

Desert Ramblings

the newsletter of the
Oregon
Natural Desert
association

Fall 2001

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Volume 14, Number 3

Freedom and wilderness

The personal and public devastation of September 11 gives us pause for reflection on who we are and what we do. Many of us have places in Nature where we can contemplate life's enigmas. Like most everyone, I found it hard to avoid a feeling of despair in the aftermath and now, with the morass in Afghanistan. At the same time, it's somehow reassuring to know that we can still grieve collectively. Our challenge now is to move beyond foreboding national isolationism and rekindle a sense of global and natural community.



FROM THE OUTBACK

by Bill Marlett

Life on Earth will continue, though it will never be the same. America has declared war, while the global war on Nature continues unabated — if not largely unnoticed. The story behind the loss of biological diversity on our planet has yet to be told.

For peace, some turn to the calm of natural sanctuary. For me, I have a renewed sense of mission: the defense of wilderness . . . vestiges of wild Nature in a world more vulnerable than assumed. My wilderness is not just Nature unfettered by the hand of human dominance, but something that reflects the freedoms etched in our Constitution. Freedom of expression and unbridled Nature are bound together by a common thread: human restraint. And while the institutional tag of Wilderness is an American invention, the notion of people around the world having reverence for, and holding sacred, special landscapes is an enduring human trait.

The defense of personal freedom comes in many forms. I will defend my freedom by defending Wilderness — not as an indulgence, but as a hope for future generations, a quintessential attribute of Americans and citizens of all nations.

I have a renewed appreciation for wilderness: of what was, what is, and what can be. As with freedom, the defense of wild places is a global necessity. But to thwart the terror visited upon our biological heritage, we must embrace human rights and the free expression of Nature everywhere.

Wilderness embodies diversity, and serves as a model for our own human community. As in Nature, a diverse community is stable, yet evolving — one in which the passion for freedom flourishes.



Snow-capped Steens Mountain.

ONDA FILE PHOTO

Implementing the Steens-Alvord Act

Home Creek dam poses threat

By Brent Fenty

On August 14, Oregon's Congressional delegation and about 150 citizens converged at Page Springs Campground near Frenchglen to celebrate the Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Area (CMPA), passed in October 2000. Burns Paiute elder Jane Sam opened the dedication ceremony with a heartfelt prayer, which was followed by remarks from Sens. Gordon Smith (R-OR), Ron Wyden (D-OR), and US Rep. Greg Walden (R-OR). Oregon Parks and Recreation Director Mike Carrier, Burns Paiute Tribal Council chairman Albert Teeman, Jill Workman of the Oregon Chapter Sierra Club, Harney County Judge Steve Grasty, Roaring Springs Ranch manager Stacy Davies, and acting BLM director Nina Hatfield, also addressed the group.

Each speaker applauded the designation and the cooperation required to secure federal protection for Steens, while thanking the various citizens who made the legislation possible. Albert Teeman of the Burns Paiute Tribe commented on the need for further protection of Steens Mountain: "To show [Steens] the respect she deserves is to protect her from future harm." Mike Carrier, speaking on behalf of Gov. John Kitzhaber,

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FROM THE DEN

by Lee Christie

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ONDA exists to protect, defend and restore forever the health of Oregon's native deserts.

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"The times, they are a'changin.'" I would guess this about sums up what we all are thinking and feeling right now. It is a difficult time for us to remain focused, but we must. Let's celebrate the good in our lives, in America, and in the world.

At ONDA, we have many reasons to celebrate: our important ongoing work, our dedicated staff and board and, most of all, our 'SUPERHERO' Bill Marlett. His recent conservation leadership award from the Wilburforce Foundation (see below) brings honor to all of us and reinforces our commitment to ONDA's mission. Please join us in our desert protection efforts. This is the time to make a difference at home, in our communities and in Oregon. As Terry Tempest Williams puts it, "Staying home may be the most radical act we can commit."



ANNOUNCEMENTS

RangeNet 2001

November 10 – 11, Phoenix

Building on the success of last year's event in Reno, members of RangeNet — an on-line community of public lands grazing reform advocates — will gather at Arizona State University in Phoenix for a two-day conference and strategy session. Topics include: "Ecological Impacts of Public Lands Grazing," "National Public Lands Grazing Campaigns," and "Getting Your Voice 'Herd' in Washington." For more information, contact the conference organizers at jhpowers@futureone.com or visit www.rangenet.org/rn2001.

RMP for 90 days after its release. To obtain a copy of the Lakeview Draft RMP, contact Dwanye Sykes, RMP Team Leader, Lakeview BLM, HC 10 Box 337, Lakeview, OR 97630; (541) 947-2177; d1sykes@or.blm.gov. You can also view the plan on-line at www.or.blm.gov/Lakeview.

