules on (or refuses to review) the case.

ONDA will continue monitoring the case and review any grazing leases to insure they comply with legal requirements and protect state land resources. 

Harold Shepherd is a Portland attorney who works on state land issues.

The only formal study of state-managed rangelands found that 75% of such lands were in fair to poor condition.

¹ "Proposed Asset Management Plan," Division of State Lands (August 1995), pp. V-27,28.

PROTECTING REDBAND

ONDA acts to save this unique desert fish



JOSEPH TOMELLERI

By Peggy Robinson

On September 4, ONDA and three native fish conservation organizations petitioned the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to protect six populations of Great Basin redband trout under the Endangered Species Act. Oregon Trout, the Native Fish Society, and the Oregon Council of Trout Unlimited joined ONDA as co-petitioners to save this unique desert fish.

The petition applies to six surviving Great Basin redband trout populations in the Catlow, Fort Rock, Harney, Warner Lakes, Goose Lake, and Chewaucan basins of eastern Oregon, extending peripherally into northern California and northern Nevada (see map). These desert redband trout represent the landlocked branch of rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*), which also includes anadromous steelhead (see page 8).

As they evolved, Great Basin redband trout populations have fluctuated widely in response to climatic cycles and other natural processes. During the Pleistocene era (10,000 to 13 million years ago), huge lakes covered much of southeastern Oregon. At that time, many of today's comparatively small basin lakes were connected by extensive alkaline lakes and marshes. During a drying period (from 8,000 to 10,000 years ago), lake levels dropped, isolating the various redband populations.

Declining numbers and range

The current status of non-anadromous redband trout populations is extremely precarious. All redband populations, including the Great Basin redband, have suffered from habitat

degradation and loss. The causes include grazing, farming and irrigation practices; dam-building and channel alterations for flood control and flood-plain development; and roadbuilding. Consequently, the redband's geographic range has been shrinking, and its numbers have declined significantly. Redband populations have already gone extinct in 72% of their historic range in the Great Basin and Columbia Plateau. Healthy populations survive in only 10% of the historic habitat.

The six desert basin populations which ONDA and others seek to protect occur in the southern portion of the species' range. For at least 10,000 years, each population has been isolated from each other and from related populations in the Snake and other rivers. Attempts to introduce hatchery redband trout into Great Basin lakes and rivers have largely failed; most of the introduced fish have died before breeding.

Redband need cool, healthy streams

Like other trout species, redband abundance has been strongly correlated with healthy riparian cover, including large instream woody debris, undercut banks and overhanging vegetation.

Healthy streamside vegetation—especially trees and shrubs—shades the stream, helping keep the

The Great Basin redband trout is the landlocked relative of rainbow trout and anadromous steelhead.

Redband trout populations have already gone extinct in 72% of their historic range.

OREGON'S GREAT BASIN



TROUT

water cold. Low water temperatures are required not only by trout and other salmonids but also by insects (that the fish prey upon), which need both aquatic and riparian habitats. In redband streams in the petitioned basins, water temperatures are excessively high in the summer, according to the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality.

Causes of decline

Livestock grazing is the primary cause of degraded riparian habitat in the arid West and a major contributor to the decline of the West's native trout. In the basins covered in the petition, livestock trample and graze the lush stream banks, thus reducing vegetative cover, causing erosion, and destabilizing the banks. Undercut banks, a favorite refuge for fish from predators and high summer temperatures, collapse under the weight of cattle. The resulting erosion and sedimentation can bury the gravel spawning beds where trout lay their eggs, suffocating the eggs, as well as bottom-dwelling invertebrates that trout feed on. Erosion also increases turbidity (cloudiness), impairing a trout's ability to see and capture its prey. Studies by Bowers & Perkins (1995), Moskowitz & Rahr (1994), and Howell (1997) in the basins of southeast Oregon all identify livestock grazing as a factor affecting the

reproductive success of desert redband populations.

Irrigation severely threatens redband trout by dewatering streams and fragmenting populations (Moskowitz & Rahr, 1994). Dewatering lowers stream flows, which decreases pool size, raises water temperatures, and shrinks riparian zones by reducing the water available for maintenance of streamside vegetation. The effects of dewatering for irrigation are particularly severe because they occur in the summer when adequate stream flows are most critical to fish survival. For example, decreased summer flows may reduce trout embryo survival by removing water from upstream spawning beds before newly hatched fish have the opportunity to migrate downstream to deeper water.

Current protections inadequate

The redband trout of the interior basins currently have no legislative protection, only the policies of the agencies that manage their public land habitat. Substantial scientific evidence indicates that under these policies, redband habitat continues to deteriorate. Federal and state laws designed to conserve fish or maintain stream water quality have likewise failed to prevent ongoing habitat degradation and fragmentation.

