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MONO LAKE

NEWSLETTER



2000 Field Seminars

Mono Lake Newsletter

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MONO LAKE COMMITTEE

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ere in Lee Vining we often think of winter as a time to slow down and take a step back from the hectic pace of summer. Snow usually helps to do that, but as this Newsletter goes to press, the ground—and even the peaks above town—are looking pretty dry. Maybe that's why things are buzzing with excitement here in the office. There's good news about South Tufa and more!

On the restoration front you'll find details on Rush Creek channel openings on pages 4–5. News on Propositions 12 & 13, the park and water bonds, can be found on page 13. An intriguing algae update is on page 16. And make sure to take a look at the keynote address from Credo Mutwa of South Africa—given at the Living Lakes International conference here in Lee Vining during the fall—as it is a special treat.

Thinking of visiting? Be sure to review the 2000 field seminars on page 17–20. Or plan your own trip; either way Mono Lake is here for us all as the new century begins!

— Arya Degenhardt



Mono Lake Committee Staff Bartshe Miller, Arya Degenhardt (holding the data collection instrument), Bob Melrose of the Reno Weather Service (holding the balloon), Anna Christensen, MLC Board Member Dave Marquart, and Greg Reis at the launch of a weather balloon at the National Weather Service facility in Reno. Balloons are launched twice daily with instruments which measure temperature, humidity, pressure, and wind speed and direction as they soar to heights of nearly 20 miles above the earth. For weather information and the National Weather Service link see www.monolake.org.

Mono Lake Committee Mission

The Mono Lake Committee is a non-profit citizens' group dedicated to protecting and restoring the Mono Basin ecosystem, educating the public about Mono Lake and the impacts on the environment of excessive water use, and promoting cooperative solutions that protect Mono Lake and meet real water needs without transferring environmental problems to other areas.

Mono Lake is a part of the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network and a member of the international Living Lakes partnership. Learn more at www.livinglakes.org.

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Travel on the gravel

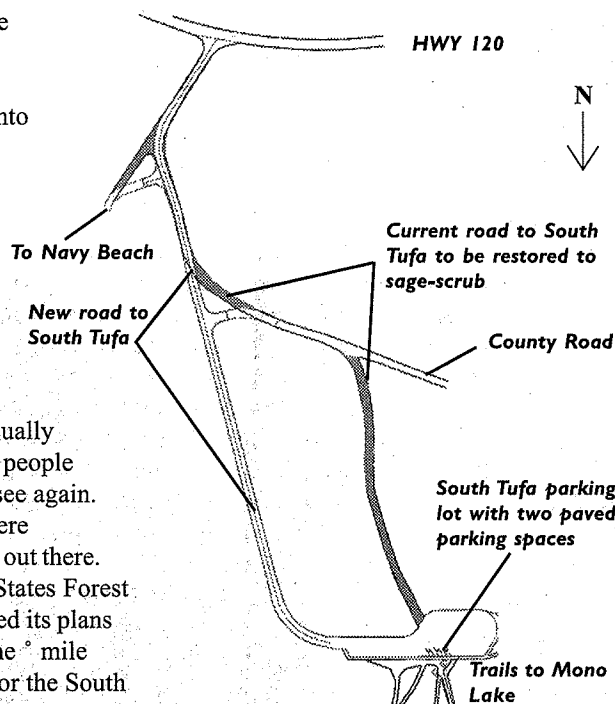
South Tufa plans finalized

by Bartshe Miller

Do you recall a time traveling far from home, when you turned off the pavement onto a dirt road, the low rumble of tires moving across gravel, bumping along through the dust past unfamiliar terrain to a mysterious destination? Your experience began when you left the pavement: freedom, something remote and exciting was usually ahead, something that few people had seen before or would see again. A dirt road meant somewhere different, somewhere wild, out there.

Fortunately the United States Forest Service (USFS) has changed its plans and decided not to pave the 1/2 mile gravel road to South Tufa or the South Tufa parking lot, with a small exception. The original plans, finalized in 1993, called for realigning, widening, and paving the road all the way from the entrance at Hwy 120 East to and including the South Tufa parking lot. When news got out that the USFS was about to implement the plans, they received numerous letters and feedback. (Mono Lake Committee members came forth with many heartfelt and poignant letters; thank you for making your views known—your comments have been invaluable.) The majority of comments were clearly in opposition to paving and enlarging the parking area. After recent input from the Tufa State Reserve, Mono Lake Committee, and the general public, the USFS has decided to alter the plans.

Technically the USFS did not have to consider further comment from the public after the Environmental Assessment comment process was completed in 1993. The Committee thanks the USFS for the time it spent meeting with the Committee



Map (modified—not to scale) of the planned road changes in the South Tufa Area vicinity.

and Tufa State Reserve staff, and gathering input in an effort to better respond to the public on the changes at South Tufa. Part of that response included deciding not to pave the parking lot and road at the site.

The USFS has decided to go ahead with the following specific plans:

- put a large amount of gravel on the road to bring the existing gravel road up to the surrounding ground level
- realign and pave the entrance slope leading from Hwy 120 East down to where it levels off (about 500 feet, somewhat past the Navy Beach road entrance)
- realign the Navy Beach road to enter at a right angle with a stop sign
- realign the intersection of the county road (Test Station Road) and the

continued on page 21

Striking a balance

Visitation has increased at Mono Lake and changes at South Tufa, the main visitor day-use site, have become necessary and inevitable.

If you have visited South Tufa in the past and decide to return, you will notice the changes. It will be hard to miss the five new structures, the cement curb, the enlarged parking lot, the paved trail around the parking lot and to the lake, more shade, more parking, more pleasant restroom facilities, and definitely better handicap access. You might lament the changes, or you might welcome them, or you might have mixed emotions. Your experience will be different.

But if you have never visited South Tufa before, what will your experience be like?

When visitation increases at a recreation site, park and public land managers often make predictable changes that include pavement, cement, and more or bigger structures. These changes may not always be the best alternatives, and there may be other solutions that can serve increased visitation without diminishing the experience.

Searching for these solutions has been the Mono Lake Committee's concern during the last year working with the Forest Service on the improvements at South Tufa. We have watched visitation increase over twenty years, conversed with hundreds of thousands of visitors, and tens of thousands of Mono Lake Committee members. We have had contact with the thousands of people who have "discovered" Mono Lake during two decades of South Tufa walks. We are not engineers, but we are experts on visitation.

We have valuable input to contribute, and will continue to work with the Inyo National Forest and Tufa State Reserve to find a reasonable balance between visitors' access, improvements, and the Mono Lake experience.

Rush Creek bottomlands:

Editor's Note: The Rush Creek bottomlands is one of the focus points for restoration in the Mono Basin. The following two pages highlight one very important aspect of the restoration process—channel openings. Here we've brought together scientific and historical background with actions currently underway to illustrate the importance and complexity of channel opening itself as well as the process of restoration itself.

Immediately below the Narrows, Rush Creek widens out dramatically into a broad-bottomed alluvial valley formed over thousands of years by the unique situation of stream processes interacting with a widely fluctuating lake. This interaction resulted

in the former V-shaped valley partially filling in with deltaic sediment to form the current broad-bottomed one. Following is a description of Rush Creek's multi-channeled bottomlands prior to diversions. The text is excerpted from "Past and Present Geomorphic, Hydrologic, and Vegetative Conditions on Rush Creek" by Dr. Scott Stine.

"Because of the broad, relatively flat nature of the bottomlands, floodwaters (and with them waterborne seeds of riparian vegetation) could be spread far and wide, naturally irrigating hundreds of acres of lowland. Flows that overtopped the channels carried silts and fine sands and deposited them on the valley floor. The low latitudinal and longitudinal gradients of [the bottomlands], in concert with the narrow, unincised nature of the

channels, maintained a high water table.

"This combination of factors created an environment in which water was abundant at or immediately below the ground surface. Seepage and overflow water filled oxbows and other depressions: wet meadows were common (roughly 65 acres in the bottomlands); and a high water table underlying deposits of moisture-retaining silts and sands supported a large area (roughly 208 acres) of riparian woodland (mainly of willows and cottonwoods, but including scattered pines and buffaloberry). The wetland nature of the bottomlands was further increased by the naturally and artificially induced seeps and springs that emanated from the canyon walls, and by diversions into "Indian Ditch"—an artificial irrigation canal that carried water




Rush Creek bottomlands in the 1930s.

Photo from the Aiken case files

wooded wetlands in the arid Mono Basin

to, and distributed it along, the west-central margin of the bottomlands.

"In 1929 Rush Creek followed a straight to sinuous, single- to multi-channeled, willow- and cottonwood-lined, low- to very low-gradient waterway across the bottomlands. Aerial photographs, as well as field inspection of the now-abandoned segments of the waterway, show that the channels were narrow (typically 10–18 feet wide) and steep-sided. Overhanging walls, rootwads, and deep pits in the channel bottom were common (these persist at several sites within remnant channels). In such channels, even a moderate amount of flow (i.e., ~30 cfs) created relatively deep water (say, 2–4 feet deep and more depending on channel-bottom intricacies). At these moderate flows, water reached depths exceeding 2 feet along thousands of linear feet of channel through the bottomlands." 

From the report: *Stine Ph.D., Scott. Past and Present Geomorphic, Hydrologic, and Vegetative Conditions on Rush Creek. Trihey & Associates, 1992.*

Channel-openings for 2000 field season to be discussed this spring

by Heidi Hopkins

Changes on Rush and Lee Vining creeks over the last few years are prompting discussion about the stream channel openings ordered by the State Water Board. Scientists' recommendations about these channel openings will be made to the State Water Board next April.

Unplugging the entrances to channels in the stream bottomlands was a key element of the Water Board's order on Mono Basin restoration. Entrances to many of the channels that once threaded the bottomlands in a complex, multiple-channel system (see preceeding article) were plugged during the years of diversions and degradation. Periodic floods scoured out new, straighter channels through the desiccated floodplain and deposited debris in side channels' mouths. Today, some of these cut-off channels—though dry—remain reasonably intact in form.

Plans for channel openings were drawn up in 1995 and 1996. High flows in 1997 and 1998 have caused the streams' channels to migrate and downcut in various locations—all part of natural stream dynamics, but intensified on the still recovering Mono Basin streams. Today, Dr. William Trush, the scientist in charge of stream monitoring, feels that there are enough changes that the original plans for opening the channels may need to be reviewed.