Bill Marlett receives Wilburforce Conservation Award

ONDA is thrilled to announce that Bill Marlett, our fearless executive director, received the Wilburforce Foundation's 2001 Conservation Leadership Award on Sept. 29. The award, which honors activists for their hard work on vital conservation issues in the West, was presented to a somewhat flabbergasted Bill by Tim Greyhavens, director of the Seattle-based Wilburforce Foundation, at this Fall's Desert Conference. ONDA's board and staff extend our deepest gratitude to the good folks at Wilburforce for their recognition of Bill's unflagging efforts to protect Steens Mountain.

Comment on BLM's Lakeview District Plan

The Lakeview District of the Bureau of Land Management has announced that its Lakeview Draft Resource Management Plan (RMP) will be available soon for public review. The plan will guide the future management of 3.2 million acres of public land in Lake and Harney Counties; the BLM will accept public comments on the draft

Steens-Alvord Act

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

acknowledged the existing threats to Steens from commercial and private development and said that future efforts must address “the desire of some people to compromise [Steens’] beauty for their own gain.” The Sierra Club’s Jill Workman, representing the Steens-Alvord Coalition (of which ONDA is a member), stated that “The work is not done here on Steens.” Jill described some of the continued threats to Steens and the conservation community’s hopes to eventually expand the Steens Mountain Wilderness Area.

Implementing cow-free wilderness

On July 26, the BLM released the Project Implementation Environmental Assessment Decision for implementing the Steens Act (available at http://www.or.blm.gov/burns/Planning/ea_page.htm). Intense negotiations between BLM, conservation groups, and local ranchers led to the final document, which outlines the agency’s plan to remove livestock from the new cow-free wilderness area and secure alternative forage for affected cattle operations. ONDA’s involvement, as part of the Steens-Alvord Coalition, helped limit BLM’s actions to essential forage replacement. Modifications to this environmental assessment saved taxpayers over \$100,000 and, more significantly, immediately eliminated grazing from the pasture which includes the Wild and Scenic Blitzen River, instead of a proposed three-year grazing phase-out.

Steens Advisory Council

Following a long delay and a recent plea from Oregon’s congressional delegation, Interior Secretary Gale Norton finally appointed members to the 12-seat Steens Mountain Advisory Council (SMAC). The SMAC will gather for its first meeting in October to advise BLM on development and implementation of a management plan for the Cooperative Management and Protection Area and on interim management issues. The plan will tackle issues not specifically addressed in the legislation, including transportation, recreation, and grazing, and

must be completed by October 2004.

ONDA board member Alice Elshoff of Frenchglen will serve on the SMAC as the local environmental representative, and Jerry Sutherland of the Oregon Chapter Sierra Club will represent statewide environmental interests. Jason Miner, conservation biologist with Oregon Trout and member of the Steens-Alvord Coalition’s Steering Committee, will represent fishing interests.

Home Creek dam proposed

During Spring 2001, ONDA learned that immediately following the passage of the Steens Mountain Act, Roaring Springs, the largest ranch operating on Steens, sought permission from the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) to construct a 40-foot earthen dam and reservoir on Home Creek. While located on private land (acquired through a land exchange authorized by the Steens Act), the dam, if built, would modify the natural stream flows through the newly created Home Creek Wilderness, located downstream of the proposed dam site.

This proposal surprised ONDA because Roaring Springs Ranch, the Governor’s office, and conservation interests had agreed during negotiations over the Steens Act that the State would secure an instream water right on Home Creek — in lieu of a Wild and Scenic River designation — to protect its fish and natural flows. Several weeks after the state submitted its application to OWRD for the instream water right, Roaring Springs Ranch submitted its dam application and hired Martha Pagel, the former OWRD director, to represent its interests in the competing water right application.

Home Creek provides habitat for redband trout, a state-listed “sensitive” species which ONDA petitioned for list-



Senator Gordon Smith.



Senator Ron Wyden.



Rep. Greg Walden.

ing under the Endangered Species Act. The proposed dam would inundate two miles of redband trout habitat and block an additional mile of habitat upstream of the reservoir that the dam would create. What’s more, Home Creek is listed as water quality limited for temperature by the Oregon Dept. of Environmental Quality. Construction of the dam and reservoir could further increase stream temperatures. Due to the expected impacts, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has recommended that OWRD deny Roaring Springs’ request. ONDA, Oregon Trout, and the Sierra Club have also urged OWRD to reject the still-pending dam proposal.

ONDA has maintained a good working relationship with Roaring Springs Ranch and the ranch’s manager, Stacy Davies. It is our sincere hope that the ranch owners ultimately drop this misguided proposal. The last thing Steens Mountain and its native trout need is a dam.

Future wilderness additions?

