shown is a view of the proposed Pronghorn Area of Critical Environmental Concern, which would protect lands linking Oregon's Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge with Nevada's Sheldon Refuge. The Pronghorn ACEC is one of many proposals ONDA has advanced to protect desert lands in its first decade.

ONDA Celebrates Ten Years
ONDA challenges status quo to conserve desert

Looking back over the last ten years is instructive and rewarding. We have had many successes and have learned from our setbacks. Looking ahead to the next decade suggests our work has only just begun, and we enter the new millennium with exciting possibilities ahead of us.

Desert wilderness
Although we've made significant progress on ONDA's primary goal of passing federal legislation designating desert wilderness in Oregon, passage of such a bill remains unrealized. Millions of acres of public land managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) deserve such designation, but for years have been in legislative limbo. Unless the Republican-controlled Congress has an unexpected change of heart, passing any wilderness bill is as likely as a cow jumping over the moon.

For an Oregon wilderness bill to be introduced, the Democrats would at least need to win control of the House of Representatives in the next election. That would...
Celebrating ONDA's first decade

ONDA, born of a collaboration between Don Tryon and Alice Elshoff, had its humble beginnings somewhere in the vicinity of Bend's Pine Tavern. About twenty people showed up for what proved to have been ONDA's first meeting. Now we are over 1500 strong and have two offices and a staff of five, including an attorney. We have also a strategic plan and the will to accomplish its goals (see p. 11). This issue celebrates our first decade and looks forward to the next.

The West is changing and will continue to change, but we must keep the pressure on. As a result of our efforts, Gov. John Kitzhaber has established the Healthy Streams Partnership (see p. 10), and since 1991 cattle no longer rumn Hart Mountain National Wildlife Refuge. We have won important court victories. We have raised public awareness of the damage cattle inflict on our arid lands. We have dogged the BLM every step of the way, demanding compliance with the laws that protect our public lands. The BLM no longer bows automatically to the will of big ranchers.

And we will keep pushing until there are no more cattle degrading our public lands. As a board we have agreed not to compromise this position. It is our dream that our children will see the fruits of our labors; that they will enjoy free-flowing, clean streams free of trash; that they will hear the howls of wild wolves. And they will thank Don and Alice, and, seeing no more destruction on Saturday and down-home entertainment Saturday night.

It's always a treat to be in Oregon's Great Basin country, which is rich in natural history. So, by our supporters and Desert Conference Hostpitality Room hosts Emily Thomas and Jason Seivers, who married in September.

All of us at ONDA extend the warm-est of wishes to the newlyweds.

Desert Poets!

Rick Demmer is planning to compile a booklet of your poems from Desert Conference. Send your stuff to:

Rick Demmer
P.O. Box 51
Prineville, OR 97754
E-mail: rddemmer@bend.net

Congratulations...

...to ONDA vice president and treasurer Craig Miller, who tied the knot with Marilyn Mason in an August ceremony atop Steens Mountain!

Also, best wishes to longtime ONDA supporter and Desert Conference Hospitality Room hosts Emily Thomas and Jason Seivers, who married in September.

All of us at ONDA extend the warm-est of wishes to the newlyweds.

Desert Conference XXII April 27-30, 2000 Malheur Field Station Malheur National Wildlife Refuge Planning has already begun for next year’s Desert Conference. Stretch your legs in a high desert wonderland on one of our renowned outings on Friday. Birds, canyon country, or wildflowers are among the topics for the hikes. Settle in for some thought-provoking discussions on Saturday and down-home entertainment Saturday night.

It’s always a treat to be in Oregon’s Great Basin country, which is rich in natural and pioneer history. Of course, the spring bird migration makes this desert oasis a sight to behold.

Look for more information in your mailbox, or contact Grilly at g粮油@onda.org or 503-525-0193.

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All of us at ONDA extend the warm-est of wishes to the newlyweds.
Welcome, Daniele!

In May, Danielle McKay joined the ONDA staff as our new part-time membership coordinator. Even though she never imagined herself working in an office, Danielle finds that she really enjoys being in ONDA’s Bend office. She enjoys the challenge of the job and finds the issues that ONDA deals with very interesting, “especially Steens Mountain and wolves.”

Daniele is a native Oregonian, having been raised in Klamath Falls. She attended Central Oregon Community College in Bend and graduated with an Associate of Arts degree. For much of the last eight years she has traveled extensively in Europe and South America. ONDA warmly welcomes Daniele to the ranks, and we hope she finds working on behalf of a cow-free Steens, wild wolves, and a natural desert worthwhile and rewarding.

