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A New Deal for the West

by Bill Marlett

In 1935, America was in the heat of Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal. National policy addressing the ills of the Great Depression—were coupled with efforts to reverse the debilitating effects of western drought and its attendant effect on our soil and wildlife heritage. In that same year,

From the *Outback*

Aldo Leopold bought his "shack" on the sandy Wisconsin River bottoms and, under the leadership of Robert Marshall and others, helped found The Wilderness Society to foster the budding inclination of far-sighted men and women to preserve the remnants of our wild heritage. Only the year before, Roosevelt had appointed Leopold to a presidential committee to find a solution to the drought-caused wildlife crisis. The so-called "duck committee" was the genesis of the national wildlife refuge system we enjoy today.

In April of 1935, President Roosevelt penned his name to an executive order creating the Hart Mountain Game Refuge Reserve (now the Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge), a broad expanse of spectacular high desert in Oregon and Nevada, for the purpose of rescuing the vestige of a once vast

see **Outback** page 3



Pronghorn on Hart Mountain



George Waterliner

Kristina Kenck

Hart Mountain celebrates ten cow-free years!

by Kristina Kenck

Herds of pronghorn antelope roam the stark slopes and plains, fawns carefully nestled in the lush early-summer grasses. The streams run cool, clear, and deep, fostering healthy populations of native redband trout. A burgeoning population of northern sage grouse nurtures its young chicks in the shelter of natural riparian communities. The Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge—a remote, 251,000-acre section of the High Desert in southeastern Oregon—sits atop a ridge that rises 3,000 feet on its west side and then slopes gently eastward. With no electric service and a 65-mile drive to the closest major town, the refuge is, to say the least, isolated.

Unfortunately, isolation has not precluded the area from experiencing the devastating effects of human activities such as grazing and hunting—the latter of which led, in the early 1900s, to the near extinction of the pronghorn antelope that call the area home. In 1935, President Roosevelt responded to this crisis by issuing an Executive Order that established

see **Hart Mountain** page 5



Oregon Natural Desert Association

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

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Newsletter

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From the Den

By Craig Miller, President



Over the past several years, ONDA's board has evolved into an effective, focused, and solid force under the outstanding leadership of Lee Christie. Under her guidance, ONDA transformed itself from the minor to the major league in Oregon's conservation front. Although Lee is stepping down as board president, she will thankfully remain on the board.

As part of the continued evolution of our board, we are extremely excited about our newest board member, Kirk Richardson (see page 12 for a quick bio).

At the same time, we wish to extend our deepest gratitude to longtime board member Dick Vander Schaaf, who is leaving ONDA after an amazing ten years of service. Dick's insights as senior ecologist at The Nature Conservancy and experience in the non-profit world have been invaluable to ONDA's growth. There are few advocates in the conservation arena of Dick's caliber and perseverance, and he will be sorely missed.

Announcements

Help inventory unprotected wildlands this fall

ONDA cordially invites you to join us for a weekend of work and fun in the High Desert of Oregon. From September 29–October 5, help inventory wilderness values on public lands that are currently unprotected in the BLM's Lakeview District. Inventory work will include hiking, driving, photographing, mapping, and writing. ONDA's staff will provide the training and tools (cameras, GPS units, field guides, and maps); you just need to show up. To RSVP: Please send an e-mail with your name, address, and phone number to cegertson@onda.org, or call Chris Egertson in ONDA's Bend office at 541-330-2638. For more information, visit ONDA's web site. We hope to see you there!

ODFW wolf plan update

People with an interest in the development of a wolf management plan for Oregon may now read all the materials produced for a committee that has met monthly since last year. The materials are posted on a newly updated web site at www.dfw.state.or.us/wolves/main.html. The Wolf Advisory Committee expects to complete its work in August and present a draft Oregon Wolf Management Plan to the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission at the Commission's September 9, 2004, meeting in Salem. The Commission will vote October 15 to initiate a public review process on the draft plan. Final adoption of the plan is expected in January 2005. If you have any questions, contact: Information and Education Division, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, 503-947-6002.

Order your 2005 Oregon Wild Desert Calendar now!

Order your Oregon Wild Desert Calendar now and be treated every month to spectacular pictures of precious desert lands, some of which deserve permanent protection as wilderness, that are unique to Oregon. The Owyhee Canyonlands, Spring Basin, Alvord Desert, Hart Mountain, and Steens Mountain, are just a few of the places highlighted. There is only a limited amount available, so order yours today. You can find the order form on the back page of this newsletter.



sea of pronghorn. The species, not unlike the American bison, had been reduced from 30 million-plus to tattered fragments across the West. One of the last, best places for recovering pronghorn was Hart



Pronghorn antelope

Mountain, where the population numbered only a mere hundred or so individuals.

President Roosevelt showed remarkable ecological wisdom when he created

the Hart Mountain Game Range, as it included all the land between the current Hart Mountain and Sheldon Wildlife refuges. However, under pressure from local business and political interests in Lake County, Roosevelt reduced the reserve in 1936, removing critical lands between the refuges (Sheldon Refuge was created in 1936 and is located in northern Nevada on the Oregon border).

The good news is that the Hart Mountain pronghorn herd has recovered nicely to 2,400 animals as of last count in 2003...the highest since creation of the refuge.