ONDA’s staff have been working with The Nature Conservancy and a Steens Mountain landowner to bring into public ownership the single largest private inholding in the Steens Mountain Wilderness Area. The deal could add 1,240 acres of new cow-free Wilderness and protect critical habitat for redband trout and other wildlife within the Donner und Blitzen watershed. ONDA is also coordinating with the Western Lands Group on efforts to acquire 640 acres in a Wilderness Study Area near the Steens’ summit that is currently threatened by private development. This acquisition could set the stage for the addition of over 6,000 acres to the Steens Mountain Wilderness Area. Although the Steens Act authorized \$25 million for additional land acquisitions, President Bush’s Fiscal Year 2003 budget proposal fails to fund this mandate (see sidebar on pg. 4).



Governor vetoes "Narrows" Bill


HB 3528 would have allowed 'Sagebrush Strip Mall'

by Gilly Lyons

If you've driven down Highway 205 south of Burns lately, you may have noticed a cluster of brand new buildings and RV-hookups at the turn-off to the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. Called "The Narrows" (and continuing a long tradition of developments that borrow their names from the same natural features they're built upon), the highly controversial convenience store/campground complex may find it harder to turn a profit after a recent veto from Oregon's governor.

In mid-August, Gov. John Kitzhaber rejected House Bill 3528, which would have cleared the way for "The Narrows" developer, Jett Blackburn, to sell gasoline and motel beds in addition to soda pop and corn chips. HB 3528 sought to circumvent Oregon's land use laws by allowing piecemeal "special interest" zoning. Blackburn had already received a zoning variance from Harney County to construct the first phase of "The Narrows" on Exclusive Farm Use-zoned

acreage, but needed legislative permission to move forward with the otherwise-illegal gas station and motel expansion. Using bizarre reasoning, HB 3528 would have declared a "state of emergency" in Harney County, presumably brought on by the sudden, critical shortage of gas pumps between Burns and Frenchglen.

By vetoing HB 3528, Gov. Kitzhaber has helped protect Oregon's land use planning system from the vagaries of a partisan legislature. His veto also sends an important message to other would-be developers in the vicinity of Steens Mountain: local zoning decisions should be made at the county level, not in Salem. Finally, the welcome demise of HB 3528 serves as a vital reminder that Harney County needs a thoughtful, comprehensive land use planning framework, one that meets the needs of local residents while safeguarding the region's tremendous natural values. 

Words of hope from The Nature Conservancy

At a time like this, when the dark side of humanity is so starkly revealed, it is worth reflecting on the realization that our cause represents such a hopeful, and much more powerful, dimension of the human spirit. In the perpetual search — the perpetual struggle — of civilization, to find meaning and an enduring morality, inevitably the better virtues of human nature prevail. And what could be a more fundamental, more enduring, precept than that which benefits all peoples, all generations, for all time. At a time like this, it is worth remembering that Earth abides. And it is our commitment to ensuring that, as long as there is a human civilization, it is enriched immeasurably — even ennobled — by the preservation of the full variety of life on Earth.

Steve McCormick, President
The Nature Conservancy

Tell Bush, Congress to fund Steens Acquisitions

The Bush Administration has deleted funding for future Steens Mountain land acquisitions and exchanges from the President's 2003 budget. This funding is absolutely critical to protecting Steens Mountain from future commercial and trophy home development.

Please write a letter today urging President Bush to put money for Steens back in his '03 budget.

Please send your letter to:

President George W. Bush
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Please send a copy to:

Rep. Greg Walden
1404 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Sen. Gordon Smith
404 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Sen. Ron Wyden
516 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Points to include in your letter:

- The Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Act (HR 4828) promised \$25 million for future land acquisition and exchanges;
- Funding is essential to resolve existing threats to Wilderness, Wilderness Study Areas, and Wild and Scenic Rivers;
- All the parties that participated in the Steens Act negotiations support this funding.

Elaine Zelinski
BLM State Director
1515 SW 5th Avenue
Portland, OR 97205

Gov. John Kitzhaber
254 State Capitol
Salem, OR 97310



STEVE BLY

Canoeing the East Fork of the Owyhee River.

Owyhee Canyonlands

Land of paradox

By Gilly Lyons

The Owyhee Canyonlands is a region of superlatives and contradictions. Exquisitely beautiful, in places it is heartbreakingly damaged. Unfathomably vast when viewed from the uplands, it is unexpectedly intimate when admired from a canoe at the bottom of a side canyon. These wild lands are about as far as you can get from an interstate highway within the lower 48 states, but they are no stranger to motorized vehicles. The Owyhee Canyonlands are, in a word, fascinating. They're also crucial to the long-term ecological integrity of the Great Basin, beleaguered by a suite of threats, and almost entirely unprotected.

