

Dreams Do Come True: Mono Lake's New Ranger

by Douglas Dunaway

Deana Freeman, the new State Park Ranger for the Mono Basin Scenic Area is no stranger to hard work. Starting in 1990, Deana Freeman worked as a State Parks Aide for eight years, until she became a National Park Ranger for Yellowstone National Park in 1998. Working with large crowds of tourists at Yellowstone gave her the experiences she needed to enter into the State Parks Ranger Academy. Graduating from the State Parks Ranger Academy in May of 1999, Deana dreamed of getting a Ranger position in the Eastern Sierra.

The usual waiting period to get a preferred placement is 15 years, so she was prepared to do her time. Her first tour as a State Park Ranger was four years at the Millerton Lake State Recreation Area, located outside of Fresno on the west side of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. After years of dealing with the hectic weekend crowds from the central valley, Deana transferred to the Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park. Located on the northern coast above Eureka, this quiet oasis of coastal redwoods was a welcome change of pace, but she still wanted to work in the Eastern Sierra.

After the Mono Lake Tufa State Reserve's first Rangers, Dave and Janet

Carle, retired in 2000 and 2004 respectively, Deana's dream of moving to the east side was about to come true. She and four other rangers applied for the position at Mono Lake. She was thrilled when she was offered the position, and on July 1st of 2004, she officially became the Mono Lake Tufa State Reserve's second full-time ranger alongside Dave Marquart, seasonal ranger naturalist of 23-years.

One of the first things she did was kayak out to Paoha Island for the day. "I got a great perspective of the entire Tufa State Reserve from the island. With its hot springs, marshy coves, and sand dunes, it was the perfect panoramic viewing point to see all of the Mono Basin." Her first summer here was busy—splitting shifts between Mono Lake and Bodie State Parks because of staffing shortages, she felt a little stretched thin, but happily things have quieted down and Deana is settling into the flow of life at Mono Lake and the little town of Lee Vining. "The town has such a strong sense of community" she said "everyone in Lee Vining, from Dave Marquart and the Carle's, to all the Mono Lake Committee staff have made me feel welcome and comfortable."

An avid hiker and photographer,



JEN NISSENBAUM

Deana Freeman, the new Tufa State Reserve Ranger is a State Peace Officer with full law enforcement abilities.

Deana has no long term plans. When asked for a short response to why she loves it here, she replied "Mono Lake needs a ranger" leaving me with the feeling that she intends to stay here for a long time. ❖

Douglas Dunaway is the Committee's Staff Assistant. He's fully aware that Deana won't look the other way if she sees him speeding on his way home to Bishop.

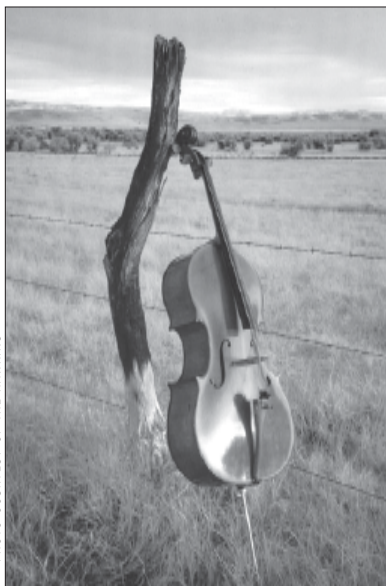


PHOTO COURTESY OF THE HAWKINS

Music and Ecology Camp at Mono Lake

Explore Mono Lake through this independent camp run by Cole and Priscilla Hawkins for instrumentalists ages 11–18. There are two camp sessions this year: June 19–25 and August 7–13, 2005 both in the Mono Basin.

Mornings will focus on studying the ecology and natural history of the Mono Basin and Sierra Nevada. Morning activities include horseback riding, hiking in the Sierra, climbing into a volcano, a boat tour on Mono Lake, and optional swimming at a spa or hot spring.

Afternoons will focus on music—playing instruments in coached chamber groups, private lessons, and classes on improvisation, performance, and music listening.

Nights will be occupied with star gazing, jam sessions, slide shows, and learning about local Native Americans.

Camp will conclude with a concert for the public held at the historic Mono Inn.

The cost for camp is \$550 per session, and there are 2 scholarships available. For more information, contact camp organizers Cole and Priscilla Hawkins at (530) 753-1927, and visit <http://members.dcn.org/~chawkins/MUSICandECOLOGY.html>.