

Winter

1994

MONO



LAKE

NEWSLETTER

*Mono Lake still not
saved*

*Water Board
proceedings continue*

*Martha Davis
on Mono Lake*

Mono Lake Newsletter

Winter 1994

Volume 16, number 2

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This issue's cover



shrub coated with ice sits on a graceful curve of Mono's snowbound shore in the cover photograph of this issue taken by Don Jackson. Don, pictured on page 21, has volunteered with the Committee for many years. On one of his many visits, he recently had the opportunity to spend a number of additional days at Mono Lake when his vehicle's head gasket blew out at South Tufa. Don lives in the misty woods of Forestville.

The cover photo was shot in January of 1988 along the northwest shore of Mono, looking west toward Lundy Canyon. We're hoping for twice as much snow this year!

Late breaking news!

As this issue of the Mono Lake Newsletter went to press, the Mono Lake Committee (MLC) and the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (DWP) reached an agreement on the terms of an application for state AB 444 funds. Up to \$36 million may be released to Los Angeles, in a matching program, for the construction of water reclamation facilities.

The funds were set aside in 1989 and require a joint application by DWP and the Committee. DWP, until now, had refused to agree with the Committee's stipulation that water generated from funded projects be credited to Mono Lake by reduction of diversions.

"While the agreement does not settle the entire dispute," said MLC Executive Director Martha Davis at a Los Angeles press conference, "it will result in greater protection of Mono Lake's fragile ecosystem and, at the same time, provide Los Angeles with a locally controlled, drought-proof replacement water supply." Martha comments further on page 3 of this newsletter.

Brokered by L.A. City Councilwoman Ruth Galanter, the agreement targets the development of reclamation water supplies in Los Angeles, beginning with the city's East Valley project. This project will produce 35,000 acre-feet of water per year, almost half of the water needed to protect Mono Lake. The application was formally submitted to the State in late December of 1993.

Watch for details in the Spring issue of the Newsletter!

The Mono Lake Committee is a non-profit citizens' group dedicated to saving Mono Lake from excessive diversion of water from its tributary streams. We seek a solution that will meet the real water needs of Los Angeles and leave our children a living, healthy and beautiful lake.

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From the Executive Director

Mono Lake still not saved

by Martha Davis, Mono Lake Committee Executive Director

I am often surprised and occasionally disheartened when friends and supporters ask me: "Now that Mono Lake is protected, what is the Committee going to do?"

The answer is that Mono Lake is not yet saved—which means, of course, that the Committee has much more work to do.

We can achieve protection for Mono Lake only by winning permanent water flows that will restore a healthy ecosystem at the lake and on its tributary streams. Our courtroom victories have taken us a long way towards this goal, but we have not yet won *permanent* water for Mono Lake.

That is why the current evidentiary hearings before the State Water Resources Control Board are so important. It is there a final, binding decision can force the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (DWP) to relinquish its legal grip on Mono's tributary streams and keep the water flowing to Mono Lake—forever.

And yet I understand why so many friends may imagine that Mono Lake's protection is close at hand. The Committee's political news in recent months has been so spectacularly good that it's easy to feel victory is inevitable.

The first news came in early October when California Governor Pete Wilson surprised DWP by taking a forceful stand in favor of full restoration of Mono Lake's public trust values. James Strock, California Secretary for Environmental Protection, testified on behalf of the Governor at the Water Board's October 4 hearing in Los Angeles, calling for a minimum protected level of 6390 feet but encouraging the Board to go even higher, if necessary, to comprehensively resolve the multitude of environmental concerns at Mono Lake.

Then, several weeks later, the Commissioner of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Dan Beard, came to Califor-

nia to announce the support of the Clinton Administration for Mono Lake's preservation. Affirming his agency's commitment to the full implementation of H.R. 429 (see *Mono Lake Newsletter*, Winter 1993), Commissioner Beard promised to fund up to 25% of the cost of developing 120,000 acre-feet per year of reclaimed water in southern California to replace DWP's Mono Lake diversions.

"Saving Mono Lake requires translating this year's political support into permanent water flows for Mono Lake."

Another shot of good news followed in late December. After more than four years of delay, L.A.'s political leaders finally agreed to join with the Mono Lake Committee in applying for State AB 444 funds to develop water projects in Los Angeles. As part of the pact, DWP pledged—for the first time in its history—that it would voluntarily limit its Mono Basin diversions by the amount of water generated from the funded projects.


Although the details of the joint application are being worked out as this newsletter goes to press, the breakthrough announcement headlined newspapers throughout the State. California's political leaders, including Governor Wilson, Los Angeles Mayor Richard Riordan, members of the Los Angeles City Council, and State Legislators, joined with the Committee at a landmark press conference on December 13 to pledge their support for the accord. Governor Wilson added his personal commitment to making the AB 444 funds available in the State's budget.

With all this good news, I understand why our friends may feel we are close to success. In the face of such remarkable political support, how could the Mono Lake Committee fail to win full protection for Mono Lake?

I would like to believe that political momentum is a talisman against failure. But I am more inclined to put my faith in the Committee's continuing hard work.

If we have been successful in piecing together one of the most extraordinary bipartisan political coalitions in the history of California's water wars, it is because the Committee has articulated and pursued a vision of Mono Lake that unites preservation with a commitment to finding solutions that meet the real water needs of Los Angeles. We should all be proud of the Committee's accomplishments. And we should realize we have not yet turned the vision into reality.

Saving Mono Lake requires translating this year's political support into permanent water flows for Mono Lake. All the support we gather contributes to our ability to win that water in the Water Board proceedings.

But we haven't won yet. 

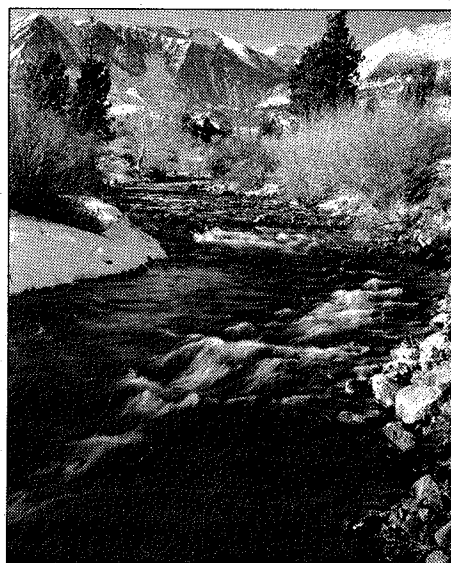


Photo by Larry Ford

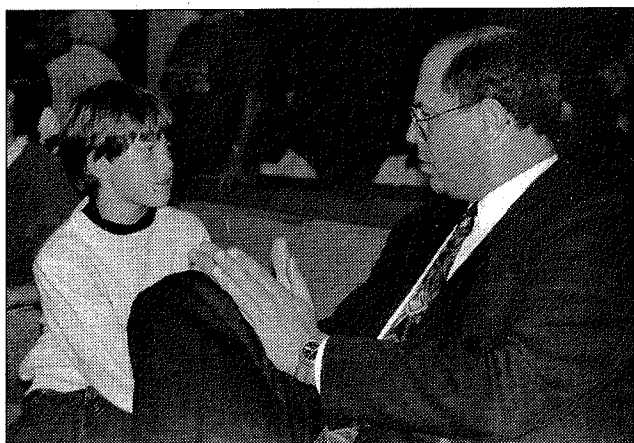
Water Board overwhelmed by statements favoring protection of Mono Lake

by Sally Miller

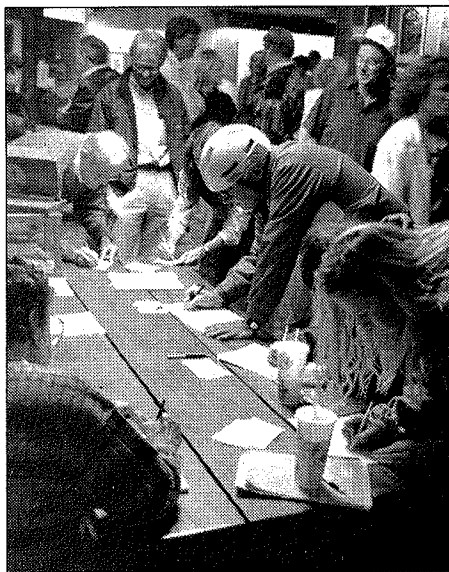
They came, by the hundreds. From all over California, citizens ventured to each of three public hearings on Mono Lake held by the State Water Board in Los Angeles, Mammoth Lakes, and Sacramento this past October.

From young kids to old-timers, from long-time visitors to those who had never seen the lake, individuals filed up to the microphone hour after hour to express their support for saving Mono Lake. The diversity of the crowd and their testimony was striking, but a common thread ran through the statements—a love of Mono Lake, and a strong desire for its permanent protection.

In Los Angeles, Fernando Gomez of the Los Angeles Conservation Corps spoke of the restoration work that he and other youths accomplished on Rush Creek during the summer of 1992 and of the need to preserve places like Mono Lake for urban residents. Gomez said that working on the restoration *"made a big impact on young people like us that live in L.A., born and raised, for us to have a chance to go out and really experience most of the natural environment ... we know it is going to hurt thousands of Los Angeles young people if they never get to chance to go out and experience Mono Lake."*



Student Jeffrey Parker spoke with Hearing Officer Marc del Piero after making a statement in favor of protecting Mono Lake. "Marc," Parker began, "... have you noticed Mono Lake's beauty?"



Mono Lake supporters sign up to address the Water Board in Mammoth Lakes.

Mono Lake Bike-a-thoners made a strong showing at the L.A. hearing, as well as in Sacramento, and spoke eloquently of the importance of the annual Mono Lake Bike-a-thon in their lives. Many Los Angelenos said that they were more than willing to continue to practice standard water conservation measures and that they wanted the water conserved to be credited to Mono Lake. Only a few present spoke in favor of DWP. The L.A. Chamber of Commerce was one of these; however, they were more concerned about having a reliable water supply than supporting the Department of Water and Power's position.

Also in L.A., James Strock, Secretary of the California Environmental Protection Agency, surprised and delighted the audience by reading a statement that expressed Governor Pete Wilson's support for protection of

Mono Lake at a level of 6,390 feet or higher.

Citizens at the Mammoth Lakes hearing demonstrated tremendous community support for the lake's protection. Many spoke of the necessity of preserving a healthy lake for the benefit of the region's tourist-based economy. Others reminded the Water Board that they did not want Mono County to suffer the toxic legacy left to Inyo County by the Department of Water and Power at Owens Lake.