Three million wild acres

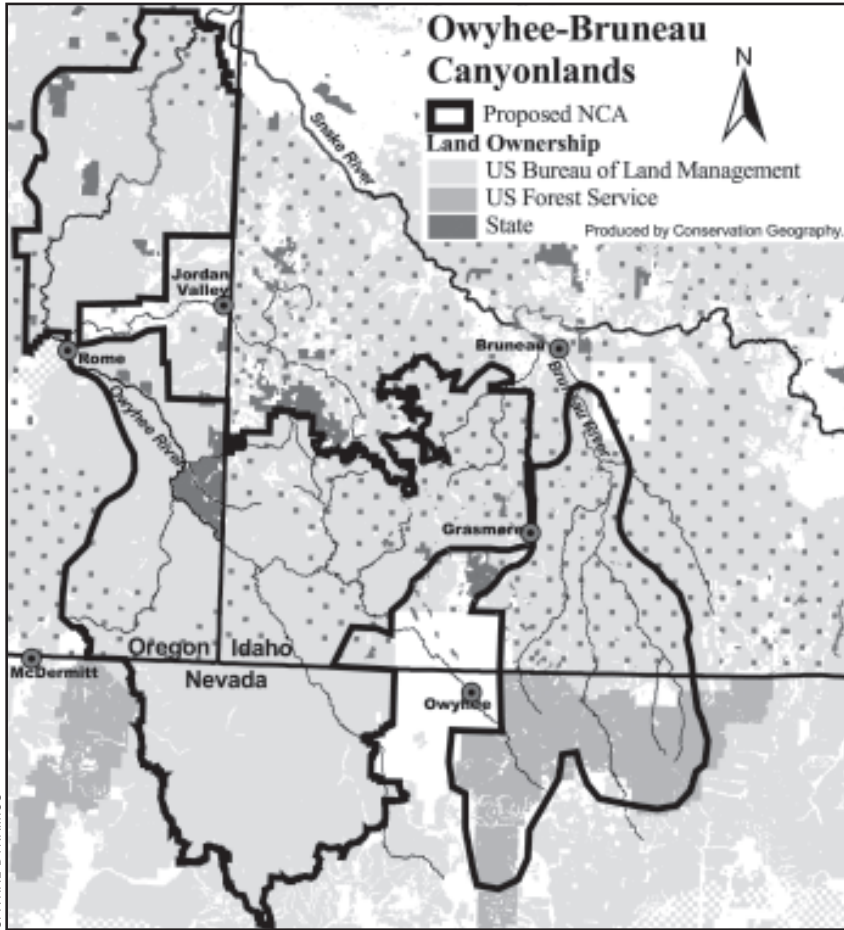
Straddling the intersection of southeastern Oregon, southwestern Idaho, and northern Nevada, the Owyhee Canyonlands weigh in at 3 million acres of BLM-managed public land – twice the size of Yellowstone National Park. As such, the region makes up the largest undeveloped, unprotected wildlands left in the United States outside of Alaska. The Owyhee's vast network of deep basalt river canyons and sagebrush-peppered plateaus serves as a bittersweet reminder of what the American West once felt like, and how

vitaly important it is that we safeguard this remote corner of the world.

Geographically, the Canyonlands are part of the Great Basin ecosystem (though they spill over into the Snake River Plateau as well). But in keeping with its penchant for contradictions, the Owyhee region rarely conforms to our expectations of what the Great Basin should look like. As Andy Kerr writes in his book, *Oregon Desert Guide: 70 Hikes*, "Though a 'Great Basin' desert type, the topography is remarkably different. It is not basin and range, but canyonlands. The welded tuffs yield glorious rock formations reminiscent of Utah's Colorado Plateau."

The canyons range in elevation from over 9,000 feet in Nevada's Jarbridge Wilderness down to 4,000 feet at the confluence of the Snake and Owyhee Rivers in Idaho. This wide array of habitat – which roams from sagebrush steppe to

The Owyhee Canyonlands are the largest undeveloped, unprotected wildlands remaining in the United States outside of Alaska.



SPATIAL DYNAMICS

Owyhee Country's Wild Rivers

If you ask a random stranger what comes to mind when you say "Owyhee Canyonlands," chances are she or he will reply with a blank stare or an attempt to correct your mispronunciation of "Hawaii." The region's profound remoteness keeps it off most people's list of top 10 vacation destinations. However, if you stumble upon an Owyhee adherent, you'll likely get this response: "Rivers, lots of wild rivers." While the bulk of the Owyhee's acreage consists of uplands and expansive plateaus, it is the deep, incised basalt canyons and the waters flowing through them that capture the hearts and minds of most visitors.

Literally hundreds of miles of rivers and streams criss-cross the Canyonlands' three million acres. These waterways tumble and gurgle across three state lines, undaunted by political boundaries. Unfortunately, those arbitrary boundaries have huge repercussions for the Owyhee River and its tributaries. As soon as the federally-protected Wild and Scenic Owyhee River leaves Oregon and enters Idaho, it becomes the wholly-unprotected Owyhee River. Same physical landscape, different political landscape.