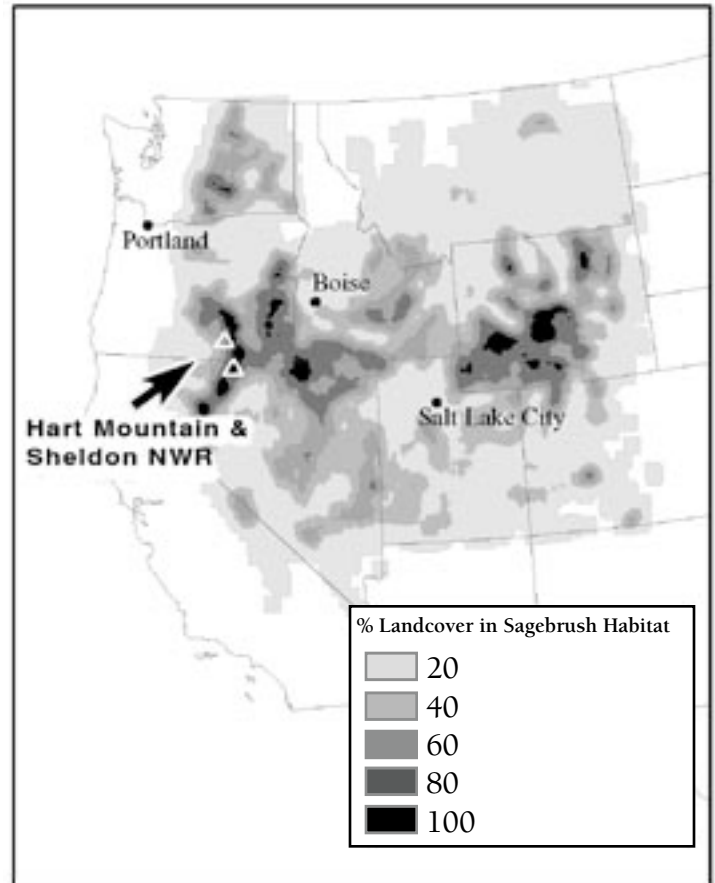
Underscoring that recovery is another reason that gives us cause to celebrate: the 10th anniversary of cows being removed from the 275,000-acre refuge—one of the most significant conservation achievements to protect and restore functioning sagebrush habitat in Oregon and the West. That victory in 1994 would not have been possible but for the vision of President Roosevelt and his executive order nearly sixty years ago.

Unfortunately, it took a lawsuit filed by ONDA and others in 1992, challenging the Fish and Wildlife Service's policy of allowing livestock to graze the refuge in spite of its legal mandate to the contrary.

While scientific documentation of the recovery has been sorely lacking, a recently published paper by the USGS Forest and Rangeland Ecosystem Science Center in Boise¹ hints at a bright future for riparian bird populations. The report also

bodes well for other wildlife and strongly supports the FWS's 1994 decision that livestock grazing has been at odds with the purpose of the refuge (see summary of the paper in this newsletter on page 5).

In an effort to implement President Roosevelt's original vision for the Hart Mountain Refuge, ONDA along with



Map from "Teetering on the Edge or Too Late? Conservation and Research Issues for Avifauna of Sagebrush Habitats," © Knick, et al (2003)

twenty other conservation groups, requested the BLM to manage the one million-acre biological corridor between Hart and Sheldon refuges as an "area of critical environmental concern." Our goal was to provide seamless management and continuity between the refuges consistent with the needs of wildlife. The BLM rejected our request noting that, while the proposal had merit, existing BLM management actions were adequate to protect the ecological values of this connecting corridor.

Not satisfied, ONDA wrote a letter to President Clinton in 1999, imploring him, like Roosevelt, to use

continued on next page

his executive privilege to expand the refuge boundaries to encompass the one million-acre biological corridor between the two refuges.

Unfortunately, with so many other priority land protection initiatives in play, our request went unfulfilled.

So where do we go from here? Undaunted, our strategy will follow two tracks: the first is to appeal to Congress to designate the lands between Hart and

Sheldon Refuges as a Sage Grouse National Conservation Area. Similar, high quality habitats should likewise be considered (e.g., in Wyoming) as part of a western system to protect core sage grouse areas consistent with BLM's national strategy to recover imperiled sage grouse populations.

Second, we will ask our next President to issue a revised executive order expanding the Refuge boundaries to restore President Roosevelt's original vision of one vast refuge where restoration actions for pronghorn, sage grouse, and other sagebrush-dependent wildlife can be implemented as quickly as possible.

A recent paper published by the Cooper Ornithological Society² highlights the shocking loss of sagebrush habitat in the Intermountain West and underscores not just the necessity for permanent protection of the entire Hart Mountain–Sheldon Refuge complex, but all remaining high-quality sagebrush landscapes in the West (see map of high quality habitat page 3). While the overall message is ominous for any sagebrush-dependent species, it reinforces our argument that the Hart-Sheldon refuges must be greatly expanded and permanently protected.

What is truly needed is another New Deal for the West, one that openly

What is truly needed is another New Deal for the West, one that openly acknowledges the realities of a failed government experiment to manage the region's arid lands as a feedlot for cattle.

acknowledges the realities of a failed government experiment to manage the region's arid lands as a feedlot for cattle.