The local Audubon Chapter was present in force, and many members spoke of their work constructing and annually extending boardwalks at County Park and Old Marina as the lakeshore has receded. These stalwart volunteers expressed their desire to see their work inundated as the lake gradually rises to a hoped-for level of 6390 feet or higher.

Several people who testified in Mammoth were visitors to the area. One couple from Marin County planned their vacation in Mono County so that they would be able to testify. Ted Sanford, from Seattle, took time from his Mammoth Lakes vacation to tell the Water Board of Mono Lake's importance to him as an out-of-state resident.

Water Board Vice Chair and hearing officer Mark Del Piero commented at the end of the hearing that *"... local government officials have a deep appreciation for the sense of community that manifests itself among the various cities and towns and villages around the State of California. The only thing that is perhaps more emotionally moving than the vision of Mono Lake this side of the Sierra, I think, is the solidarity of this community in terms of its opinion about the necessity to preserve the resource."*

In Sacramento, Mono Lake supporters from as far away as the Bay Area and southern San Joaquin Valley echoed the overwhelming call heard at the previous hearings for Mono Lake's protection. They were joined by a coalition of statewide and regional environmental groups including the Planning and Conservation League, Mountain Lion Foundation, the Sierra

the Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs, The Wilderness Society, the newly-formed Sierra Nevada Alliance, and a coalition of fly-fishers' groups.

State and local legislators, too, joined citizens in expressing their support for protection of Mono Lake at 6390 feet or higher. An eloquent statement from Senator Patrick Johnston, formerly representing Mono County, was read.

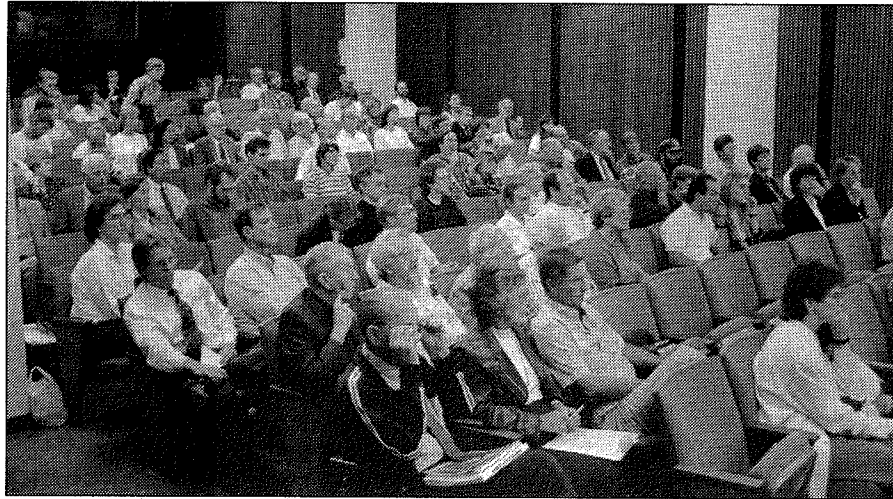
"The Indians, the Shoshones and Paiutes, referred to water as 'pah'... Mono Lake should have its 'pah' restored for all time," said Johnston.

Other state legislators who submitted statements included senators Frank Hill, Mike Thompson, Dan McCorquodale, Quentin Kopp, Nick Petris, Milton Marks, and Assemblymembers Richard Katz, Byron Sher, and Jackie Speier. U.S. Representative Norman Mineta also submitted a statement.

In Mammoth, Mayor David Watson read a statement on behalf of the Town of Mammoth Lakes in support of a 6390 foot or higher alternative for Mono Lake. Mono County Supervisors Mike Jarvis, representing the Great Basin Unified Air Pollution Control District, and Andrea Lawrence also spoke kindly on Mono's behalf. In Los Angeles, City Council member Zev Yaroslavy stated that protecting Mono will "... reverse for all time the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power's dangerous and reckless policies which have jeopardized the scenic beauty, the animal life, and the air quality of Mono Basin."

Many speakers at the hearings expressed their support for the Committee's position of 6390 feet or higher. Others, however, thought the Committee position too low, and asked the Board to return the lake to its prediversion condition. Long-time Lee Vining resident Augie Hess, who lived at Mono Lake prior to diversions, was one of these.

He vividly described the lake and



Most everyone who testified had a special experience at Mono Lake they wished to share.

streams as they once were. *"Over the years I have had the opportunity to know Mono Lake. I used to hunt on the shores at the various springs that used to dot the shores. I swam in the lake, had many a happy day boating its entire surface with no thought of danger due to exposed tufa formations."*

Hess related the sadness he has felt at seeing the demise of this once beautiful and productive ecosystem: *"In the last forty years we have had to watch the lake slowly recede to almost extinction leaving wide ugly banks of white scale and elimi-*

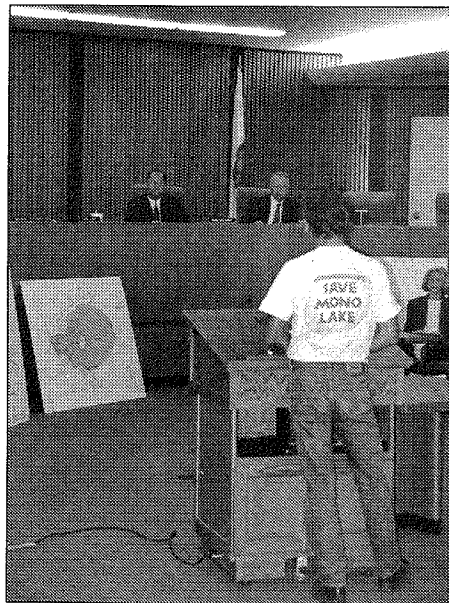
nating all the previous points where we could launch a boat, eliminating the numerous springs down there and [now there is] less growth of willows and grasses."

Birder Joan Humphrey of Davis, who never saw Mono Lake in prediversion times, said that she hoped someday to see the hundreds of thousands of ducks and geese that once blanketed Mono

Lake. *"The draft EIR and others mention that ducks once existed in tremendous numbers around Mono Lake. ... I feel I've missed something here. I would really like to have seen, and continue to see, up to a million waterfowl circling in clouds around Mono Lake."*

Did the public hearings make a difference? *"Absolutely,"* said Committee Executive Director Martha Davis. *"The public hearings are, of course, only part of this lengthy administrative process. But, unlike the situation in the courts, the Water Board process has a political component. Everything our supporters do will make a big difference in whether we ultimately save Mono Lake."*

After the Sacramento hearing, Committee Associate Director Ilene Mandelbaum observed that *"never before has the meaning of the 'public trust' been more eloquently stated than at these public hearings. While the evidentiary hearings are extremely important to the outcome of the Board's decision, there is nothing more compelling than the voices of the public speaking out for Mono Lake's protection. We sincerely thank the lake's many supporters who participated in the hearings."*



Bike-a-thoner Steve Schmidt addresses State Water Board members Marc Del Piero (left) and John Brown (right).

Sally Miller is the Committee's Eastern Sierra Representative. She began work with the MLC in 1984 as a summer intern and moves around the office faster than most Mono Basin winds.

Administrative hearings on Mono begin

The State Water Board administrative hearings opened in an appropriately authoritative setting. Board members and staff sat on a raised platform, and attorneys made their presentations at a lectern. Use of a microphone was necessary to allow everyone in the room to hear. Witnesses sat at a crowded table and craned their necks to see the Board.

Then the microphones stopped working. It turned out that the room was on loan from a different agency, and someone had stolen most of the audio equipment. There was no money to purchase more.

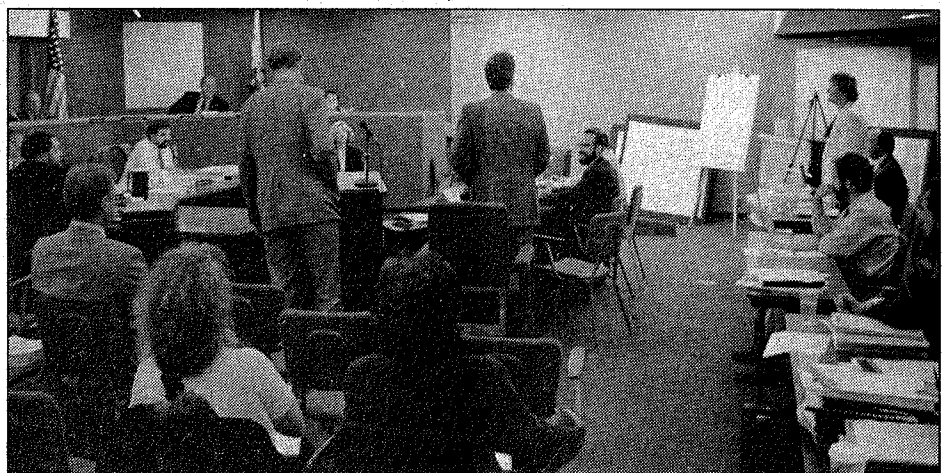
So the hearings moved across the street to the official, but smaller, State Water Resources Control Board Hearing Room. A fluorescent lit room without windows, the room is full of charts and maps, the pieces of paper that represent the reality of Mono Lake. Narrow tables of attorneys line one wall and, when hearings are in session, notebook computers are fiercely tapped upon. It is not a powerful room, but powerful happenings take place in it.

Mono Lake's future will be charted based on the testimony presented in this small room in Sacramento. Each option available to the Board could place the lake onto a different path. Some options have safe gull nesting grounds. Some have improved recreational opportunities. Some have alkali dust storms. Some have visions of restoration. The Water Board will choose one for Mono Lake, and Committee attorneys are trying to make sure it is the right one.

Each party to the hearings has a chance to present its case through the testimony of witnesses and submission of evidence. Presently, only the State Board staff and the Department of Water and Power (DWP) have concluded their cases. While this article rolls through the presses, the MLC will be arguing before the Board.

DWP's case

DWP has come a long way in their regard of Mono Lake. In his opening statement to the Board, DWP attorney Tom



The State Water Resources Control Board Hearing Room. It is here that Mono Lake's future is being decided. Standing at the left is MLC attorney Bruce Dodge. Standing at center and right are DWP attorneys Tom Birmingham and Janet Goldsmith.

Birmingham stated that no question exists about the importance of saving Mono Lake; the disagreement is about which lake level does the saving. The Department, Birmingham said, "is committed to preserving the Mono Basin as a healthy, living, functioning ecosystem."

DWP introduced a new management plan which maintains the lake level in the 6377 foot range and curtails diversions from Walker and Parker creeks. The plan, DWP argues, protects the lake at its current "healthy" level. However, the DWP plan fails to address air quality issues (see article on page 8) and rests on shaky assumptions. DWP witnesses have presented testimony in support of the DWP plan, arguing the Mono's creeks were historically poor fisheries, that the landbridging of Negit Island is not a serious threat to gull nesting habitat, and that Mono's brine shrimp and alkali flies are healthy at current salinities.