Due to divergent state politics, Oregon boasts about 200 Wild and Scenic River miles in the Owyhee area (the North Fork of the Owyhee, the West Little Owyhee, and the main stem Owyhee River). Idaho and Nevada have none. In Idaho, 344 river miles have been deemed "eligible" by the BLM for Wild and Scenic River designation; Nevada has 26 such eligible miles. For these river segments to receive the protection they so richly deserve, Congress must act. Until then, a single river and its tributaries will continue to be managed according to time zone rather than ecology.

Threats to an Ecosystem

Like most lands administered under BLM's multiple-use mandate, the Owyhee region has a full dance-card: myriad interests compete for its attentions, leaving the landscape tuckered out and in need of a breather. Here are some of the most pressing threats:

- **Livestock Grazing:** Huge swaths of the Owyhee region are grazed by domestic livestock, resulting in water pollution, soil erosion and compaction, dewatered streams, trampled seeps and springs, and weed invasions of epic proportions. Grazing along the Wild and Scenic Owyhee River in Oregon prompted ONDA to sue the BLM in 1998 for failing to protect and enhance the river's values as required by the

lush riparian areas to high altitude forests – accounts for the area's great diversity of fish and wildlife. The Canyonlands host more than 200 species of wildlife, including peregrine falcons, golden eagles, pronghorn antelope, elk, cougars, bobcats, redband trout, and sage grouse.

But of all the animals that call the Owyhee home, the species perhaps most closely associated with this region is the California Desert bighorn sheep. The

Canyonlands harbor one of the largest populations of bighorn sheep left in the nation, providing the sole source of "transplant" animals to assist with re-establishment programs in nine western states. However, transplant efforts have been temporarily suspended because the Owyhee's bighorn population is declining.



STEVE BLY

Bighorn sheep.

Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. The successful legal challenge led to the removal of cattle from several sections of the river (see sidebar below). However, elsewhere in the Canyonlands and along portions of the Owyhee River, grazing abuses still abound.

- **Off-Road Vehicles:** Unregulated ORV use in the Owyhee leads to noise pollution, soil erosion, wildlife stress, and disruption of solitude. ORVs can also devastate fragile cultural resources, including ancient fire hearths, teepee rings, medicine circles, and pottery fragments. Despite written regulations, BLM lacks the staff and funding to adequately enforce these rules; as a result, willy-nilly cross-country travel and a disregard for established routes have become the norm.
- **Military Bombing Ranges:** For the past 12 years, Idaho conservationists have struggled to block a U.S. Air Force proposal to expand an existing bombing range further into the Owyhee Canyonlands. The expansion would result in thousands of low-level subsonic and supersonic fighter jet and heavy bomber flights over the Canyonlands. In addition, 12,000 acres of public land would be withdrawn for military-only use. Meanwhile, the Air Force has stated that its existing ranges already meet its training needs for the nearby Mountain Home Air Force Base. (The Air Force currently makes 7,500 sonic and subsonic flights annually over the Owyhee Canyonlands.) The bombing range proposal would allow Air Force planes to swoop as low as 1,000 feet over Little Jacks Creek, home to declining populations of bighorn sheep

— a shy mammal that's particularly sensitive to roaring jet engines and exploding bombs. The Owyhee Canyonlands Coalition, an alliance of Idaho conservation groups, has filed suit against the Air Force and seeks a ban on any ground-disturbing activities until various legal claims have been resolved.

- **Bad Management:** The Owyhee Canyonlands are sorely mismanaged thanks to the BLM's inadequate and inconsistent regulations. The latest update of the Owyhee Resource Management Plan allows a significant spike in grazing levels and ORV use. The draft Southeast Oregon Resource Management Plan also offers no improvements. Both plans decrease protections for wildlife habitat while increasing commercial or extractive uses. Meanwhile, the Oregon Biodiversity Project estimates that only 2% of the Owyhee ecoregion is adequately protected to conserve and restore biodiversity.

Protecting an Ecological Crossroads

While the bulk of the Owyhee Canyonlands enjoys few formal safeguards (with the notable exception of Oregon's Wild and Scenic River corridors), two dozen BLM Wilderness Study Areas in Oregon and Idaho offer nominal interim protection to some of the region's most remarkable acres. However, even these WSAs include only a fraction of what deserves to be permanently protected.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



Elk.

IDAHO DEPT. OF FISH & GAME

No more pipeline

By Stephanie Parent

In an ongoing legal case, the U.S. District Court of Oregon ordered the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to permanently eliminate all cattle grazing from all areas in the Owyhee Wild and Scenic River corridor. However, at the request of BLM and the cattlemen, the court also allowed the construction of numerous fences throughout the area, as well as water developments within wilderness study areas in the Saddle Butte allotment.