The overall restoration goal for the Mono Basin streams is to reinstate stream processes and conditions. In both its 1994 decision protecting Mono Lake and the 1998 decision approving restoration activities, the Water Board ordered certain plugged channels to be opened. Other active and passive restoration measures called for by the Water Board include reinstating flows, excluding grazing from the riparian zone, closing roads in the floodplains, and planting willows, cottonwoods, and pines as needed.

Already completed channel openings

A number of channel openings were undertaken on the streams beginning as early as 1991. On Lee Vining Creek, eight channels were opened during 1991–1994. Since then some channels were cut off from the main stream during the January


1997 flood, and some others were significantly modified in how and when they carry water. The four remaining reopened channels continue to carry water year-round. The scientists monitoring Lee Vining Creek are particularly fascinated by one of the reopened channels—referred to as the "A-4"—which over the years since it was opened has increased the amount of water it carries and which is developing good meanders and pools with healthy trout.

On Rush Creek, one major bottomland side channel—Channel 10—was opened in 1995, and three more were opened in the stretch of Rush Creek above Highway 395 in 1999. Channel 10 continues to evolve. Similar to Lee Vining's A-4, Channel 10 has increased the amount of flow that it takes relative to the main channel. Two of the channels opened this fall above Highway 395 on Rush Creek had been mechanically closed at some point in the past. DWP crews used a backhoe to simply pull the cobble dams away from the entrances. These channels are designed to carry water at peak flows. A third channel in the vicinity was opened to carry flows year-round.

Channels remaining to be opened

A number of channels remain to be opened on Rush Creek, all but one of them in the bottomlands below the Narrows. Two proposed openings in particular would rewater large areas of Rush Creek's bottomlands. Today, both these channels are carrying flows at high water, and one carries a minimal flow even during low-flow periods. With some work, they both might carry water year-round.

Bill Trush will be analyzing the situation and making recommendations to the Water Board next April.

The Committee believes that unless compelling new evidence is found, planned channel openings should proceed next year. 

Heidi Hopkins is the Committee's Eastern Sierra Policy Director. In the winter she enjoys ice skating on ponds in and around the Mono Basin.

Mill Creek powerplant relicensing could set national precedent

The decade-long process of relicensing the Mill Creek power plant could set a national precedent for Forest Service lands. Under a set of federal rules known as 4(e) conditions, the Forest Service is empowered to determine instream flows for streams managed by the agency across the country. Recently, however, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), which has jurisdiction over non-federal hydroelectric facilities, mandated a lesser flow for the creek than the Forest Service set, and the matter has gone into appeal.

In fact, the FERC requirement, which came last April, pleased no one. Parties engaged in seeking a rehearing include the US Forest Service (USFS), California Trout, American Rivers, dam operator Southern California Edison (SCE), and the Mono Lake Committee.


The USFS, California Trout, and American Rivers object to FERC's failure to uphold the USFS 4(e) conditions—a position that the Committee also signed on to.

The Committee's primary concern is FERC's failure to address the issue of the Mill Creek return ditch. The ditch, which

returns water to Mill Creek after its passage through the Lundy power plant, was the reason the Mono Lake Committee formally entered the relicensing process back in the fall of 1997 (see Winter 1998 *Newsletter*). Over the years, the Mill Creek return ditch has not been maintained at its originally approved capacity. The Committee believes it should be refurbished so that unappropriated or unused water leaving the powerhouse can flow back into Mill Creek, helping support restoration of the creek, including valuable riparian bottomlands habitat (see sidebar). Due to the ditch's degradation, that excess water currently runs down Wilson Creek instead.

The matter might be considered simple if those were the only two issues at hand. But a number of additional parties also are raising objections to FERC's ruling. These include The Trust for Public Land and Mono County, who are working together to acquire the historic Conway Ranch. The release of water into Mill Creek from the dam, they claim, will infringe on their adjudicated water rights for the property.

New licenses for the SCE power plants on Rush and Lee Vining creeks have already been completed, and the Lundy power plant is the last SCE power plant

in the Mono Basin to have its operating license. The relicensing process has already lasted over a decade and with implementation of FERC's April decision still pending, resolution of all the issues is months, and probably years, away. 

Restoration and Mill Creek

The Committee supports restoration of natural habitats and ecological processes in the Mono Basin. This type of restoration is underway on Rush, Lee Vining, Parker, and Walker creeks, thanks to the 1994 Water Board decision and continued work by supervising scientists, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, the Committee, and others.

On Mill Creek, a stream that has been partially dewatered due to irrigation and hydropower diversions, restoration means restoring flows to the stream either through releases from Lundy dam or through returning unused or unallocated water through the Mill Creek return ditch. A good Mill Creek restoration program would strive to rewater the stream sufficiently to achieve a multichanneled bottomland, self sustaining fishery, and year-round fresh-water conditions at the mouth of Mill Creek.

With many competing interests involved, how restoration might be accomplished is far from clear. Progress will depend on continued discussions and research. One thing is certain: any reallocation of water from existing uses back to Mill Creek must be consistent with environmental review and appropriate protection of habitats currently benefiting from Mill Creek water.

Job opportunity

The Mono Lake Committee is hiring a full charge bookkeeper to work full time in the Lee Vining office! We're looking for an independent, skilled individual with strong experience in all areas of bookkeeping including AP, AR, general ledger, deposits, cash disbursements, sales and income tax reporting, and payroll. Experience working with nonprofit organization accounting is desirable and strong computer skills

are critical. MAS90 software experience is helpful. A full job description is available at <http://www.monolake.org/committee/jobs.htm>, or call Geoff at (760) 647-6595, or fax resume and cover letter to (760) 647-6377. The job is open until filled and an interview and general bookkeeping skills test are required. If you have strong bookkeeping experience and have been thinking of living in the Eastern Sierra, here's a great opportunity!

From the desks of the Executive Directors

by Frances Spivy-Weber and Geoffrey McQuilkin

Editor's Note: The Committee Board recently approved the creation of two executive director positions, one for operations and one for policy. Starting January 1, 2000, Geoff McQuilkin assumed the operations job with a focus on managing our headquarters and programs at Mono Lake and taking a more active leadership role for the Committee regionally. In the policy position, Frances Spivy-Weber continues to focus on Los Angeles policy and statewide water policy issues. Together, Fran and Geoff share responsibility for raising funds, balancing the budget, and planning the program.

From Fran...


Having served as Executive Director for three years, I have become increasingly sure that the Mono Lake Committee must make clear to everyone that we are—and will be—a strong, permanent voice for restoration and protection of Mono Lake and the Mono Basin.

Nothing says this better than having the chief spokesperson for the organization—the Executive Director—in Lee Vining at the Mono Lake Committee headquarters. Yet, the Committee staff, Board, and members know that working only in the Mono Basin will not protect Mono Lake. Water policies statewide will also shape Mono Lake's future. Future decisions of the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power will always have a powerful impact on the Mono Basin. We need a high profile presence in Los Angeles and statewide, and that is the important role that Martha Davis played for twelve years, and I have played for three. Happily, the Committee Board of Directors agrees, so now we are two.

From Geoff...

Having worked with the Committee full time for seven years—and having done a little bit of everything during that time—I'm excited to help lead the

organization in Lee Vining. These days, the Committee faces more choices than ever before: what issues to take on in the Mono Basin, what education programs to expand, what restoration methods make the most sense, how to assure Mono's future in a state with ever-growing demands for water, how to transform the Committee itself into a lasting, permanent Mono Lake guardian. Making these choices, and making the programs that result successful, will take more work than ever. Happily, there are now two EDs to get the job done!

A high priority for both of us is to make sure that the Mono Lake Committee is able to accomplish the key tasks that protect Mono Lake. This requires a balanced budget, an accomplishment that is never easy. We are pleased, therefore, to share with you the highlights of our 1998 audited financial statement—and the balanced budget it represents. 

1998 fiscal year financial highlights

Public Support

| | |
|------------------------|------------|
| Member Contributions | \$ 651,280 |
| Foundation Grants | 74,950 |
| Donations and Bequests | 51,146 |

Revenue

| | |
|-------------------------|---------|
| Sales Program | 110,180 |
| Program Service Revenue | 27,853 |
| Interest and Other | 22,370 |
| Donated Services | 38,683 |

Total Revenue \$ 976,462

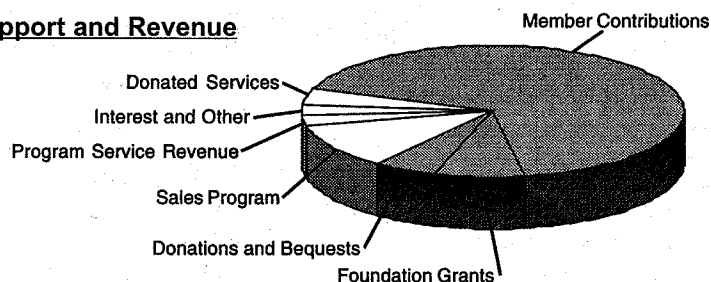
Program Services

| | |
|---------------------------------|------------|
| Public Education and Outreach | \$ 471,462 |
| Research and Policy Development | 144,051 |
| Fundraising and Sales | 248,114 |
| Management and General | 106,481 |

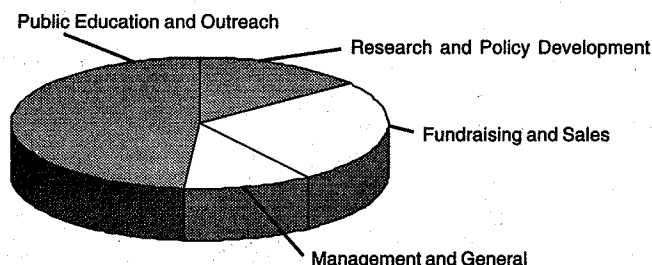
Total Expenses \$ 970,108

Net assets at end of year: \$ 882,418

Public Support and Revenue




Expenses



A Mono Basin chronicle



October: Eared grebes cover the surface of the lake ... often joined by ruddy ducks and California gulls in winter plumage ... belted kingfishers chasing each other through the trees at the confluence of Rush and Reversed Creeks ... bats dart overhead in the cool evenings as great horned owls break the silence with their calls ... it has been quite a year for the changing of the leaves as fall colors are still going strong at the higher elevations.