DWP witnesses have not fared well on cross-examination, however. The evidence supporting the "poor fishery" theory proved to be fleeting. The suggestion that California gulls are doing fine on the small islets surrounding Negit failed to account for habituation of predators (coyotes are swimming farther to reach gull nests as they learn to recognize the food source). And the argument that brine shrimp popu-

lations are not declining turned out to be based on a small set of data, disregarding laboratory observations of negative salinity effects on the population.

So far, the Department of Water and Power has made a few points, but not a so case. To this extent, the hearings are going well. However, the MLC has yet to make a case for higher lake levels. We have successfully thrown doubts onto DWP's presentation; now we must make a better one.

The Water Board Hearings, now running 12 hours a day, have yet to return a verdict.



DWP attorneys and staff hastily discuss strategy during a break in the hearings.

Long-time Mono Basin residents testify on historical conditions, air quality

One of the most contentious topics of the Water Board hearings has been the condition of the Mono Basin before diversions began. On December 3, the Water Board convened at the U.S. Forest Service Visitor Center in Lee Vining to hear the testimony of Mono Lake Committee and National Audubon Society witnesses regarding historical conditions.

Long-time basin residents August Hess, Kerry Kellogg, and Elma Blaver were joined by Betty Shannon, a photographer and journalist who spent time at the lake in the 1960s to form a panel which answered questions on creek condition, fishing, hunting, boating, other recreation, and aesthetics.

A separate panel of North shore residents, comprised of John Denny, Sally Murray, and Charlie Simis, testified regarding alkali dust storms. All three spoke of the normally superb views from the North shore, their love of the area, and how they had been affected by dust storms. "If you go outside your teeth are instantly gritty and it stinks," testified Denny. "It smells like brackish sea water. It hurts to breathe."

Historical values

The testimony of historical witnesses, while anecdotal, is important because it sheds light on basin features that have been lost due to diversions by the Department of Water and Power (DWP). The Committee feels that the pre-diversion evidence indicates the existence of excellent fisheries in Mono's creeks, the presence of millions of waterfowl, a greater abundance of brine shrimp and alkali flies, and significant recreational use of Mono Lake. DWP has argued otherwise.

The witnesses discussed their memo-



The Water Board met in Lee Vining to hear testimony on historical conditions from long-time basin residents.

ries of the lake in years past. Betty Shannon provided a number of photos she took at South Tufa in the 1960s, when the lake elevation ranged from 6387 to 6393 feet. Asked what she thought of South Tufa at that time, when more tufa towers were in the water, Shannon answered "it was more beautiful then."

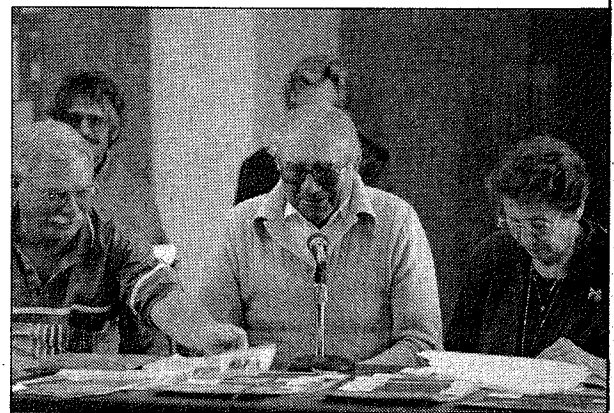
In her written testimony, Shannon recalled an abundance of alkali flies at the lake. "I remember vividly the experience of walking down a long stretch of beach through an 18 inch wide black band of adult flies that parted with each step and filled in behind me as if I'd never passed." Although it is not well documented, alkali fly populations may have decreased due to the lake's increasing salinity. Kerry Kellogg, a resident of the basin since 1945, testified "I remember seeing fly larvae thickly piled up on the shore ... but I don't recall seeing the fly larvae so thick since the late 1950s."

Kellogg spoke of good hunting at Mono Lake. He testified to seeing over one

thousand Canada geese on the water in the winter, as well as numerous ducks. "In my opinion," he testified, "duck numbers noticeably diminished by the late 1960s."

Elma Blaver, born in 1916 in a house on the banks of Rush Creek, testified that her family used to collect kutsavi, or alkali fly pupae, at Mono Lake. "When we went collecting," she said, "we typically waded through floating pupae two or three feet wide."

August Hess, a life-time resident of the basin, also testified. He grew up at Mono Mills, on the south east side of the lake, and his family moved to Lee Vining not long after the town developed. They fished the creeks and hunted Mono's shores for many years. Hess testified that waterfowl and wildlife were more abundant before diversions began. And in conclusion he noted that "Tourists that come to see the lake now may think it's beautiful, but they don't know how it once was. What's left of the lake may still be beautiful, but there used to be so much more of it. The colors, the views, the shore—it's very different now."



Kerry Kellogg (left), August Hess (center), and Elma Blaver (right) discussed the content of numerous historical photos.



What will El Niño bring to Mono Lake?

by John Cain

For centuries fishermen on the coast of Peru and Chile have experienced a phenomena that has dramatically affected the level of Mono Lake, and which may be partly responsible for the ultimate protection of Mono Lake.

The fisherman called it El Niño, an allusion to the Christ child because of its coincidence with the Christmas holiday. The El Niño brought a sudden influx of warm water to the coastal seas of the Eastern Pacific, leading to massive kills of cold water species.

El Niño is also associated with a strengthening of the sub-tropical jet that brings rainy weather to Southern California and sometimes to all of California. For the state as a whole, however, El Niño is more often dry than wet. Most people remember when a strong El Niño brought California the wettest year on record in 1982-83, but few realize that the driest


year on record, 1976-77, was an El Niño year as well.

The most dramatic fluctuations of Mono Lake have occurred as a result of El Niño. In 1976-77, the lake fell approximately 2.5 feet, from 6377.8 to 6375.2. During the 1982-83 El Niño, the lake rose six feet, from 6372.9 to 6378.9. The last two years were El Niño years. 1991-92 was very dry, but wet in the South, and 1992-93 was wet statewide.

I have recently wondered if the battle to save Mono Lake would have unfolded differently without El Niño. It was El Niño (with a lot of help from DWP) that first exposed the landbridge in 1977. Perhaps this sudden decline was what motivated David Gaines and his friends to start the Mono Lake Committee.

El Niño may have also led to the re-establishment of fish in Rush Creek in 1982-83, and, ultimately, to a succession of

court rulings that ordered water down all the streams DWP had previously diverted. In late September of 1982 an unseasonably strong sub-tropical storm brought heavy rains to the Eastern Sierra causing Grant Reservoir to spill into lower Rush Creek. Because of the spill, large numbers of fish made their way into Rush Creek.

After two El Niño years (one wet and one dry) the lake currently stands at 6374.7, 1.3 feet higher than the low of last year. If precipitation is average over this winter, the lake will rise to about 6376 by the summer of 1994. State meteorologists are predicting that this year will be the third El Niño in a row. Let's hope El Niño is feeling benevolent. 

John Cain is the Committee's Science Associate. He spent most of the fall in Sacramento at the Water Board Hearings, and is hoping a wet El Niño winter will provide good backcountry skiing.

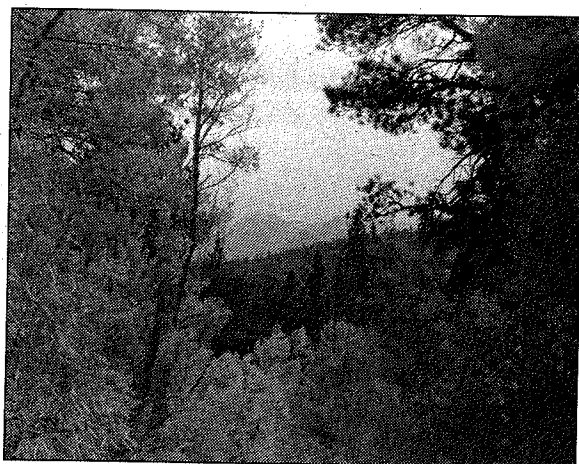
Mono Basin Journal

A roundup of lesser known events at Mono Lake


Fall came colorfully this year, and left on the wind. Dark orange willows and glowing cottonwoods traced drainages up the sides of the Sierra, a fleeting marker of watercourses otherwise hidden. A cold snap came in November, and then the wind, and suddenly the leaves were gone.

In town one tree, hidden in a back alley, kept its leaves through the early winds only to lose them one still morning. Poconip—the crystalline ice fog that rises from the lake at night—had frosted the leaves and branches. As the early morning sun broke through, the stems snapped off the branches, and yellow leaves fluttered to the ground in the quiet air. Within ten minutes, the tree was bare.

Grebes arrived in quantity while the Water Board held hearings. The word spread quickly around the office and, after



driving home from Sacramento one moonlight night, it was the first thing I heard about. Upwards of a million arrive annually, and every year, until they return, it is easy to forget how impressive they are, blanketed across the lake.

Wind blew fall out of the basin in December. One ferocious morning I went down to the lake to see the grebes. Plenty of whitecaps were visible from the road, but no grebes. At the end of the David Gaines memorial boardwalk I spotted them. Each tufa outcropping, like a boulder in a stream, sheltered a raft of grebes, all facing the wind and paddling to stay in place. The wind raged, grasses bent to the ground, a gull soared overhead, and the grebes patiently paddled waiting for the wind to break. 

DWP fails to dismiss air quality issues

by John Cain

By mid-day the wind had stirred up a cloud of alkali dust thousands of feet high that obscured the entire east side of Mono Lake, as well as Paoha Island. At 1:00 p.m. we met State Water Board member John Brown, his staff, and several other parties for a tour of the Mono Basin. Brown had never been to the basin before, but he came well prepared in a full length down suit.

Brown's visit offered new meaning to the term "whirlwind tour." For the next four hours we were blasted by 50- to 100-mile per hour winds as we attempted to see some of the landmarks of the Mono Basin. Simply standing in the wind was reminiscent of racing down a hill on skis, with wind rushing through my hair and by my ears.

Normally, winds blow dust only from the exposed playa of the east side of the lake, but these high winds were strong enough to blow larger dust and sand particles from denuded areas on the west side of the lake as well. At the former delta of Rush Creek, pumice sands blew from sparsely vegetated surfaces that once supported wetlands teeming with ducks. The sands pelted us as we viewed the wreckage inflicted by fifty years of bad water policy.