Thanks, Mac!

By Stephanie Parent

ONDA was very fortunate to have Peter “Mac” Lacy as legal intern this summer. Mac began this job with a love of the desert imagined herself working in an office, Daniele finds that she really enjoys being in ONDA’s Bend office. She enjoys the challenge of the job and finds the issues that ONDA deals with very interesting, “especially Steens Mountain and wolves.”

Mac is in his second year at Northwestern School of Law of the Northwest, and graduated with an Associate of Arts degree. For much of the last eight years he has traveled extensively in Europe and South America.

Thanks for all your hard work, Mac!

Looking ahead: ONDA’s second decade

By Gilly Lyons

Oregon Legislative Round-Up

By Gilly Lyons

The Oregon Legislature was stymied in its efforts to weaken the state’s implementation of the federal Clean Water Act. Two anti-clean-water bills, Senate Bills 673 and 1166, both of which would have steered the State Department of Environmental Quality away from regulatory water quality standards virtually unenforceable on Oregon’s federal lands. Meanwhile, SB 1166 aimed to narrow the definition of “outstanding resource waters,” a critical part of the Clean Water Act’s anti-degradation policy. These two bills figured prominently in the Oregon Cattlemen’s Association’s 1999 legislative agenda—one that is apparently hostile to this state’s most precious natural resource: clean water. The governor may wield power in the job, but he still exercised common sense on these bills which would spelled bad news for our state’s rivers.

Congress may exempt grazing from environmental laws

As Desert Ramblings went to press, Congress was preparing to vote on an omnibus spending bill that might contain a host of anti-environmental amendments or “riders” that probably would never pass as stand-alone bills.

A rider promoted by Sen. Pete Domenici (R-NM), a loyal friend to the livestock industry, would allow the BLM to renew thousands of expiring federal grazing permits without environmental review or public participation. The Domenici rider would effectively suspend most environmental laws (including the Clean Water Act and the National Environmental Policy Act) while the BLM attempts to catch up on a deluge of permit renewals that the agency has seen coming for years.

This utterly transparent gift to the livestock industry would set an appalling precedent that expiring grazing permits need not be subject to legal or environmental scrutiny.

Sen. Durbin (D-II) has offered an alternative amendment that requires the BLM to establish a schedule for permit renewal within two years, ensures proper environmental review for permit renewals during the interim period, and would require permittees whose permits expire to comply with the standards and conditions of their current permits until they are renewed. ONDA urges our legislators to oppose the Domenici rider and, in the absence of a better alternative, to support the Durbin amendment.

Oregon Wilderness bills—Looking for a new decade

On the surface, this Oregon Legislature looks to be uniquely poised to deal with the status of our state’s wilderness. As noted in our last Desert Ramblings issue, the opportunity to create a state wilderness bill is there for the taking (in southern Oregon) are under consideration. Under the Antiquities Act, a President can bypass a reluctant Congress to designate national monuments to protect areas possessing scientific or historical significance. President Clinton’s designation of Utah’s Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument in 1996 was made under the authority of this Act.

In addition, ONDA, in coalition with 30 other groups, will continue to urge President Clinton to expand the Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge to the west and south, connecting it with Nevada’s Charles Sheldon Wildlife Refuge (located on the Oregon border). ONDA would also like to see a John Day Wild Salmon Refuge to protect spawning and rearing habitat for salmonids in the John Day River. President Clinton has executive privileges to create or enlarge national wildlife refuges.

Our second goal over the next 18 months is to secure designation of the Badlands Wilderness Study Area. This 32,000-acre expanse of sculpted sand and lava is a mere 20 miles east of Bend. We have been working with Sen. Ron Wyden’s staff and the rancher who has the largest allotment within the WSA to craft a proposal that would not only designate the area as wilderness but allow for the voluntary retirement of the grazing permit. Given that the Wilderness Act “grandfathers” in livestock grazing, allowing for the voluntary retirement of this permit is critical to the long-term restoration of these areas.

ONDA has been advocating for this option for several years as a bridge between ranchers and conservationists. The Badlands thus provides an important precedent that hopefully can be expanded to include any grazing permit in Oregon. Recent examples of this successful approach include Nevada’s Great Basin National Park and the Escalante National Monument.

