



# FRIENDS OF HART MOUNTAIN NEWSLETTER



Published bi-annually by *Friends of Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge*  
Spring 2008

PO Box 21 - Plush, OR 97637 - 1-541-947-2731 - friendsofhartmountain@yahoo.com - www.friendsofhartmountain.org

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This newsletter is published bi-annually by the *Friends of Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge* for the benefit of its members. Copies are also made available to visitors and through various other outlets in Lake County.

The *Friends of Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge* is an independent, non-profit, 501(c)(3), corporation dedicated to supporting the primary purposes for which the Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge was established: to provide habitat and breeding ground for pronghorn antelope and other species of wildlife; for the protection of natural resources; and the development of incidental wildlife-oriented recreation where it does not interfere with the primary purposes of the Refuge.

## Visitors at Hart Mountain NAR

In 2006, the total number of visitors who signed the guestbook was 1,682. A number of visitors were from outside of the United States. Countries represented included: Germany, The Netherlands, Belgium, France, Italy, Switzerland, New Zealand, Spain, and British Columbia. The average length of stay was 1.2 days and the average party size was 2. Our largest visitor months for 2006 were June (346) and July (346).

By 2007, the number of visitors increased to 1,865, including persons from the United Kingdom, Denmark, Africa, Japan, Switzerland, and China. The average length of stay had increased to 1.8 days and the average party size had increased to 2.3. June (363) was the month with the highest visitor count for 2007.

While at Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge, our visitors reported seeing the expected pronghorn antelope, mule deer, coyote, sage grouse, badgers, pelicans, Canada geese, and jack rabbits. In addition there were sightings of elk, turkey vultures, American bittern, golden eagles, bald eagles, cougars, red shouldered hawk, green towhee, rattlesnakes, gopher snakes and horned lizards.

## Friends of Hart Mountain Board Meeting

The *Friends of Hart Mountain* Board Meeting is scheduled for Saturday, June 28, 2008 from 9-4 at the Lakeview Fish and Wildlife Office, 18 South G Street, 2nd floor meeting room.

The meeting will include a regular board meeting, orientation of new board members, and goal setting for the Friends group for the next 2 years. Members of the Friends group are encouraged to attend. If you have questions about the meeting, contact Ken Guza, dianaken@olywa.net or phone (360) 754-7371.

## MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGER By Rob Bundy

It has been just a little over a year since I arrived on Hart Mountain and I remain optimistic about the opportunities I see before us. In combination with our volunteers, external partners, and of course, the **Friends of Hart Mountain NAR**, we have successfully accomplished several projects including:

- Phase I Construction of the CCC Campground.
- Refuge staff completed all rock and pad work, and installed fire pits.
- Oregon Hunters Association (OHA) provided picnic tables and helped remove interior fencing around the CCC Camp
- The well was drilled and electricity was brought to the site.
- The restrooms were installed and available for use.
- Phase II Construction of the Hart Mountain Shop
- Cattle guard and fence installation on the north and south ends of Hart Lake to minimize cattle trespass and regulate livestock trailing across refuge land.
- Degarmo Canyon trail construction and rehab.
- About four more miles of interior fence were removed.
- Invasive plant species were treated both on refuge lands and on adjacent private lands.
- A preliminary partnership was developed to explore in-holding acquisition on the refuge.

Additionally, our **Friends** and volunteers have helped us to organize, and where necessary, supplement our existing biological files so we can prepare for

our upcoming 15 year review of the 1994 Comprehensive Conservation Plan. This effort is scheduled for pre-planning during the next year or so, and will keep all of us very busy over the next three years. We are also working with the Federal Highways Administration to complete rehabilitation of the Frenchglen Road. This project will provide a restored gravel surface to approximately 31 miles of the Frenchglen Road, from the bottom of the grade to the west, extending to our eastern boundary. Construction will be ongoing over the summer but there should not be any complete road closures associated with the project. Please keep this in mind during your summer outings and be careful around construction zones.