The week before this literal whirlwind I had been sitting in the State Water Resources Control Board Hearing Room in Sacramento listening to a more abstract type of storm as expert witnesses testified regarding the air quality problem at Mono Lake and lawyers from both sides skillfully cross-examined them.

The first witness was David Calkins from the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). He testified that the Mono Basin had recently been designated a non-attainment area for particulate matter air pollution (in fact, EPA signed the final designa-

tion papers one working day before Calkins testified). Calkins said that the State of California was obligated under the federal Clean Air Act to develop a plan for bringing the area into compliance with federal standards.

On cross-examination, Tom Birmingham, the Department of Water and Power's attorney, sought to establish that the Mono Basin air problem was not cov-



Exposed alkali lakebed is the source of Mono's air quality problem.

ered by the Clean Air Act. He asked the witness to explain the difference between EPA's jurisdiction over anthropogenic (human-caused) and non-anthropogenic air pollution sources. Calkins explained that Congress, when enacting the Clean Air Act, had specifically exempted non-anthropogenic air pollution sources. Therefore, EPA did not regulate non-anthropogenic sources such as volcanoes or forest fires.

Birmingham, however, had not counted on our lawyers arriving prepared. Much to the dismay of the Department of Water and Power (DWP) and their attorneys, Patrick Flinn, an attorney with Morrison and Foerster representing the Mono Lake Committee, came prepared with language from the Senate and House Committee Reports regarding this exact issue. Committee reports are routinely used in legal proceedings to aid in the determination of congressional intent.

Flinn asked EPA's witness to read a section of the report.

As DWP's lawyers' heads sunk, Calkins read, "*The dry lake beds of Owens and Mono lakes are examples of anthropogenic sources ...*"

Flinn concluded by asking Calkins if he believed that Congress considered the Mono Lake air problem an anthropogenic source that EPA was obligated to regulate.

Calkins happily answered "Yes."

DWP did not fare much better at arguing away air quality problems with their own witnesses. Their first witness, John Pinsonault, advanced a theory that dust storms may have occurred naturally (making them non-anthropogenic) and might continue even if the lake is raised to its natural level. Under cross-examination, Pinsonault admitted that he had not done any analysis that would allow him to con-


clude that his theory was true.

In the end, the only thing Pinsonault seemed sure of was that air quality in the Mono Basin would continue to exceed federal standards at a lake level of 6390 feet above sea level.

Dr. Fedoruk, a medical doctor, testified that the air quality in the Mono Basin was not a public health problem because few people visited the area subjected to dust storms. He testified that "*most people exposed to occasional dust storms will take avertive action, such as going indoors.*"

On cross-examination, Patrick Flinn read from the declaration of John Denny, a resident of the North shore of Mono Lake. "*It was so dusty inside that you could shine the flashlight through the house,*" he read, "*and see the same amount of dust inside as out. You could not see five feet with a flashlight—inside or out.*"

Flinn then asked if this condition might be a public health hazard.

Fedoruk, to DWP's dismay, answered "Yes." 

Martha Davis on Mono Lake

An interview by Geoffrey McQuilkin, Mono Lake Committee Publications Editor

In 1984, Martha Davis became Executive Director of the Mono Lake Committee. She came to the Committee from Greenpeace, where she was the wildlife campaign coordinator. A graduate of Stanford, with a master's degree from Yale, Martha has led the Committee in the fight to save Mono Lake for ten years.

I caught up with Martha by phone one afternoon in November to interview her for the Mono Lake Newsletter. We discussed the year past, what lies ahead for the Committee, and, of course, Mono Lake.

Q

You have been the Executive Director of the Mono Lake Committee for ten years now. What do you think the Committee's greatest successes have been since you arrived?

A

Clearly, the most important successes have been in the courtroom, especially the court victories for the streams. The support by the courts for protection of the streams and for Mono Lake, I think, became the turning point in the battle over Mono Lake's future. Once the water started flowing in the streams, people could begin to envision a protected Mono Lake. It boosted public support enormously for our efforts to continue the legal fight for Mono Lake's future.

"Once the water started flowing in the streams, people could begin to envision a protected Mono Lake."

The legal decisions also had a tremendous impact on Mono Lake because we were able to prove that the water rights claimed by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (DWP) were not legal. This revelation dramatically changed our footing in the courtroom. It became clear that much of the harm that had happened to Mono Lake resulted from DWP's illegal diversions.

You mentioned the water flowing down the streams again as one of the Committee's first tangible victories. Do you think the release of that water increased the Committee's local support in the Eastern Sierra?

Q

Yes, I do think it increased our local support. Many people in the community, and it's understandable, saw the Mono Lake Committee as successful only in winning protection for the lands surrounding Mono Lake. The Forest Service Scenic Area and the Tufa State Reserve did not include specific language addressing the need for water in the streams or the need for water in Mono Lake. The local community felt they were being saddled with restrictions on land use, while nothing was being done that truly protected Mono Lake.

When the water started flowing down Rush and Lee Vining Creeks, it became the first tangible evidence that we were making a difference. It was the first evidence that it was possible to win protection for the streams and for the lake. I think that was a turning point for the community.

What do you think the Committee's most important success in 1993 was? Or was it an average sort of year?

Q

The most important success was the decision by Governor Wilson to come out publicly not just in support of Mono Lake—he's had a long-standing record of support for Mono Lake—but in support of the 6390 lake level or higher as being what is needed to preserve the ecosystem.

Mono Lake is an unusual issue in that it has gained such widespread support from all different kinds of people. Politically, Mono Lake has received tremendous support from both sides of the aisle, from Republicans and Democrats alike. Having the governor lend his sup-

A

port publicly and visibly demonstrates the strength of the arguments that we've been making all along on behalf of Mono Lake: that higher lake levels are vital to the protection of this ecosystem; that there are ways to solve the Mono Lake problem by developing replacement supplies in the Southland; and that there is an opportunity for California to solve environmental problems by creating jobs so that everybody wins.

Q

The State Water Resources Control Board is anticipated to release a draft decision in the spring. From what I hear, the implementation of that decision could have a several components. It sounds like it will be a complex decision, although there may be a simple lake level figure involved. What are some of the other elements that the decision will include?

A

One of the interesting things that will come out of the Water Board process is a decision on how to address the harm caused to the lake as result of the dropping lake level. There are a lot of public trust values that have been lost through 50 years of diversions. The Water Board has an opportunity, in addition to setting a minimum lake level and minimum flows for Mono's streams, to address the restoration of Mono Lake to bring back public trust values. They have an opportunity to restore some of the wetlands—the duck habitat—and the wildlife habitat that have been devastated due to DWP's operations.

Q

We've seen stream restoration go forward under Judge Finney's order already. That work has primarily been on the streamcourses and has not included the wetland-type restoration you've mentioned. Are there locations, apart from the streams, where wetland restoration is a real possibility?

A

Well, a restoration program will include the work that's going on along the streams. I think what most people expect coming out of the Water Board, at a minimum, is continuation of the court-ordered

stream restoration work.

Additionally, there appear to be opportunities along the north and east shores to restore some of the wetland habitat that once existed at Mono Lake. These restora-

"The Water Board has an opportunity ... to address the restoration of Mono Lake to bring back public trust values."

tion efforts depend in large part on the lake level ultimately set by the Water Board. There are some parties, including the Department of Fish and Game and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, who are arguing for significantly higher lake levels, in the range of 6410, in order to provide the opportunity to restore these devastated wetland habitats.

Q

This all sounds very optimistic. You mentioned that in September of next year the Water Board decision will be sent to Judge Finney's court where he will pass final approval on it. Is there a possibility that DWP could sidetrack or appeal the decision at that point?

A

All the parties will have the opportunity to appeal the decision in front of Judge Finney. It's an option that is available to the Department of Water and Power. We just have to wait and see what decision comes out of the Water Board and see what Finney's reaction is to it.

There are many reasons to believe that Judge Finney is going to look very closely at the Water Board decision and review it with a great deal of care. At the same time, I think there will be considerable deference by the Judge to the Water Board.

The Water Board has undertaken a very thorough and thoughtful process. They've spent three years preparing the Environmental Impact Report, and they've held public hearings around the state in order to receive public testimony. And

now they're in the midst of the legal administrative hearings involving numerous days of testimony and cross-examination of witnesses by all the parties.

It's reasonable to expect that the decision that comes out of the Board will reflect the thought that has gone into the process. So, while people can try to appeal the decision, I expect that unless there is a major problem with the decision, such an appeal would not be very successful.

Q *When the decision is made, a number of projects, such as creek and wetland restoration, may be ordered. Will there be a role for the Mono Lake Committee in those activities?*

A I think the Mono Lake Committee will end up playing a pivotal role in restoration activities. In fact, as we look to the future for the Mono Lake Committee, in many ways our biggest task is still ahead of us. How do you bring back the ecosystem at Mono Lake, how do you begin the task of healing the land that has been so devastated by DWP's diversions? We have already started on that work through the court-ordered restoration programs, and we are part of the court-appointed committee that is overseeing the plans for the restoration of the creeks. We know from the last few years of experience on that committee that there is an enormous amount of work to be done.

There are very few places in the country where this level and quality of restoration effort are going forward. In many respects Mono Lake is at the cutting edge of restoration work. We're talking about taking ecosystems that have been dewatered for decades and putting back into place the whole working ecosystem—not just the water but the vegetation and all the environmental connections that make the ecosystem work.

So it's a complex task and it's going to require a great deal of time, and a great deal of effort, and a great deal of thought. The Mono Lake Committee has already proven to be a key player by trying to bring a holistic approach to the restoration

“How do you bring back the ecosystem at Mono Lake, how do you begin the task of healing the land that has been so devastated by DWP's diversions?**”**

effort, by keeping in mind the historic values that once existed at Mono Lake, and by making sure that those are not overlooked in the process of moving towards restoration of the ecosystem.

Q *Are there other roles that you see the Committee playing at the same time as these restoration projects?*

A Yes. One of the things we can learn, particularly from the last few years, is the importance of Mono Lake for public education programs. One of the things we've discovered is that when people come to Mono Lake they're always impressed by the beauty of Mono Lake. But beyond that, the lake opens up a door and helps them to understand how places like Mono Lake are connected with our water system, how we use our water, and how we use our resources.

Mono Lake is emerging as an important site for outdoor education, particularly for people from our cities. One of the programs we worked on last year brought youths from the inner city of Los Angeles up to Mono Lake. The program was called "From the Mountains to the Sea" and it was focused on helping these young people understand where our water comes from and where it goes.

