

Desert Ramblings

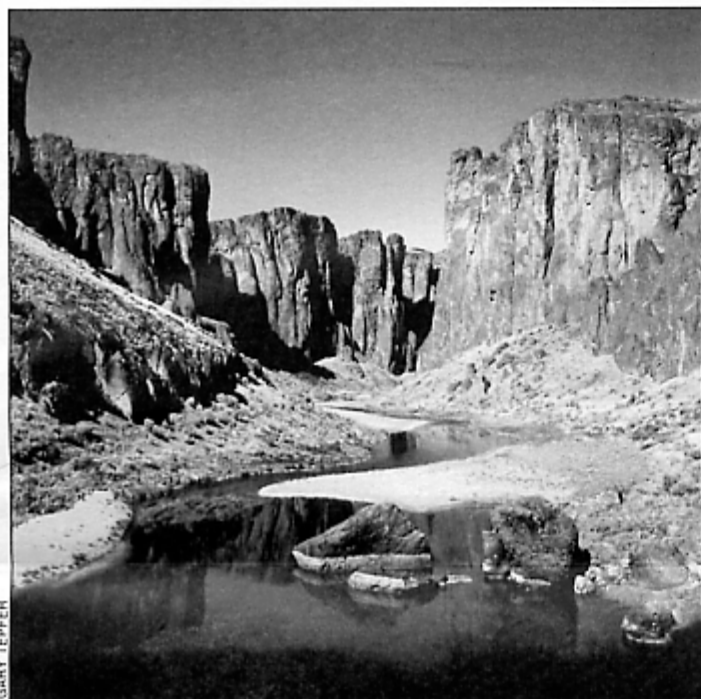
the newsletter of the
Oregon
Natural Desert
association

Spring 1998

Volume 11, Number 2

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The wild and scenic Owyhee River in southeast Oregon.

ONDA sues to protect Owyhee Rivers

BLM violates Wild & Scenic River Act

By Graden Oehlerich

On January 22, 1998, Oregon Natural Desert Association (ONDA) and three co-plaintiffs filed suit in U.S. District Court against the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for its failure to manage the Owyhee Rivers in compliance with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Together with ONDA, Oregon Wildlife Federation, Idaho Watersheds Project, and the Committee for Idaho's High Desert are suing BLM for failing to protect and enhance the "outstanding remarkable values" for which the Main Stem, Little West, and North Fork Owyhee Rivers were designated as wild and scenic.

The suit also charges BLM with violating the National Environmental Policy Act by failing to prepare an adequate environmental impact statement to analyze the impacts of grazing on the rivers. Further, the agency is cited under the

Stream clean-up setback

DEQ allows continued federal land grazing along polluted streams

Efforts to clean up Oregon's streams took a big hit in February. After months of effort by conservationists to strengthen draft rules guiding state certification of federal grazing permits, the Oregon Environmental Quality Commission (EQC) adopted rules that allow livestock to continue grazing along polluted streams.



FROM THE OUTBACK
by Bill Marlett

In a lawsuit brought by ONDA and others to clean up livestock-polluted streams, federal District Court Judge Ancer Haggerty ruled in November 1996 that grazing can produce a pollution "discharge" regulated by the federal Clean Water Act (CWA). Consequently, the court required that before the Forest Service can issue new grazing permits, the state must first "certify" that there is "reasonable assurance" that the activity will not violate water quality standards. The ruling prompted EQC to develop "rules" for how the state would decide whether to grant or deny these certifications for federal land grazing permits.

In a disappointing display of public policy making, the EQC ignored the substantive issues raised by a citizen advisory committee (on which ONDA served), and instead focused on the "hardship" to ranchers if they could not turn out their livestock on schedule. This bias caused one to wonder if the appointed commissioners realized they were talking about public—not private—land! Even more unbelievably, the EQC completely disregarded the comments of some 600 citizens who wrote to the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) asking that polluted streams be rested from livestock grazing.