December: The lake level has dropped noticeably and in places the shoreline is wide, mucky, and covered in balls of algae ... two surf scoters at the north shore ponds ... high winds bring choppy waters and briny foam in streaks across the lake surface and fluffy piles along the shore ... solstice brings us the full moon in full glory ... Tioga Pass re-opens for the first time in years ... and while lenticular clouds mark wind passing overhead, down below it is still warm and dry. 

INTERNATIONAL **Living Lakes** CONFERENCE

RESTORING STREAMS AND LAKES — REVITALIZING COMMUNITIES

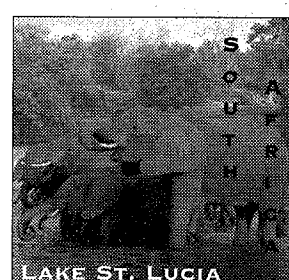
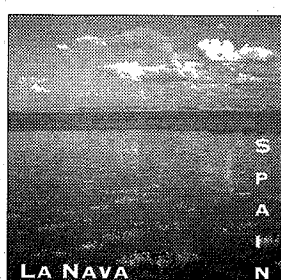
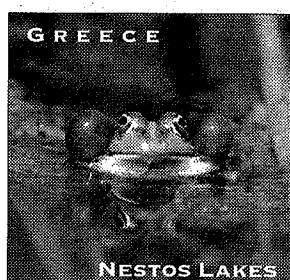
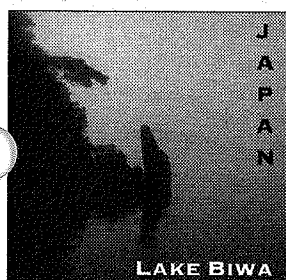
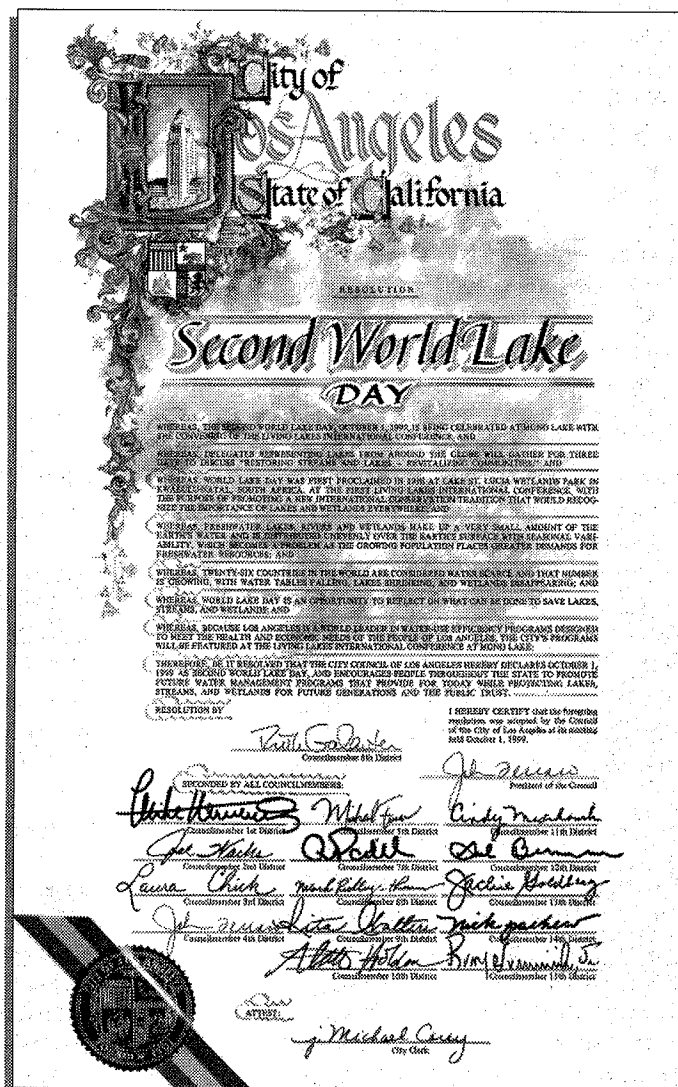
Lee Vining took on an international environmental flair and Mono Lake stood in the spotlight when Living Lakes representatives, scientists, and business leaders from Europe, Japan, Russia, South America, South Africa, and the United States gathered in early October for a three-day conference.

Panel discussions and field tours examined issues ranging from bird habitat to ecotourism to the meanings of lake conservation around the world. Evening slideshows and group meals created the chance for personal interactions and lasting friendships. And an inspiring keynote address by Credo Mutwa (see next page) tied the whole conference together.

Throughout the event, participants gained new ideas and energy for their lake protection efforts. One lesson of the conference was perspective: no matter how hard the issues at one lake, an organization at another lake elsewhere faces issues that the first, thankfully, doesn't have to worry about. For example, to achieve environmental protection, Lake St. Lucia in south Africa has deep-rooted economic justice issues to solve, while at the Dead Sea the effort to bring together Egyptian, Israeli, Jordanian and Palestinian environmental organizations is more than challenging given the complex, heated politics of the region.

Thanks go to Lee Vining's motels, restaurants, and residents, who all helped to support the largest conference ever held in town. For more on Living Lakes and, in a few months, materials summarizing the conference, see www.livinglakes.org.

At right: The signed resolution declaring the official Second World Lakes Day in which the City Council of Los Angeles: "encourages people throughout the state to promote future water management programs that provide for today while protecting lakes, streams, and wetlands for future generations and the public trust."



INTERNATIONAL **Living Lakes** CONFERENCE

CREDO MUTWA: KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Editor's note: Saturday morning of the Living Lakes Conference began with a speech from Credo Mutwa, a Zulu leader from South Africa. Credo's heartfelt words, sense of humor, and spiritual wisdom reveal the heart of what the conference and the Living Lakes Partnership is all about. The following essay is drawn from his keynote address.

I stand before you as a man who is stunned and shaken by what he has seen, what he has heard, and what he has experienced. First of all, did you know, you who live around Lake Mono, that your lake joins together Africa and the Native American people? Did you know that the most amazing word I've ever heard when I arrived here was the word Inyo. Which is said to mean the dwelling place of the creator, or rather, the place of creation. Did you know that that word occurs in Africa as a reference to the sacred organ of a mother? Did you know that the word Mono is a name for something delicious and nutritious that you eat? Perhaps one day if I return this way I shall share more of these things with you.

No matter whom we are, no matter in which part of the world we dwell, we are one. We are one with each other. We are one with the earth. We are one with the moon, the sun, the stars. Please, please remember that. It is useless to conserve entities such as water and trees if you have severed yourself away from those

entities. You cannot conserve something which you do not feel within you. You cannot conserve something which is not part of you.

When I was initiated for the first time in 1937 into the mysteries and knowledge of Mother Africa I was ordered by my teacher who was my aunt. She said I should go outside and fill a small clay pot with water. And then she said to me, "Look into the water—what do you see?" I was caught in a trap because an initiate is not supposed to have an ego. An initiate is not supposed to refer to himself. I said, "Aunt, I see a person in this water." She said, "Who is that person?" I did not dare say it was me. I said, "It is the person I know who is the son of my mother, the only son." And she said, "Yes, you are in this water, and the water is in you. Until you know that, that you and the water are one, you must not even drink the water, you must not even think about it, because you have cut yourself off from it."

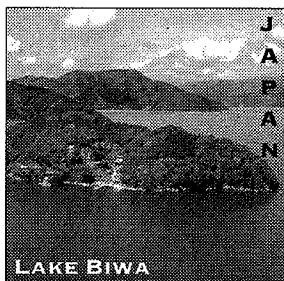
No matter where you go in Africa you will find African people referring to water by very interesting names indeed. And all of these words mean one thing no matter where you go: the fluid of creation, the thing that did something, the thing that caused something to be.

In olden days Africans used to risk their lives in protecting water. In olden days our people used to severely punish anyone they caught urinating into a stream or a river. There are some ants which you find in my country that, when

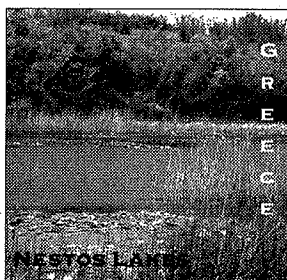
you hold one in your hands, look as fat as myself, and it fights like nobody's business. And if you were caught, wise guy, making water into the water, one of those babies was made to bite you, closing the hole for several hours, and it will be the biggest lesson you will ever learn.

Our people believe many strange things regarding water. They believe that water is a living entity. That water has got a mind, that it remembers. The reason why a lake forms where it is, the reason why a river flows through where it flows, is not because it happens to be the right place for water to flow. No! It is because in that place where the river flows, there is an energy, an invisible spirit that moves like a snake, under the ground through the fine sand and which moves in the direction opposite to the one down which the river flows. If this great fire snake, as we call it, this unseen energy, if it dies, then the river dies too.

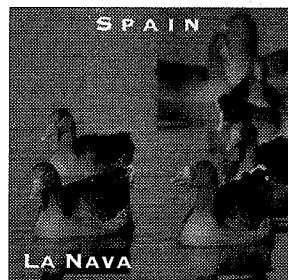
In the language of my people, the Zulus, a lake is called *icibi*. Now this word *icibi* gave birth to a verb *icibella* which means "to patch." If there is a hole in a cloth and you put a patch on it that patch is called *icibi* and you *icibella*. Now why do we say that a lake is a repairer? We believe that a lake controls the life forces of all living things around it. A lake controls the life forces of every bird, every fish, every tiny creature that you find in water, and it also controls and stimulates the life forces of bigger animals up to and including human



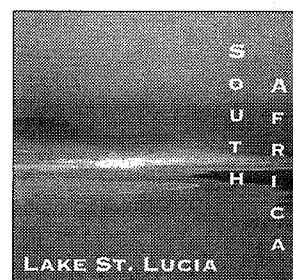
LAKE BIWA



NESTOS LAKE



LA NAVA



LAKE ST. LUCIA

INTERNATIONAL **Living Lakes** CONFERENCE

beings. And each time there is an illness in the land, our kings used to prevail upon the tribespeople to go closer to lakes to get into that field. There is an invisible field of power all around a lake. If you take off your clothes and moisten your skin slightly and walk into that field, you will feel a tingling. That is what we call the spirit of the water, the *icibi*, the repairer of life.