On the other hand, if the USFWS grants the desert redband protection under the Endangered Species Act, and if land management improvements are made, scientific evidence suggests that rapid improvements in redband habitat will occur. For example, when grazing was reduced or eliminated in five study areas in the northern Great Basin, redband trout numbers increased by an average of 184% (Bowers et al., 1979).

These ancient populations of interior desert redband trout have struggled against great odds to survive drastic climate change. They deserve protection and restoration of their remaining unique habitats. Formal listing under the Endangered Species Act can help draw this uniquely adapted desert dweller back from the brink of extinction.

Literature cited is listed at the bottom of page 8.



Redband trout need healthy streamside vegetation. Grazing strips streamside vegetation that filters and cools water.

LAKE: PAST AND PRESENT



What are the Great Basin Redband Trout?

By Peggy Robinson

Great Basin redband trout represent one branch of a diverse species of western trout called rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*). Anadromous members of this species (those that migrate from their natal rivers and spend part of their life cycle in the Pacific Ocean) are called steelhead. Non-anadromous members of the species, which spend their lives in inland rivers and lakes, have been divided into two further groups. Those that live west of the Cascade Crest are called coastal rainbow trout, and those that live east of the Cascade Crest are called redband trout.

The redbands themselves are divided into two groups. In one group are the redband trout that lives in the tributaries of large river such as the Snake, Columbia, and Deschutes Rivers. A smaller group which lives in closed lake basins (with no access to other basins or to larger river systems) is called the Great Basin redband trout, and completes its life cycle within the small watersheds of the Great Basin. In the future, fish taxonomists may divide this genetically diverse group into separate species.

The desert streams and basin lakes that are home to Great Basin redband trout are remnants of large Pleistocene-era lakes in existence 10,000 or more years ago. As the climate gradually became drier, lake levels dropped and the fish's habitat shrank until it consisted of chains of smaller lakes connected by stream/marsh complexes. In response, the resident trout established a pattern of migration between spawning areas (streams) and higher food-producing areas (marshes and remaining shallow lakes). When these shallow lakes intermittently dried up during drought, the fish sought refuge in the remaining streams, returning to the lakes when they refilled.

By about 8,000 years ago, the climate became so dry that most of the connecting stream/marsh complexes dried up. The lakes became isolated from one another, and the fish inhabiting each of these basins could no longer interbreed with the others. This genetic isolation resulted in the evolution of six distinct populations of redband trout in the northern Great Basin.

According to the fish geneticist, Dr. Ken Currens, Great Basin redband trout became isolated from other coastal and redband forms early in the evolution of the rainbow trout species, between 10,000 and up to 120,000 years ago.

Two life histories

Scientists have identified two distinct life histories for Great Basin redband trout—stream residents and lake residents. Stream residents spend their entire life cycles in flowing waters. When they reach maturity, they return to the headwaters of their streams to spawn. In the fall they go back downstream to areas appropriate for overwintering.

The other group inhabits lakes and reservoirs, migrating into streams only to spawn. This lake-dwelling form is much larger and produces more offspring than the stream-living form.

Great Basin redband trout have evolved to tolerate the dry conditions in the rain shadow of the Cascade and Sierra Nevada



Long ago, Great Basin redband trout could migrate through stream/marsh complexes, such as this one in the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, which used to connect many of Oregon's basin lakes. Now the various populations have evolved into genetically distinct forms.

ALAN ST. JOHN

mountain ranges. They can survive relatively high water temperatures, large daily fluctuations in water temperature, drought, and intermittent stream flow. Nevertheless, fish biologists have determined that even short periods of water temperatures above 26.6° Celsius (about 80° Fahrenheit) can be lethal to redband. Many of Oregon's desert streams, stripped by grazing of riparian vegetation that would otherwise cool the water, exceed this temperature in the summer.

Great Basin redband trout currently occur in only a fraction of their former numbers (Behnke, 1987). Recent surveys have indicated a continuing decline in redband populations (Kostow, 1995; Bowers and Perkins, 1995, 1996; Lee et al., 1997), prompting ONDA's petition for listing and designation of critical habitat to ensure their survival. ↗

Literature Cited (in articles on pgs. 6-8)

