



Lakewatch

Monitoring the public trust resources of the Mono Basin

by Greg Reis

“Once the state has approved an appropriation, the public trust imposes a duty of continuing supervision over the taking and use of the appropriated water. In exercising its sovereign power to allocate water resources in the public interest, the state is not confined by past allocation decisions which may be incorrect in light of current knowledge or inconsistent with current needs.”

—California State Supreme Court National Audubon Society v. Los Angeles 1983 Public Trust decision

The statement above summarizes why Mono Lake was saved. It also summarizes why Mono Lake will never be saved. And thus, it sums up why the Mono Lake Committee is here today, and one of the many reasons why our work continues in the Mono Basin.

No one is creating any more water, but we continue to add people and demands on our water supply. Through education and policy work we are not only strengthening the protection of Mono Lake in law and in public opinion, but we are also



LADWP's realtime Mono Basin hydrologic data Website.

beginning to restore the Mono Basin to its former ecological glory.

“Lakewatch” usually reports on stream flows and the lake level, two vital indicators of the health of the Mono Basin.

Now you don't have to wait for this quarterly article anymore to find out how high the streams are, or how much water is being diverted. LADWP is posting real-

time hydrologic data for the Mono Basin on its new website at: <http://web.ladwp.com/~wsoweb/Aqueduct/realtime/monorealtime.htm>. This site, required by the Water Board, will make monitoring of the streams more efficient, and will make the Committee more effective in our Mono Basin watchdog role.

Never fear, though: “Lakewatch” will still report current lakelevel and streamflow information and analysis. So, as of early December, Mono Lake continued its autumn decline and stood at 6383.4 feet above sea level, its lowest in 2 ½ years. But now, in addition to watching the WebCam to check in Mono Lake, online members can monitor Mono Basin creek flows—allowing anyone around the world with an internet connection to join in the protection and restoration of the Mono Basin ecosystem. 🐾

Greg Reis is the Committee's Information Specialist. He's working on his desert-peaks-to-climb list this winter.

The Photopoint Project

The Mono Basin Photopoint Project is off and running! Armed with a camera, film, maps, and destination in mind, participants in the Committee's relatively new Photopoint Project embark on the essential task of documenting restoration around the basin. Five dedicated participants have already taken the benchmark photo for what will eventually be a series of yearly photos creating a visual representation of restoration over time.

Thanks to a start-up grant from the Advocacy Arts Foundation, the Photopoint Project began in August of

2000. Participants with all kinds of backgrounds and from Mono County and beyond expressed interest in the project. Often citing long histories with Mono Lake and the Mono Lake Committee, participants are enthusiastic about helping document restoration.

The photographs are posted at www.monolake.org/photopoint, a site that will continue to be updated as new photographs are taken. Based on the idea that restoration is part science and part art, the project will be just that—eventually becoming a tool to help illustrate the sometimes abstract concept

of restoration.

Reasons for participating are and will continue to be, as varied as the photopoints themselves. From the streams to the lakeshore, planned and unforeseen changes will be documented by project participants. If you are interested in participating in the program, or would like to know more about it, please contact Lisa Cutting (lisa@monolake.org) or Arya Degenhardt (arya@monolake.org) at (760) 647-6595. 🐾