Prelude to decision

While ONDA's lawsuit was responsible for the EQC rulemaking, it was not certain that we would be allowed on the citizen advisory committee. To DEQ's credit, we were kept on in spite of a pitched battle by the cattlemen to keep us off. We

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4 ►

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FROM THE DEN

by Dave Funk

A stronger ONDA = A better protected desert

For organizations, the process of growth and change never stops. As part of our strategic planning, ONDA's Board of Directors is developing a comprehensive plan designed not only to sustain the organization, but to ensure that it is an influential force in determining the future of Oregon's high desert. Under the leadership of board member Rudy Clements of Warm Springs, we are re-working the mission statement, analyzing current situations on the land that need to change, identifying critical success factors, and defining our philosophical underpinnings. The plan will include tactics to increase membership, to distribute the work load more evenly, and to create deeper bonds with Native American tribes.

In the meantime, regular board business continues. At the January meeting the board unanimously passed a resolution in support of the Native Forest Council's Zero Cut policy on public lands. The forests of Oregon's High Desert region are integral to the health of the arid-land ecosystem, and we applaud the NFC's leadership in this effort.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Desert Conference XX April 30 - May 3

Join ONDA (and conference co-hosts Friends of Nevada Wilderness and Committee for Idaho's High Desert) for a weekend of field trips, workshops, slide shows, and wildflowers in the spectacular Blitzen Valley in southeast Oregon. Help ring in Desert Conference's 20th anniversary with the panache that only weathered but well-loved Malheur Field Station and a big pack of desert rats can offer. (Note: Lake Abert Field trip also includes Warner Wetlands. Bring your binoculars.) For more info or to register, e-mail Gilly at glyons@onda.org or call ONDA's Portland field office at (503) 525-0193.

Many Thanks...

ONDA would like to gratefully acknowledge the Wilburforce Foundation for a generous grant in support of ONDA's membership development program.

Also, a heartfelt thanks to ONDA member and volunteer extraordinaire

Etienne Scott for orchestrating donations of office furniture from PG&E Energy Services. ONDA's Portland field office is infinitely better outfitted as a result!

ONDA thanks Training Resources for the Environmental Community (TREC) for its expert assistance in developing a strategic plan that will ensure ONDA remains a strong, uncompromising ally of Oregon's High Desert, as well as a stable, healthy non-profit organization for decades to come.

People photographs needed

Although ONDA's photo library contains stunning landscapes (and quite a few cows caught in streams), few photos have people in them. If you have photos of people enjoying Oregon's desert landscapes, please share a copy with ONDA. Send prints or slides to: Elaine Rees, 440 W. 17th Ave., Eugene, OR 97401. Credit will be given whenever they are used. Thank you!

Oregon Natural Desert Association

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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.

Board of Directors

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Graden Oehlerich, Wild Rivers Coordinator

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Communication Strategies, Design

Elaine Rees, Board Liaison

Elizabeth Claman, Copy Editor

DEQ allows grazing to continue along polluted streams

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

agreed to participate on the premise that ONDA should first exhaust every administrative and legislative opportunity to solve the problem before continuing litigation or filing another Clean Stream Initiative.

Initially, staff ecologist Dr. Joy Belsky represented ONDA. We thought good science would surely win the day with this committee. Wrong! The cattlemen, DEQ, and the federal agencies all believed that livestock grazing should continue along streams, even if those streams did not meet water quality standards due to livestock grazing. When it became clear that science was going to be overridden by politics, I replaced Joy on the committee.

By this point the committee had abandoned the goal of reaching consensus and turned its attention to identifying issues that the EQC should debate. Without a doubt, the most contentious issue was whether livestock grazing should continue along polluted streams. Conservationists were united: streams should



Grazing is the primary source of pollution in many desert streams in eastern Oregon. Erosion, sedimentation, bacterial pollution (e.g., fecal coliform) and high temperatures degrade salmon habitat.

luted streams. With over 9,000 miles of streams in Oregon polluted by livestock (as documented so far by DEQ), the new rules represent a huge lost opportunity to improve water quality and restore critical habitat for salmon and other aquatic life.

No deadline for improvements

The purpose of the rule (and the Clean Water Act) is to restore and protect water quality. However, the rules EQC adopted only require improvements in "site conditions" (such as streamside vegetation, etc.). This may sound good, but this criterion does not measure actual water quality improvements. While streamside vegetation is critical to stream health, an improving trend in streamside vegetation may not result in meeting water quality standards within our lifetimes.