When these young people came to Mono Lake the connection was instantaneous. Not only did they love being out-of-doors—and for many of them it was the first time they had gone camping—but suddenly the connection was very real. Here was a place 350 miles away from the city, but it was one of the sources of water that they used in their

homes. They returned home with a heightened awareness of how they were part of a bigger community.

Q

Those special Mono Lake experiences have probably turned lots of people into Committee members. Many members have had a chance to visit the lake, or at least hear of a friend's experience, and get a sense of why the area is so special. But this doesn't necessarily guarantee success in trying to protect such an area—something seen many times in the history of the environmental movement. What do you think the Committee has done over the years to gather such broad support in a fight originally deemed unwinnable?

A

First and foremost, Mono Lake speaks for itself. The most powerful spokesperson for Mono Lake is the lake, and it has always been that way.

If you bring people from Los Angeles to Mono Lake, they usually stand on the shore and the first question they ask is: "How can we find a way to protect this magnificent resource and still make sure L.A. has the water it needs?"

That is the right question. How do we plan for a future for Mono Lake, for California, for the country, that makes sure we do not needlessly waste or sacrifice resources like Mono Lake in order to have resources for our cities?

The minute you ask that question, you open up the door to saying: "How do

"The most powerful spokesperson for Mono Lake is the lake, and it has always been that way."

we solve this problem?" That's where creativity comes in, that's where innovation comes in, and that's where common sense comes in, because you then start looking at how to increase, in a way that's environmentally sound, our water supplies

so that places like Mono Lake can be protected.

All along, it has been a hallmark of the Committee to say, "We're an advocate for Mono Lake, and we're going to be a strong advocate, but we're also an advocate for the City of Los Angeles. We're seeking a solution that meets the needs of both."

I think decision-makers like Governor Wilson, and Assemblyman Isenberg, and Congressman Miller, and the various people who have stepped forward and helped us seek a solution, respond to the fact that we have a holistic view of the problem, that we care about the rest of the state of California, and that we are looking for a solution that truly meets the needs of everybody involved.

Do you think that David Gaines, the Committee's founder, ever thought the Committee would be as far along in protecting Mono Lake as we are now?

Q

I think that he would have been astounded at how far we have come in restoring Mono Lake and its streams. David believed we would protect Mono Lake. I remember several weeks before he died, we had a lengthy conversation about the future of the Mono Lake Committee and he was expressing an optimism that I had never heard from him before, about how confident he was that Mono Lake would be saved.

What I think would surprise him is how far we have come in putting restoration on the agenda for Mono Lake. When he first articulated a vision for Mono Lake's future he, like everybody else, was caught up in the reality of the fight over the water rights and the size of the Department of Water and Power. Everybody was



A

telling us that you can't take on the Department of Water and Power and win.

In many respects, David defined a future for Mono Lake that was based on a minimum protected lake level, letting go of a bigger dream for Mono even though he wanted it. He wanted to see Mono Lake restored to the 6417 foot level. But he always said that that would never happen

"We will have to roll up our sleeves and make sure that the vision of a protected Mono Lake comes true. "

and that we had to be realistic, that we had to be part of solving problems. So he always scaled down the vision.

I think today he would be thrilled and surprised at how strongly the courts, and the Water Board, and various political leaders have come forward in emphasizing the need for restoration of the values of Mono Lake.

Q *Let's look at the Committee itself for a moment. We've gone through some changes this past year—remodeling the Lee Vining Information Center and Bookstore, for example. And we've seen some difficulties, such as with our new membership list maintenance company. What tough spots do you see ahead for the Committee in 1994?*

A Well, I think the toughest spot in 1994 will be having the public believe that the Mono Lake issue is over, and that once the Water Board makes its decision we can somehow pack up our bags and go home. What is clear is that the decision is going to be much more complicated. There will be a restoration component, and to that extent our work is just starting. We will have to roll up our sleeves and make sure that the vision of a protected Mono Lake comes true. That's going to be the work of several more years before we really feel confident that the restoration part of the work is on track.

Q *In closing, let's talk about Mono Lake and the time you have spent there. What has been your most memorable experience at Mono Lake?*

A One of the most memorable things I've done was to hike around the lake with a friend of mine. Her husband met us at night, so we only needed to carry day packs, and it was the most amazing journey of discovery.

We wandered around the shoreline, rather than worrying about getting to a specific destination. So we just explored.

We would see something on the horizon and just walk toward it; we probably walked twice the mileage of the actual lake circumference. We found snowy plovers on the alkali flat. We had the wonderful experience of walking along alkali flat and suddenly tripping across warm springs. You're hip deep in water and there are green tules and yellow-headed blackbirds—it's so dramatic. We kept going further, discovering remote springs and I remember at one point losing my sandals in the mud.

To me, Mono Lake is a combination of all those experiences. They come together in a collage of beauty. I had such a wonderful time exploring the far side of Mono Lake—the wildness of Mono Lake. For me it has always been a touchstone memory to come back to. I'm sitting here at a desk and I've got papers everywhere and I don't have a window and I have to mentally imagine what it is like to be at Mono Lake because that's the reason I'm doing all this. I constantly come back to that collage of memories. It's what keeps me going.

Martha Davis is the Executive Director of the Mono Lake Committee. Martha began work in the Committee's now-defunct Sacramento office in 1983. In addition to Mono Lake, she requires a minimum of six hours of phone conversation each day to keep her going.

Migrations

by Gary Nelson

As winter closes in on the Mono Basin, many of its residents prepare to move south. Some people can be seen working on trailers or motor homes, their accelerated activity in direct contrast to the slowing of nature's autumnal rhythm. Thoughts of warm Mexican beaches (and perhaps cheap Mexican beer) give added purpose to each turn of the wrench or closing of the duffel bag.

One couple has already left.

The mating pair of osprey that nests on a tufa tower a few hundred yards offshore from Navy Beach, has gone. Unencumbered by material possessions, prompted by instinct, these magnificent fish-eating hawks simply took off and flew south, straining to gain enough altitude to clear the divide at Deadman Summit, soaring over forest and sagebrush, and then coasting down through the gradually thinning air into clear desert valleys.

I have always wondered where they go to winter. Could be anywhere from Southern California to South America. Somewhere warmer than the Mono Basin, no doubt. Sometime during late September, after I'm sure that they are gone, I point the bow of my canoe towards the "Osprey tufa." This formation lies east of the main grove at South Tufa, still a healthy distance from the relict shoreline. The two largest towers—although right next to each other—are quite different. One rises about 20 feet above the lake and tapers to a sharp point. The other is eighteen feet high, and flat-topped. The higher tower serves as a perch, and it is the first place I look to see an osprey outlined against the clear desert sky during the summer months.

The flat-topped tower is home to the osprey, where they have built their deep nest of pine branches. Paddling beneath the tower I imagine the work that has gone into this nest. Each branch represents a foot of several miles for the bird, and various winter winds necessitate consider-

able rebuilding each spring.

From my position east of the osprey tufa I can look past the empty nest to the russet shoreline at South Tufa. It seems like only days ago that this abandoned beach teemed with people. They swam in the warm briny water, buoyantly afloat

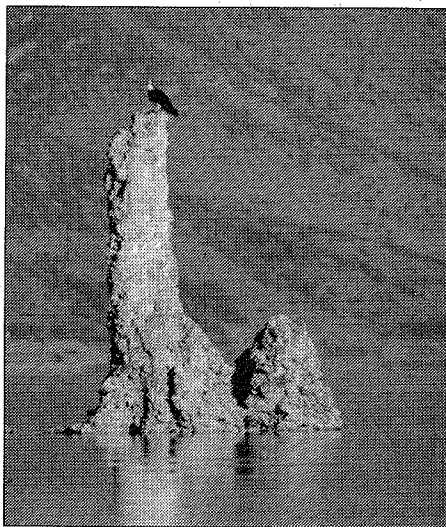


Photo by Don Jackson

amidst trillions of brine shrimp. They wandered through the tufa grove, marveling at the artistic intricacy of the towers. Now they are gone.

Winter is the season of true solitude in the Mono Basin. As I float upon the mirror like surface of the lake, without the screeching of osprey or even a whisper of wind to break the awesome silence, solitude has become a tangible component of the basin, no less a presence than the granite bulk of the Sierra rising to the west. I may never know where my feathered friends go to winter, but while they're gone I'll keep an eye on their summer home, and await their return.

I am often asked, during canoe tours, why fish-eating hawks nest at a lake with no fish. I reply that the osprey, like other higher species, are willing to commute longer to work so that they can raise their young in a safe environment. Hopefully, the recent fishery restoration work on Lee

Vining and Rush creeks will shorten their commute.

Since the very wet winter of 1984, the flat-topped tufa has offered the isolation and safety from predators that these osprey require to raise their young.

The isolation factor is, unfortunately, changing rapidly. I have been launching canoes from Navy Beach for the last five summers. At first it was very rare to see even one other canoe or kayak on the lake. Often they would paddle along with our group. Sometimes, with a wave, they would glide off on their own solitary tour through the tufa.

The past two summers have seen a substantial increase in boating activity at Navy Beach. It is not unusual to see 20 or more boats on the lake during a summer day.

Many people launching from Navy Beach are immediately drawn towards toward the osprey tufa, unaware of its tenants. We have tried to warn boaters about the osprey's need for privacy, how they will abandon the nest if disturbed. Everyone I have talked with has immediately respected this restriction, once they were made aware of it.

Nevertheless, I wonder if we may have reached the point where neither the small sign below the parking lot, nor the buoys anchored offshore will be adequate to ensure privacy for the osprey. Next summer may tell.

If the osprey ever feel compelled to abandon this tower, I hope that it will be because of a rising lake level. The higher stream flows needed to make the lake rise would provide new habitat and improved fisheries along Mono's creeks. Perhaps the towering cottonwoods and pines that were once home to the osprey, here in the basin, will thrive again, providing streamside nesting sites.

And that's a good reason for moving.

Gary Nelson is in charge of the Mono Lake Foundation canoe tour program. He is a veteran Committee volunteer and a strong supporter of spicy food at potlucks.

1993 in review



Heavy winter
snows (left) led to
a good runoff
year; Mono Lake
rose 1.3 feet
overall.



Staff, volunteers, and
our contractor worked
many hours to make
the new building vision
come true.

Above, nails are set on
the old floor before a
final sanding.



The
Information
Center and
Bookstore
remodel was
finished in
1993 (left).