Our people believe that there is a music, a sort of communication that goes on between streams, and rivers, and lakes. That if you destroy a lake 20 miles away from another one, this music is cut off and the lake that you have destroyed dies, and so does another lake which has been in communication with it.

Our people further say that water has not ears. We have a proverb amongst my people that says: he who makes love to another man's wife on the bank of a river must be careful not to utter loud and stupid noises. Because why? Because of water. If there is a fierce emotion near a stream, that stream somehow records that. And guess what will happen? What you did near the river will be heard by every person in the surrounding villages one day. And you will wonder how they got to hear about it.

There is much I could share with you. But our people say that he who talks too much makes people tired. So I am not here to make you tired, I am here to tell you this: let us by all means conserve the beautiful song of nature. Let us regard each lake and each river. Not simply as an interesting stretch of water across

whose expanse spoiled millionaires will zip around in their powerboats. No! Let us feel the water, let us hear the water, let us be one with the water.

Please, let us bring back the earth, let us accept one thing which our mothers accepted and our grandfathers knew: that the earth is a living entity where everything is joined to everything else in eternal marriage. And if you destroy something in one part of the world you create a chain of destruction that destroys things somewhere else.

Let me tell you one last thing: I am told by the great storytellers of our tribes that fresh water is not native to our earth. Once, many thousands of years ago a terrible star, the kind of star with a very long tail, descended very close upon our skies. So close that the earth turned upside down and what had become the sky became down, and what was the heavens became up. The whole world was turned upside down. The sun rose in the south and set in the north. Then came drops of burning black stuff, like molten tar, which burned every living thing on earth that could not escape. After that came a terrible deluge of water accompanied by winds so great that they blew whole mountaintops away. And after that came huge chunks of ice bigger than any mountain and the whole world was covered with ice for many generations. After that the surviving people saw an amazing sight. They saw rivers and streams of water that they could drink, they saw that some of the fishes that escaped from the

sea and were now living in these rivers. That is the great story of our forefathers. And we are told that this thing is going to happen again very soon. Because the great star, which is the lava of our sun, is going to return on the day of the year of the red bull, which is in the year 2012.

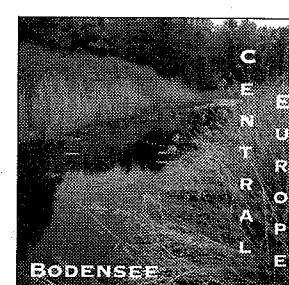
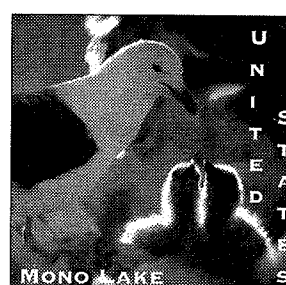
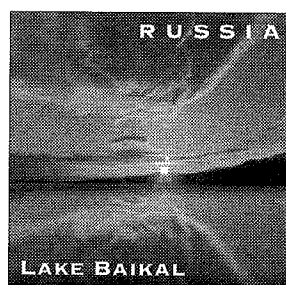
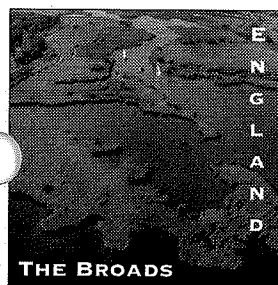
Well, I'm glad I won't be there to see the fun. My wish is this: that there may be blessing over everything that you have done, over everything that you are going to do. May whatever power there is beyond the stars strengthen your efforts, because each lake that you bring back to life is a whole world saved.

Thank you.



Photo by Udo Gattenlöhner

Professor Gerhard Thielcke, Credo Mutwa, and his ritual wife Nobella at the Living Lakes Conference.



INTERNATIONAL **Living Lakes** CONFERENCE

LIVING LAKES: SPREADING A WATER ETHIC

BY GREG REIS

**"WHEN WE TRY TO PICK OUT ANYTHING BY ITSELF,
WE FIND IT HITCHED TO EVERYTHING IN THE UNIVERSE."**

—JOHN MUIR

Last winter Committee staff began to build the Living Lakes Website, www.livinglakes.org, thanks to a grant from the Global Nature Fund. In order to do this we began with researching the problems and solutions surrounding each of the partner lakes. By creating profiles of each of the lakes complete with photographs and contact information we hoped to facilitate the exchange of ideas and solutions between lakes. We also created features such as "Lake of the Month," where a different non-partner lake is featured each month. This helps spread the word about lakes like the Aral Sea and Walker Lake—neither of which are partner lakes, but both are facing extinction and need lots of help. By using our skills we created the website which is one of the core elements of the Living Lakes partnership.

The partnership also provides many benefits to the Mono Lake Committee. Mono Lake's success story is now accessible to an international audience. When future proposals threaten the lake, this international constituency can be counted on to support protection of the lake. Working to conserve lakes elsewhere protects a part of the web of life that supports Mono Lake.

International attention also helps focus domestic attention, such as when various politicians visited Mono Lake for the conference in October. Board Member Martha Davis and I took Patrick Wright, deputy secretary for Policy Development for the California Resources Agency, and his family canoeing on the lake, showing a top state official the magic that makes this special place a centerpiece for conservation education.

We have a lot to learn from the experiences of other lakes as well. The solar-powered boat used at Lake Constance, for example, is a motor boat that could replace the more common noise and water polluting gas powered ones.

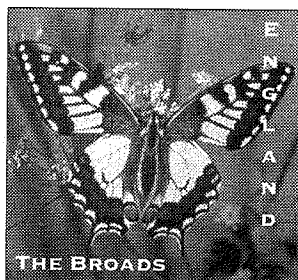
Many of the international visitors that stop in our information center leave not just with a connection to

Mono Lake, very far from home, but also knowing that people here care about a lake near their home, something more real to their daily lives. Spreading a "water ethic" that educates people how to care for their water resources is an important part of our work, no matter where around the world that leads.

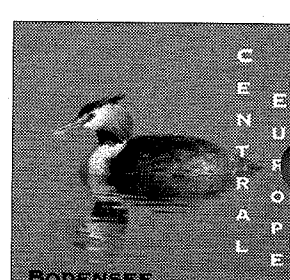
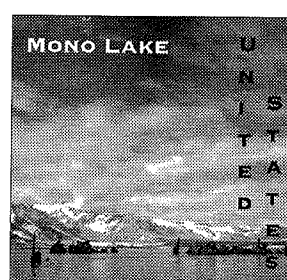
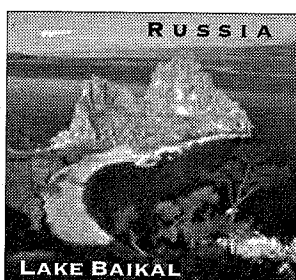


Photo by Sarah Taylor

Living Lakes conference participants from around the world pose for a photo with Twipsy dolls, the official mascot of Expo 2000. The Living Lakes partnership will be featured at the Expo in Hannover, Germany.



Mono Lake Newsletter




Good news for the environment in Propositions 12 & 13 park and water bonds

The Legislature and Governor put two bond acts on the March 7, 2000 ballot: the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2000 (Park Bond, Proposition 12) and the Safe Drinking Water, Clean Water, Watershed Protection, and Flood Protection Bond Act (Water Bond, Proposition 13). The titles are similar, but the focus of each is different, yet each reinforces the other. Both propositions, if approved by the voters and used effectively by California commu-

nities, will be good news for the environment.

Mono Lake and the Mono Basin community could benefit directly and will definitely benefit indirectly from the passage of both bonds. 66 percent of the Park Bond is for local and state parks, making the Tufa State Reserve, Bodie State Historical Park, Mono County Park, and Hess Park all eligible for Park Bond funds. The Water Bond projects will increase dry year water supply by almost 1 million acre-feet —

without building more dams. Mono Lake's greatest long-term threat is the possibility that in 10–30 years, Southern California's need for water could be great enough to overpower the 1994 Water Board decision. The governor and legislature are proposing to make Water Bond investments in conservation, water recycling, watershed protection, and water quality improvements. These are just the kind of investments that will help protect Mono Lake and other "Mono Lakes" in the future. 

Update on Owens Lake

by Mike Prather

Editor's Note: We often get questions about Owens Lake dust pollution issues. The following article was written by Mike Prather representing the Eastern Sierra Audubon Society.

The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) is obligated by an MOU agreement with the Great Basin Unified Air Pollution Control District to work on the Owens Lake dust pollution problem. Ten square miles of the Owens lakebed will be treated for dust using shallow flooding or managed native salt grass vegetation by 2001 and 16.5 square miles by 2006.

In 1998 LADWP commenced a study of groundwater availability at Owens Lake for the purpose of dust abatement. They publicly committed themselves to pumping only if it could be accomplished in an "environmentally safe" manner. A 60-day pump test found that drawdowns in nearby wells and wetlands exceeded what was considered safe. As a result Los Angeles has dropped its initial shallow water flooding project using ground-

water, a test that would have covered merely one square mile and used approximately 1600 acre-feet of water.

Initially there was a sigh of relief by defenders of shorebird habitat and wetlands at Owens Lake when the announcement to not go ahead with the pilot project was made. However, Los Angeles immediately stated that it had not given up on pumping from under Owens Lake and that there might have to be "some negative impacts" that would require mitigation when and if future pumping did occur.

The Eastern Sierra Audubon Society believes that shallow flooding for dust control at Owens Lake should use water from the aqueduct and not from groundwater. Water can be delivered to Owens Lake via the Lower Owens River Project. A proposed pumpback station that would return water to the aqueduct from the river will be capable of delivering water to the lakebed for dust control and its associated habitat creation. Shallow water flooding, which has more benefit for shorebirds than managed vegetation, should be used

on as many square miles of the lake's surface as possible.

Now is the time to urge the California State Lands Commission, which is charged with the responsibility of protecting public trust values at Owens Lake, to require that Los Angeles leave as many square miles as possible flooded every year for all time. As opposed to other dust treatments. Even ten square miles of shallow flooding habitat is only a fraction of what once occurred at the lake.

Only then will the numbers of birds approach those witnessed by George Bird Grinnell in 1917 when he said, "Great numbers of waterbirds are in sight along the lake shore ... large flocks of shorebirds in flight over the water in the distance, wheeling about show in mass, now silvery now dark against the gray-blue of the water. There must be literally thousands of birds within sight of this one spot."