As you are all aware, we still have limited staff on Hart Mountain NAR and we rely on your help to accomplish our long-term goals. These goals range from completing our boundary fence (which has implications for both cattle and feral horse trespass on the refuge) as well as updating our public use program. We would like to provide visitor service enhancements in some areas (such as along the east side of Hart Lake) while minimizing vehicle disturbance in other parts of the refuge. Please give us your thoughts on the types of visitor opportunities you would like to see over the next several years. Remember that Hart Mountain NAR is a special place that belongs to all of us; if we continue to work together, we will provide a lasting legacy for our children and grandchildren. Thank you for all of your help and cooperation and hope to SEE YOU ON THE MOUNTAIN.

### ONDA FENCE REMOVAL 2007

Volunteers and staff at Hart Mountain NAR have been working on the continuing project of removing all unnecessary fencing from the refuge. Originally the fences were needed for the containment of the livestock on the refuge. Now, since the livestock has been removed from the refuge, we are working to remove the fences that are not needed. When the project began, there were approximately 213 miles of unnecessary fence on the refuge. During the past 14 years, volunteers and staff have removed about 202 miles of fence, which leaves about 11 miles remaining to remove. In August 2007, Oregon Natural Desert Association (ONDA) removed 4.2 miles of unnecessary fence. We would like to thank ONDA for their help with this worth-while service project. We also want to thank Hart Mountain Volunteer George Reynolds for his leadership and support to make it happen.

### JOINT FIRE SCIENCE PROJECT

The Joint Fire Science project is located to the north of the Poindexter Ranch on the Northern part of Hart Mountain. The goal of the project is to compare prescribed fire, mowing, and chemical treatments, and to identify threshold values for annual and perennial grass response in the Wyoming Big Sagebrush on the refuge. The refuge goal is to be able to apply this science to the refuge for future treatments. The project consists of two, 200 acre burn units that are in a rectangular shape. In late September 2007 HMNAR completed ½ of the treatments. The remaining 200 acre treatments are scheduled for this fall.

HMNAR is proposing a prescribed burn in the Upper Calderwood/Big Flat unit. The unit is typically a very wet site, leading to few opportunities for management activities. As a result members of the biological and fire management staff are recommending this prescribed fire in an effort to stimulate the growth and vigor of the desired meadow vegetation, reduce shrub and juniper encroachment, and consume dead and down vegetation. It is also important to note that due to access concerns this project may be postponed several years until conditions are right.

**Weed Management Grant by Marla Bennett**

Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge received a \$37,800 grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to map noxious weeds on private and Refuge lands, and to treat weeds on neighboring private lands. The three year project was completed in April 2008.

Eighteen ranchers treated noxious weeds on 1,449 acres of private lands near the Refuge with chemicals purchased by this grant. Refuge staff and volunteers created a weed database and initiated public education on noxious weeds. The Refuge purchased equipment for mapping, and mapped weeds on public and private lands. Native seeds were purchased, and a wetland area on private land was planted. Lastly, money was contributed to the development of an informational weed booklet.

The interagency weed booklet is called "A Field Guide to Lake County's Noxious Weeds." Local agency offices, including the FWS at HMNAR are distributing this booklet to the public. Also, a small in-house brochure of the most common weeds (Mediterranean Sage, Western Waterhemlock, Canada Thistle and Bull Thistle) was made to serve as a field guide for volunteers and for distribution to the public.

Lands near areas containing weeds are easily invaded by noxious weeds. Weed seeds are transported by wind, water, livestock, wildlife, birds, and vehicles. Therefore, it is in the best interest of everyone when landowners control weeds on their properties. At the end of the final treatment season, a meeting was held with landowners. Each landowner saw a reduction in the number of weeds on his property, and all hope to participate in future Refuge weed grants.

For questions about the grant, contact Marla Bennett, Wildlife Refuge Specialist at 541-947-2731, or email address: marla\_bennett@fws.gov.

**Noxious Weed Survey**

Can you identify the following noxious weeds?

- Mediterranean Sage             Yes    No
- Western Waterhemlock        Yes    No
- Canada Thistle                 Yes    No
- Bull Thistle                     Yes    No
- Would you know how to  
treat or remove these  
noxious weeds?                 Yes    No

**Biology Update by Gail Collins, Senior Wildlife Biologist**

The melting snow and warming temperatures can only mean that another busy field season is nearly upon us on Hart Mountain! Here is a brief summary of ongoing or upcoming biological projects:

**Pronghorn fawn mortality study:** The data from this long-term effort is currently being analyzed in coordination with the Oregon Department of Fish and Game; results are pending.