For example, Forest Service and BLM standards often allow livestock to consume half of the vegetation along a stream. The agencies claim this will protect water quality, but no scientific literature supports this contention. Common sense and science tell us even modest grazing levels over time will affect the overall composition of plant species and reduce shade giving vegetation, such as willow and cottonwood.

Requiring the agencies to make only nominal improvements in streamside vegetation essentially lets them off the hook. After the grazing permit expires in ten years, if water quality standards are still being violated, the agencies can make further, modest adjustments to grazing practices and wait another ten years to see what happens, if anything. At this rate, we could all be in our graves before we and the salmon see the widespread water quality and habitat improvements that ten years of rest from grazing could produce.

Weak rules force litigation

EQC's decision forces ONDA to test the legal sufficiency of the new rules by challenging one or more of the state's certifications in court. Our position remains clear: continued grazing along polluted streams fails to provide the (legally required) "reasonable assurance" that water quality standards will be met.

A big thanks to our colleagues Jim Myron of Oregon Trout and Mary Scurlock of Pacific Rivers Council, who also endured the tedious and frustrating advisory committee process. This was a classic case of how "consensus" sounds good as a media sound bite but usually fails to protect the environment. 

The new rules represent a huge lost opportunity to improve water quality and restore critical habitat for salmon and other aquatic life.

be rested from grazing until water quality standards are met (or, if grazing is allowed, it should not retard natural recovery). The agencies and grazers felt their only obligation to the public was "better management." The "cowboys" won. The proposed rules presented by staff allow continued grazing along pol-

Owyhee litigation

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Administrative Procedure Act because it continues to authorize grazing and other activities within the wild and scenic river corridor which degrade the rivers' outstanding remarkable values. Unfortunately, the BLM has not studied alternative courses of action which would protect and enhance the river values, as required by the law.

The BLM has not studied alternative courses of action which would protect and enhance the Owyhee Rivers' values, as required by the law.

Blitzen River precedent

The Owyhee suit follows on the heels of ONDA's 1997 (see *Desert Ramblings*, Spring 1997) victory in a similar wild and scenic river case on the Donner und Blitzen River, which drains the west slope of Steens Mountain in southeast Oregon. In the Blitzen case, Judge Ancer Haggerty's ruling significantly strengthened the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and set a national precedent for protecting designated rivers. Haggerty's ruling shifted the burden of proof, requiring management agencies to prove that activities conducted within wild and scenic river corridors will not degrade the values for which the river was originally designated. Further, activities must "protect and enhance" the values of the river as mandated by the Act.

The Blitzen case resulted in a moratorium on grazing and road building within the river corridor until the BLM can prove that these activities comply with the mandate of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. If this new case is successful, the Owyhee Rivers should receive similar protections.




Hikers enjoy the West Little Owyhee River Canyon, a tributary of the mainstem Owyhee River.

BLM response: No problems

Jerry Taylor, manager of the Jordan Resource Area, Vale District of the BLM, responded that the situation on the Owyhee is different from the Blitzen case. "We have a strong management plan and believe our analysis was sufficient," Taylor told the *Capital Press*. "We can show we've already made significant gains in protection and enhancement of the rivers through implementing the plan. In fact, the area

was in outstanding shape to begin with, and we can clearly show our plan has improved it even further, even with all uses allowed, including livestock grazing."

Nineteen ranchers who currently hold grazing permits within the Owyhee River basin have filed with the court as interveners in the case. This action will help establish the ranchers' "standing" in the case should they want to appeal the court's ruling. 

The Owyhee Landscape

The Owyhee Basin drains nearly 11,337 square miles in Nevada, Idaho, and Oregon. The Owyhee canyons are dramatic, awe-inspiring high-desert landforms, with cliffs reaching up to 1,000 feet above the sagebrush and grass-covered talus slopes that form the river's edge. The canyonlands provide habitat for over 200 species of wildlife. Numerous songbirds nest in the riparian vegetation of the canyons, and at least nine plant species within the canyonlands are classified as federal or state sensitive species; at least three of these plants may be listed soon under the federal Endangered Species Act. In addition, redband trout, which ONDA and others have petitioned to list as endangered, also inhabit the three Owyhee Rivers.