- Behnke, R.J. 1987. "Systematic and zoogeographical interpretation of Great Basin Trout." Chapter 4 in Naiman, R.J. and D.L. Soltz. 1987. *Fishes of North American Deserts*. John Wiley and Sons, N.Y.
- Bowers, W., B. Husford, A. Oakley, C. Bond 1979. "Wildlife habitats in managed rangelands—the Great Basin of southeastern Oregon," *Native Trout*. USDA Forest Service General Technical Report PNW-84. 1979.
- Bowers, W. and R. Perkins. 1995. "Southeast Oregon Fish Review, Southeast Region Stock Review." Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Portland.
- Bowers, W. and R. Perkins. 1996. "Southeast Oregon Fish Review, Southeast Region Stock Review." Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Portland.
- Howell, P. 1997. "Oregon chapter workshop raises visibility of declining redbands." *Fisheries* 22(3):34-36.
- Kostow, K. (ed.) 1995. "Biennial report on the status of wild fish in Oregon." Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, December 1995, Portland, OR.
- Lee, D.C., J.R. Sedell, B.E. Reiman, R.F. Thurow, J.E. Williams. 1997. (In Press). "Broad-scale assessment of aquatic species and habitats." In T.M. Quigley and S.J. Arbellide, eds. *An Assessment of Ecosystem Components in the Interior Columbia Basin and portions of the Klamath and Great Basins*. U.S. Forest Service General Technical Report PNW-GTR-XXX, Portland, Or.
- Moskowitz, D. and G. Bahr. 1994. "Native Trout Report: An analysis of the status and management of Oregon's native trout with management recommendations for conservation." Prepared by Native Trout Conservation Council for Oregon Trout. Portland, OR.

EAST VS. WEST: WHO KILLED WILDERNESS?

By Margaret Hays Young

Excerpted from "Seeing What Isn't There," an essay in *Place of the Wild*, edited by David Clarke Burks. Island Press (Washington, D.C.), 1994.

When one questions what has been done by previous generations, the criticism is often most bitterly resented by those who know best that it's true. There's a difference in the way folks in the East and West respond to the charge that we have destroyed this land. In the Northeast and South, where the land has been trashed for many generations, folks are less likely to be defensive about it and more likely simply to admit that it's true. The damage is obvious, but most of it was done a long time ago, by people we never knew.

In the West, the attitude is often somewhat different. There the damage has been done recently, say, within the last hundred and fifty years, and the individuals responsible still have names in living memory. Out West, when one says that the land has been ruined, one may be talking about people's relatives and friends. That's personal. And when it's personal, people get threatened, angry, and defensive. One common reaction is to deny that there is a problem, however obvious it may be. That's happening now: many folks will stubbornly stand on overgrazed, eroded, compacted, clearcut, or poisoned land and simply insist there's nothing wrong with it....

If you suggest to a public lands rancher, for example, that cows and sheep are destroying the land, he often bristles and denies it. Perhaps because he knows how it happened and doesn't want to be held responsible. Perhaps his parents or grandparents have been given public tax dollars to do it for a long time. Perhaps, as a western rancher, he takes a certain pride in being part of the heroic Western Lifestyle. When a public lands logger in the Northwest insists that 'forests grow

back,' though he may see the clearcuts expanding all around him and knows that big trees are getting hard to find, he's caught in a quandary; he can see that the land is ruined, but he's still got the chainsaw in his hand.

When a logger or rancher or miner insists on his right to his traditional lifestyle, he's really insisting on three things: that western settlers had to occupy the land for the Good of the Country; that they therefore had a right to public subsidies to keep doing it; and that they are part of an American Tradition which the rest of the country admires. If he is mistaken, then his tradition may have no meaning and his livelihood may be in serious jeopardy. Western settlers weren't

just ordinary colonists: they thought they'd been given a Mission, they thought they had a Deal, and they thought their traditions were heroic. But suddenly people are saying that those are just empty myths.

While easterners and Californians have renegotiated their expectations, many western folks have not. Because the land has been ruined, a lot of myths

about the West are being questioned all at once. There is more to western resentment of eastern 'meddling' in wilderness issues than resistance to new ideas. To a public lands user, these new ideas may cost him not only access to the land, and some long-accustomed subsidies, but a lot of old myths and a great deal of self-respect. In such circumstances, it is not surprising that many westerners feel cheated and betrayed. The early western settlers carried a nineteenth-century mandate which, in retrospect, looks a lot like a mistake. It was perhaps best said by a Colorado feedlot owner quoted by Anne Matthews in her wonderful book, *Where the Buffalo Roam*: "Asking us to admit that we were wrong all along, in trying to settle a lot of this country, is like asking us to have surgery without anesthetic."



Bruneau, Idaho.

ELAINE REES

ONDA's 1996 Annual Report

ONDA is grateful for the generous support received in 1996 from the following foundations. Their assistance – coupled with the on-going, dedicated support of our 1,000 members – makes ONDA's work possible.

