

Grand Orator Steve Frazier

Sharing Who We Are

The OOTA Story

Have you ever been asked, by a friend or potential Jackass... "Just what is the Order of the Antelope?" You can respond with "well, we get together and get drunk once or twice a year", or "there really isn't much to tell, it's all pretty secret" ... Or you could use the opportunity to say who we really are!

First and foremost, the Order of the Antelope is a conservation organization. The Order makes it is business to preserve the wildlife on Hart Mountain, and to preserve the spirit of Man.

Founded in 1932 by a group of men from Lakeview who were concerned about the demise of the population of Pronghorn Antelope of Hart Mountain. They made their first Trek that year in June over "roads", many just wagon ruts or game trails. They made it to the top, and all the way to Blue Sky one vehicle at a time. Their purpose was to protect the mountain and provide sanctuary for Pronghorn Antelope.

In December 1936, then President Franklin D Roosevelt signed into law the Hart Mountain Antelope Refuge. 278,630 acres were to be sustained through the concept of Multiple Use Management, still in use today.

The Order of Antelope Foundation provided scholarships to two students (one junior and one senior), majoring in wildlife-related studies. Applications are reviewed by the scholarship committee and the most worthy are selected.

Over the years, the Order has funded the annual big game surveys on Hart Mountain, to the tune of \$10k a year. That was money the refuge didn't have or couldn't get from USF&W. Focusing on three prime species, Antelope of course, Mule Deer, and Big Horn Sheep are counted by helicopter each July to determine populations, fawn survival, and general herd make up of each species. The information is an invaluable management tool provided 100% by Members of the Order! In addition, the Order adds \$70K annually to the Lake County economy through purchases of food goods and services for our annual trek.

Each year the Order participates in projects to improve habitat and the overall conditions on Hart Mountain. Trees have been planted, brush cleared, miles of cross fences removed. We made signs, mowed lawns, and painted buildings. It is amazing to see large groups of Antelopers working on Saturday morning under the supervision of Refuge Personnel to make Hart Mountain a better place for critters and visitors.

We're proud to be Antelopers! Since our founding in 1932, almost 30,000 members in good standing have gathered on Hart Mountain for the Annual Trek. We are proud of our continued contributions of money, labor, and donated time to the Refuge and its successful operation.



Looking into the Deer Creek Inn from above on Saturday 7/19/2025

Grand Historian Patrick Twitchell

Third Weekend in July Until I Die

Mostly True Events from Our 2025 Scorch Trek

Most men go through their lives unaware of the needs of their soul. Instead, they move from one task to the next, often exhausted and on the edge of defeat. However, there is a special breed of man that exists, an antlerless two-hooved upright creature we call an Anteloper. This bright creature tends to his soul each year by making a great journey of both spirit and body called a Trek. To an outsider this immense effort of loading coolers, driving for hours, getting but a few winks of sleep, and engaging in copious refreshment looks counterproductive. "Surely, this cannot replenish the soul". Only the uninitiated would think this foolishness, but we must forgive them, for they do not yet know.

This year's Trek was like no other. Shortly after the '24' Trek had concluded, word of a great tragedy began to spread. On August 5th, 2024, a lightning strike touched off a fire on Hart Mountain and high winds drove that fire to over 65,000 acres. Our beloved Blue Sky was quickly engulfed, and the need to tend to our Deer Creek Inn took center stage. The Board of Control members, as well as Lake County Antelopers, sounded the call to action and firefighters made a courageous stand at Deer Creek. Even with fire surrounding the camp, Deer Creek was heroically saved. We are all in debt to the actions of these amazing people.

As the months passed, anticipation began of our annual Trek began to build. "Will the road be open?" "#\$&@ing Black Canyon Fire!" When the moment arrived, nothing was going to stop "400" Antelopers in need of rest, refreshment, and revelry. **In case you had moments of too much refreshment, here is what you missed:**

Corvallis and Eugene took over the auction, and an objective wow! The items up for bid were amazing. Old treasures, hand-made masterpieces, and

some just cool stuff defied the concept of a charity auction.

Noah Rogers took over the store, giving long-time Keeper and PCWT Floyd Davidson some well-deserved rest. Boys, the merch was on point. But it was the guys selling that really made the experience. This is an omen for next year's store order and we're looking forward to the menagerie goods up for purchase.