Congress designated 120 miles of the Main Owyhee River as wild and scenic in 1984; four years later, segments of the West Little Owyhee and the North Fork Owyhee were added, bringing the designated sections to 186 total river miles. The Main Owyhee contains five "outstanding remarkable values": scenery, geology, recreation, wildlife, and cultural values. The West Little and North Fork possess recreation, scenic, and wildlife values.


The Owyhee River

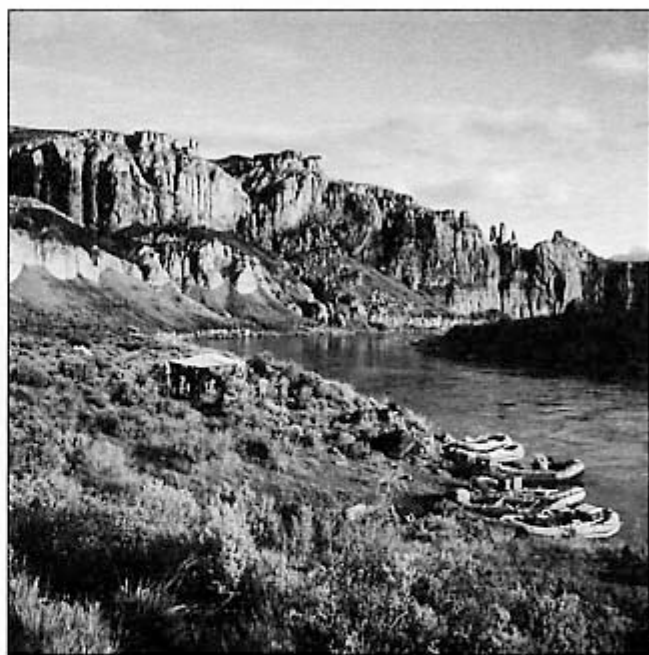
Oregon's Little Grand Canyon

The Owyhee is a river unlike any other in Oregon. Released from the snowpack by the spring thaw in Nevada's Independence Mountains, the river flows north, cutting through Idaho's southwest corner before entering Oregon's southeast corner. Nearly all the river and its tributaries in Oregon above Lake Owyhee (168 miles) are federally designated as Wild and Scenic Rivers. From Garat Crossing in Idaho to Lake Owyhee in Oregon, three great stretches of river are open to adventurous rafters, each easier and less hazardous than the stretch above.

The seldom-run upper stretch, the East Fork, runs from Garat Crossing to Three Forks. In this remote, 65-mile-long section of river, there is one difficult but mandatory portage at Owyhee Falls and, depending on water level, up to three more portages over class IV and V rapids. In spite of the effort, the trip is stunning, with sheer walls, great side hikes, and a welcoming warm spring two miles above Three Forks.