Looking at the overall wilderness picture, we will soon file a lawsuit under the 1934 Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. We have already won cases in federal district court on the Donner und Blitzen, Owyhee, and John Day W&S Rivers. Now we want the BLM to clearly explain to the public how its plan to allow livestock grazing will “protect and enhance” the outstanding values of these rivers. We will also consider litigation to protect salmon habitat in the Columbia Basin and to protect the Pueblo Mountains from grazing abuses.

By the end of the next decade, we believe public lands grazing will be in sharp decline. Many areas will be closed to livestock as a result of voluntary retirements coupled with mandatory reductions resulting from listings under the Endangered Species Act (e.g., sage grouse and redband trout). Adding to the pressure to reduce grazing will be an increasing demand for recreation and wilderness opportunities, as well as the realization that invasive weed problems will, in many places, require the elimination of grazing. ONDA will be involved on all these fronts.

We also are likely to see a call to end subsidized ranching on our public lands. Ranchers should not be surprised if Congress passes a “freedom to ranch” bill similar to the recently passed “Freedom to Farm” law which phased out government price supports and other subsidies to agriculture.

Yes, we're making progress in our collective efforts to define community on our public lands and, in doing so, help define our part in the broader community that depends upon our public lands. ONDA members can be proud to belong to one of the handful of groups in the West challenging the status quo, refuting the dogma of the past, standing up to the cowboy myth, and fighting for ecological justice.
Pronghorn fawns
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

storm and most literally froze to the ground,” said Hart Mountain Refuge Manager Dan Alonso in The Oregonian (January 22, 1996). This information was never again mentioned to the public or press.

Recent research on the Refuge concludes that weather and diet quality, not coyote predation, limit pronghorn numbers.

Both in interviews with reporters and in the Hart Mountain NAR newsletter, Refuge staff has repeatedly reported that their research showed that newborn pronghorn fawns in subsequent years or press.

Pronghorn fawns

Killing coyotes contradicts the purpose of a wildlife refuge (coyote skeletons on Refuge fence).

(1996, 1997, and 1998) were “in excellent health,” with “no nutritional deficiencies, diseases, or parasites that predisposed fawns to predation.” Surprisingly, the same spokesmen had earlier told reporters that, “a fair percentage of the pronghorn fawns in 1996 were well below the normal range for protein,” adding that protein deficiency “prevents fawns from lying still and hiding from predators.” They also reported that the fawns in 1996 had low blood levels of copper and selenium, a deficiency that causes cattle “to deliver weakened babies” (The Oregonian, November 1996).

Later, a Hart Mountain biologist admitted in agency Technical Report 99:01 that pronghorn fawns in 1998 had significantly low blood values of hemoglobin, albumin, total protein, blood urea, nitrogen, selenium, vitamin B1, and vitamin E. “These fawns were not in excellent health,” the author concluded. Earlier statements to the public were never corrected.

This information suggests that Refuge personnel knew from the beginning that coyotes were not the cause of the low fawn survival in 1995 or afterwards. In fact, all recent research on the Refuge concludes that weather conditions and diet quality, not predation, limit pronghorn numbers. This new research has also never been released to the public.

Even without coyote control, fawn survival has been high two of the last four years (see sidebar). If ONDA and the Predator Defense Institute had not prevented the refuge from implementing its plans, valuable scientific information on the factors controlling pronghorn numbers at Hart Mountain would have been lost. And worse, the refuge would have concluded its control efforts had been successful.

Pronghorn fawn survival triples without predator control

Pronghorn fawn survival has more than tripled, from 12 fawns per 100 does in 1996 to 38 fawns per 100 does in 1999 without any kind of predator control! (The long-term average is 29 fawns per 100 does.) During the same period, total pronghorn numbers increased from 882 to 1,378 animals, one of the highest pronghorn populations ever recorded on the Refuge. ONDA released this story to the press in August. It appears that the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service released pronghorn data only when numbers are low, allowing them to promote their campaign to kill coyotes. This is a strange way for a National Refuge – with a mission to manage the entire ecosystem – to behave.

What I want to speak for is not so much the wilderness uses, valuable as those are, but the wilderness idea, which is a resource in itself. Being an intangible and spiritual resource, it will seem mystical to the practical-minded — but then anything that cannot be moved by a bulldozer is likely to seem mystical to them.