**Coyote howling surveys:** Coyote howling surveys have been conducted on Hart Mountain since 1997. An analysis was conducted this spring investigating the efficacy of howling surveys in determining coyote population trend.

**California bighorn sheep survey:** We will be conducting our annual bighorn aerial survey again this July. This survey provides us with a minimum estimate of the bighorn population, sex and age ratios, and general population trend. These surveys are not intended to be a complete census, but to give us an idea of the general status of the population. Surveys for bighorn have been conducted on Hart Mountain since their reintroduction in the mid-1950s.

**Pronghorn survey:** Also in July, we will be conducting our annual aerial survey for pronghorn. The data collected is similar to that for bighorn: minimum population estimate, sex and age ratios, and general population trend. These surveys are also not intended to be a complete census, but to give us a general sense of the population. Surveys using a variety of methods have been conducted for pronghorn on Hart Mountain since the mid-1950s. During this effort, we will also document any observed feral horses or trespass cattle. Feral horses were removed from Hart Mountain in the late 1990s; however incidents of horses moving onto the Refuge from adjacent lands continue to occur.

**Boundary fence survey:** While we have access to a helicopter in July, we also plan to survey the boundary fence to identify areas for repair or new construction.

**Effects of habitat treatments in low sagebrush:** This project is in coordination with the Joint Fire Science Program. Hart Mountain is part of a large, regional research experiment to evaluate the effects of prescribed fire and other habitat treatments in the sagebrush ecosystem.

**Effects of habitat treatments in mountain sagebrush:** This project is in coordination with the Oregon Agricultural Research Station. The purpose of this research experiment is to evaluate the response of understory vegetation to a variety of habitat treatments.

**Status of uplands since livestock removal:** This summer, we are contracting an analysis of upland vegetation data collected prior to and after livestock were removed from Hart Mountain in the mid-1990s. This effort should provide some comparative data for our upcoming Comprehensive Conservation Plan.

Please feel free to contact me at 541-947-3315 for more information.

## Volunteers Needed

1. June – August— **Invasive species control.** Hart Mountain NAR is beginning a noxious weed management program. We need volunteers to identify weeds and spray or dig them out. You will get to hike our meadows, canyons, and riparian areas to document the locations of noxious weeds. We will train you.
2. May – October— **Maintain facilities.** Paint, clean, odd jobs. Volunteers are needed for a variety of tasks: make and replace signs, pick up litter, building renovation/repairs (skilled carpenters), and painting.
3. May – October— **Public Relations.** People-oriented volunteers who would like to greet visitors and hunters and answer questions. Creative people who can help us revise/update our Visitor's Center displays.
4. Anytime— **Office Work.** There are always office duties such as filing, organizing, writing, printing and folding brochures, and stocking the visitor's center.
5. May to November— **Hot Springs Campground Host.** We are looking for volunteers with RV's who can commit a month or longer, but the time can be negotiable. The campground host interacts with campers, answers questions, gives directions, helps keep outhouses cleaned and stocked, and generally oversees campground activities.
6. May through October— **Build a Fence.** This summer we plan to enclose the historic Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp on Warner Lakes. In addition we always need to do maintenance on existing fences.

### 2007 HUNTING SUMMARY

Hart Mountain supported 6 hunting seasons in 2007. Thirty of the 31 pronghorn rifle hunters were successful. Fourteen of 20 antelope bow hunters were successful. Seventeen of 25 muzzleloader deer hunters were successful. Two mule deer bow hunts occurred: 16 of 78 mule deer bow hunters were successful. Four of 6 bighorn sheep hunters were successful.

### CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE

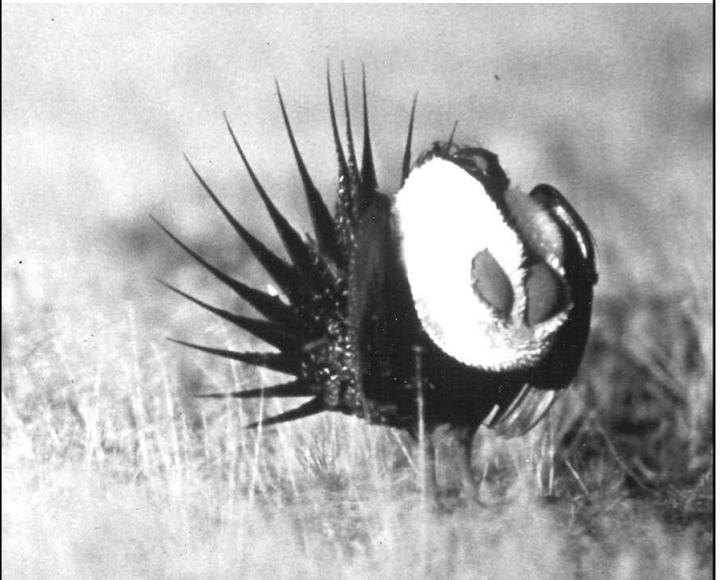
Our website has been updated to include our past newsletters, you can shop online, join the **Friends** or renew your membership, change your address (snail mail and email), contact us and much more. The address on the Internet is: [www.friendsofhartmountain.org](http://www.friendsofhartmountain.org).

## Sage Grouse Relocation

In 1997, the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) Research office published a report that stated:

Sage and sharp-tailed grouse were historically found throughout most of the sagebrush, deciduous shrub, and grass habitats of eastern Washington. Large-scale removal of native vegetation for agriculture uses, combined with reduction in habitat quality as a result of intensive grazing by livestock, have resulted in the statewide reduction of prairie grouse. Recent surveys have indicated that sage grouse are primarily restricted to Douglas, Kittitas, and Yakima counties and sharp-tailed grouse are restricted to Okanogan, Douglas, and Lincoln counties. Remaining populations appear to be small and isolated, corresponding to partially intact areas of habitat. Declines in populations of sage grouse have resulted in their designation as an endangered or threatened species.

On March 30 and April 1, 2008, staff from Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Washington Department of Agriculture, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service visited Hart Mountain NAR and participated in a joint effort to relocate sage grouse from Hart Mountain to Washington State. This relocation is part of WDFW's effort to restore a population of sage grouse in Lincoln County, Washington in the Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area. Washington requested and Oregon approved the permit for this transfer. As of April 3, 2008 all 17 birds (10 males and 7 females) were successfully released and the monitoring is ongoing.



## Acquiring Private Property In-holdings at Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge by Ken Guza

On April 3, 2008 an initial meeting was held in Lakeview, Oregon to discuss strategy and the feasibility of a plan to acquire privately held properties (in-holdings) from willing sellers or donors, within the boundaries of Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge (HMNAR) in Oregon, and Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) in Nevada. The all-day meeting brought together a broad cross section of national, regional and local organizations with a shared interest in conservation and wildlife habitat at the two refuges. The organizations present at the meeting included: Regional and local offices of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), **Friends of Hart Mountain NAR**, The Nature Conservancy, Trust for Public Lands, The Conservation Fund, Oregon Natural Desert Association (ONDA), Toiyabe Chapter of the Sierra Club, Oregon Hunters Association, The Order of the Antelope, and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. Five other organizations were invited, are interested, but were unable to attend due to scheduling conflicts.

We were pleased with the meeting attendance and the high degree of interest in and support for this undertaking. There is broad agreement that a planned approach to acquiring in-holdings is both timely and appropriate.

The discussion began with a focus on the risks associated with the development of in-holdings at the two refuges, both of which are administered from the Lakeview, Oregon office of the USFWS. There are many potential risks at both refuges. A common denominator is that the risks can be unpredictable. For example, at Sheldon NWR an unexpected property sale in 2007 led to road building and construction in the heart of the refuge, damaging both the surrounding wildlife habitat and the previously unspoiled vistas. While properties may differ in specific habitat values, development has a way of spilling over beyond private property boundary lines.

The same acquisition strategy will be utilized for both refuges, though with a different set

of partners for each state. The fundamental element for the partnership is the commitment by the USFWS to actively support the acquisition plan. With assured support from the USFWS, partners are able to make funding commitments. Some funding is available from the USFWS for reimbursement of acquisition costs. Foundation funding is potentially available, especially for small parcels such as those within HMNAR. Coordination of funding efforts will be needed for each refuge.

In addition to the USFWS commitment to this project and identification of potential funding sources, advocacy will be needed. For acquisition efforts to succeed, the partners and their memberships will be called upon to advocate and support this multi-year project.