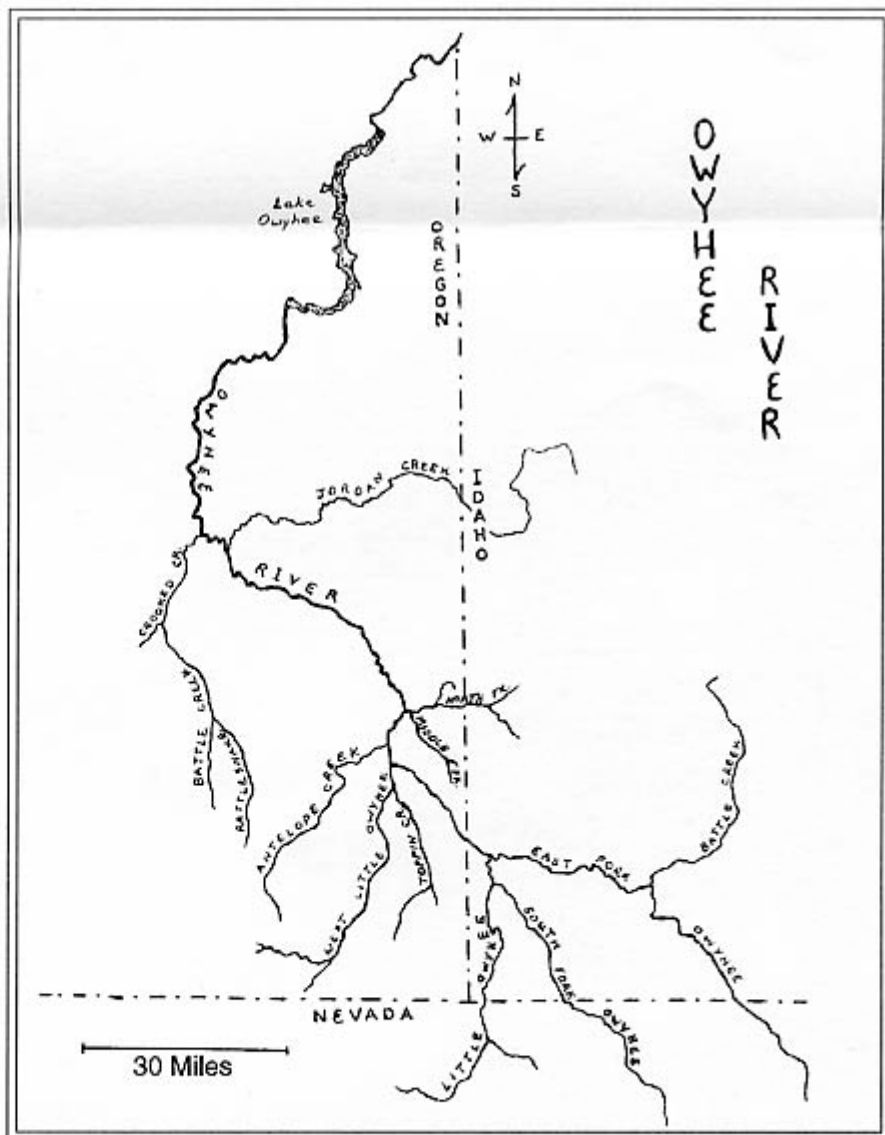
The middle section runs from Three Forks to Rome. It's an easier shuttle and is 39 miles long, yet is almost as challenging as the upper river. There are four major rapids in this stretch. Widowmaker, the largest of them all, is a Class VI portage. Some brave souls occasionally run Widowmaker but most line their boats down the right side. In contrast to the first 32 miles of steep-walled canyons, the last 7 miles of this run open up to flat, slow water and exasperating afternoon upstream winds.

The Lower Owyhee is the most popular stretch for boaters. Approximately two thousand boaters run the lower section annually, outnumbering those that run the middle Owyhee three to one. This trip starts at Rome and meanders for six miles through flat farmland to Lower Owyhee Canyon, where the terrain abruptly changes to scenic cliffs as the river cuts its way through a ridge near the confluence with Crooked Creek. The next 45 miles of the river corridor thread through a geologic wonderland of limitless hiking opportunities. Historic structures, hot springs and petroglyphs add to the fantastic scenery. A final 10-mile workout across the windblown, flat water of Lake Owyhee wraps up the trip, which ends at the stunning Leslie Gulch take-out. 



Rafters enjoying the Owyhee River.

GARY TEPPER



Coyote

"...[T]o describe the coyote honestly one must consider every aspect of the creature, giving consideration not only to the physical characteristics but also the heart and spirit that lies within."

— Wyman Meinzer, *Coyote*



ONDA FILE PHOTO

By Elaine Rees

The coyote, ubiquitous canine of the American plains and deserts, is nowhere better described than in the legends of the peoples who have known him the longest. Native Americans, whether from the northern Great Plains or what is now Mexico, portray the coyote in myriad and contradictory ways. Coyote is a god, a mischief-maker, a hero, a fool, the Old Man, and the Little Brother.

Euro-Americans are no less struck by the coyote's seemingly multiple personalities, although they tend to reject the contradictions and fixate upon and judge this critter based on one

facet of its character. Some who have watched coyotes kill indiscriminately and eat not a bite of the carnage are convinced that the animal and all its ilk are depraved and evil. Others, having observed a young bachelor male solicitously watch over a playful litter of pups while the parents are hunting, conclude that coyotes are a responsible and virtuous lot. Southwestern author Mary Austin chose to emphasize the animal's satirical bent when she dubbed the coyote "the Charlie Chaplin of the Plains."

A Native American coyote petroglyph.



Native Americans portray the coyote in myriad and contradictory ways: god, mischief-maker, hero, fool, Old Man, and Little Brother.