I want to speak for the wilderness idea as something that has helped form our character and that has certainly shaped our history as a people. It has no more to do with recreation than churches have to do with recreation, or than the strenuousness and optimism and expansiveness of what historians call the “American Dream” have to do with recreation…

Something will have gone out of us as a people if we ever let the remaining wilderness be destroyed; if we permit the last virgin forests to be turned into comic books and plastic cigarette cases; if we drive the few remaining members of the wild species into zoos or to extinction; if we pollute the last clear air and dirty the last clean streams and push our paved roads through the last of the silence, so that never again will Americans be free in their own country from the noise, the exhausts, the stinks of human and automotive waste. And so that never again can we have the chance to see ourselves single, separate, vertical and individual in the world, part of the environment of trees and rocks and soil, brother to the other animals, part of the natural world and competent to belong in it. Without any remaining wilderness we are committed wholly, without chance for even momentary reflection and rest, to a headlong drive into our technological terminal-life, the Brave New World of a completely man-controlled environment. We need wilderness preserved — as much of it as is still left, and as many kinds — because it was the challenge against our character as a people was formed. The reminder and the reassurance that it is still there is good for our spiritual health even if we never once in ten years set foot in it. It is good for us when we are young because of the incomparable sanity it can bring briefly, as a vacation and rest, into our insane lives.

It is important to us when we are old simply because it is there — important, that is, simply as idea…

Americans still have that chance, more than many peoples; for while we were demonstrating ourselves the most efficient and ruthless environment-busters in history, and slashing and burning and cutting our way through a wilderness continent, the wilderness was working on us. It remains in us as surely as Indian names remain on the land. If the abstract dream of human liberty and human dignity became, in America, something more than an abstract dream, mark it down at least partially to the fact that we were in subtle ways subdued by what we conquered.
A solid foundation of support

We extend our deep appreciation to the diverse foundations that have supported ONDA in our first decade.

The Brainard Foundation
The Bullitt Foundation
Caranza Foundation
Center for Respect of Life and Environment
Columbia River Bioregion Campaign
Outdoor Industry Conservation Alliance
Environmental Support Center
The Flow Fund
Foundation for Deep Ecology
Further Foundation
Fund for Wild Nature
Gund Foundation
Harder Foundation
Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge
Ned and Anna Levinson Foundation
McKenzie River Gathering
Mazamas
McKenzie River Gathering Foundation
Northwest Fund for the Environment
Oregon Community Foundation
Oregon Jewish Community Foundation
Patagonia, Inc.
Petrafund Foundation
Recreational Equipment, Inc.
The Rockwood Fund
Rogue Wave Foundation
Spur Foundation
The Strong Foundation
Temper of the Times Foundation
True North Foundation
Turner Foundation
Wilburforce Foundation

Thank you, board members

Our current board of directors and previous boards have been instrumental in ONDA’s accomplishments. Below are the solid people who are currently serving on our board.

Dave Funk, President
Craig Miller, Vice President and Treasurer
Stu Sugarman, Secretary
Phil Conti
Lee Christie

Volunteer board leads ONDA to success

ONDA’s volunteer board of directors developing the Strategic Plan at a recent meeting. The board charts the course for the organization, raises funds to achieve its goals, and pitches in to get conservation work done.

Membership growth through the first decade

1989: 100
1994: 500
1995: 1,000
1996: 1,500
1997: 1,500
1998: 1,500
1999: 1,500

ONDA’s First Decade

A personal retrospective

By Alice Elshoff

It has been quite a journey looking back through ten years of newsletters to augment my own recollections of these momentous years. I won’t be able to do justice to all the people who have helped nurture this organization into the dynamic force it is today, but I can say that every single person who has contributed in whatever way to ONDA’s work is a gem in my book!

It all began in 1980 when the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) was preparing to send Congress a list of Oregon roadless areas for consideration as wilderness. The list included only about half of the lands identified in the original inventory. A wise Don Tryon, later to become one of ONDA’s founders, thought someone besides the BLM ought to take a look at these lands, so he took it upon himself to explore most of eastern Oregon’s public lands. This effort led to the realization that desert lovers would need to prepare an alternative wilderness proposal that included all the spectacular wild lands the BLM had left out in their recommendation to Congress.

I became interested in joining Don’s “movement” after I asked the BLM why the Badlands Wilderness Study Area near my home (then in Bend) failed to include an interesting slot canyon containing water-smoothed rocks from an ancient river as well as caves and rock art. When they asked “What canyon?” it seemed clear they weren’t really that serious about their inventory. (Sen. Wyden is now advocating for designation of the proposed Badlands Wilderness; see back page.)