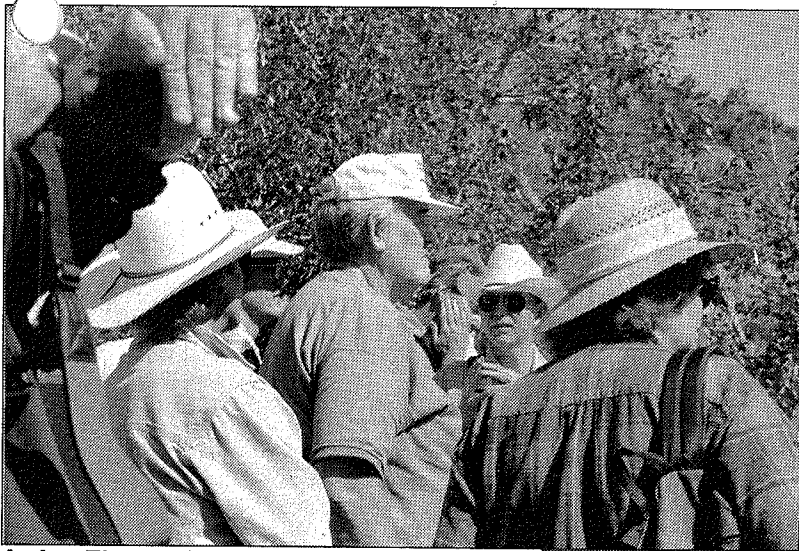


Summer at Mono
Lake was as fun as
ever! Canoe tours
(left) were
especially popular.

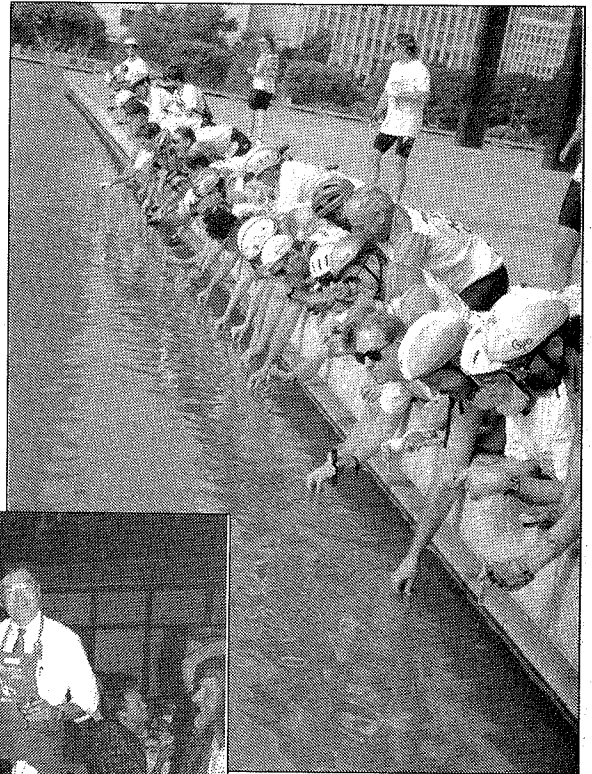
The MLC adopted
a new logo (right)
in 1993. Thanks to
Patagonia for the
design!



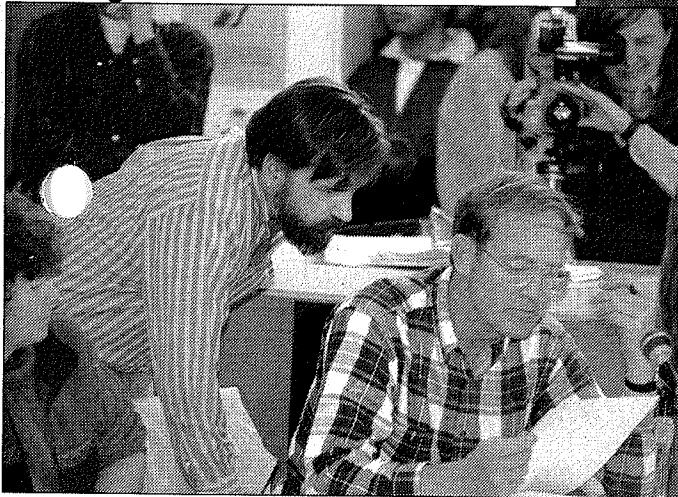
Photo by Althea Edwards



Judge Finney (above center) reviewed creek restoration work on a field trip during the summer.



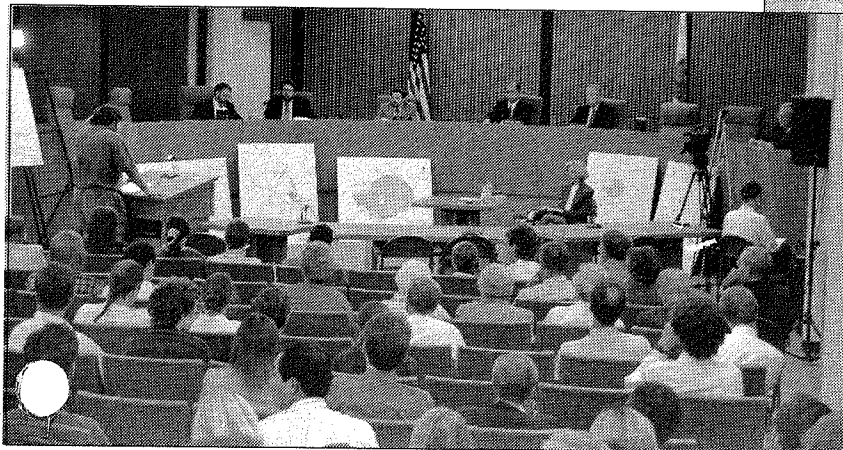
The annual Bike-a-thon (above) was once again successful, as was the popular Wine Cellar Drawing (pictured left). This year's Drawing is on May 21 (see back page)



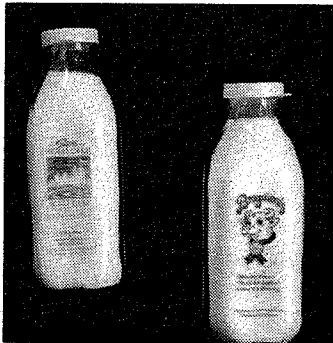
The Water Board Administrative Hearings began in 1993. Pictured, left to right are Associate Director Ilene Mandelbaum and MLC attorneys Patrick Flinn and Bruce Dodge



The State Water board recieved thousands of letter (above) from supporters of Mono Lake. They also heard directly from concerned citizens at public hearings (left).



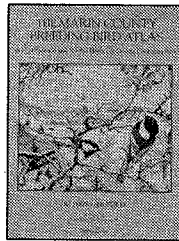
Gifts from the Committee store.



Committee Milk Bottles!

These are the real thing! From Broguiere's "Milk so fresh . . . the cows don't know it's missing" Dairy, these one quart bottles sport the Broguiere's logo on one side and the MLC logo on the other. They make great decorative, and functional, counter-top canisters. For collectors, this batch of bottles was put into circulation in the fall of '93. Milk bottles rapidly obtain collectible status; in fact these could be worth twice what you pay before you get them!

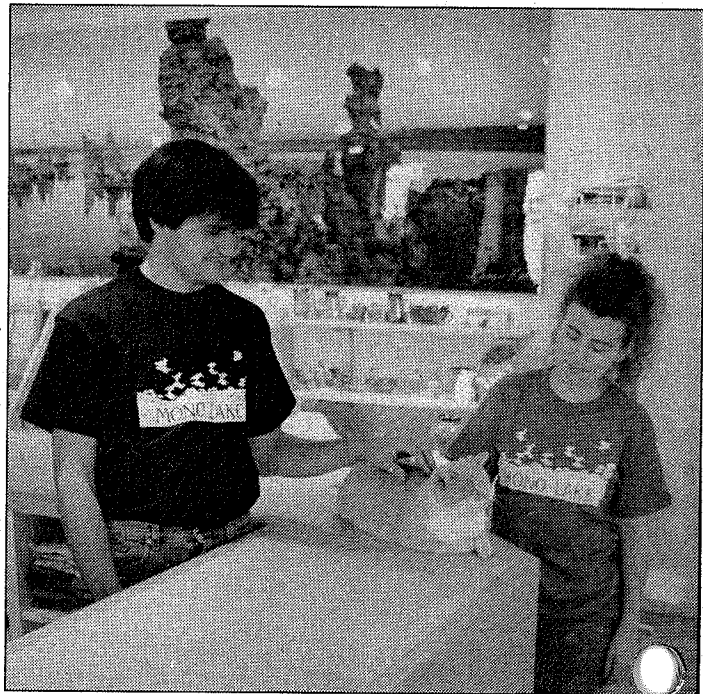
Glass milk bottle: \$5.00
Three or more: \$4.00 each



The Marin County Breeding Bird Atlas: A Distributional and Natural History of Coastal California Birds

Dave Shuford, who supervises the annual expeditions to Mono's islands to count California Gulls, has compiled an exhaustive set of data on the bird life of Marin County. Shuford is on the staff at Point Reyes Bird Observatory and, in this book, shows his expertise on the diverse habitats and winged inhabitants of Marin County. While the book is most useful in Marin, it contains natural history information applicable far beyond political boundaries.

Includes Marin county distribution maps; 479 pages: \$24.95



Shorebird T-shirts

Join autumn interns Julie Landa and Mike Sanders and save big on one of the Committee's best sellers! Adopted store cat Aldo would wear one if he could! We find ourselves with an embarrassingly large overstock. Bad for us . . . great for you.

Sizes S-XL. Available in royal, black and purple (Sizes and colors limited to stock on hand. We suggest selecting second and third choice colors or calling in your order.) Regularly \$13.00 Through April 15 only, while supplies last: \$9.00

Order milk bottles, books, T-shirts, videos, or anything else from our Lee Vining store!

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	3 or more Milk Bottles, each	\$4.00	
	Shore Bird T 1st Color:	\$9.00	
	2nd Color:		
	Marin County Breeding Bird Atlas	\$24.95	
	1994 Mono Lake Calendar	\$5.95	
	Video: The Water Cycle	\$29.95	
	Other:		
CA residents add applicable sales tax			
Shipping (see left)			
Phone orders: Call (619) 647-6595		Total:	
Fax orders: (619) 647-6377			
The Mono Lake Committee, P.O. Box 29, Lee Vining, CA 93541			

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Over \$50	\$6.00

Signature _____ Card Number _____ Expiration Date _____

Use the handy membership envelope!

Winter is a quiet, beautiful time to visit Mono Lake — and the MLC

by Rick Knepp

The stark beauty of the Mono Basin in winter makes this a wonderful time of year to visit. The comparison to a lunar landscape we frequently hear takes on an entirely different dimension under the cloak of white the shoreline often wears.