WRITE:

Executive Director
California State Lands Commission
100 Howe Ave.
Suite 100 South
Sacramento, CA 95825-8202

Water Ouzel Wash

by Greg Reis



In mid-November I spent a day watching the streams and the lake. I visited the mouth of Lee Vining Creek, where there are cottonwood trees being flooded and killed by the rising lake. The largest are about 8–12 inches in diameter and 25 feet high. It is a very unusual scene, considering the last time big trees were flooded from a rising Mono Lake was early in the 20th century. But in wet areas where salts have been leached out of the soil, vegetation has grown rapidly. Just look at how big the willows are in recent shots of the “Benchmark Tufa” (see *Benchmarks* page 15)—growth that has taken place in the last 30 years of extremely low lake levels.

At the lake level gauge I saw that the lake now stood at an elevation of 6,384.2 feet above the sea, an elevation identical to the same time last year. This only leaves three tenths of a foot that the lake can drop before DWP would have to install a new *lower* gauge to measure the lake level. We’ve been so focused on a rising lake lately that we’ll have to start getting used to the lake rising much more slowly, and even dropping a bit like it has this fall. In fact, it is almost a foot lower than its highpoint this summer. This is due to the lower runoff this summer and a warm and dry fall—and to the larger surface area of the higher lake allowing additional evaporation.


After four years of above-normal runoff we finally had a below-normal year. DWP forecasted 97,000 acre-feet of runoff for the April 1 to September 30, 1999 runoff period, or 94% of normal. In fact, actual runoff turned out to be 91,500 acre-feet from April to September, or 88% of normal. Since 1935, this period has been drier in 29 years and wetter in 36 years, so this runoff season was slightly drier than the median year. Of this amount, 21,600 acre-feet was stored in

Edison reservoirs and about 3,770 acre-feet was exported, so less than 66,130 acre-feet reached Mono Lake—about 64% of a normal natural flow. Under natural conditions, only 13 years since 1935 would have provided less water during the summer.

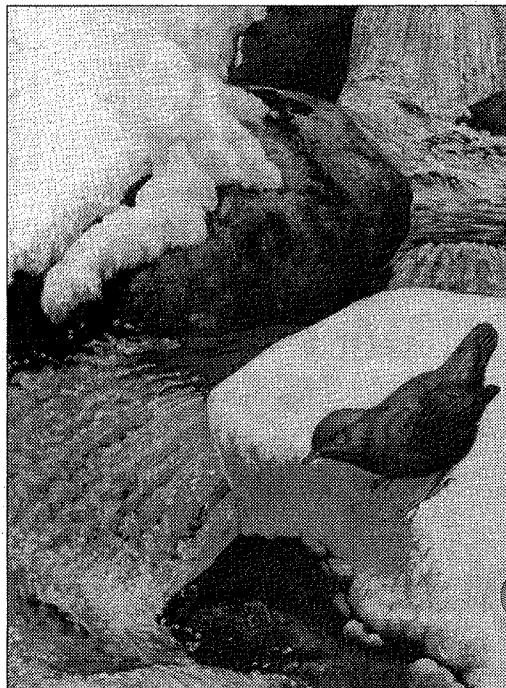
While at the dock, I took in the view of countless eared grebes on Mono Lake—their most important fall staging site in North America, and “one of the most impressive concentrations of a single bird species in North America,” according to researcher Dr. Joseph Jehl.

Down on Rush Creek, I visited a channel that was rewatered in mid-October. This is the first channel to be rewatered since Channel 10 was rewatered three years ago. This channel does not have a name, but is referred to most simply as “the former main channel of Rush Creek between elevations 6881 and 6862.” The most vivid names for places along the streams aren’t the

official names such as “Channel 10” or “A-4,” but “The Duck Pond,” and the “Yellowbird Reach.” In keeping with using evocative names, I propose we call this channel the “Water Ouzel Wash.”

“Water Ouzel” because when I went to take a look at it on that November day, an American dipper, or “Water Ouzel,” as John Muir liked to call his favorite bird, was exploring this newly restored habitat. “Wash” because right now, it has upland shrubs in it and looks like a wash. However, already, only a month after rewatering, grass is sprouting everywhere. In spring I imagine it will look like Channel 10 did its first spring, with the high water table causing an incredible growth of grass underneath the dying sagebrush. This will kill a few of the pines we planted here in 1997, but the value of the additional stream habitat is worth it, as the Water Ouzel seems to think. 

***Bird and stream are inseperable,
songful and wild, gentle, and
strong, the bird ever in danger in
the midst of the stream’s mad
whirlpools, yet seemingly
immortal. And so I might go on,
writing words, words, words, but to
what purpose? Go see him and
love him, and through him as
through a window look into
nature’s warm heart.
—John Muir on the
American dipper, 1898***



American dipper (*Cinclus mexicanus*) by Carl Dennis Buell.

Mono Basin Journal

A roundup of less political events at Mono Lake

by Geoffrey McQuilkin

Mornings, early mornings, quiet mornings, at the lake reveal a thin, dense layer of ice fog hanging off the south tip of Paoha. Watch it, and it rises with the sun, lifting off the lake, generally migrating to the west before dissolving into the air. As winter sets in, and snows cover the basin floor, the cold night air will help the cloud grow much larger, until it envelopes Lee Vining on calm days, filling the basin with ice crystals.

But on quiet fall mornings, as the fog lifted, the broad expanse of the lake sparkled at sunrise. Not with wind, but birds. One, one and a half, two million red grebes out there floating on the lake, diving for food, breaking the surface and sending out shimmering ripples to make the lake sparkle from miles away. Down close to the lake, a

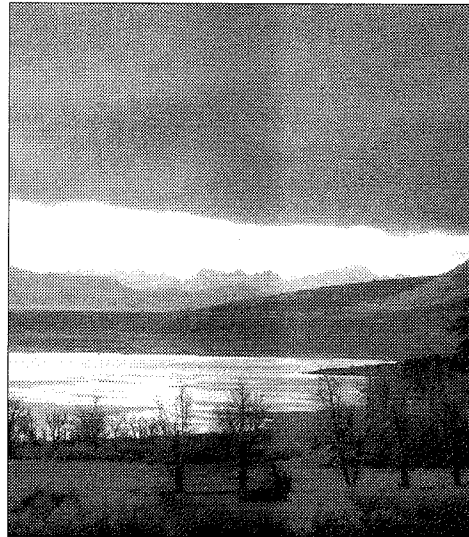



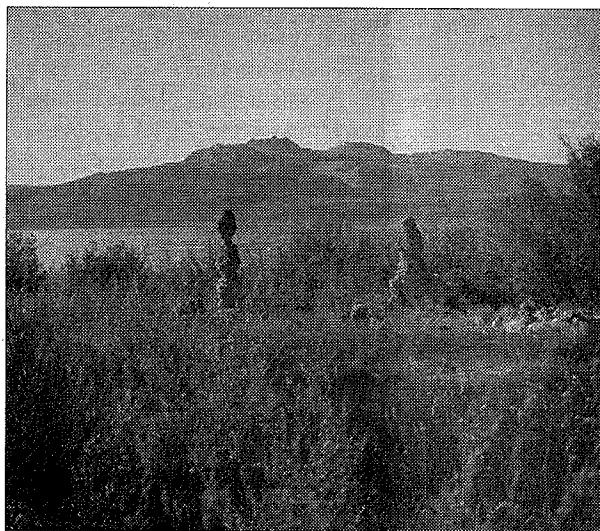
Photo by Arya Degenhardt

Morning poconip cloud hanging over the lake.

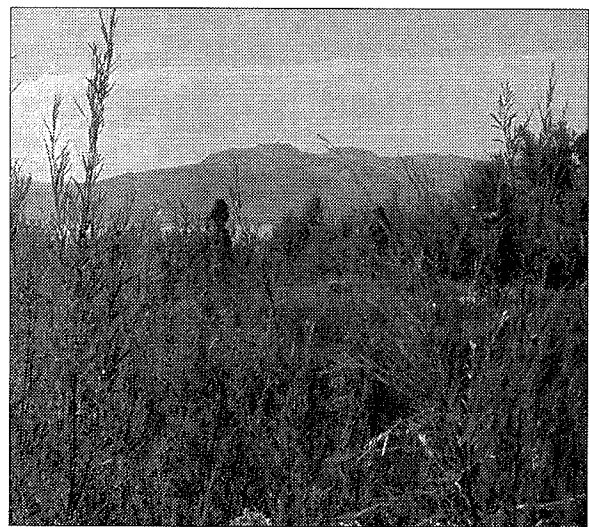
casual glance might overlook the low-floating, dark colored birds. But with a moment's more attention they are unavoidable, then overwhelming, scattered as they are across the water all the way out to the horizon.

Then come the cold, cold nights. The poconip clouds grow bigger, food grows scarcer, and the grebes depart for southern coastal waters. As the grebes leave, the lake becomes placid without their sparkling morning dives, but only until the next resident shows up: the winter wind, whipping up froth and spray and spinning it across the lake. Each winter storm brings new energy to the wind, and tufa towers stand strong as whitecaps crash to shore. Reluctant to leave, the grebes, no doubt, are happier diving in their warmer, less windy waters. 

Benchmarks



Benchmark Tufa in 1997 with the lake level at 6382 feet above sea level and the willows relatively small.



Benchmark Tufa in 1998 with the lake level at 6384 feet above sea level and the vegetation on the rise. See the Lakewatch article on page 14 for more details.

Microbial Observatory established at Mono Lake

by Geoffrey McQuilkin


The National Science Foundation has awarded several grants to fund scientific research on microbes at Mono Lake as part of its national Microbial Observatories initiative. With microbes making up the vast majority of the estimated 11 million undescribed organisms on earth, the initiative is designed to discover and investigate microbes at a variety of locations around the country.

The project is being led by Drs. James Hollibaugh, Robert Jellison, Johnathan Zehr, and Samantha Joye. Hollibaugh and Joye, both currently at the University of Georgia, have performed recent work at Mono Lake, including measurements of bacterial processes and the identification of an entirely new class of algae found in the Mono's waters. Jellison, a researcher at the Sierra

Nevada Aquatic Research Laboratory (SNARL), has conducted research on nutrient cycling, primary productivity, and *Artemia* (brine shrimp) dynamics at Mono for years and has employed a hydrodynamic model that predicts meromixis and lake mixing behavior.