After a few years of walking the lands and drawing maps, it became obvious to Don and myself that we needed to organize. In 1988 ONDA was born with Matt Holmes as its first chairman. We immediately began an ambitious...
I remember how gung-ho people were to go to meetings, conferences, festivals and perhaps to be designated as wilderness. I also remember all the years of its existence, ONDA worked from a shared vision and a strong mission. The board and staff, composed of desert activists, decided, on a case-by-case basis, how we were going to respond to threats of abuses of our cherished public lands. Ours was a very natural evolution. A group of citizens responded to a threat. Then another. Then yet another. No one really had time to plan comprehensively for the long haul. Until last year.

Aided by a grant from The Willamette Foundation, we began working with TREC (Training Resources for the Environmental Community) to fine-tune our shared vision and turn it into a long-term plan of action. Two days of work in a room at Camp Hancock near the John Day River, just seconds away from great desert hiking, was like conducting an AA meeting in a distillery, but the TREC facilitator kept us in line and forced us to define goals and objectives for the next decade. And now we’re on the journey. We are forming committees, organizing our fundraising, and improving communication with our members. If the plan goes as well as we want it to, Oregon will, in ten years, have a dwindling number of cows on the public lands as ranchers retire their permits. Willow and cottonwood will once again shade desert streams, keeping the water cool and fresh for the native trout. The BLM will be aggressively working to eradicate alien species of plants and to restore the complex high desert ecosystem. The howls of wolves will be heard in the Wallowas and the Blue Mountains. We will have a strong Oregon High Desert Protection Act in place to protect our wild roadless areas. There will be no cattle in wilderness areas.

Will all of this really happen in ten years? I doubt it. Plans never go exactly as you want them to, no matter what. For this vision to work we need to do the yeoman’s task of increasing our membership to include all who treasure the Oregon desert. We need to approach potential donors for funds to hire attorneys and more staff to support our increased activity. We need to be educating, to be talking to people and showing them the benefits of a new way of looking at the desert, even though we’d rather be out in the desert ourselves. We need to recruit more volunteers for every manner of task.

We thought creating the plan was tough. It turns out that was the easy part. Let’s look back in ten years and see what we accomplished. Because if any of our dreams come true, it will be because everyone who reads this and believes in the dream did something to make it happen.

战略计划概述

**目标1：指定沙漠荒野区在俄勒冈**

**组织目标：**
- 制定一张大盆地沙漠地图。
- 调查多州沙漠保护法。
- 召集荒野区荒野提案。
- 准备大盆地地图。

**立法目标：**
- 通过一项荒野保护法案。
- 通过一项遗产倡议行政命令。

**教育目标：**
- 建立与资金的合作伙伴关系。
- 在州内发起11月2000年州民提案。

**目标2：恢复沙漠生态系统和清洁水源**

**组织目标：**
- 鼓励以保护和保护项目为出发点的民族主义。
- 经常参加国家会议和产品。

**立法目标：**
- 考虑11月2000年州民提案。
- 推出水体中的CREEP。

**教育目标：**
- 建立对沙漠的公众意识。
- 建立荒野保护提案。
Measure 38 produces results  

By Jim Myron and Ashley Henry

One of ONDA’s most challenging projects undertaken in the past decade was the Oregon Clean Stream Initiative (Measure 38). This citizen initiative would have required the livestock industry in Oregon to comply with state water-quality standards and the federal Clean Water Act.

While the ballot measure did not pass, it did show the citizens of Oregon that the environmental community can successfully undertake a grassroots effort to place an initiative on the ballot. It also raised the level of awareness of the general public to the problems associated with the grazing of domestic livestock.

Response: Progress on water quality  

Measure 38 also produced a useful political response, stimulating Gov. John Kitzhaber to foster his Healthy Streams Partnership as an alternative to support additional funding so the state could begin to address water-quality problems. The 1997 Legislature allocated sufficient funding for the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality and the Oregon Department of Agriculture to establish Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) allocations for all of Oregon’s water-quality limited streams.

Another direct result of Measure 38 was the implementation (finally) of SB1010, a plan to create water quality management plans on all agricultural lands. Passed by the 1993 Oregon Legislature, SB1010 was never seriously implemented. Together, the implementation of SB1010 and the Healthy Streams Partnership should lead to water quality management plans on all agricultural lands, as well as establish maximum pollutant levels on all Oregon streams which violate federal clean water standards. For years, such important plans had been stalled. These actions may never have occurred without the threat of Measure 38.