What we don't need is to bloat existing federal agencies.

Without spending a dime in new taxes, we can reallocate the millions of dollars in misplaced subsidies that now coddle the western livestock industry, and give ranchers a golden saddle for retirement or funding for their children's college educations. With reallocated dollars, states and counties could be given the daunting task of rehabilitating sagebrush habitats for recreation, open space, fish,

and wildlife—the real economy of the West. If we can give a college education for military service to our country, what about service in defense of our own homeland: to save imperiled fish and wildlife in our own backyard? The federal government, as it did under Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal, might even rekindle the Civilian Conservation Corps, instilled with a mission that defends our Western rangelands through habitat restoration, eradication of invasive weeds, and recovery of imperiled species.



Endnotes

1 "Riparian Songbird Abundance a Decade After Cattle Removal on Hart Mountain and Sheldon National Wildlife Refuges," Earnst, Ballard and Dobkins (2004). Available from ONDA's web site.

2 "Teetering on the Edge or Too Late? Conservation and Research Issues for Avifauna of Sagebrush Habitats," Knick, Dobkin, Rotenberry, Schroeder, Vander Haegen and Van Riper (2003). Available from ONDA's web site.

the Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge (NAR) for “the preservation, management and study of pronghorn antelope and other wildlife species.”

While the order placed Hart Mountain under legal protection that restricted hunting and other destructive activities, the management plan for the refuge allowed for livestock grazing, despite its sensitive habitat and historical importance as a wildlife refuge. Over the years, this activity significantly altered the vegetation and habitat critical to the survival of the refuge’s native species, which include pronghorn antelope, bighorn sheep, mule deer, mountain lion, bobcat, and coyote. Hart Mountain also provides critical habitat for the now-imperiled sage grouse and other threatened bird species such as the sage sparrow, as well as native redband trout.

ONDA’s involvement with Hart Mountain began in the early 1990s, when a coalition of conservation groups (including ONDA) filed a lawsuit against the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, claiming that the agency’s management of the refuge “favored the interests of livestock over those of wildlife, and were inconsistent with the purposes for which the refuge was created.”



ONDA file photo



Elaine Rees



Dan Sherman

After an injunction against grazing was issued (until an environmental impact statement could be prepared), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service adopted a new, 15-year management plan, in 1994, which removed livestock from the refuge for the life of the plan.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the removal of cows from Hart Mountain, and the resulting change is astounding. Thanks to the efforts of ONDA and other groups:

• A recent study (see sidebar this page) found a significant increase in Hart Mountain songbird populations over the last ten years. Preliminary results indicate that 71 percent of riparian species exhibited positive trends as a result of cattle removal.

• Pronghorn numbers have successfully rebounded to a record high (over 2,400 counted last year), and last year the Refuge also boasted a healthy rate of fawn

RIPARIAN SONGBIRD STUDY

A recent Forest Service general technical report, funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, entitled “Riparian Songbird Abundance a Decade After Cattle Removal on Hart Mountain and Sheldon National Wildlife Refuges,” compares songbird abundance in 2000-2001 to that in 1991-1993 on sixty-nine permanent plots in the Hart and Sheldon refuges. It provides the first comprehensive look at the impact of grazing cessation on riparian habitat and native species.

Importantly, the results confirm what many have already suspected: that the removal of domestic livestock from Hart Mountain has had a dramatic and overall positive effect on the area’s native wildlife. Key findings from the study include:

- ▣ *Ten years after the removal of cows from Hart Mountain, preliminary results indicate that 71 percent of riparian songbird species exhibited positive trends and 76 percent of species exhibiting a significant change (either positive or negative) increased;*
- ▣ *Aspen and willow associates exhibited a significant increase in detections/km² throughout the study area;*
- ▣ *Of the twenty-six riparian species of concern (for which the researchers had sufficient detections), seven exhibited significant increases on original plots since the removal of cattle;*
- ▣ *Detections of ground/low-cup nesting species (such as the Brewer’s blackbird and western meadowlark) and high-cup nesting species (such as the ruby-crowned kinglet) increased significantly, but cavity nesting species (like the downy woodpecker) exhibited little change. These patterns of increases are consistent with recovery from cattle grazing;*
- ▣ *Researchers found that after the third year of cattle removal on the Refuges, cover of herbaceous vegetation had increased, consistent with both livestock removal and increased rainfall.*

You can download a copy of the study from ONDA’s website at: www.onda.org.



continued on next page

survival (66 fawns per 100 does, compared with a record high of 107 fawns per 100 does, recorded in the 1950s).

Stream banks that were once flattened and denuded by the trampling of cows are rebuilding their natural, multi-storied structure. Meadows along streams that before looked like feedlots now support lush vegetation.

Vital sage grouse habitat, once degraded by cattle grazing, now supports one of the remaining strongholds of this sensitive and declining native species in the West.