The goal of the microbial observatory work is to identify microbes found in Mono Lake, to determine their distribution and response to change—particularly in relation to meromixis—and to model their behavior. The research work involves extensive sampling of lake waters by boat and laboratory analysis at SNARL, and requires no significant new structures or construction.

The Mono Lake Committee will be participating in the public outreach component of the project by developing project profiles and updates on the

Mono Lake Website www.monolake.org and by hosting summertime forums led by the researchers. Watch for further news of the project as summer approaches! 

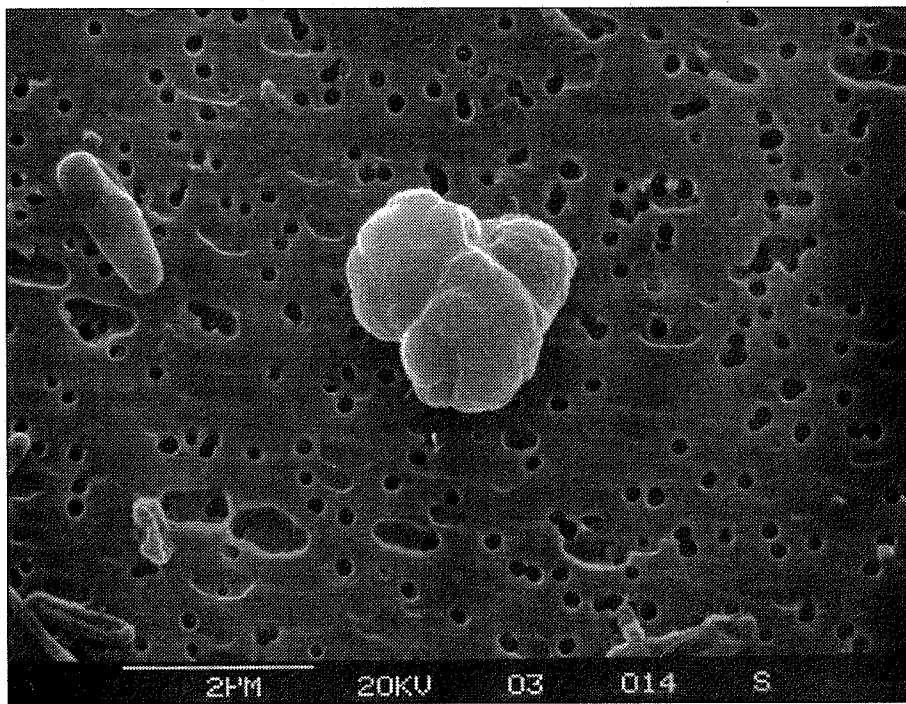
Geoff McQuilkin is the Committee's Co-Executive Director. He and his wife Sarah are working very hard on making their new house a home.

Digital Archive develops at www.monobasinresearch.org

Thanks to member support and enthusiasm from scientists and Mono Lake fans alike, the Mono Lake Digital Archive is off to a fine start. Committee Information Specialist Greg Reis is on the job designing the Internet site that will be at the heart of the archive. He's also gathering the documents that have been identified as key starting documents: the Environmental Impact Report prepared for the Water Board, historical interviews with long-time local residents, and a database of Mono Basin research reports.

All this and more will be available over time on the Digital Archive website, but you can see the project take shape beginning in January 2000, as the new Digital Archive Website goes live at www.monobasinresearch.org.

As the year progresses, we expect the Digital Archive to become a hub for information exchange about Mono Lake and the Mono Basin and a place where everyone can access the detailed research and information that is part of managing the amazingly complex natural resource that is Mono Lake.



Shown above is a representative of an unusual new class of algae recently identified in Mono Lake. The proposed name is *Picocystis salinaeum*, in the class *Picocystophyceae*. Recently funded microbial research holds the promise of further exciting discoveries in Mono's waters.

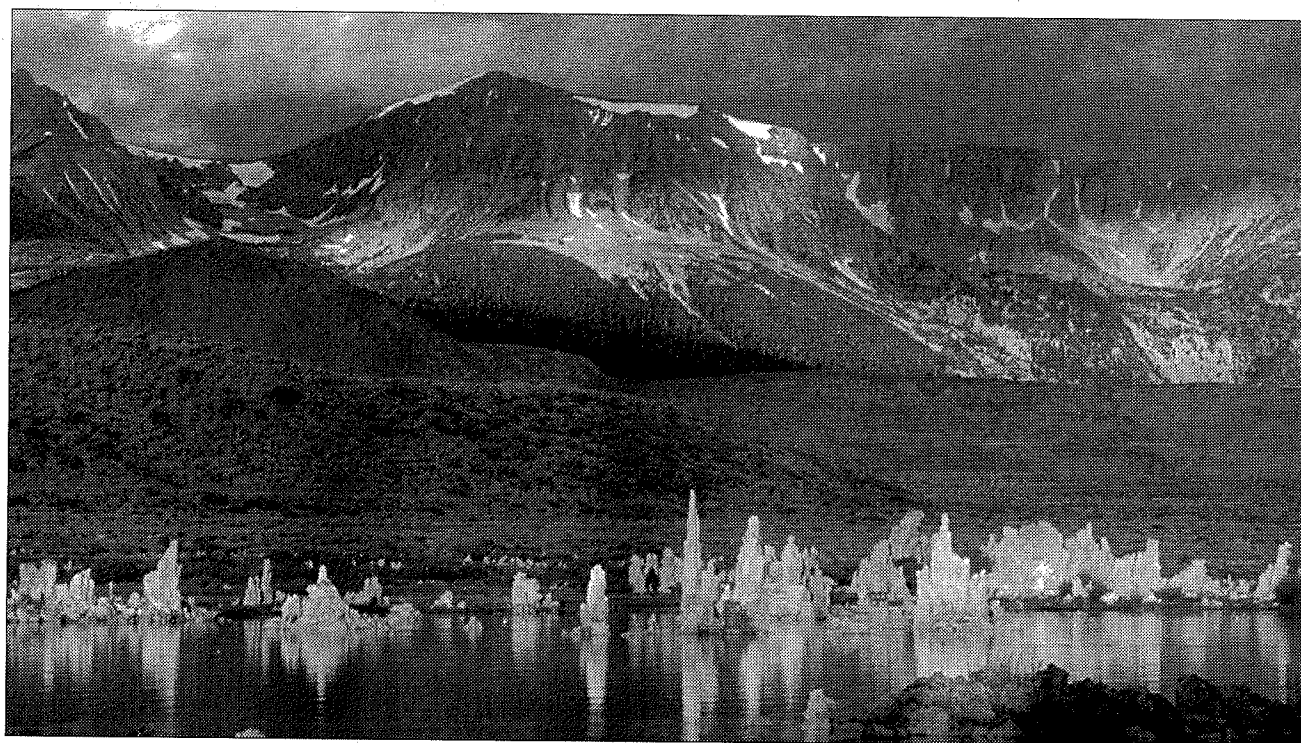


Photo by Richard Krepp

2 0 0 0 F i e l d S e m i n a r s

California Gull Research: Gull Response to a Rising Lake

Dave Shuford/ Point Reyes Bird Observatory
May 24–28

\$120 per person per day; overnight; meals included

Join a research team directed by the Point Reyes Bird Observatory and Cornell University in collecting data on the gull colony. Gain hands-on experience in field survey techniques while investigating whether the lake's changing chemistry—due to Mono's recent lake level increase—is affecting gull reproductive success. Your help is needed in continuing this important research. The rare adventure of visiting Mono Lake's spectacular Negit Islets and observing at close quarters the second largest California gull rookery in North America is for the stout of body and heart. Please contact the Field Seminar Desk for more information on this unique Mono adventure.

Birds of the Eastern Sierra

Lisa Hug, June 10–11

\$95 per person/ \$80 for members

The Eastern Sierra offers a wide variety of breeding habitats for many species of birds during spring and summer. In this two-day seminar, we will explore the saline lakeside, desert scrub, riparian canyons, Jeffrey pines, and lodgepole pine forests to discover the unique blend of birds that reside in the region. We will focus on sharpening field identification techniques as well as learning life history strategies of the common local birds. Lisa Hug is a California naturalist with experiences in the Eastern Sierra as a Committee intern and as a field assistant for the Point Reyes Bird Observatory breeding bird study. She has led many public bird walks through Point Reyes National Seashore. She currently teaches a shorebird identification course through the community education department at Santa Rosa Junior College.

*Call (760) 647-6595 for registration and
information. Ask for the seminar desk.*

2 0 0 0 Field Seminars

The Story Behind the Land: Geology of the Mono Basin

Tim Tierney, June 17–18
\$95 per person/ \$80 for members

The Mono Basin is a geological showcase, featuring young volcanoes, glaciated landscapes, stark mountains and weird mineral towers, all set about ancient and saline Mono Lake. Explore this land with geologist Tim Tierney, author of the Committee's field guide *Geology of the Mono Basin*, and learn how to recognize the geology, know the reasons behind why things have happened, and what the future may hold. The first day of the seminar will be spent gaining an overview of the area via car and short walks. The second day will focus on thoroughly exploring a few select areas with extended hikes. Tim is an excellent teacher and interpreter of the "hard" languages.

Plants, Perfumes, and Poisons

Glenn Keator and Margareta Séquin, June 23–25
\$110 per person/ \$95 for members

Plants interact with their environment in a multitude of ways: They attract pollinators with perfumes and brightly pigmented flowers, yet they repel other visitors with prickles, thorns, strong odors, sticky resins, and poisons. In their struggle to compete, grow and reproduce, they carry out chemical warfare with their neighbors—or elicit their help. Join us as we investigate plant structures, and the methods plants employ to pollinate and protect themselves.

Each day of this full three-day seminar will include a half-day field trip to plant habitats in the environs of Mono Lake, where we will study plants and learn about their special chemistry (no previous chemistry knowledge required!). In the hot afternoons we will go inside and spend some time on field trip topics, illustrated by pictures, hands-on demonstrations, and discussions. In the evenings there will be slide shows. Glenn Keator is a Bay Area botanist, teacher, and writer with long experience in California's native plants. He has taught widely on many botanical subjects for adult education at a number of California campuses. Margareta Séquin is an organic chemist, with an emphasis on natural products. She is a teacher at San Francisco State University, and has also actively participated in chemistry events geared to promote a better understanding of chemistry among the general public.