The grazing permittees have constructed the southern portion of pipeline, as well as water troughs, causing soil degradation, native plant loss, weed invasions, and visual intrusions. Based on the evidence of ecological and aesthetic damage in the field documented by Katie Fite and Dave Steele, ONDA is returning to Judge Redden to request an amendment to the injunction order to stop construction of the northern portion of the

water development to prevent further damage to the area's wilderness values. ONDA is also requesting that the amended order require frequent monitoring of forage utilization for two additional years to ensure that the permittees stay within utilization limits near the new water development.

The court's order requires that the ranchers broadcast native seed to rehabilitate the area disturbed by pipeline construction. ONDA is trying to compel the rehabilitation of the area before grazing is allowed to resume in the allotment November 1. In addition, ONDA is requesting that the court prohibit grazing in any allotment until fences are brought into compliance with BLM specifications. This would ensure that wildlife are able to pass through the fences. The BLM and the cattlemen intend to oppose this motion, but we hope for a positive ruling before grazing begins.

Citizens' wilderness proposals for both Oregon and Idaho seek to designate these WSAs as federal wilderness, along with hundreds of thousands of additional wilderness-worthy acres that the BLM overlooked in its statewide inventories a decade ago. Conservationists are now re-inventorying these wildlands in an effort to expand the number of official WSA acres. (For more info about the Oregon Owyhee wildlands inventory, contact ONDA at 503/525-0193; for the Idaho Owyhee inventory, contact the Sierra Club in Boise at 208/384-1023.)

Because Congress can take years (or decades) to craft and pass a wilderness bill, conservationists have sought other protective designations for the Owyhee Canyonlands. During the last few months of the Clinton Administration, Idaho activists campaigned for a two-million acre National Monument on the Idaho side of the Canyonlands. The campaign attracted national attention to this remarkable place, but in the end, the Owyhee Canyonlands was not among Clinton's new monuments.

More recently, in July 2001, three Idaho conservation groups – Idaho Conservation League, The Wilderness Society, and The Nature Conservancy – announced they'd agreed to work with Owyhee County representatives and local livestock operators on a cooperative initiative to "protect and enhance

the health of the Owyhee ecosystem while allowing sustainable uses of the land." It's still unclear what shape this venture will take, and a splash of skepticism may be in order. But provided the negotiating table remains open to a diverse array of interested parties, the planned discussions could lead to some meaningful protections for the Owyhee.

Although the future of the Owyhee Canyonlands remains cloudy, one thing is clear: desert conservationists from three Great Basin states are dedicated to protecting this extraordinary, inspiring place, and that's surely a force to be reckoned with. Mike Medberry, an Idaho wildlands advocate, offers this description of the Owyhee's enchanting landscape:

A morning breeze carries the strong, bracing smell of sagebrush. As far as the eye can see, sage and rabbitbrush spill pale green across a rolling landscape. But it is the trickery of this high desert country to hide a gaping canyon in these subtle lines of grass, brush, and earth. Until you are nearly upon the cliff, you may not see that five hundred, in some places a thousand feet of sheer basalt drops from the plateau. To the Owyhee River or the Jarbidge or the Bruneau, to Sheep, Jacks, or Mary's Creeks. Or to a canyon lesser known.



Owyhee Canyonlands Hike: Lambert Rocks

The following is an excerpt from Oregon Desert Guide: 70 Hikes, by Andy Kerr (The Mountaineers, 2000). Proceeds from the sale of "Oregon Desert Guide" support conservation organizations working to protect Oregon's desert wildlands.

What to Expect: A fantastic lava flow on a bench above the Owyhee River

Distance: 8.8 miles round trip

Elevation Range: 3,020-3,700 feet

Drinking Water: Yes

Best Times to Go: Spring and Fall
(avoid in Summer; it's too darn hot)

USGS 7.5' Map: Lambert Rocks

Oregon Map Starting Point: Rome

At the Rome store head northwest (US 95 runs east-northeast/west-southwest) for 1.8 miles. The road turns to the north-northeast for 0.8 mile until crossing the Owyhee River. Continue on the main road, and always northerly if you have a choice, for approximately 13.6 miles. You are now at a road intersection and in the middle of an airstrip (in fact, you've been on it for the last 0.3 mile). Take the road to the north (get off the runway, which runs north-northeast), which turns northwesterly. Park at about 3 miles.



GARY TEPPER

Lambert Rocks

Hike out the unimproved way along the peninsular point and then steeply down to Bogus Creek. Hike the four-wheel-drive track to the Owyhee River (4.4 miles total).

This can be done as a long day hike but is best enjoyed as a backpack to a riverside camp. There is much to explore coming and going.