ONDA file photo



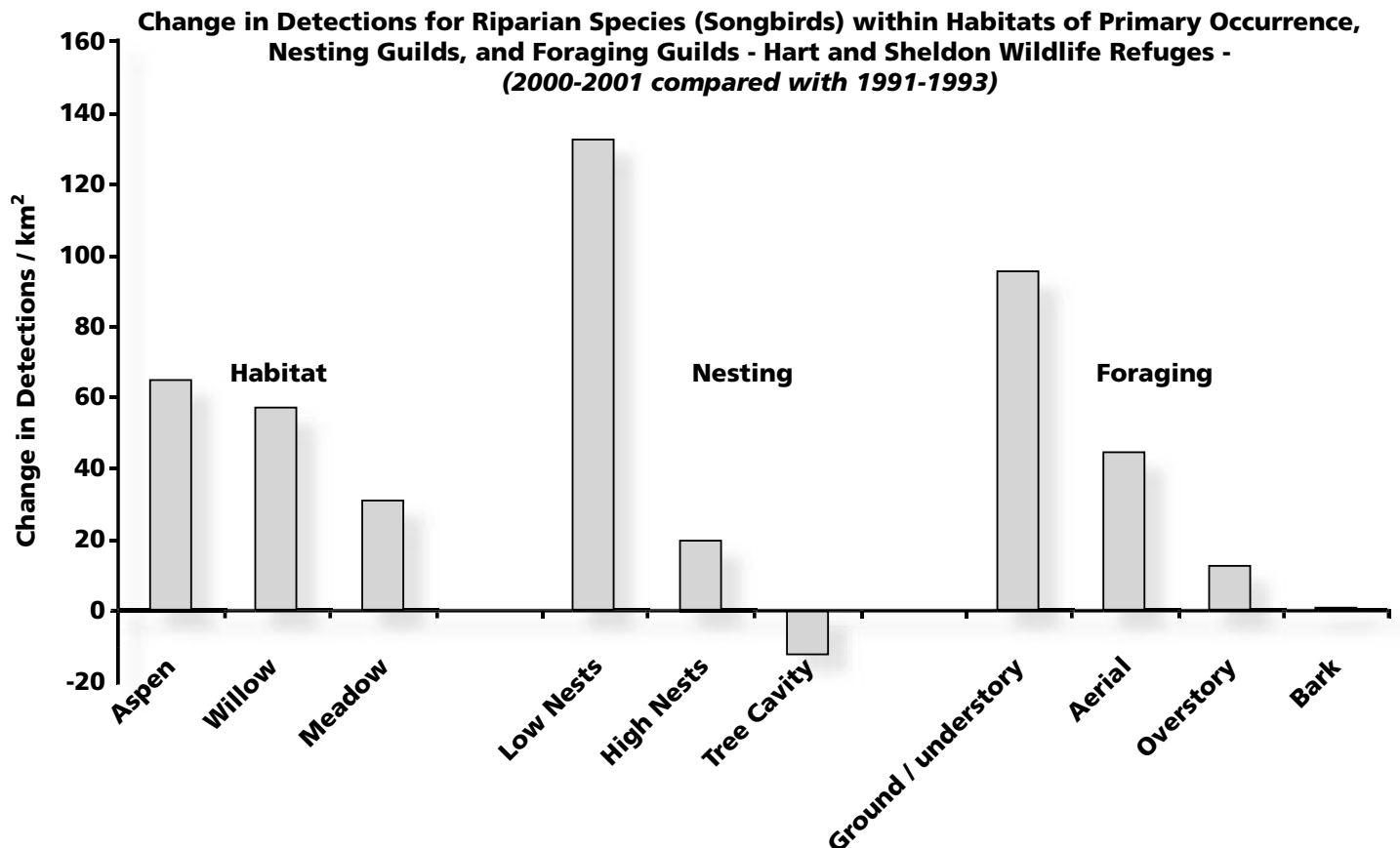
George Wuerthner

In addition to these improvements in riparian habitat that have resulted from the removal of cattle from the Refuge, ONDA volunteers (as

well as volunteers from a number of other environmental organizations) have removed nearly 100 miles of barbed wire fencing from Hart Mountain, facilitating wildlife movement within the Refuge. ONDA's goal is for Hart Mountain to be completely fence free, and volunteer work parties will continue to work towards this goal until it is accomplished.

In addition, ONDA will continue to advocate for the removal of livestock from important migratory routes and species-critical habitat contiguous to the Hart Mountain Refuge, including the vital migratory corridor between Hart Mountain and the Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge—Hart's "sister" cow-free refuge located 20 miles south in northwestern Nevada. This corridor is critical to the successful migration, and therefore health, of the Hart and Sheldon pronghorn herds.

This 10-year anniversary gives us much to celebrate, and we are extremely thankful for the members, volunteers, and organizations that have collaborated with us in our efforts to protect and restore the vast expanse of wild majesty that is the Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge. With your continued support, we can ensure that the pronghorn herds are able to migrate and thrive, that vital sage grouse habitat is protected, and that the health of Oregon's high desert wildlands is restored.



2004 Wilderness Research and Rescue Project shaping into a success!

by Chris Egertson

The 2004 Wilderness Research and Rescue Project is in full swing, and our enthusiastic volunteers, as well as the spectacular scenery found throughout



Diablo Mountain near Lakeview

Oregon's High Desert, are making this season a memorable one. Inventory volunteer Judd Beck noted, "...the Abert Rim, with its extraordinary views, countless antelope, and sense of isolation and serenity" has been his favorite stop so far. With inspired help like this, we are sure to meet our inventory goal of three million acres by the end of the summer.