California Gull Research: Chick Banding

Dave Shuford/ Point Reyes Bird Observatory
July 1–4
\$120 per person per day; overnight; meals included

This seminar will focus on the actual banding of the gull chicks. See description of California Gull Research seminar above.

Paiute Burden Basketry

Lucy Parker, July 14–16
\$135 per person/ \$115 for members (primitive group
campsite included)
\$50 materials fee

Learn to weave baskets in the tradition of the regional Paiute. Students will prepare and use willow strings and whole shoots for a miniature cone-shaped basket. California red bud will be added for color design. Plain twining will be used for weaving and a stack stitch design will be created. Three-strand weaving will also be incorporated. The cone-shaped basket was traditionally used for gathering pine nuts in the Mono Basin. Lucy Parker is a descendent of the Yosemite Miwok, Mono Lake Kutzadika^a, and Pomo peoples. She learned traditional handiwork from her mother, a master basket weaver, and will pass on some of her knowledge in this special three-day/two-night camping seminar. You do not have to camp to participate, but the evenings will be spent around the campfire with traditional songs and stories. This seminar is designed for those with prior basket-weaving experience.

Mono Basin Wildflowers

Mark Bagley, July 22–23
\$95 per person/ \$80 for members

From the sagebrush scrub to the aspen forests of Lundy Canyon, from the marshes and meadows along the shore of Mono Lake to the whitebark and lodgepole pine forests of Tioga Pass, the Mono Basin is home to a wide variety of wildflower habitats. This workshop is for beginners, as well as for dedicated wildflower enthusiasts who want to know more about the plant life of the Mono Basin. We will learn to identify many common wildflowers, trees, and shrubs and the plant communities they inhabit. We will also review the names of some basic plant parts, learn how to recognize a few of the most important plant families, and

2000 Field Seminars

examine the environmental factors which shape the various habitats. Mark Bagley, your instructor, is a full-time consulting botanist in the Eastern Sierra and Mojave Desert. Mark is well-known among past seminar participants for his easy-going pace and engaging teaching style in the field.

Ancient Landscapes of the Mono Basin

Wally Woolfenden, August 5-6

\$95 per person/ \$80 Members

Climate and volcanism have been the chief architects of Mono environments during the past several millennia. Vegetation associations, animal populations, lake levels, weathering rates, glaciers and, more recently, human communities all responded to dramatic changes in climate. Occasional eruptions of magma created numerous rhyolite domes and covered the area with pyroclastic flows and ash. Prehistoric people also left their imprint on the landscape. This field seminar will explore geological and archaeological sites throughout the Mono Basin area and discuss the evidence and methods used by scientists to reconstruct past environments and human cultures. Dr. Wally Woolfenden has lived and worked in the Sierra Nevada as an archaeologist and paleoecologist for the Forest Service over the past two decades. He has recently studied vegetation and climate history from pollen deposited in the sediments of Owens Lake and Glass Creek Meadow. This seminar will involve moderately strenuous hiking into unique Eastern Sierra landscapes.

Mono Basin, Bodie, and Full Moon Photography

Don Jackson, August 11-13

\$235 per person/ \$195 for members

Join award-winning photographer and 15-year Monophile Don Jackson in exploring and photographing the wonders of the Mono Basin and Bodie State Park during the full-moon weekend and the peak of phalarope visitation. This four-day workshop will be a combination of field sessions and classroom work and will cover the art and technical

aspects of creating impactful images, including composition, perspective, lighting and exposure, the Zone System, new films, and more. Critiques of participants' work will be an important part of this workshop. Open to all color and black and white photographers that have a fully-adjustable camera (35mm to view camera) and a basic understanding of its operation. To see Don Jackson's work visit his website at www.donjackson.com.

Fall Bird Migration

Dave Shuford, August 26-27

\$95 per person/ \$80 for members

The east slope of the Sierra Nevada is a major migration route for birds traveling from northern nesting areas to warm southern habitats. As a result, early autumn is the time of year to see the greatest diversity of landbirds, shorebirds, and waterbirds in the Mono Basin and on Crowley Reservoir. Dave Shuford has been a staff biologist at Point Reyes Bird Observatory for twenty years. He has conducted numerous surveys and research projects in the Mono Basin and beyond, and is well acquainted with where to find birds in the Eastern Sierra.



Photo by Betty Potts

Call (760) 647-6595 for registration and information. Ask for the seminar desk.

2 0 0 0 F i e l d S e m i n a r s

Surviving on the Edge: Sierra Bighorn Sheep in the Mono Basin

John Wehausen and Karl Chang, September 2-3
\$95 per person/ \$80 for members

Controversy surrounds the fate of the Sierra bighorn, one of the most recent additions to the federal list of endangered species. This field seminar will involve discussions of the biology and conservation of these animals with attempts to view them. John Wehausen is a research scientist at White Mountain Research Station in Bishop. He has been investigating various aspects of the Sierra bighorn and working for their conservation since 1974. In the late 1970s he initiated the restoration program that brought bighorn back to the Mono Basin. This seminar involves strenuous hiking at the 10,000-foot elevation and above.

Paoha Island Kayak

Stuart Wilkinson and MLC Staff, September 9
\$65 per person/ \$55 for members

Wind and weather permitting, visit Paoha Island for a picnic lunch! Join Stuart Wilkinson and a Mono Lake Committee staff member for a guided naturalist expedition to Paoha Island. Your leaders are well-versed in Mono Lake geology, ecology, history, and politics, and this natural history kayak tour will cover a wide variety of topics relating to this unique high desert lake. Plan on four to five hours for the tour. Some kayak experience is recommended for this trip to Paoha Island. Kayaks and safety equipment are provided.

Miwok-Paiute Work Basketry

Lucy Parker, September 15-17
\$135 per person/ \$115 for members (primitive group
campsite included)
\$50 materials fee

Learn to weave baskets in the tradition of the regional Paiute. Students will prepare and use whole shoots of willow for a bowl-shaped basket. A design of cleaned willow will be incorporated for color, and a close, plain twining will be used. This basket was traditionally used for gathering acorns and berries. Lucy Parker is a descendent of the Yosemite Miwok, Mono Lake Kutzadika^a, and Pomo peoples. She learned traditional handiwork from her

mother, a master basket weaver, and will pass on some of her knowledge in this special three-day/two-night camping seminar. You do not have to camp to participate, but the evenings will be spent around the campfire with traditional songs and stories. This seminar is designed for those with little or no experience in basket weaving.

Mono Basin Fall Photography

Richard Knepp, October 6-8
\$150 per person/ \$125 for members

Autumn in the Mono Basin is one of the greatest photographic experiences in the country. Spectacular foliage and skies combine with exceptional light, presenting ample subject matter for photographers in both color and black and white. Join accomplished photographer Richard Knepp to explore varied shoreline locations at sunrise and sunset, and fall color in nearby canyons. Subjects for discussion include composition, exposure techniques, filtration, basic theory of the Zone System, and developing a personal vision. Photographers of all levels are welcome; a fully adjustable camera of any size or format is suggested.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Call the Mono Lake Committee at 760-647-6595 and ask for the seminar desk to register. A more complete seminar description is available upon request. Sorry, we cannot accept registration by mail.

• REGISTRATION •

Seminars are limited to fifteen people except where noted. If a seminar receives less than six participants, the seminar will be cancelled two weeks in advance and full refunds will be given. If you cancel three weeks prior to the seminar start date, we will refund your payment (less a \$10 processing fee). No refunds after that date, but tuition can be applied to another class in 2000. We accept VISA, MasterCard, and Discover or personal checks payable to the Mono Lake Committee. Participants must sign a liability release form. All seminars operate under permit from the Inyo National Forest.

• DISCOUNTS •

Mono Lake Committee members receive discounted seminar prices where noted. If you are not a current member of the Mono Lake Committee, you may receive the discount by joining when you register.

Call (760) 647-6595 to register

Continued from page 2: South Tufa


South Tufa entrance road

- construct a new entrance road into the South Tufa parking lot from the east
- dig to minimize the slope of the parking lot; maintain existing boundary (as partially expanded this summer)
- pave several parking spaces in front of the South Tufa kiosk and trail entrance (five total, with two of these being striped for no parking) to complete handicap and emergency access to the trail.
- construct one or two shade and picnic structures at the edge of the parking lot (exact details yet to be decided)
- block off, dig up and replant (at least by placing topsoil with seeds in it) the abandoned section of the South Tufa entrance road
- consider minor improvements at Navy Beach parking lot as long as gravel

and equipment would be in area; details to be recommended by State and MLC; decision to be made in early February

The above changes will be the last in a series that began four years ago with the installation of a large interpretive shade structure at the South Tufa trailhead. Three summers ago, the USFS installed a fee-collection kiosk at the trailhead with the beginning of the fee demo program in 1997. The following year three large vault bathroom structures (one more than planned) were installed replacing the old and increasingly unpleasant chemical ones. This past year, the USFS paved a trail around the lot and down to the lake, put in curbs, and unexpectedly enlarged part of the lot. The trail, parking lot and next year's road work were part of a larger plan to "upgrade" facilities at South Tufa

that was completed in 1993, during a time when Mono Lake Committee was focused on the Water Board hearings.

Visitors will still have to bump along a dirt road, leaving the most of the world's pavement behind. Not everyone will be happy. Pavement will give way to gravel without striped lines to stay between, some bumps in the road might cause a CD player to skip, there will be dust, slow travel, and more time to appreciate the views. The road to South Tufa will continue to "inconveniently" remind visitors that Mono Lake is not the typical tourist destination, but somewhere different, wild, out there. 

Bartshe Miller is the Committee's Education Director. He went all the way to Oklahoma looking for wild places this season.

Free Drawing Winners!

Thank you to all who participated in this year's Free Drawing.

There were so many great prizes this year, we were sad that we couldn't win some of them ourselves, but we are happy to announce this year's winners.

Peter and Carol Engar of Sunnyvale will be sure to have fun with their Pier 39 Fun Pack in San Francisco. Monica Duclaud of Berkeley and Roger W. Peard of South Lake Tahoe each won the four part PBS video series *Cadillac Desert*.

