

# Burned Forest Ecology in the Eastern Sierra



**Stephen Shunk**  
**June 8–10, 2012**

\$150 per person / \$135 for Mono Lake Committee members  
enrollment limited to 15 participants

Western forests evolved with fire as a critical part of their ecological health. For well over 100 years, humans have attempted to suppress fire, in effect removing this crucial component of forest ecology. When a forest does burn, we tend to remove the trees to preserve their timber value, but burned trees have an intrinsic value to the forest when they remain standing. The Black-backed Woodpecker, the poster child for healthy burned forests, is now a candidate for threatened or endangered status in California. How do we balance the needs of society with the need for conservation of healthy forest habitats?

Join Oregon naturalist and North American woodpecker specialist Steve Shunk for this dynamic introduction to burned forest ecology in the Mono Basin. Steve will show first-hand how native flora and fauna respond to fire in burned forests that are very much alive.

Steve started birding in the San Francisco Bay Area in 1989 and moved to Sisters, Oregon, in 1997, where he has studied the ecology of western forests for the last 14 years. Steve co-founded the East Cascades Bird Conservancy and served as its first president, and he now lectures and leads birding tours across the continent. Steve recently completed the *Peterson Reference Guide to Woodpeckers of North America*, and he will spend his second season in summer 2012 studying the Black-backed Woodpeckers of the Sierra Nevada.

## ITINERARY

Meet at **7:00pm, Friday, June 8**, at the Mono Lake Committee Information Center & Bookstore in Lee Vining. After introductions, Steve will give a slide show presentation on burned forest ecology and the Black-backed Woodpecker in the Sierra Nevada.

On **Saturday, June 9 meet at 7:00am** outside the Mono Lake Committee. We will spend the day exploring two different burned areas south of Lee Vining, possible the Mono Craters and June Lake burns, but subject to change depending on snow levels. We will return to Lee Vining at approximately 5:00pm. After dinner (on your own), Steve will give a special presentation on woodpecker anatomy and adaptation.

On **Sunday, June 10, we will meet at 7:00am** outside the Mono Lake Committee. We will explore the piñon pine forest and aspen woodlands of the Sawmill fire to view the amazing regeneration that occurs in desert riparian habitats. We will return to Lee Vining by about 3:00pm, but participants may leave at varying times depending on travel plans.

***Altitude and Dehydration Cautions:*** This seminar will involve easy to moderate hiking at elevations up to 9,000 feet. We will hike up to two miles a day, mostly on level terrain, with some short walks on steeper or more rugged terrain. Remember to bring (and drink!) lots of water because your body loses more water at the higher altitudes of the Mono Basin. Experts recommend that you 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

All meals are on your own; please bring lunch, snacks, and beverages for both field days.

## TO BRING

- binoculars
- sturdy footwear
- day pack including plenty of water, sun protection, jacket
- picnic lunch for both days



## Mono Lake Committee Field Seminars

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