Our first inventory took place March 19–22 along the rugged John Day Wild and Scenic River near the Dayville unit of the Fossil Beds National Monument. While inventorying potential wilderness areas, including Murderer's Creek and Sheep Rock, eleven volunteers experienced the rugged terrain and painted landscape, for which the John Day is famous. Even though we ran into snow in the high country, we were able to inventory about 200,000 acres of public land over the two day stretch.

During our April 28–May 4 trip to the Lakeview BLM District, twelve volunteers experienced a week of primitive camping within the Lost Forest Research Natural Area. The group enjoyed the scenic terrain of the Black Hills area, the wide open sagebrush sea in the Chandler Butte area,

and the puzzling stands of ponderosa pines throughout the Lost Forest area. By inventorying over 670,000 acres of public land, this trip was more than a success.

We continued our inventory of the Lakeview area from June 25–29. The views were overwhelming around the Diablo Peak, Abert Rim, and Coyote Hills areas. Some volunteers were lucky enough to witness herds of bighorn sheep and pronghorn roaming the hillsides, while others caught glimpses of sage grouse in one of the West's last stretches of quality sage brush habitat. Despite suffering a few flat tires, nine volunteers inventoried more than 500,000 acres.

By the time this newsletter comes out, we will have completed our August 1–4 Hart Mountain inventory, leaving only the September 29–October 5 inventory. For those of you contemplating joining a trip, now is your chance! We will be concentrating our efforts on areas south of Hart Mountain along the California/



John Day area near Sheep Rock

Nevada border. Because these areas are located far from any major towns, they are some of the most remote, wild, and pristine areas in Oregon's High Desert. If you are interested in joining this trip, contact Chris at 541-330-2638 or cegertson@onda.org to reserve your spot!

Chris Egertson

Joe Hessler



Bruce Taylor

Crump Lake sage

The shrub the Intern **AN ECO**

by Dr. David Dobkin, Execu
High Desert Ecological Rese

A soon-to-be-published report by the High Desert Ecological Research Institute provides a comprehensive assessment of the distribution and conservation status of birds and small mammals of shrubsteppe landscapes across the Intermountain West. Focusing on a combination of upland and riparian species, the report covers thirty-seven species of birds and twenty-four species of small mammals in a broad-scale analysis of what is presently known about their distributions, abundances, and sensitivity to habitat disturbance.

The research project's results paint a picture of an ecosystem in trouble. Using a conservative approach to analyses of USGS Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) data, Dobkin and his colleagues found that at least 40 percent of the birds analyzed experienced significant long-term declines in the western BBS region, and 49 percent of the species showed significant shorter-term declines. In contrast, only 8 percent of species exhibited significant long-term increases, and only 5 percent showed shorter-term increases. Striking patterns of declining populations were seen even at the smaller regional scale, particularly across the long-term period for the Columbia Basin ecoregion that includes the shrubsteppe landscapes of eastern Washington, eastern Oregon, and southern Idaho.

Striking patterns of declining (wildlife) populations were seen even at the smaller regional scale, particularly across the long-term period for the Columbia Basin ecoregion.

Using GIS spatial analyses in conjunction with Breeding Bird Survey data, the report illustrates the geographic pattern of change in relative abundance for each species across the 1968–2001 period. The

study provides the first maps to depict geographic patterns of changes in bird populations in the Columbia Basin, Great Basin, and Wyoming Basin, the three ecoregions with the greatest percentages of sagebrush landcover in the West.

For example, the spatial analyses indicated that loggerhead shrike population declines were widespread in the Western BBS Region, and especially severe in the three primary shrubsteppe ecoregions of the Intermountain West. Comparison of shrike distributions between the 1968–1983 and 1984–2001 periods indicated population losses from large portions of the Columbia Plateau, from the western two-thirds of the Great Basin, and from the western portion of the Wyoming Basin (see map).

For the great majority of bird species considered, the report documents a high degree of vulnerability to livestock grazing, exotic plant invasion, and unnaturally



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Shrubsteppe landscape of the mountain West:

ECOSYSTEM IN TROUBLE

Executive Director,
Research Institute

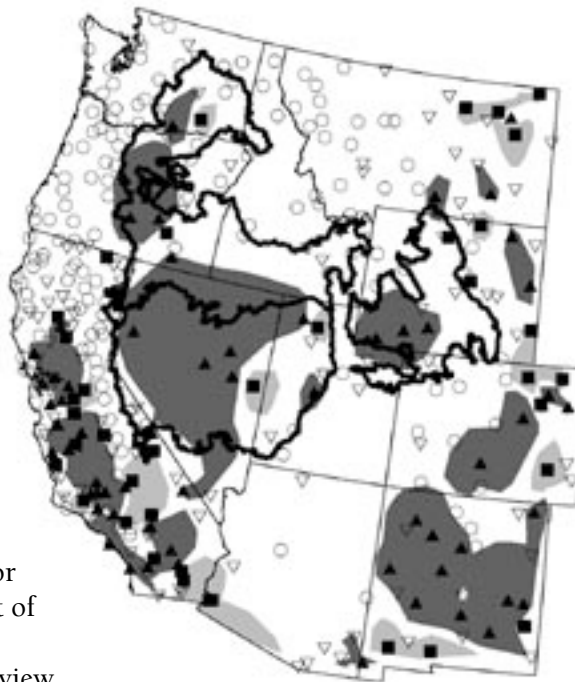


frequent fires indicated by the birds' complete dependence on native ground and shrub vegetation for nesting (78 percent of species) or foraging (70 percent of species).



