

# Arborglyphs & Aspen Natural History



**Richard Potashin & Nancy Hadlock**  
**October 13–14, 2012**

\$160 per person/ \$145 for Mono Lake Committee members  
enrollment limited to 15 participants

**Eskuara!** And welcome to this seminar on aspen carvings and aspen natural history. Fall is the best time to showcase the intriguing aspen, which will be the object of our affections this weekend, both artistically and culturally. This seminar is designed as an introduction to the history, culture, and solitary lifestyle of the man responsible for many of the aspen carvings—the Basque sheepherder—one of the neglected icons in the taming of the American West. By visiting several different groves we will contrast the design, artistic intent, and cultural content of aspen carvings. Participants will be documenting the carving using photography, pencil drawing, and video.

The trees also have wonderful stories to tell. As we meander through the groves we'll discuss the natural history and ecology of aspens, the tremendous community of living organisms they support and the historical impacts of grazing on aspens in and around the Eastern Sierra.

Richard Potashin, aka “Alkali Aspenowza,” is a longtime Eastern Sierra resident and past Mono Lake Committee intern and canoe guide who has been discovering and documenting aspen carvings for many years. Nancy Hadlock has been a naturalist, interpreter and educator for the National Park Service and US Forest Service for over 30 years. She has also been studying Basque culture for many years, taking classes at the University of Nevada’s Basque Study Center. She and Richard claim to have the largest Basque Resource Library in the Eastern Sierra!

## **ITINERARY**

**Saturday, October 13 at 8:30 am** we will meet at the Mono Lake Committee Information Center & Bookstore in Lee Vining. After brief introductions, we'll carpool to an aspen gallery for an introduction to aspen natural history and arborglyphs.

We'll return to the Mono Lake Committee between 4:00 and 5:00pm. Beginning at 6:30pm we will host a Basque Happy Hour and light meal (optional; outside of the field seminar itinerary) with a Basque bota competition, storytelling, music, and an aspenglyph slide show. All are welcome!

On **Sunday, October 14 at 8:30 am** we'll regroup at the Mono Lake Committee and proceed to another aspen grove, where we will spend the morning and have lunch. We'll be outdoors all day and will return to the Committee between 3:00 and 4:00pm.

## ELEVATION & WEATHER

Most of the weekend will find us at 6,500–8,500 feet above sea level. **Anyone restricted to lower elevations should not enroll.** Those with a history of heart, ear, or respiratory problems should consult their doctors before attending. Most of the walking will be at a leisurely pace, with some of it over trail-less terrain. There may be some high stepping over fallen aspens.

Temperatures in fall can be comfortable or downright chilly, ranging from the 30°s to the 70°s. Winds and snow can also be present at this time. Be sure to bring extra layers like fleece garments, down jackets, windbreakers, warm gloves, and hats. Sturdy shoes and thick pants are recommended.

**Altitude and Dehydration Cautions:** Remember to bring (and drink!) lots of water because your body loses more water at the higher altitudes of the Mono Basin. Begin drinking extra water as you drive to higher elevation in order to prevent dehydration and headaches. Also, the sun is rather fierce at high elevations, capable of burning even on cool and cloudy days, so be sure to protect yourself thoroughly using sunscreen, sunglasses, and hat.

## MEALS

Please bring a lunch already packed in the morning plus water and snacks to eat during both days.

## TO BRING

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| <input type="checkbox"/> warm clothing (warm enough for snow!)                  | <input type="checkbox"/> camera                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> raincoat, just in case                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> binoculars (optional)     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> hat, sunscreen, and sunglasses                         | <input type="checkbox"/> daypack                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> hand lens (if you have one)                            | <input type="checkbox"/> plenty of water           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> pencil and paper, if you desire to sketch the carvings | <input type="checkbox"/> boots or supportive shoes |

## RECOMMENDED READINGS

- *Speaking Through the Aspens*, Jose Mallea-Olaetxe, University of Nevada Press, 2000.
- *The Basque History of the World*, Mark Kurlansky, Walker and Company, 1999.

An aspen fact sheet and introduction to Basque aspen carvings will be mailed to you by the instructors and should be brought to the seminar.



## Mono Lake Committee Field Seminars

P.O. Box 29 • Lee Vining, CA 93541 • (760) 647-6595 • [www.monolake.org](http://www.monolake.org)