

Andrea Lawrence receives 2006 Defender of the Trust Award

by Frances Spivy-Weber

Last June the Mono Lake Committee Board of Directors gave their highest honor, the Defender of the Trust Award, to Andrea Lawrence, founder of the Andrea Lawrence Institute for Mountains and Rivers (ALIMAR). Doug Virtue, Committee Board member, spoke eloquently about Andrea's inspiring life and vision for the Sierra before a gathering of over fifty members, friends, and staff enjoying



Andrea Lawrence, left, on a wildflower walk with her good friend and field trip leader, Cathy Rose, right, during the Chautauqua.

the Committee's Wine Flight fund-raiser at the annual Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua.

The Defender of the Trust Award is given annually to a person or persons who have made extraordinary contributions to champion Mono Lake, and there are few who equal Andrea in meeting these criteria. At the beginning of the Committee's history in 1978, Andrea loaned David and Sally Gaines her Friends of Mammoth mailing list, which was an important start for building the local Mono Lake Committee membership. Andrea watched out for all things environmental during her sixteen years on the Mono County Board of Supervisors, but she always exerted special energy when it came to defending Mono Lake. Since 1999 Andrea has served on the Mono Lake Committee Board of Directors, where she is a constant source of wise counsel on large policy issues and local political strategies.

Past Defender of the Trust Recipients include former Los Angeles Mayor Richard Riordan (2005), Dennis Tito (2004), Sally Gaines (2003), Rick Lehman and Phil Isenberg (2002), Stan Eller and California Trout (2001), Congressman George Miller (2000), Zev Yaroslavsky (1999), Ruth Galanter (1998), Martha Davis (1997), Bruce Dodge and Jan Stevens (1995), George Peyton (1994), and Harold Gilliam (1993). ❖

Black Point Cinder Mine under scrutiny by Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service

by Lisa Cutting

At a local public meeting last July, Molly Brown, Deputy District Ranger for the Inyo National Forest, shared with the group recent developments affecting the Black Point Cinder Mine operation in the Mono Basin.

On May 19 of this year, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) issued the Black Point Cinder Mine owners a letter notifying them that their mining claims were null and void. The Forest Service then notified the owners that because their claims were invalid, they were no longer authorized to operate on National Forest land and that all operations had to stop immediately. The owners disagreed with both the determination and the order to cease and desist, appealing the BLM decision and requesting a stay through the Interior Board of Land Appeals

(IBLA) in the Department of the Interior. The Committee recently discovered that the IBLA granted the owners a stay, allowing the mining operation to continue during the appeal process.

The Black Point Cinder Mine has been operating for decades—why is this investigation happening now? Brown explained that in 1984 when the Mono Basin Scenic Area was designated by Congress, the administration of approximately 24,000 acres in the Mono Basin, including Black Point, was transferred from the BLM to the Forest Service. It was only recently through a routine inventorying procedure that the Forest Service discovered there was no BLM authorization on file for the mining operation. The Forest Service requires an operating plan, a bond, and

environmental analysis documents to be on file because of the disturbance caused to National Forest land through mining or mineral extraction activities. The fact that these documents are not currently on file is inconsistent with laws, rules, and regulations that govern mining and mineral extraction on National Forest lands.

The cinders extracted from the Black Point Cinder Mine are important locally because Caltrans spreads them on the highway during the winter to provide better traction and safer road conditions. Mono County and Caltrans are following the situation closely.

For more information and updates on this issue contact Forest Service Deputy District Ranger Molly Brown at (760) 647-3033.