The most geologically interesting views across the river are not actually of Chalk Basin, but of the unnamed drainages to the south, though most postcards and calendars identify this scene as Chalk Basin.



Netting the Sun

The following passage is excerpted from "The High Desert," in *Netting the Sun: A Personal Geography of the Oregon Desert*, by Melvin Adams (Washington State University Press 2001). Mel read from his book at the 23rd Annual High Desert Conference in September 2001.

I went to the desert to find the simple and plain in the world and in myself: to find the basic elements of salt, fire, rain, sun, grass, and sage; to find their scents and meanings; to find the primal elements of the desert and myself. The desert cannot be survived without preparation and attention. It is honest in its intention. There is no false sense of security there as one might find in more vegetated regions . . .

I went to the desert to be astonished by spring wildflowers that grow in rock gardens where no soil or water appears to collect, astonished by bare rock covered with lichens in saturated reds, oranges, and yellows. How is it possible to live like this – in the freezing wind one day and a torrid gale the next? I became amazed by galloping antelope and drumming sage grouse and by the simplicity of life and its durability.

I went to the desert to be tested; to exorcise pride and self-concern; to dissolve layers of human presumption; to recover the elemental where there is no difference between man, animal, wind, rock, sun, or grass; to find the intersection of the animate and inanimate. In the desert I found a heartbeat: rhythms of grass, flutterings of aspen, murmurs of ancient wind. I am happy there.



MARILYN MILLER

Hart Mountain sunset.



GENE RUBIN

Michael Rubin takes a break against a fence post about to be removed during the Barbed Wire Round-up.

More fence removed from Hart Mountain!

Over twenty ONDA volunteers gathered at the Hart Mountain National Wildlife Refuge July 24-28 for our 8th Annual Barbed Wire Round-Up. Members and staff braved the relentless high desert sun (okay, so it was in the low 80s with a lovely breeze and no mosquitoes) to remove six miles of obsolete fence, mostly in and around wildlife-rich meadows that are too tricky to access in wet years. All were well rewarded by the knowledge that the fences removed would no longer pose a threat to wildlife including sage grouse, coyotes, and pronghorn antelope.

During the course of our work party, volunteers had the pleasure of witnessing a large number of pronghorn fawns frolicking about the refuge. The 2001 season saw the survival rate of fawns soar to 66 per 100 does, up from the average of 32 fawns per 100 does between 1971 and 1991. The total pronghorn count on the refuge this year is 1,617, a giant leap from the average count of 617 just ten years ago. This is the third year of record high pronghorn numbers on the refuge, even in the absence of coyote control. This strongly suggests that the removal of cattle in 1991, not the coyote population, has been instrumental in the rebound of the refuge's pronghorn population.

ONDA thanks all of our hard-working volunteers for another successful year of fence pulling at Hart Mountain. There are only 60 miles left to go of the original 160 miles of fence that once criss-crossed the refuge. We'll be there again next summer, and we encourage all our members to join us for hard work and good times!

Welcome Mac! ONDA hires second staff attorney

Back in the summer of 1999, ONDA was lucky enough to cross paths with Peter Mac Lacy, then a first-year law student at Lewis and Clark College in Portland. Thanks to funding from Lewis and Clark's Public Interest Law Project, Mac spent that summer volunteering for ONDA as a legal intern. He assisted our staff attorney, Stephanie Parent, with a broad range of projects, including comments, memos, analyses, and research. When the summer came to an all-too-rapid close, we found ourselves wondering how we ever managed without Mac.

Two years and one law degree later, ONDA is honored to welcome Mac to our staff as a full-fledged attorney. Mac has a background in geology, geography, and soil science and will join forces with Stephanie to expand ONDA's desert ecosystem defense efforts, with a focus on litigation and appeals. He'll work from ONDA's Portland office, which means that grassroots coordinator Gilly Lyons and staff ecologist Joy Belsky will have another colleague (and will finally be compelled to dispose of the large piles of office detritus that have accumulated over several years.)

While we're certainly excited about the skills, commitment, and legal acumen that Mac will bring to this new position, we're also chuffed to note that his arrival brings ONDA's Cheesehead population to three: Mac, along with Stephanie and executive director Bill Marlett, graduated from the University of Wisconsin at Madison. Welcome, Mac — and Go Badgers!



Peter Mac Lacy

LISA C. LACY

Support High Desert conservation Estate planning ensures family wishes

By Daniele McKay

If your passion for Oregon's High Desert is strong, consider supporting ONDA's long term conservation efforts with a contribution through your will. Planning and writing a will is not only a family obligation but also a personal privilege. If you do not have a will, or have not specified your wishes through one, the state will decide what to do with your assets. The government may collect a significant portion in the form of estate taxes.

By leaving a gift to ONDA in your will or estate plan, you ensure that your assets will continue to benefit Oregon's wildlands in perpetuity. And because of the tax benefit of making a charitable contribution in your will, your gift can also benefit the family and friends who will inherit your estate.