When Columbus "discovered" America, the range of the coyote (*Canis latrans*) was roughly the unwooded areas west of the Mississippi River, from southern Alberta and Saskatchewan to south-central Mexico. It thrived where rodents and rabbits were abundant and where wolves were scarce, the wolf being a major competitor and sometime predator of its smaller relative (see page 8).

Complex social structure

Coyotes, like humans, have a complex social structure. A pack is usually comprised of two to ten animals led by the dominant or "alpha" pair. Pack size is determined primarily by the abundance of prey within the pack's territory. Where coyotes are not subject to predator control measures or other disruptions, the alpha male and female mate for life and are the only breeding pair within the pack. Subordinate females are "behaviorally sterile"; they are physically capable of breeding but do not as long as the alpha female produces litters. "Beta" members of the pack are subordinate to the alpha male, following him to a chosen hunting area and assisting him in the kill. Betas also help defend the pack's territory and raise the young.

The alpha pair mates in late winter and the pups are born in an underground den (often a refurbished badger hole) two months after breeding. The pups live exclusively on the mother's milk for approximately two weeks and then begin to eat regurgitated food supplied by the parents. At about four weeks of age the pups venture out of the den. At this time, the female often moves them to a second den, possibly to escape the inevitable flea

Coyote "Control": Decades of Denial

by Elaine Rees

For decades, ranchers and range managers have tried to control coyote populations, primarily to reduce predation on livestock and large game animals. Yet despite what at times could be described as all-out war, the coyote has not only survived but flourished. Since the arrival of Euro-

peans on this continent, the coyote has increased its numbers and expanded its range. Many attribute its success in spite of man's best efforts to eradicate it to a sort of deceitful intelligence that has deposed the white man from his rightful place as the smartest of animals.

Researchers are now learning that the coyote's resiliency is not so much a function of diabolical intelligence, but of biology. Any reduction of the size of a pack of coyotes increases the food-per-coyote ratio. "The increase in food availability improves the nutritional condition of breeding females which translates in higher pup birth weights and higher pup survival," according to Bob Crabtree, a coyote expert.

Intensive predator control measures cause the coyote population to be maintained in a "colonizing" state. Consistent reduction of coyote populations keeps the age structure skewed to the young. Therefore the natural limitations (such as restricted territory and food supplies) faced by older-aged, unexploited populations are absent. The result is a population "boom" because the territorial, younger populations are much more productive. This is why intensive, annual, nonselective trapping, gunning, and poisoning programs have never been successful in reducing coyote numbers over the long term.

On the other hand, the effectiveness of predator control measures against North American wolves has upset the inter-species balance, creating a boon to coyotes by virtually eliminating their primary natural competitor. The recent re-introduction of wolves to Yellowstone Park has afforded researchers the opportunity to observe wolves seeking out and attacking resident coyotes. (Crabtree, 1995) Without the wolves to keep them in check, coyotes increased their numbers and expanded

their range over most of the North American continent.

Rethinking our attitude toward the coyote and how to live in his domain is undoubtedly in order. Dayton Hyde, who befriended coyotes on his ranch near Chiloquin, Oregon, wrote:

... a hungry predator is a problem predator. By feeding (leaving dead cattle for the coyotes) and protecting our coyotes, we were insuring that each coyote on the ranch lived to a ripe old age. As a resident of a territory, he would keep strays from coming in, and by virtue of knowing every mouse run in his fiefdom and every squirrel in town, he could make a comfortable living without getting into mischief."

— Don Coyote,
Arbor House Publishing Company, 1986.



A coyote, killed by a rancher and placed on a fencepost to serve as a "warning" to other coyotes.

The coyote's resiliency is not so much a function of diabolical intelligence, but of biology.

COYOTES AND PRONGHORN

Pronghorn Expert on Hart Mt. Coyote Shoot

Below is an excerpt from the expert testimony of Bart W. O'Gara, Wildlife Consultant, submitted by ONDA and other groups in the lawsuit which successfully stopped U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's plan to hold a "recreational coyote hunt" on the Hart Mt. National Wildlife Refuge. Slated to take place in February 1998, the hunt's objective was to reduce coyote predation on pronghorn fawns, which are born in May.

