



Male sage grouse congregate during the mating season in areas called leks, year after year, to display their plumage, strut their stuff and attract mates. Disturbed lek sites and seasonal habitats have been a factor in the decline of the sage grouse, Little says.

The proposed drone testing area is also home to elk, mule deer and antelope. Little says ONDA wants to help the proponents locate their testing areas to prevent and minimize impacts to proposed wilderness areas and certain types of wildlife habitats, as well as disturbances to the hikers enjoying the quiet and solitude of the backcountry.

Remote-control aircraft buzzing central Oregon skies on practice missions is one problem, but killing people thousands of miles away by remote control takes

involved in the military's UAV programs admit "appealing to youth gaming culture was one of their explicit goals." A robotics expert working for the Marines said, "We modeled the controller after the PlayStation because that's what these 18-, 19-year-old Marines have been playing with all of their lives."

In her book, Benjamin quotes a drone pilot in Qatar saying, "It's like a video game. It can get a little bloodthirsty, but it's fucking cool," and she cites instances of pilots who sit at a base in Nevada, drop Hellfire missiles from Predator drones in Afghanistan, then drive home in time to catch a rerun of *Friends*.

Though in some cases, the killing, despite being on a video feed, becomes more personal. Benjamin writes of drone pilot Matt Martin, who was watching on

'It's like a video game. It can get a little bloodthirsty, but it's fucking cool.'
— drone pilot

things to another level. The Oregon test site wouldn't have bombs or ordnance dropping from the drones, according to EDCO, but Benjamin points out that the funding for drone technology, even drones for civilian use, generally comes from the military.

Wyden and others in the pro-drone tech contingent say there are many legitimate uses of drone technology. "Search and rescue, targeting drug operations in national forests, and aiding police pursuits in urban areas could all be done more safely, effectively and inexpensively with the right UAV technology," a statement from Hoelzer says. She goes on to cite spotting forest fires and improving crop yields as other uses for UAVs.

The technology can be used for good or for bad, Benjamin says — and when it comes to being used for spying and violating privacy rights, and for killing people, drones are unacceptable.

Benjamin pulls together books, news stories and her own personal experience in *Drone Warfare* to document the terrors of drone technology. She cites the book *Wired for War* when she writes that those deeply

screen as two children on a bike rode up to a group of supposed rebels he had targeted. Martin had already released the missile. When the screen cleared, he could see the bike blown 20 feet away, and the bodies of the two little boys "lay bent and broken among the bodies of the insurgents."

Benjamin says the military often relies on faulty information when targeting "bad guys" for drone strikes, and she takes President Obama to task in particular. "He's taken us into this new age of drone warfare," Benjamin says, as has Congress and the military. "Also shocking is the lack of response," she says, adding that certainly if these were the actions of George W. Bush we would be seeing an outcry about the thousands of people killed as a result of drone warfare.

The current government, Benjamin says, is more concerned about partisan politics. "We're making more enemies faster than we can kill them," she says, and "making more people hate America." ■

Medea Benjamin will present "Drone Warfare and What You Can Do to Stop It," answer questions and sign copies of Drone Warfare at Cozmic, 199 West 8th, 7 pm, Sunday July 1. \$5-\$25 suggested donation. Call 343-7970 for more information.

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