Between the sounds of open wallets, one could take in a great meal thanks you BOC President and Keeper of the Chuckwagon Greg Campbell and Grand Chef Dennis Miller. Perhaps a slough juice instead, or other refreshment of choice thanks to Keeper of the Waterhole Keith Helling and his amazing guys. Maybe take one for the road and head out on one of Grand Tour Director/Best Pronghorn Big Steve Thompson's epic treks. Or stick around and take in some cornhole thanks to Roseberg Herd, or the ever-enlightening Jackass Races thanks to Broadway Inn and McMinnville Herds.

As all the events came to a close, we gathered for the Saturday Night Program, paying proper reverence to our flag, branches of service, and our Past Pronghorns. Grand Orator Steve Frazier was at the helm and his stories had the common effect of eliciting frequent involuntary convulsions. Grand Secretary Scott Utley and Brother Keeper of the Lands Larry Utley shared the Order's finances and record donation haul. Truly a banner year.

Finally, the moment we were all waiting for, our Spiritual Leader Chief Whitetail Jim "Mudballs" Blair gave us his report and then introduced the 2026 Chief Whitetail, non-other than Larry Utley. What a great year to be an Anteloper!

Grand Historian Patrick Twitchell

Blue Sky: The Spiritual Home of the Order

Visiting the Still-Great Home of the Order

Connection is often the difference between someone who enjoys history and someone who doesn't. Creating connection with those around us is one of life's great blessings. However, connecting with people and events that we weren't present for is quite a trick. Herodotus, Tacitus, Lord Acton; and more contemporary authors like John Shaara and Stephen Ambrose masterfully create that deep connection with those who crack open their stories.

The Blue Sky Hotel is one of those places. Home to over 50 Treks, this lush sanctuary has delighted and rejuvenated over 10,000 Pronghorn. It is easy to see how, when one sees the tall shade pines, the soft bedding of needles, the cool breeze that gently moves through the trees. This serene locale is full of whispers of past experiences just itching to be revealed.

Let's face it. For most of us in the Order today, this is a place we have not experienced in its full splendor. We did not experience pit beef, bourbon pancakes, 35mm films, sheep gates, and jackass justice. Fortunately for us, we are chalk full of members who did. Creating connections to this place is as easy as partaking in a few stories from those fortunate members that have experienced this legendary place.

Every Trek, around 11 AM on Friday, we visit Blue Sky. This year we came across two Pronghorns engaged in both reflection and refreshment, Barry Smiley and Ryan Smiley of Florida Herd. For over two hours we listened to stories from the 80's at Blue Sky. Being present on the ground was a tremendous help, as it was easy to point out where the cookshack, bar, and benches were.

Connecting place and event, Smiley Sr. was able to weave story threads seamlessly. Of course, no less important, there is also the ritual BSing about life, and our personal stories that bond our herds together.

This would not be the last time I saw the Smileys on the Mountain, as we would share more tales and refreshments the next day in camp. Blue Sky has a way of bringing people together and I urge those freshmen Prongs, 5-year, 10-year, and 20-year members to seek out our Blue Sky veterans for the tales that will build connection. It will be worth your while. Until next year, may your watering holes remain lush and your spirit strong as ever.

**ORDER of THE
ANTELOPE**



1952: Blue Sky Tomfooleries

PCWT #29 Curley Walker

Editorially Speaking

When the expression "Fellow Man" was created in our language, it must have been with the Order of the Antelope in mind because it is withing our Order the term finds its true meaning.

The Order is without a doubt the greatest leveler that have ever been conceived among men. Titles, position, degrees, rank, and ratings have no meaning on Hart Mountain. In the environs of the Blue Sky Hotel the only term that has significance is "Friend".

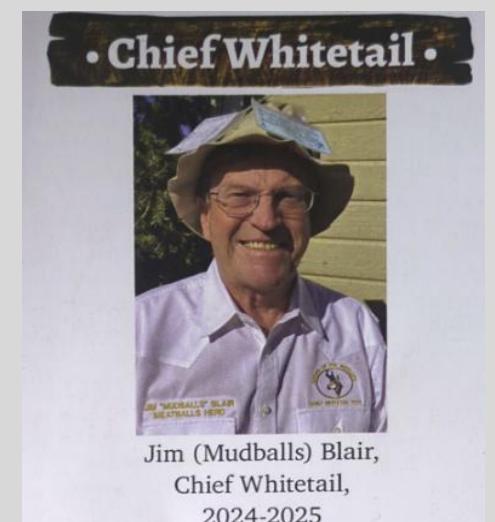
Underneath their individual crusts of Hart Mountain dust beat the hearts of a group of men who have found something that combines all the meanings of service clubs, fraternal organizations, churches, and down-right friendship.