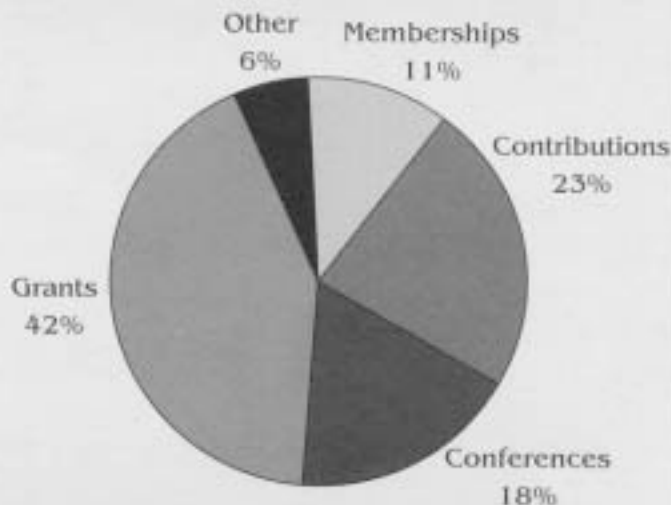
Bullitt Foundation
 Columbia River Bioregion Campaign
 Center for Respect of Life and Environment
 Fund for Wild Nature
 Kirby Foundation
 Kongsgaard-Goldman Foundation
 Lazar Foundation
 McKenzie River Gathering
 National Rivers Coalition/REI
 Outdoor Industry Conservation Alliance
 Patagonia, Inc.
 Peradam Foundation
 Rockwood Fund

Conservation Highlights in 1996

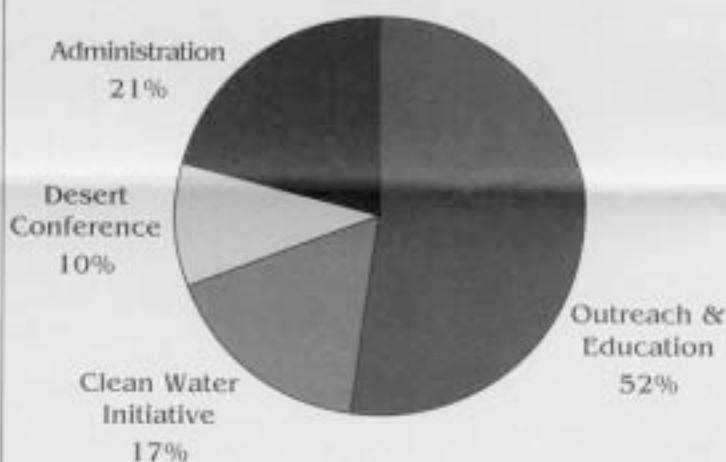
During 1996, Oregon Natural Desert Association:

- Led the effort to pass Measure 38: The Oregon Clean Stream Initiative. While the initiative did not win at the ballot box, we succeeded in raising awareness and spurring dialogue throughout Oregon and beyond about the enormous impacts that cattle have on water quality and wild fish habitat. The Clean Stream Campaign also provided the impetus for Governor Kitzhaber's Healthy Streams Partnership.
- Won a landmark lawsuit under the federal Clean Water Act stating that the U.S. Forest Service can no longer issue grazing permits unless the rancher first obtains certification from the state that the grazing will not violate state water quality standards. This decision provides conservationists with a strong, effective tool to protect water quality and fish habitat on federal lands nationwide.
- In concert with other conservation groups, stymied plans by energy exploration company Anadarko to drill for geothermal energy on the shores of Borax Lake, home of the endangered Borax Lake chub.
- Helped stop a severely flawed federal Livestock Grazing Act in its tracks; grassroots pressure from ONDA members and others concerned citizens throughout the U.S. kept this pro-ranching bill from reaching President Clinton's desk.
- Along with other conservation groups, successfully pressured the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service from moving forward with plans to shoot coyotes suspected of preying on pronghorn fawns at Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge. Opposition from ONDA and others resulted in a decision to further study the predator/prey dynamic at Hart Mountain.
- Hosted Desert Conference XVIII at Malheur Field Station in Harney County; over 200 desert rats and 40 talented speakers came out to the Blitzen Valley to listen, talk, laugh, share and celebrate the Great Basin.

1996 Income by Category



1996 Expenses by Category



SUPPORT AND REVENUE

Memberships	\$9,805
Contributions	\$19,417
Conferences	\$15,778
Grants	\$37,104
Other	\$5,449
TOTAL SUPPORT & REVENUE	\$87,553
Assets released from restrictions	+ \$81,590
TOTAL	\$169,143

EXPENSES

Outreach and Education	\$75,823
Clean Water Initiative	\$25,000
Desert Conference	\$15,095
Administrative	\$31,263
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$147,181

FUND BALANCE \$21,962