Cross country skiers and snowshoers delight in a trip along the lake's edge; a whisper-quiet journey, sometimes shared only by silent sentinels of tufa, a coyote in pursuit of a hard-earned supper, and a rabbit determined not to become that meal. During occurrences of the fog the Paiutes call poconip, pine and sage wear a lacy veil of crystalline ice; as the poconip lifts, those same crystals dance on the wind, sparkling in the hazy sun like so much pixie dust. The attractions of the Basin in this special season remain one of the best-kept secrets of Western tourism.

Life at the Committee's Information Center and Bookstore is quiet this first winter following our remodel, a welcome breather from the hectic pace of our busiest summer ever. We now offer a warm and inviting environment for a little shopping or for simply "hanging out."

Spend a few hours browsing

through our hundreds of book titles and other merchandise, while enjoying music from our carefully selected list of titles.

New this winter are pottery from local ceramist Jack Trefry, a selection of the popular Klutz books for kids, photo notecards by Ansel Adams (and others) from Museum Graphics, and an improved selection of regional posters and prints.

Our recently revised slide presentation is

ready and waiting to be shown, and our staff welcome the opportunity to bring visitors up to date on the current status of the lake and our efforts to protect it at the State Water Resources Control Board hearings in Sacramento. We hope to see you soon!

Rick Knepp is the Committee's Sales Manager. He was hired by MLC in 1992 and is tired of losing things on his desk.

Business opportunity with 1995 Mono Lake Calendar

Believe it or not, the 1995 *Mono Lake Calendar* is midway through development. If you own or manage a business, this could be your chance to help yourself and the Mono Lake Committee's efforts on behalf of the lake at the same time!

The Committee's 10th calendar should (we hope!) reach the presses by April 1st, and the masses by month's end. In early December photographs to illustrate the calendar were selected in Sacramento at the offices of Dane Henas Design. Designers Henas and Wendy Heaton, working on the calendar for the third year, were pleased with the "outstanding" group of images, including work by such noted photographers as David Muench, James Randklev, and Jim Stimson.

The introductory essay for the 1995 calendar will be written by internationally-renowned photographer and writer Galen Rowell. Design work on the cover will be complete in January, should you be interested in a sample.

So where does your business or organization fit in?

By taking advantage of a little-known program in which the calendar is produced with a customized "shirt-tail" message hanging two inches below the grid. The "shirt-tail" serves to keep companies' names in front of clients, customers, and friends year-round. The calendars are

usually offered as gifts by these companies during the holiday season.

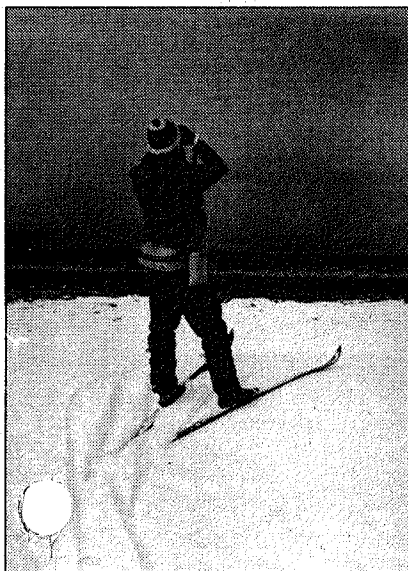
And they work!

Dave Sloves, a long-time Committee supporter and President of Desktop Products, a computer sales firm in Emeryville, has been shirt-tailing since the program began in the mid-eighties. Reflecting on his order for the current year's calendar, Sloves notes: "My customers have come to expect the calendar each year. One year we ran short, and we heard about it!"

U.S. Generating Company was a first-time participant with the 1994 calendar. "We're very pleased," said Cindy Burgess, of the Bethesda, Maryland firm. "We're looking forward to 1995."

The program offers the customized calendars to purchasers of 100 or more calendars, with protective mailers, at prices approaching wholesale levels. "It represents a tremendous opportunity to support the Committee's work and to give a beautiful gift that will keep a firm's name in front of its customers for the entire year," according to Rick Knepp, MLC Sales Manager and Calendar Project Director.

Printing deadlines require that purchasers confirm their participation by March 10th. If you would like to learn more about how the shirt-tail program works, or for a price quote, call Rick in the Lee Vining office at (619) 647-6595.



Committee experiencing problems with membership list

by Alan Magree

The Mono Lake Committee Mail and Membership program underwent profound changes in 1993, resulting in some unfortunate errors. Early in 1993 the company that assisted the Committee in the preparation and maintenance of our membership list suddenly went out of business. This turn of events forced the Committee to make a quick decision regarding the disposition of the list.

The vendor that was selected assured us that they would be able to maintain our list and provide updates in a timely manner. As many of you are aware, this was not to be the case.

Many Committee members have sent us comments and complaints concerning duplicate mailings and repeat requests for renewals. After some preliminary investigations, it was discovered that the membership file had not been updated accurately by the maintenance company. Subsequent research revealed between 2,000 and 3,000 errors in the membership file. Several facets of the record update

process were either ignored or forgotten during the preceding months, ranging from failure to advance membership expiration dates to skipped entry of address changes.

Protracted, and somewhat tense, negotiations followed. Finally, the maintenance company agreed to re-do all of their previous work for no charge.

In the meantime Sharon Munciel, the Committee's Mail and Membership Coordinator, sent out letters of apology to hundreds of disgruntled members. The Committee's most recent mailing of renewal reminders included a printed insert explaining our problems with updating records. We are currently evaluating several potential new service companies and anticipate changing vendors as soon as practical.

The Committee receives approximately 20,000 pieces of mail from members over the course of the year. We open and personally handle virtually all the mail we receive from our members. The Mail and Membership Coordinator sorts the mail, responds to special requests, and sends information to the list maintenance

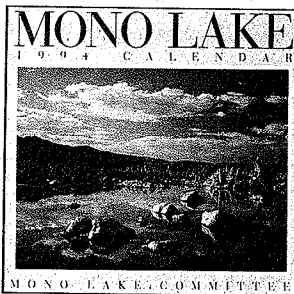
company for data processing. Data processing includes updating renewal dates; recording donations to appeals; changing names or addresses; record deletions; and special status requests, such as marking a member's record so it is not traded with other groups. The list maintenance company also prints mailing labels and makes sure our membership records are backed up and secure.

This year has been challenging in many respects. Overall donations to non-profit organizations have been down considerably. The Committee and its members have always enjoyed a high degree of personal contact, and our ability to serve your needs is what sets the Mono Lake Committee apart from other organizations.

We are truly sorry for any inconvenience the recent mix-ups may have caused and we are working diligently to improve the situation. Thank you for your patience and continued support.

Alan Magree is the Committee's Development Director. He began work with the MLC this past fall and enjoys being tall.

Mono Lake Calendar Sale!



Featuring an essay from award-winning writer Terry Tempest Williams and exquisite photographs by James Ranklev, Jim Stimson, Jeff Gnass, and others, this is a calendar for all seasons . . . and one to keep into the future. After January 15, save five dollars off the in-season price of \$10.95.

After January 15th: \$5.95

New Bike-a-thon video: The Water Cycle

Producers Nancy Brink and Rick Jaffe follow the 1991 Bike-a-thon from DWP to the shores of Mono Lake as a framework for examining issues of water policy, resource use, development, and individual action.

Bike-a-thoners are featured in the documentary, as is fascinating and rare historical footage of the aqueduct construction and the Owens Valley water wars.

The Water Cycle is designed to help people explore "new attitudes toward the environment and natural resources." Available at a special price through the MLC.

Music written and performed by jazz pianist Bruce Barth. 29 minutes. VHS. Study guide included. \$29.95.

Use the order form on page 18!

Free drawing winners chosen

The 1993 Free Drawing took place on November 1, 1993, at the Mono Lake Committee Information Center in Lee Vining. Winners were chosen from the over 26,000 entries received.

Alan Magree, the Committee's Development Director, noted that "the Free Drawing recruits more new members for the Committee than any other single event." This year, 800 new members joined the Committee through the Free Drawing, which offers a chance to become a member and a chance to win a prize.

Thanks go out to everyone who entered; your donations are an important source of support for the Committee. This year's winners, and their prizes, are:

Barbara Spencer, of Santa Ana, won this year's Grand Prize: a two week adventure trip to Holland and Denmark, courtesy of *Cel Nature Tours*, Victorville, California. If you would like to join her, see the advertisement in the back page of this newsletter.

Irving and Vera Schiller, from Glendale, won the Ansel Adams Signed Lithograph, donated by the *Ansel Adams Gallery*.

Tom Dekoning, of Tollhouse, won the Yosemite Weekend, donated by *Yosemite Park and Curry Company*.

Vladimir Hryeenko, from Santa Monica, won the Mono Lake Weekend, donated by *The Mono Inn*, *The Gateway Motel*, and *The Mono Lake Foundation*.

James Harkins, a resident of Carmel, won the Mammoth Lakes Weekend, donated by *Alpine Lodge*, *Tamarack Lodge*, *O'Kelly and Dunn*, and *Elliot Aviation*.



Volunteer Don Jackson draws a winning entry for the 1993 Free Drawing. Sales Manager Rick Knepp holds the over 26,000 entries.

Kevin Tobeck, who resides in Tracy, won the American River rafting trip, donated by *Friends of the River Foundation*.


Jeff Park, of Topanga, won the Redwoods River Retreat, donated by *Redwoods River Retreat*.

Chuck Munger, from Fallbrook, won the June Lake Ski Weekend, donated by *June Ski Resort*, *The Sierra Inn*, and *Creative Mailing*.

Taras Kiceniuk Jr., of Santa Paula, won a \$100 Eddie Bauer shopping spree, donated by *Eddie Bauer*.

Dale Laster, of Santa Monica, **Meyer Luskin**, from Los Angeles, **George De Jong**, of San Francisco, **Peter Boyes**, of Rancho Murieta, and **Rosemary Jones**, of Fresno, each won a jacket provided by outdoor clothing company *Patagonia*.

Tina Sanders, MLC Development Coordinator, congratulated the winners and thanked the donors of prizes. "We hope all the winners enjoy their prizes," she commented, "and we extend our appreciation to all the companies which donated them."

"Don't forget," Sanders concluded, "every entry made in the free drawing supported our efforts to save Mono Lake. Because of that, everyone who entered wins something." 

Top Bike-a-thon fundraisers announced

The Mono Lake Bike-a-thon is more than a challenging ride; it is a fundraiser as well. Bike-a-thon participants recruit sponsors for the ride and put the money toward saving Mono Lake. Donations from sponsors usually arrive at the Committee offices for several weeks after the ride is completed. As a result, we were unable to announce the top Bike-a-thon fundraisers in the last issue of the letter. Now that we know who they are, we are proud to list them below.

