

## 2014 Mono Lake Committee Scholarship – Alexis Romero

I am staring at the lake and it is making me realize how sad it is seeing the lake so low. I have been here 18 years and the water has dropped a lot. I feel a breeze and I see little waves in the lake moving and the birds are so calm and beautiful, everything is so peaceful. When I was a boy I loved coming down here because it was so cool and beautiful and I loved looking at the lake for awhile and thinking about life. When I look at the lake it makes me think of beautiful memories I have had and I smile. The biggest memory I have is riding bikes down to the lake with my friends. We had such a great time down there and put big smiles on our faces. When we got there we looked at the lake and told stories. Now since I am older, I go down there and tell my self how crazy it is how I was a boy looking at the lake and now I am at the same place; it's unbelievable how time flew by. I like seeing the tufas because they are so unique and crazy how they got here. I see how the cars are away from the lake and how quiet it is just hearing the wind and the birds and the tress and the water around me. It is so beautiful that lose myself and tell my self how lucky I am to live in such a unique place. Living here my whole life has been a great blessing and I am a proud to call this my home and Mono Lake my backyard. When I move on in life, I will remember this lake and the smell of it because it's so strong. Even though the lake has dropped it feels like if it never ends.

Places like this matter because they are unique and one of a kind. There isn't any other Mono lake out there. It matters because many different birds come to Mono lake to breed or as a stop over during spring migrations. But it's not just the animals that need Mono Lake but the humans too. It helps people that live in the city a lot because it gives them a opportunity to escape the crowds and think about life because it's very peaceful. City people don't have this chance very often because its always busy in a town and stressful. It's really important to me because places like this make me who I am because if I had grown up in Mexico, I could have became a gangbanger or a member of a drug cartel. There are few other options. But thanks to Mono Lake, we have a place to get away and think about what really matters. It has shown me beauty and the value of life. If it does that to me, imagine what it does to people who live in cities?