Lessons learned  

ONDA also learned some very important lessons from waging the campaign. Among these lessons: 1) you need to have a lot of money to carry out a successful initiative campaign, 2) you need to know who your supporters are, and 3) expect some underhanded and sometimes illegal actions from the opposition.

In the final analysis, the Oregon Clean Stream Initiative prompted new legislative and agency efforts to clean up Oregon’s rivers. It has also changed the way the state of Oregon views non-point source pollution (like grazing pollution). We argued against snowmobiling on the mountain and unsuccessfully protested the Steens Summit fence, the BLM’s uninspired answer to inappropriate livestock grazing in an alpine Research Natural Area—at a cost to the taxpayers of $17,000. The fence still stands today, an eyesore that intersects two Wilderness Study Areas.

First staff hired  

In 1995, ONDA took another leap forward by hiring Bill Marlett as our executive director (and first paid staff). One of our major battles that year was our fight to block Newmont Mining Co.’s proposed cyanide gold mine at Grassy Mountain. We only hope that the long-term benefits of the Measure 38 campaign and the efforts of hundreds of dedicated volunteers will be cleaner streams and restored habitat for native fish and other aquatic life.
CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Both 1994 and 1995 were roller coaster rides for desert activists. Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt’s Rangeland Reform effort raised hopes for long-overdue improvements in the management of public lands grazing. These hopes were dashed by administrative back-pedaling and eventual capitulation to the livestock industry, leaving public lands owners even more disenfranchised. Another avenue looked promising when the State of Oregon proposed a plan to allow competitive bidding for state-owned rangelands. The change would have allowed conservation groups to bid on leases, and if successful, to restore wildlife habitat rather than graze livestock. ONDA prepared to bid on (and then restore) 10,000 acres of scenic Owyhee Canyons. But newly-elected Gov. John Kitzhaber reversed this policy and final resolution of the issue has been put on hold pending resolution of subsequent lawsuits.

In 1995 it became obvious that we needed another staff person. By some rare and wonderful alignment of planets, we were able to find Gillian Lyons, who had just completed her master’s degree in Environmental Studies at the University of Montana. She not only had the exact mix of skills needed but, well, she was “Gilly.” Those who know her understand that I need say no more. So what if the old Sagebrush Rebellion anti-federalists had re-emerged under the banner of their so-called “Wise Use” movement. We now had Gilly on our side. It was probably no coincidence that we launched our first annual Desert Poetry Festival at Desert Conference that very year.

The Clean Stream Initiative

The next year found us consumed by our Clean Stream Initiative (see pg. 10), a ballot measure campaign which highlighted the ugly truth about grazing damage to our rivers and streams to a whole new contingent of citizens. Membership grew during this period. Lies and a well-financed ad campaign by the livestock industry along with some strange twists of fate conspired to keep this initiative from passing. But the groundwork was laid for the next major attempt to free the desert from the tyranny of over a century of abusive grazing. It was for his work on behalf of water-fighters that Bill Marlett received the “Outstanding Grassroots Grazing Reform Organizer” award from the Alliance for Wild Rockies.

Since 1997, we have added Dr. Joy Beilsky, Ph.D. as staff ecologist; George Wuerthner, a nationally published nature writer and anti-grazing activist, as our national outreach coordinator; and Stephanie Parent as staff attorney, all enhancing ONDA’s effectiveness and credibility. We also have hired a part-time membership coordinator and an administrative assistant.

In its first decade, ONDA evolved from a scrappy volunteer group to a lean, established and effective watchdog of our public desert lands with nearly 2000 members supporting our work. Today, we await the outcomes of numerous ONDA-initiated court cases, the possibility of special designation for the Steens, and the protection of several desert species under the federal Endangered Species Act. All these actions are part of fulfilling our mission to restore native ecosystems and water quality on the public lands of eastern Oregon.

In 2010, I look forward to reading the second ten-year retrospective to see what we have accomplished during the first decade of the new millennium. I’m sure at least a few of you will remember the first decade of ONDA...and the second one just might be even better!

– John Howell

ONDA’s First Decade

“Back in the early 1990s I volunteered to digitize the OHDPA maps into the GIS system. It was a rewarding experience, something I will remember for the rest of my life. I really enjoyed working with Bill Marlett. It’s great to work with someone who is unwavering in his vision.”

– Alexis Elhoff — a founding member of ONDA.