The top fundraiser was **Mark Coolidge**. For his efforts he was awarded a set of 700C STD Trispoke wheels donated by *Cobalt Cycles*.

Paul Green ranked in second place for fundraising and won a Backroads bicycle tour weekend getaway for two (it is suspected he'll take emeritus MLC Board member Helen Green with him).


Emily Kenyon, who raised the third largest amount of money, won a weekend for two at the Redwoods River Retreat.

Glenn Skinner raised the fourth largest amount of money for the Committee and

received the appreciation of the Mono Lake Committee.

A special drawing was held for a set of Trispoke Wheels. **Paul Green** won the prize.

While the Bike-a-thon awards are being handed out, **Viki Marugg** deserves a special thanks for refurbishing the cyclists' route map. Viki did a great job; among other refinements, riders now can find the campground in Mammoth Lakes.


And Bike-a-thon Coordinator Tina Sanders sends special thanks to all the companies which donated awards; they encouraged riders to raise as much as possible. 

Welcome to new staff

Welcome to **Stacey Simon**, the Committee's new Public Education Program Coordinator. Stacey was a summer intern in 1991 and supervised the Mono Lake Foundation canoe tour program last summer. A graduate of Occidental College, Stacey brings enthusiasm for environmental education and a desire to build a successful niche for Committee programs.

We bid a fond farewell to fall interns **Mike Sanders** and **Juliet Landa**. Mike and Julie are moving to Boulder, Colorado (after a detour to their native Wisconsin) where Julie hopes to enroll in the Environmental Policy Program at the University of


Colorado, Boulder. Mike wants to go back to school, but isn't sure what topic to focus on. We believe he's serious since he drove all the way to Mission Viejo to take the GRE. At the top of their list will be finding an apartment suitable for the "clawed terror" they adopted while living in the intern house.

As usual, the change of season brings with it new interns. Welcome to **Julie Clothier** and **Paul Greci**, who are rumored to be excited about the wood stove in the intern house. Julie and Paul both bring extensive background in environmental education and we look forward to having them join us. 

Volunteers needed

Are you interested in volunteering a few hours per week or, possibly, an entire summer? As with most non-profit groups, Committee staff have more work than can be completed. The Los Angeles office needs help for a few hours each week processing mail, answering phones, and with other tasks. It's not glamorous, but it can be fun. Call Stacy Brown at (818) 972-2025 if you are interested.

How about spending your summer at Mono Lake—and helping to save it at the same time? The Lee Vining office is look-

ing for a volunteer, or pair of volunteers, willing to commit to working several shifts a week in the Information Center and Bookstore during the summer months. Tasks involve selling merchandise, giving directions, and sharing your knowledge of Mono Lake (but don't worry—training is provided). It is a chance to work with an energetic group of people in a beautiful setting. While we can not provide housing, we may be able to assist with accommodations. Call Shannon Nelson in Lee Vining for details at (619) 647-6595. 



The Mono Lake Committee Information Center and Bookstore could be your summer home. The Committee is looking for volunteers willing to work weekly shifts throughout the summer.

Seeking new T-shirt designs


Tshirts have always been our leading merchandise fundraiser—top sellers both in our Information Center and Bookstore and in our mail order program. In order to keep them there, we need to add new designs regularly. Such is the case now. We would like to add at least one and possibly two designs for the coming season.

The Committee has a wealth of talent at its fingertips . . . you! Many members are talented artists, and we would like to tap that skill in selecting new T-shirt designs. If you would like to submit a design for consideration, we would love to see it!

Inspiration for subject matter could be drawn from any aspect of the Mono Basin or its ecosystem. Flora, fauna, landscapes, abstractions, text . . . we'd love to see whatever you may come up with. Text and captions should reference Mono Lake, the Mono Basin, or the Committee. Do note that we have found it difficult to reproduce in the silk-screen process in a literal fashion.

Please limit your design to an area roughly 10 inches wide by 12 inches high, and to four colors (black and white count as colors, unless the shirt it prints on is the appropriate color).

In order to properly prepare for the summer season, we will need to receive submissions by March 15th. Credit for selected designs will be given on each shirt, and we ask that copyright be donated to the MLC.

Please contact Sales Manager Rick Knepp with questions at (619) 647-6595. Submissions should be sent to Rick's attention at the Committee P.O. Box 29, Highway 395 & 3rd Street, Lee Vining, CA 93541. 

Volunteers and special donors help Committee

Memorial Gifts

Alan Rammer, of Montesano, Washington, made a gift in memory of Charles Stone, the father of one of his coworkers at the Department of Fisheries.

Lawrence F. Coleman, of Tiburon, made a gift in memory of his wife Audrey.

Thanks to **Virginia Elliott**, of San Diego, for her contribution in memory of Ray Bond.

Merritt and Shirley Wamen, of Carmichael, made a memorial contribution to the Committee for Mr. Fred Lichirie, Esq.

Peter C. Fisher was remembered by **Max and Patricia Fisher**, of Blue Lake, with a donation.

Dorothy Roberts, of Walnut Creek, honored Walter Cain, who was a lifetime resident of Mono County, with a gift to the Committee. Walter was a County Supervisor for 28 years and loved the beauty of the Eastern Sierra.

Matched Gifts

Spaulding and Ruby Birss, of Santa Barbara, made a donation which was matched by Bank of America.

Leslie Lampert, of Palo Alto, also made a donation. Digital Corporation matched her gift.

L. and Marjorie Smith of Palo Alto supported the Committee and had their donation matched by IBM.

Michele Sooy, of Laguna Nigel, made a gift which was matched by Bank of America.

Your employer may have a matching gift program also; contact your company's human resources department to find out. If so, the Committee will doubly benefit from your contributions.

Special Thanks

Don Hilliker, the Technical Sales Representative for Print Imaging of the Eastman Kodak Company, has generously made arrangements to keep the Committee supplied with black and white film for the newsletter and other projects. Many thanks!

Berkeley Systems (510-540-5535) kindly donated a copy of their After Dark screensaver for use on our new publications computer. Playing Lunatic Fringe hasn't slowed down the newsletter too much ...

Carroll L. Evans Jr., of Ridgecrest, has taken responsibility for making sure the Mono Lake Slideshow is shown to its best advantage. Carroll arranged for new projector lenses, and then convinced friends to join him in donating two new projectors to go with them! Many thanks, Carroll. **Alan and Joan Woodman, Janet Westbrook, and Jean Bennett** kindly helped make the projector donation possible.

Don Jackson, of Forestville, is working hard to keep his name present in this column every month. Don helped the Committee contact Kodak for the donation of film listed above. Don also has provided many photos for our library and is assisting us in getting a high quality printer (for a low price) for this newsletter.

Stephen Anderson, of Fountain Valley, provided the Committee with the striking photo now used on our membership brochures. Stephen deserves double thanks for the photo, once because it is so effective and a second time because he's been so supportive of its use.

A large cadre of volunteers helped us prepare for the Water Board's public hearings. Thanks to: **Steve Schmidt, Carolyn Callahan, Bryan Flaig, Jim Sayer, Emily Hart, Bob Schneider, Joan Humphrey, Jill Shirley, Linda Emerson, Larry Emerson, Karyn Helfrich, Steve Holland, Karen Phillips, David Takemoto-Weerts, Richard Potashin** (distant relation of Mono's legendary dust), the Sierra Club California-Nevada Field Office, **Barbara Rivenes, Friends of the River, Eric Knapp, John Crawford, the California Wilderness Coalition, Alexa Williams, Dennis King, Sara Potter, Mark Lake, Gary Nelson, and Sally Gaines**. It's a long list, which means we probably left someone out; whoever you are, we appreciated your help as much as anyone's.

Gary Nelson, of Mono City, helped out with the clean up of our back storeroom (in which Board member **Sally Gaines** was also enlisted) and the refurbishment of an old office space.

Larry Breed, of Palo Alto, spent some time improving to organization of our ice house storage area. Now we can get in the door and find things, too!

Irene Snavelly, of Covina, has earned the appreciation of staff in the Burbank office for her cheerful assistance on a multitude of projects.

Thanks go out to the Los Angeles Speaker's Bureau. These dedicated folks trek to various meetings throughout the southland to present the Mono Lake slideshow and recruit new MLC members. Thanks to **Tom Gwin**, of Victorville, **Dale Burger**, and **Nan Kaeser**.

Rich Wegman, of T.S. Enterprises in Santa Monica, gets kudos for his continuing assistance in beating our computer accounting program into shape.

Althea Edwards of La Crescenta worked with the MLC policy staff to provide recreation photos (and the required multiple copies) for the Water Board process. Thanks Althea!

Steve Patterson, of Patterson Floor Coverings in Redwood City gets a big thanks and an apology since we missed mentioning him in the previous issue. Steve has become the Committee's carpet master, donating everything we needed to make the slideshow room and office in Lee Vining attractive and comfortable. Thanks!

A special note of thanks to **Ray Broguiere** of Broguiere's Farm Fresh Dairy in Montebello for his donation of the genuine glass milk bottles sold both in the store and through the mail (see page 18).

Finally, we give hearty thanks to volunteers **Richard Wiebe, Vic Bedoian, and Chuck Peck**. They gave a slide presentation and talk on Mono Lake to over 100 members of Fresno-area Audubon and Sierra Club groups. Please contact Sally Miller at (619) 647-6595 if you are interested in making a similar presentation.

Join us

for a fifteen day nature adventure in Holland, Denmark, & Sweden

- Explore the Dutch Friesland Island nature reserves
- "Wadlopen" or mud walking between islands
- Birdwalks in woods and dune country
- Bicycle excursion in Hoenderloo and Blajunfrun in Sweden
- Sail across the Zuiderzee
- Air, accomodations, all excursions, and most meals included

June 30-July 14, 1994.

\$3495; all profits (\$500-600 per guest) go to the Mono Lake Committee and its efforts to save the Mono Lake ecosystem.



**Holland
Travel
Professional**

To make reservations, or for more information, contact:

Cal Nature Tours
7310 SVL Box
Victorville, CA 92392
(619) 241-2322

**Win one of five
exquisite wine cellars
worth over \$500 each!**

Wine drawing tickets are \$50 each

The drawing will be held May 21, 1994
after a spectacular dinner at the
St Francis Yacht Club, San Francisco

Dinner tickets are \$50 per person and space is
limited. Dinner begins at 6:30 P.M.

You need not be present at dinner to win a wine cellar!

The Mono Lake Committee
9th Annual



*For tickets and further information
call Tina Sanders at (818) 972-2025*



**MONO LAKE
COMMITTEE**

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