on trapping results in relation to presumed historical distributions, and determined the actual proportion of studies that documented presence of each species in suitable habitats across the Intermountain West. Given that all studies included in the analysis were conducted in appropriate habitats within the known geographic range of each species, the expectation and potential for finding each species at each locality was close to 100

An exhaustive review of published field studies of the twenty-four mammal species over the past sixty-five years enabled the report's authors to create a comprehensive GIS that mapped sampling methodology, habitats sampled, and species occurrence for each study. Using the compiled database, we mapped presence and absence of each species based



Abundance on BBS Route

- ▲ Declined (76)
- ▼ Stable (83)
- Increased (39)
- Not Present (151)

□ Ecoregion Boundary

□ State Boundary

Abundance Trend

- Declined
- Increased

Kilometers

0 250 500 1,000

percent. For the nineteen species with adequate data, and using a conservative threshold of 70 percent as a criterion for reasonable predictability of a species' presence, only two of nineteen species were found in more than 70 percent of sampled localities.

The report documents a clear picture of high susceptibility to the effects of livestock grazing for twenty of the twenty-four mammal species analyzed. The effects of dominance by invasive non-native plants were found to be either clearly negative or unknown for all eighteen of the upland mammal species considered. No evidence of positive responses to livestock grazing or exotic vegetation could be found for any of the twenty-four species.

To download a copy of the report, visit ONDA's web site, www.onda.org.



Legal Docket

by Mac Lacy

MALHEUR NATIONAL FOREST LITIGATION

O NDA presently finds itself in the midst of a classic case of having lost the battle but being in a very good position to win the war. In June and July, the district court denied ONDA's requests for preliminary injunctive relief in each of ONDA's two Malheur National Forest lawsuits. However, in each case, the court was quite clear in

This court shares Judge King's view in recognizing what amounts to a dire need for better management of grazing on public lands.

its view that the Forest Service has failed to satisfy its legal mandates to protect ecological conditions on these public lands.

In March, ONDA asked the court in each of these lawsuits for orders enjoining the

Forest Service from authorizing continued destructive grazing practices on the grazing allotments at issue. In the Malheur and North Fork Malheur wild and scenic rivers case, the court heard oral argument just five days before grazing was scheduled to begin on several of the allotments' units along the river corridors. The court issued a 10-day temporary restraining order while it considered its decision, and then on June 10th denied ONDA's motion. Despite the denial, the court's Opinion was encouraging for ONDA's overall case. The court observed that "the way in which grazing has been managed on these lands is clearly at odds with the statutory mandates related to the protection of the river corridors and the species that depend on them." In addition, the court concluded that ONDA has made "a strong showing on the merits" and that "an injunction before the start of the next grazing season may ultimately be the way in which this case is resolved." The court's decision not to issue an injunction for 2004 grazing was influenced almost exclusively by the fact that the decision would have come so close to the start of the grazing season.

In ONDA's lawsuit to protect John Day River basin steelhead habitat on the Murderer's Creek and Blue Mountain allotments, the court heard oral argument on July 9th, a week before the scheduled turnout on those allotments. A week later, the court denied ONDA's request, but noted in no uncertain terms that "[t]his court also shares Judge King's view in recognizing what amounts to a dire need for better management of grazing on these public lands, and that recent management has fallen short of the legal mandates related to the protection of the land and water and the endangered species dependent thereon." The court explained that while it would not "exacerbate the current situation" by causing the permittees to pay for the Forest Service's failings, it expected the agency to "rededicate" itself to a better balancing of the various interests at stake. Both cases now proceed to the merits, with briefing continuing into the fall. See the briefing, expert declarations, and opinions at www.onda.org.

ONDA FILES FOR SUMMARY JUDGMENT IN SEORMP LAWSUIT

A fter almost a year of wrangling with the BLM over the production, scope, and contents of the administrative record in the Southeast Oregon RMP ("SEORMP") lawsuit, ONDA finally was able to file its opening motion for judgment in July. This lawsuit challenges numerous deficiencies in the BLM's development and adoption of the SEORMP. Among these is the BLM's failure to comply with its Federal Land Policy and Management Act duty to "prepare and maintain on a continuing basis an inventory of all public lands and their resources and other values"—specifically with respect to wilderness values.

To support its claim that as part of the land use planning process, the BLM should have assessed wilderness values on the 4.6 million acres of public land the SEORMP governs, ONDA submitted to the court a copy of ONDA's 400-page Vale District Wilderness Inventory Report and Recommendations (Feb. 2004). The Report includes maps, narratives, and photos for each of forty-two proposed WSAs or wilderness ACECs recommended by ONDA. In 2003, ONDA inventoried over 2.2 million acres of public land in southeast Oregon and of that amount identified 1.3 million acres as having wilderness qualities that the BLM should affirmatively consider and manage for as part of its multiple use mission. ONDA's argument is that this is: (1) exactly the type of information the BLM refused to collect during its

Legal Docket



Craig Miller

Black Canyon proposed wilderness study area in the Owyhee, land affected by the SEORMP lawsuit.

preparation of the SEORMP, and (2) exactly the type of information FLPMA requires the agency to collect as part of the resource management planning process.