Last fall members of the **Friends of Hart Mountain NAR** received letters asking for donations for use with property acquisitions. Thank you - to everyone who has donated to this fund. We are still seeking donations. To date we have \$3500 and are hoping for a match base of \$10,000. Several other organizations will be asked to contribute to this acquisition fund. The funding will be used, either as a contribution toward purchase and/or as match for grant requests.

The **Friends of Hart Mountain** can be proud that they led the way in getting this initiative started. At HMNAR we are in a good position to begin this process largely due to the work that was done by Morrie Chappel in identifying in-holdings, their ownership and mapping this information.

Initial acquisition steps have already begun with four properties at HMNAR. Subsequent issues of this the newsletter will provide updates.

**DOING GOOD THINGS FOR  
WILDLIFE!**

# The Pronghorn Store



Sales at our **Friends** Store has continued to do well since our last newsletter under the nurturing of our Treasurer Nadine Reynolds. Our items are displayed in the large showcase in the Visitor area at the Refuge Headquarters. Most of the items listed here are available for mail order. All proceeds from the sale of these items go to support the activities sponsored by **Friends of Hart Mountain**, such as the \$4,000 donation to USFWS for the helicopter costs for the annual pronghorn survey. Your purchases help us do "good things for the wildlife".



We now have our logo on ceramic mugs with the words Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge. These will be available only at Headquarters at Hart Mountain due to fragility of shipping. \$6.00

Ball caps are all done with embroidery. There is an antelope on the front with the words Hart Mountain. On the back above the size adjuster there are the words National Antelope Refuge. Caps are blue with a khaki tan brim. Cost is \$15.00 + \$3.00 shipping.



**NEW!!!!** We have new T-shirts that are a royal blue that have the same embroidery as our ball caps, with National Antelope Refuge under the antelope. We have sizes Medium to 2XL and the cost is \$15.00 + 4.00 shipping. These are going fast and we are already looking at making a second order.



# I ♥ HART MT

**New!!!!!!!** Bumper Stickers that tell the world that you love Hart Mountain. \$2.00 + \$.85 postage.

Souvenir 3 cent postage stamp from 1956 with Pronghorn. Donation of \$2.00 + 50 cents postage. Stamps donated by Jim Yoakum. While supplies last.



Color Topography Maps of the Refuge are approximately 19.5" x 26.5". They are \$8.00 + \$1.00 shipping.



Water Bottles are white and have our antelope head logo and Hart Mountain Antelope Refuge printed on them in black ink. Cost is **Summer Sale \$1.00** + \$1.00 shipping.

Travel Mugs are tan and have our antelope head logo and Hart Mountain Antelope Refuge printed on them in black ink. Cost is **Summer Sale \$2.00** + \$1.00 shipping.



Can Coolers are green and have our antelope head logo and Hart Mountain Antelope Refuge printed on them in white ink. Cost is **Summer Sale \$1.00** + \$1.00 shipping.

T-shirts with our logo contest winner's design screen printed on it. These shirts are \$11.00 plus \$4.00 shipping. We hope to be having other shirts in the future. Check in at Headquarters when you are on the mountain.



The **Friends** are also selling firewood and mosquito repellent. Don't forget there are mosquitoes at Hart Mountain.

Our treasurer, Nadine Reynolds, is hosting the mail order store from her home in Lakeview. You can order your items directly from her at PO Box 128, Lakeview, OR 97630. If you have questions or are ordering multiple items you will need to contact Nadine at 541-947-4929. Items may also be ordered from our website: [www.friendsofhartmountain.org](http://www.friendsofhartmountain.org)

## DONATIONS

Some of our **Friends** donate beyond their annual dues or life membership dues. Your donations will support Refuge projects and general activities of the **Friends**. We appreciate any amount you are willing to donate. Please remember that since you receive no goods in exchange all donations are tax deductible. We wish to thank the members for all that they have generously donated in the past year. Your generosity helps the **Friends** pursue activities in support of the Refuge in fulfilling its mission. Make your check out to **Friends of Hart Mountain**. Send your donations to: **Friends of Hart Mountain, PO Box 21, Plush, OR 97637**.