If you would like to remember ONDA in your will, we would like to know so that we can thank you now. Also, this information will help us to plan our conservation efforts more effectively for the next few years and beyond. Your will gives you the freedom to enjoy life now while knowing that your family and the natural places you care about will be provided for over the long term. To learn more about including ONDA in your will, or to get referrals to estate planning lawyers or financial advisors, please contact Daniele McKay at (541) 330-2638 or dmckay@onda.org.

Thank You!

ONDA extends our warmest thanks to these foundations for their generous support of our work to protect Oregon's desert wildlands:

- Foundation for Deep Ecology
- Peradam Foundation
- Ralph Smith Foundation
- Wilburforce Foundation
- The Mountaineers Foundation

Books

- Netting the Sun: /A Personal Geography of Oregon's Desert*
by Melvin Adams \$15
- Flora of Steens Mountain*
by Donald Mansfield \$30
- The Western Range Revisited*
by Debra Donahue \$17
- Waste of the West: Public Lands Ranching*
by Lynn Jacobs \$28
- Sacred Cows at the Public Trough*
by Denzel & Nancy Ferguson \$ 9
- Oregon's Outback: An Auto Tour Guide to Southeast Oregon*
by Donna Lynn Ikenberry \$15

Scientific Papers

- “Survey of Livestock Influences on Stream and Riparian Ecosystems in the Western United States”
by Joy Belsky, A. Matzke, and S. Uselman \$ 1
- “Effects of Livestock Grazing on Stand Dynamics in Upland Forests of the Interior West”
by Joy Belsky and Dana Blumenthal \$1 (postage)

- “Livestock Grazing and Weed Invasions in the Arid West”
by Joy Belsky and Jonathan Gelbard \$5

T-Shirts

- ONDA T-shirts (100% organic cotton)
Specify size (M, L or XL), style (short or long sleeve), and color (sage or natural)
- Short sleeve \$12
Long sleeve \$15
- Women's ONDA T-shirts (white) (M, L) short sleeve \$12
- Desert Conference 2001 T-shirts (100% organic cotton) (white or natural) (M, L, XL)
- Short sleeve \$ 8
Long sleeve \$12

Etc.

- Big Indian Gorge: stunning 18"x28" color poster \$10
- Road Map to OHDPA lands \$ 5
- “Cows Kill Salmon” bumper sticker \$ 1
- “Boycott Public Lands Beef” bumper sticker \$ 1



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ACTION ALERT

Urge Senator Smith to stand up for Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument

In July, the Jackson County Commission recommended to Interior Secretary Gale Norton that the boundaries of the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument be reduced from 52,947 public BLM acres to 16,580 acres—and that protections for the shrunken monument be made functionally moot. The Commissioners ignored the more than two-to-one margin of spoken testimony from June hearings favoring the existing—or an expanded—monument. They also largely distorted the quantity and quality of written input they received. Their bias, duplicity, and ecological ignorance were astonishing.

Meanwhile, local and statewide officials and entities publicly endorsed Oregon's newest national monument in its present form. They include: Governor John Kitzhaber; Senator Ron Wyden; Representatives DeFazio, Hooley, Blumenauer, and Wu; State Representative Alan Bates whose local district includes the Monument, and two dozen other Oregon state legislators; the City of Ashland; and the Ashland *Daily Tidings*, Medford *Mail Tribune*, Eugene *Register-Guard*, and Portland *Oregonian*. Over two dozen local and regional scientists have written Secretary Norton to inform her that reducing Monument boundaries or protections would be ecologically unac-

ceptable. A survey by Buckhorn Springs Resort owner Bruce Sargent shows that private landowners within the Monument support its present form by a five-to-one majority.

Despite this strong support, Representative Greg Walden (the Monument is in his federal district) has encouraged the Bush Administration to reduce or eliminate the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument. And Senator Gordon Smith has yet to take a public position beyond welcoming more input.

Gordon Smith, Gale Norton, and George W. Bush need to know we *haven't* forgotten about the Monument and are watching them closely. Please tell them:

1. DO NOT reduce the boundaries of the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument.
2. DO NOT change the Monument's proclamation language.
3. DO release the Medford District BLM's Draft Monument Management Plan ASAP with *no* tampering or changes.

Senator Gordon Smith
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510
Phone: 202/224-3753
Fax: 202/228-3997
oregon@gsmith.senate.gov

Secretary Gale Norton
Dept. of the Interior
1849 "C" Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240
Phone: 202/208-7351

President
George W. Bush
The White House
Washington, DC 20500
Phone: 202/456-1414

You can also send a free fax to these decision-makers by visiting: www.takeaction.worldwildlife.org

For more info, visit: www.or.blm.gov/Medford