"It is very doubtful that control will be extensive enough (especially considering the time of year) to significantly influence fawn survival. Coyotes shot earlier than March likely will be replaced by the time coyotes den in the fawning area. If fawn survival improves for a third year in a row, no one will know if shooting coyotes was responsible or if other factors are influencing recruitment. The long-term cost in compromised data regarding natural population regulation in an ecosystem from which cattle were removed in 1990 will be great. Never has there been an opportunity to study such a situation, and it is doubtful there ever will be again."

Bart W. O'Gara, Wildlife Consultant




A Klamath Coyote Story

Excerpted from A Book of Tales: Being Some Myths of the North American Indians, retold by Charles Erskine Scott Wood, one-time Lieutenant, U.S. Army. Vanguard Press, 1929.

In the summer of 1875, in Warner Valley, Oregon, I met Debe. He was a young Klamath going home to kill a medicine man and recover five ponies which had been given the medicine man under the promise that he would cure Debe's brother of measles; but the brother had died. I coaxed Debe to delay a little, while we killed antelope and swan to his brother's ghost. Above the lake, among the hot gray rocks and near the little willow spring, while the coyotes trotted ghost-footed about us, Debe told me this tale:

"Kharaia, the Man in the Sky, told the Earth Man, the father of the Klamaths, to call together all the animals, that each might receive a bow. Whoever got the longest bow was to be chief and most powerful among the animals; and so on, according to the lengths of the bows. In those days animals could act like men and could talk together. On the day appointed, all the animals met together, and Kharaia gave to the Man the great sheaf of bows; but the Man said he would not give them out till the next morning, so that all could have a chance to come in that day. The Coyote determined he would sit up all night, so as to be first in the line next morning and get the largest bow; for it was very much in the heart of the Coyote to be the lord of

beasts. He sat there all night watching the stars; but in the morning, just before the dawn came, he fell asleep. The sun rose, and all the animals walked past the Coyote, who slept as if he was dead. When all had got their bows and only the shortest was left, the Coyote woke up. He was very much ashamed, but when the animals laughed he laughed too, to pretend he did not care; but his laugh was not good. The Man felt sorry for the Coyote, and he begged Kharaia to give a long bow to him; but Kharaia said: "No, I will not break my word; but I will order that he shall be the smartest and most cunning of all." That is why he sits up all night now, and laughs in such a sorry way; and that is why he is the most knowing of all animals. 