The lawsuit also attacks the Plan's shortcomings with

respect to protection of microbiotic crusts, addressing the spread of invasive weed species, the decision to close less than one percent of the planning area to off-road vehicle use, and the decision to continue status quo grazing without considering the suitability for grazing of the 4.6 million acres of public lands at issue. To support claims that the BLM failed to consider important aspects of these resource issues, ONDA filed a declaration by Dr. Jonathan Gelbard, a professional ecologist who is an expert on the effects of roads and livestock grazing on the spread of invasive weed species.

Finally, ONDA also successfully staved off a cattlemen's association motion to intervene. The district court twice agreed with ONDA that because only the BLM can be held liable for its violations of the federal environmental laws at issue, the cattlemen should not be a party to the case, at least until on-the-ground remedies are at issue should ONDA prevail on the merits of its claims. See the SEORMP briefing and supporting materials at www.onda.org.



Thank you, Chris Christie!

by Mac Lacy

ONDA is deeply indebted to Chris for his dedicated and high-quality monitoring of the on-going impacts from livestock grazing on the Malheur National Forest. Collected from 2001 to present, Chris's data has formed the basis of ONDA's two lawsuits challenging the Forest Service's continuing authorizations of excessive and damaging grazing practices on the Malheur. Without any institutional support, Chris began in 2001 to monitor, as exhaustively as one individual could over hundreds of thousands of acres, grazing throughout damaged steelhead and bull trout habitat on the forest. His monitoring has followed the Forest Service's own detailed monitoring protocol, focusing on the agency's stubble height, bank damage, and shrub use standards. ONDA's expert consultants have declared in court that Chris's monitoring is not only every bit as professionally competent as the Forest Service's—but that by and large it is far superior to the agency's frequent "drive-by" monitoring and inadequate sampling.

Chris began monitoring the effects of grazing on the public lands after years

of witnessing the destruction livestock had wreaked on the wildflowers and fish and wildlife habitat he loves to photograph. Over 1,300 of Chris's wildflower photographs from across the West are available on the University of California-Berkeley's Digital Library Project website at www.elib.cs.berkeley.edu. Chris's photos of riparian areas grazed to bare ground, banks sloughing into native fish streams, and "high-lined" willows and alder are not nearly as aesthetically pleasing to look at as his wildflower photos. But they have been extremely effective in terms of



Chris Christie

Sandpiper nest, Malheur Wild and Scenic River (Dollar Basin/Star Glade Allotment), Malheur National Forest, Spring 2004.

conveying to the court and the public the devastating impacts of overgrazing on the Malheur National Forest's John Day and Malheur river basins. ONDA owes a large debt of gratitude to Chris for his untiring efforts, keen photographic eye, attention to detail, and dedication to protecting our public lands



ONDA welcomes new board member Kirk Richardson

A hardcore Oregonophile, Kirk is a 25-year Nike veteran with strong connections to Oregon's High Desert. When he's not helping develop Nike's footwear, and nudging his employer to be more vocal on conservation issues, Kirk explores Oregon's wildlands on foot, tied into a climbing rope, or with barbed-wire fence removal tools in hand. In addition to his business savvy and marketing skills, Kirk brings to the ONDA board a wry sense of humor and a



commitment to protecting our desert wildlands. He also serves on the board of the Outdoor Industry Conservation Alliance, a group of

outdoor companies that funds grassroots environmental groups, including ONDA.

Welcome Kristina, ONDA's new Development Director

ONDA's most recent addition, Kristina Kenck, joined the organization as Development Director in June 2004. Kristina spent her youth exploring the mountains, rivers, and forests of southwestern Montana and, after a twelve-year stint in the San Francisco Bay area, is thrilled to again find herself living in a place where wild things and places are more accessible.

Prior to her move, Kristina was the Development Director at California Trout—a San Francisco-based conservation organization working to protect and restore wild trout and steelhead and their waters throughout California. There, she was fortunate to work with an amazing team and discovered how effective a group of people with shared passion and commitment can be. She also discovered the damage that irresponsible grazing management can do to the environment and developed an intense distaste for public lands beef that will help her fit right in at ONDA.

Kristina was raised in Bozeman, Montana, and got her undergraduate degree in Political Science and Economics at the University of Montana in Missoula before



migrating to the Bay Area and working in the investment banking industry for a number of mind-numbing, number-crunching years. The fast pace was tempered only by the joy and solace she found in exploring the coastline, rivers, and mountains of Northern California. After receiving her MBA at the University of

California, Berkeley in 1997, she saw the light and returned to her tree (fish, critter, and rock)-hugging roots, devoting herself full-time to nonprofit conservation work. Kristina has quickly fallen in love with central Oregon and is looking forward to many years of exploring every nook and cranny of the High Desert. She loves music, trail running, backpacking, experimental cooking, creative writing, and fly fishing, but her greatest passion is her daughter, Maya. Kristina hopes to foster the kind of reverence she has for wild places in her daughter and teach her the secrets of loving such places well.