### Wish List

- ATV Trailer(s) for single ATV
- Bird/Mammal/Plant/Track Field Guides
- Camera or Spotting Scope Tripods
- Digital Cameras

If any money donation is made directly to the Friends group for these items, efforts will be made to use it as matching funds to leverage more money. If you are able to donate any of these items, please contact Marla Bennett, Wildlife Refuge Specialist at 541-947-2731 or email address: marla\_bennett@fws.gov.

### WE NEED YOUR HELP

We try to keep our membership list and address list up to date. If your address label is not correct, please let us know. If you know of someone who did not get their newsletter, it may be one of the ones returned by the postal service as undeliverable.

Please send updated address and corrections to: **Friends of Hart Mountain**, Anne Woods, Secretary, PO Box 21, Lakeview, OR 97630. Help us save postage costs with correct addresses! Please remember that you can update your information at our web site for free.

### A Piece of History

Kelsey Boehme, Migratory Bird and Habitat Programs, Regional Office, speaks on her experience in spring of 1992.

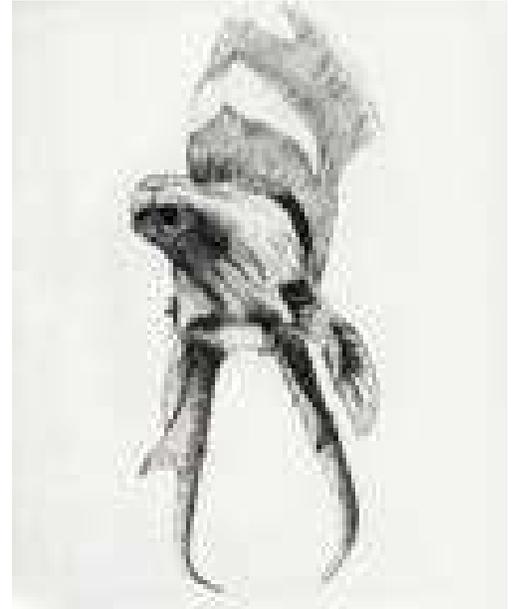
I was at Hart Mountain NWR volunteering for a sage grouse study. My job was to capture sage grouse hens to put radio collars on them at night. The daytime was free for me to explore the refuge. One day, I drove down to an area of rocks with Petroglyphs. The afternoon was beautiful, with sunny weather and a big blue sky. I sketched some of the pictures I found. I returned to the main camp. As soon as I got out of my car, I turned around. Up in the sky was a falcon in a high speed dive coming right at me! He was going so fast that he was making noise like the sound of a jet airplane flying by. He flew right by my right ear! Wow! I walked into our trailer and told everyone what happened. They pointed to the prairie falcon in the backyard, on the ground. He was diving to catch a bluebird that was still perched on a fence. I remembered that the vibrant looking bluebird stood out amongst the neutral colors of the sand and the sage brush. No wonder the falcon went after it. He buzzed me. I still remember the sound he made during his dive. Very impressive. It was a thrill of a lifetime.



## A GREAT BIG THANKS TO OUR WONDERFUL DONORS! Spring 2008

- Marla Bennett
- Larry Ferguson
- Brant & Lauren Hubbard
- Suzanna Black
- Rick Goldstein
- Alison Lynch-Miller
- Jim & Sandy LeTourneau
- John Sedlander
- Otto Nelson
- Lon Nelson
- Clinton Howard
- Ken & Diane Guza
- Karen Loerke
- Trinke Vaughan
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- Carol Wallace
- Durlin Hickok
- Eric De Place
- Eric Lucas

FIRST CLASS



*Friends of Hart Mountain  
National Antelope Refuge  
PO Box 21  
Plush, OR 97637*

## MEMBERSHIP FORM

Or go to [www.friendsofhartmountain.org](http://www.friendsofhartmountain.org) and use our website

- New Membership**       **Renewal**       **Information Update**

Make checks payable to: **Friends of Hart Mountain**  
Mail to: **Friends of Hart Mountain**, PO Box 21, Plush, OR 97637

### PLEASE PRINT

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

\$5 Family Annual Membership

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\$5 Annual Family Renewal

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

\$50 Family Life Membership

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Donation

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Please update personal information only

### PLEASE SELECT ONE:

- Please help save the environment. DO NOT mail me the Newsletters. I will view them online.
- Please send me the newsletters by email.
- Please send me the newsletters by regular mail.

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

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