MARTIN RING

ONDA's 1997 Annual Report

1997 Conservation Highlights

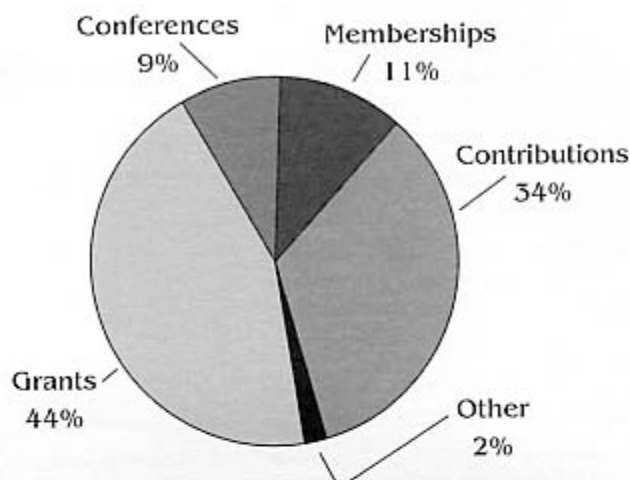
Desert Defense

- Served on DEQ Advisory Committee on development of rules for how to "certify" grazing on federal lands which contain polluted streams. The rules resulted from ONDA's 1996 Camp Creek legal victory under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act.
- Sued BLM under the Clean Water Act to ensure that our landmark 1996 Camp Creek decision on the Forest Service grazing practices will apply to BLM lands as well.
- Blocked proposed resort on Steens Mountain. ONDA helped ensure that this precedent-setting proposal was denied.
- Won a precedent-setting lawsuit under the federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to protect the Donner und Blitzen River from degradation caused by livestock grazing. The negotiated settlement requires BLM to exclude livestock from the river corridor pending completion of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).
- Sued BLM for failing to prepare a plan to protect the Wild and Scenic John Day River.
- Petitioned the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to list the Great Basin redband trout under the Endangered Species Act. This unique desert fish has been extirpated from 72% of its historic range in the Great Basin, largely as a result of livestock grazing.
- Won a lawsuit we had intervened in against ranchers who claimed special privileges under state lands grazing leases. The case, now being appealed, is pending before the Oregon Supreme Court.
- Lobbied Congress to reject Rep. Bob Smith's grazing bill, and to allow ranchers to permanently retire federal grazing permits.
- Completed our first generation GIS maps of the Oregon High Desert Protection Act, a six million acre wilderness proposal.
- Spearheaded scientific review and comment of the Interior Columbia Basin Eastside Management Plan EIS, a massive federal plan that will guide the fate of some 50 million acres of public lands.
- Worked to pass the Healthy Stream Partnership, Gov. Kitzhaber's alternative to Measure 38, which provides \$30 million to restore water quality and salmon habitat. We also helped defeat bills in the Oregon Legislature, which would have undermined our Camp Creek Clean Water Act suit and lowered water quality standards in Oregon.

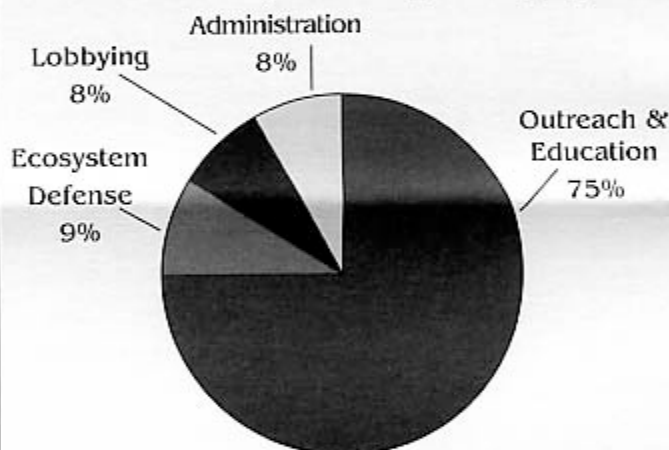
Educational Outreach

- Participated in scientific panels and made numerous presentations to diverse audiences across the state.
- Provided technical assistance to hundreds of activists all over the West working on livestock grazing issues.
- Produced and distributed our popular newsletter, *Desert Ramblings*.
- Produced and distributed 30,000 copies of our action alert, "River Notes," which educated and mobilized the public on the state's rule making on certification of grazing permits under the Clean Water Act.
- Hosted the 19th Annual High Desert Conference, a three-day, multi-state gathering of desert activists, scientists, and others concerned about the Great Basin.
- Sponsored fence removal projects at Hart Mountain and Malheur National Wildlife Refuges.
- Maintained ONDA's Clean Stream Net, providing timely, action oriented information via e-mail to over 400 activists

1997 Income by Category



1997 Expenses by Category



Income & Expenses

(Jan. 1 - Dec. 31, 1997)

SUPPORT AND REVENUE

Memberships	\$20,023
Contributions	\$63,931
Conferences	\$17,495
Grants	\$83,149
Other	\$3,543
TOTAL SUPPORT & REVENUE	\$188,141

EXPENSES

Outreach and Education	\$138,083
Lobbying	\$15,732
Ecosystem Defense	\$15,893
Administrative	\$15,551
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$185,259

FUND BALANCE \$2,882

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INSIDE:
THE MANY FACES OF COYOTE



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Desert Conference XX!

Thur-Sun, April 30 - May 3
Malheur Field Station
(in southeast Oregon's scenic
Great Basin country)

This year marks the 20th anniversary of Desert Conference! ONDA and conference co-hosts Friends of Nevada Wilderness and Committee for Idaho's High Desert invite you to join other desert enthusiasts at Malheur Field Station in southeast Oregon (south of Burns). Several field trips are offered on Friday, May 1, including an expanded Lake Abert trip that also includes a visit to Warner Wetlands (bring your binoculars.) Enjoy workshops, slideshows and camaraderie as we celebrate the natural wonders of the Blitzen Valley.



Desert Conference participants enjoy an outing to the Blitzen River.

For more info or to register, e-mail Gilly at glyons@onda.org or call ONDA's Portland field office at (503) 525-0193.