SUNSET GREAT BASIN

JOURNAL ENTRY

Tara Rae Gunter

I walked an old two track,
wound through
the fault block mountain.
Clouds thrown across the sky, banners
of electricity at dusk.
The pungent, rain-soaked sage.
Juniper, aspen, rock,
glacial movement.

The moon cut in half.
Venus just appeared.
Such stillness enveloped.
The dog leaping ahead through
bitterbrush and sage,
suddenly turned.
Invited me further.
Beckoned.
A night hawk passed, calling.
The horizon now blazing orange.
Clouds still electric, stretched further
against the mountains to the west.
Disappearing to darkness.

A swelling in my heart. Contentment.
And I knew a certain truth.
Like bedrock.
It existed there.
Was mine, was the land's.
It existed between us. An exchange,
to which we both
held tightly.

Goodbye, Heather Sterling

In this issue, we are sad to bid farewell to our Associate Director, Heather Sterling, who just recently assumed the full-time responsibility of being a proud, new mother. Heather (who conspired with ONDA board member John Sterling in this endeavor) is now in the midst of exploring her fascinating new role in life as mother to her new daughter, Lily. While with ONDA only a short time, Heather was able to shift ONDA's major donor program into gear, and for that we are most grateful. We will miss Heather's enthusiasm in the office, but fully expect her to be leading future fence-pull projects—while showing Lily the ropes of being a budding, desert activist. Good luck, Heather! 🐾



Heather Sterling and her new baby, Lily

ONDA welcomes three summer interns

Patrick Munson

Patrick Munson, a senior at Washington and Lee University in Virginia, hails all the way from Memphis, Tennessee. Patrick received the A. Paul Knight Scholarship, which was developed to provide students with an opportunity to gain a better understanding of conservation through a hands-on internship with an environmental organization. He will spend nine weeks with us this summer helping with the Wilderness Research and Rescue Project in the Lakeview region. An avid fisherman and explorer, Patrick has embraced his position quickly and will be a great asset in helping ONDA protect Oregon's High Desert.



Patrick Munson

Liz Braun

Liz Braun joins us again this year after graduating from Purdue University with a degree in Ecology, Population and Evolutionary Biology. She will be spending her summer focused on the Badlands Wilderness Proposal, as well as conducting some wilderness inventory work for the Wilderness Research and Rescue



Liz Braun

Project. After her internship with ONDA, Liz will be moving to Latin America and working for the Peace Corps. She is thrilled to have another opportunity to gain more conservation experience while helping protect the wonders found in Oregon's High Desert.

Annelisa Smith

ONDA is fortunate to have Anne as a legal intern this summer. Anne just completed her second year at Vermont Law School, where she will receive her J.D. and Masters of Studies of Environmental Law in May 2005. A native Portlander, Anne developed a love of Oregon's High Desert as she spent several summers working as a youth instructor in desert ecology, geology, herpetology and other wildlife issues at OMSI's Hancock Field Station near Fossil, Oregon. Anne will be aiding in preparation of ONDA's SEORMP dispositive motion briefing, as well as other RMP litigation research. During her final year of law school, Anne will be researching legal issues surrounding Kennewick Man and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act.



Anne and her dog, Cody



Remember ONDA in your will

Gifts to ONDA through your will are not subject to federal estate and the inheritance taxes of most states. Such gifts, or bequests, can take different forms:

Specific Bequest: You designate ONDA to receive a specific dollar amount or percentage of your estate, whether in cash, securities, or other property.

Residuary Bequest: You name ONDA to receive all or a specified percentage of the assets remaining in your estate after other expenses and bequests have been paid.

Contingent Bequest: You direct that a specific amount or a percentage of your estate be paid to ONDA only if your other

beneficiaries do not survive you. (A contingent request can be made without taking away from your family in any way).

Remainder Bequest: You direct that a sum be placed aside and invested to pay income to a surviving spouse or child. Afterwards the remaining principal goes to ONDA.

Memorial Bequest: You establish a fund in the memory of your spouse, other family members or friend.

ONDA recommends that you consult an attorney to prepare or revise your will.

For more information about bequests to ONDA, write, call, or e-mail Kristina Kenck: 541-330-2638 or kkenck@onda.org.

Marketplace

2005 OREGON WILD DESERT CALENDAR

1-5 calendars \$12 each
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CLOTHING

ONDA T-shirts *White w/logo Specify size (M, L or XL)*
 (short sleeve) \$12
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Action Alert ➤ The Badlands Needs Your Help!

Located just 20 miles east of Bend are the Badlands—a 37,000-acre high desert gem where one can find prolific desert wildflowers, dry river canyons, castle-like lava formations, ancient juniper trees, and pictographs that speak to us of another time and culture.

With Bend's booming population and encroaching development, this wondrous place has become prone to illegal garbage dumping, pictograph defacement, and old-growth juniper theft. The Badlands needs wilderness designation to help thwart these illegal activities and ensure protection of its valuable resources for future generations.

Now is the time to call or write your Representative or Senator and urge them to protect the Badlands as wilderness. You can use the contact information provided here, or visit our website at www.onda.org where we have a sample letter that you can personalize and send directly from our web site. Your phone call or letter does make a difference!

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