The uninitiated may think of the Blue Sky Hotel as "a hell of a fun place to get a drink;" but if that were the only reason for the Order of the Antelope, we had better simply go to the corner saloon.

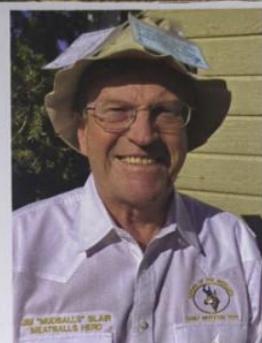
There has to be something deeper than that, and it will be the closeness to nature and the great outdoors, the association with kindred souls, the sharp awareness of God and the wonders he hath wrought.

A man might go the Mountain once a Wild Jackass, and if he is narrow of mind and small of soul, he might miss the whole point...seeing only the dirt and dust, mosquito bites, and overeating. This man will never return, much to his benefit and to that of the Order.

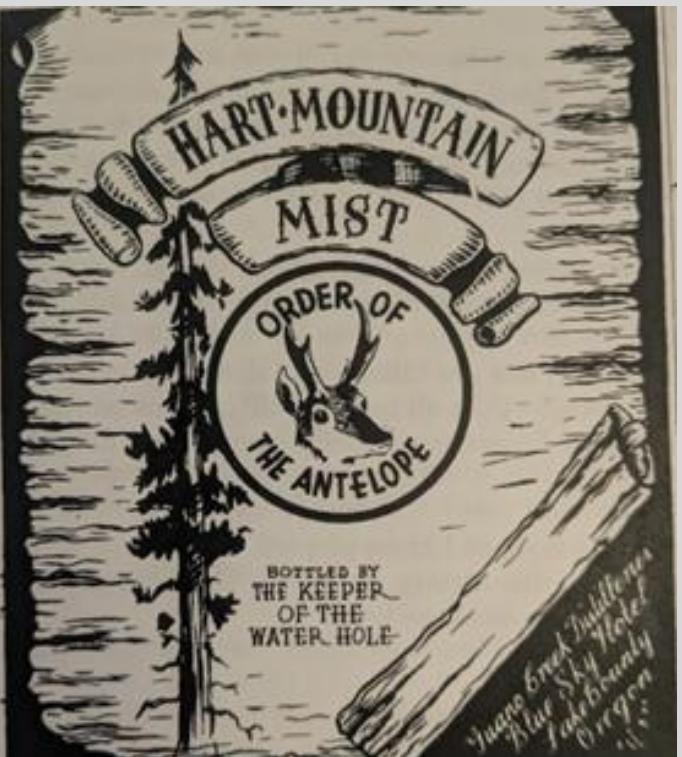
But a man of the bright eye and surging soul, if this man shall return his second year he is hooked... for he will see only friends at their best, Mother Nature as her utmost, God everywhere; he will see the Order of the Antelope for what it's really cracked up to be... the finest modern tradition, a glowing and growing legend of warmth and friendship and joy of being.



• Chief Whitetail •

Jim (Mudballs) Blair,
Chief Whitetail,
2024-2025

OOTA has been part of my life for 76 years since I was born on Friday of the 1948 Trek. My mother delivered me in Lakeview Hospital and after I was safely in the nursery she sent dad to Hart Mountain. I grew up in Lakeview, graduated high school in 1966, and enrolled at Oregon Technology Institute to study Electrical Engineering. My high school sweetheart Adoree and I married in spring 1967 in Klamath Falls and we both studied at Oregon Tech. During our 4 years at OIT, our first son was born, and I served in student government as Student Body President. We have maintained our close relationship with OIT, and southern Oregon, for more than 55 years. Following graduation in 1970, we moved to Seattle where I worked for Pacific Northwest Bell. In 1983 we moved to Washington DC where I was a lobbyist for US West. Then in 1986 we relocated to Denver, CO where I served in executive positions for 20 years and lived there now. We are blessed with 2 daughters, 2 sons, and 20 grandkids. Two sons, a son-in-law, and one grandson are Pronghorns. During a period of 25 years, we provided foster care for another 70 other kids who were in our home placement. I serve as a Trustee of the Greater Colorado Council, Boy Scouts of America, as President of the Clan Blair Society, and as Secretary of the Oregon Tech Foundation. I was recognized as a Distinguished Alumni by Oregon Tech in 1988. This is my 56th Trek to Hart Mountain.



When in
Lakeview
Check
Out the
Lake
County
Museum