Cole Hawkins of Davis, Old Man Henke of Upland, James Lewis of Irvine, Dale Logiudice of Tustin, and Dennis Meyer Andregg Inc. in Auburn all won Mono Lake gift packs full of goodies from the Mono Lake Committee Bookstore and Information Center. We hope to see Annette Malkin of Santa Monica and Mike and Kathie Avery Davis of Fremont up in the Mono Basin when they use their Mono Lake Field Seminar gift certificates from the Mono Lake Committee. Patricia

Boomer of Mountain View will be well equipped with her Birdwatching Kit from Eagle Optics and the Committee.

Bill & Rebecca Garoutte of Millbrae



Photo by Arya Degenhardt

Anna, Geoff, Echo, Kay, and Kristen choosing the winners of this year's Free Drawing.

won a 90% post-consumer recycled fleece outfit from Patagonia.

W. E. and E. K. Etal Moore of San Diego, Carolyn Harris of Los Angeles, Elgian and Dona Hurley of Boron, and Russell and Judy Mark of Los Angeles each won a limited edition *Wilson's Phalaropes at Mono Lake Commemorative Lithograph*. Tom McGillis of Ventura and Mark Schenden of Cameron Park each won the Restoration Weekend package from the Tioga Lodge and the Mono Lake Committee—see you this summer!

Cliff Drowley of Phoenix will surely enjoy his three night stay at the Double Eagle Resort and Spa in June Lake. And Sandra Noble of Danville

will enjoy her stay at the Ahwahnee hotel from the Ahwahnee Hotel in Yosemite National Park. Victorine Wimpfheimer of New York, NY won the Whitewater Adventure and framed wild river photograph from the South Yuba River Citizens League. We're looking forward to seeing T.R. Conrow, Jr. of Temple City when he is up here using his Mammoth Get-Away from the Royal Pines and Cervino's Restaurant.

Rebecca Bridges of Sunnyvale won the Complete Backpacking Kit from Wilson's Eastside Sports of Bishop. Fred V. Gerner of Richmond won the signed Ansel Adams Lithograph from the Mono Inn Restaurant at Mono Lake and The Ansel Adams Gallery. Eric Shackelford and April Lax of San Francisco won the Warren Marr Photo Print from Warren Marr.

And last, but certainly not least, Gregory R. Bortolin of San Francisco is the lucky winner of the two round-trip tickets on Lufthansa Airlines, the Grand Prize from Lufthansa Airlines.

As always, your contributions go to help restore the Mono Basin, protect this natural resource, and educate people about Mono Lake.

Making a difference for Mono Lake

by Shelly Backlar

Last fall the Mono Lake Committee hosted two special fundraising events which brought friends and supporters together in celebration of Mono Lake while raising funds to support education and restoration efforts.

Defender of the Trust Award

On September 29, 1999 the Committee presented Los Angeles County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky with our 1999 Defender of the Trust Award at the City Club on Bunker Hill in downtown Los Angeles. Supervisor Yaroslavsky was honored to receive the award and gave a moving speech about his memories of Mono Lake and his decision to champion its cause. This breakfast tribute was also a fundraiser for the Committee's Outdoor Experiences (OE) program with individuals and representatives from companies supporting OE in attendance.

We are extremely grateful to The Gas Company for underwriting the costs associated with this gathering, thus ensuring that over \$6,000 raised will go directly to support the OE program. In addition, Maryann Reyes with Southern California Edison joined the celebration by presenting Committee board member Tom Soto with a \$3,500 contribution in support of Outdoor Experiences. Other generous support came from the David Abel & Associates, the ARCO Foundation, the LA Department of Water and Power, Amy Holm and Robert Glenn Ketchum, Sandra Mays, Ed Manning, P.S. Enterprises, Dr. John and Judy Uphold, the Water Replenishment District, and Michael Weber and Frances Spivy-Weber. Special thanks to Committee member Alexa Williams of Technical Glass for designing and crafting the Defender of the Trust Award.

Benefit Concert

On Sunday, November 7 violinist David Abel and pianist Julie Steinberg gave a phenomenal performance at St.

John's Church in Berkeley as a benefit for the Mono Lake Committee and for the Water Resources Center Archives. Over 200 people came in from the stormy weather to enjoy the passionate, virtuoso performances of David and Julie in the beautiful stained-glass surroundings of the church.

At the dessert reception following the performance event sponsors and benefactors gathered around a fireplace described by one guest as "like being in someone's living room." UC Berkeley professor Matt Kondolf gave an account of his connection to the Water Archives and their importance to students and researchers. Point Reyes Bird Observatory staff biologist Dave Shuford gave a talk discussing Mono Lake gull research and Mono Lake restoration efforts.

The success of this fundraising effort, which netted over \$13,000 to be split between the two organizations, would not have been possible without the generous support of Pacific Gas and Electric Company of San Francisco's \$5,000 donation to underwrite the event costs. We thank Genny Smith, and the following event sponsors for their generous support: Martha Davis, Grace and Rick de Laet, Richard A. Denton, The Dieden Company, Ed Grosswiler, Grueneich Resource Advocates, Tony Landolt, Verena Landolt, Maria and Ed Manning, Jane Rogers and Michael Fischer, and Waterways Restoration Institute. We are grateful to East Bay Blue Print and Supply Company in Oakland for printing event invitations free of charge and to Kent Rosenblum and George Peyton of Rosenblum Cellars for donating wine to the reception. We also received generous in-kind support from A La Carte Restaurant, Jutta's Flowers, La Farine Bakery, Magic Gardens Nursery, Montclair Baking, Peet's Coffee and Tea, and Katrina Rozelle Pastries and Desserts.

Remember Mono Lake Committee in your will

When you make a gift to the Mono Lake Committee as part of your estate planning, you are helping to ensure the long-term protection and restoration of Mono Lake and the Mono Basin ecosystem. What a wonderful way to be remembered!

Josephine Owen from Pacific Grove contacted us last year to say that she was putting the Mono Lake Committee in her will. We were thrilled, and we asked when she first became interested in Mono Lake. "As a young girl," she said, "my sister Catherine and I grew up in Inyo County, and in the 1930s Mono Lake shoreline was very close to the highway. When we drove by Mono Lake, we would always stop to go swimming." She also remembered going to Mono Lake for the 4th of July. Now, Ms. Owen lives in Pacific Grove, and as an amateur birdwatcher, she is pleased to support the Mono Lake Committee for the work it does to protect the California gulls she sees out her window at home.

Thank you, Josephine Owen!

In writing or updating your will, you can designate the Mono Lake Committee as a beneficiary at the following address: Highway 395 and 3rd Street, Lee Vining, California 93541 (mailing address, P.O. Box 29, Lee Vining, CA 93541). For more information, contact Membership Coordinator Anna Christensen at this address or drop her an email at anna@monolake.org.

We thank our generous supporters for making these events so successful! 🐾

Shelly Backlar is the Committee's Development Director. She is a canoe paddler extraordinaire and enjoyed canoeing on Mono Lake with Committee staff last fall.

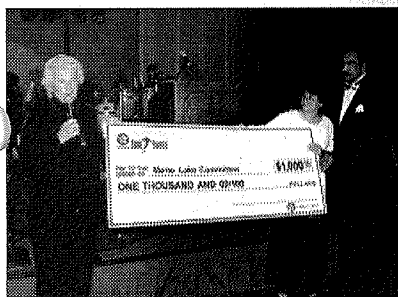
Member Corner: News from the membership desk

by Anna Christensen

Matching gifts

Washington Mutual Foundation matched a donation from **Keith Johnson** of Arcadia. PG&E matched the gift of **Edmund Ow** of San Francisco. Finally, **Bank of America Foundation** matched the generous donation from **James Goggin** of Twain Harte.

In Honor



Andrea Lawrence receiving her award in the name of the Mono Lake Committee.

On behalf of Committee board member **Andrea Lawrence**, the **U.S. Ski and Snowboard Association** presented the Mono Lake Committee with a generous grant. An Olympic gold medal winner, Andrea was named a finalist for the **Texaco Star Award**, created to honor U.S. Ski and Snowboard alumni for their dedication in the area of community service upon retirement from skiing. Andrea is most deserving of this recognition and dedicated the Mono Lake Committee as the recipient of this grant.

Thanks also to **Sheila Humphries** of Berkeley who sent us a gift in honor of the birthday of **Jane Hartley** of San Francisco.

With great thanks!

We would like to extend a special thank you to the **Fresno Audubon Society**, **Tehipite chapter of the Sierra Club**, and the **Fresno chapter of the California Native Plant Society** for their 1999 fundraising event on behalf of Mono Lake. The event included a slide program, great food, and a silent auction. This cooperative effort is an example of their continuing support over the last six years.

Once again, we applaud **Mildred Bennet** of Berkeley for organizing yet another successful trip to benefit Mono Lake. For more years than we can count, Millie has led guided tours all over the world and generously sent us the proceeds. We can't thank you enough for your dedication.

First Security Van Kasper

www.fsvk.com generously donated 11 computers to us. At least one will replace the internet access computer in the Information Center and Bookstore, and the others will replace aging computers elsewhere in the office. This donation—arranged by Senior Vice President of Corporate Finance **Ron Richards**—will greatly improve our efficiency in the office.

Once again, we send thanks to the **employees of the Tuolumne Lodge** who donated the loose change collected from their summer visitors. Thank you for your generosity!!

Congratulations to **Betty Randall Potts** of Coarsegold for winning first place in a photo contest with her conservation essay titled "Mono Lake Oasis." She generously sent us her award check.

The **Belvedere-Tiburon Landmarks Society** sent us historical photographs by artist **Jerry O'Day**. Thank you for thinking of us!

In Memory

The Mono Lake Committee would like to extend our condolences to the family of **Dr. Margaret Zeff** of Oakland. Dr. Zeff, a dedicated supporter of Mono Lake, passed away in July at the age of 98.

Evelyn Luce of Berkeley sent a donation in memory of **Hazel Hart**, the beloved sister of member **Foresta Gooch** also of Berkeley.

Sara and James Patrick of Stockton gave a gift in memory of **Audrey Leflore**, also from Stockton.

Michael Milner of Salt Lake City sent a donation in honor of **James P. Andrews**, father of member **Jack Andrews** of Salt Lake City.

Annabel Cooper of Sacramento gave a memorial tribute to **Thomas Jennings**, also from Sacramento.

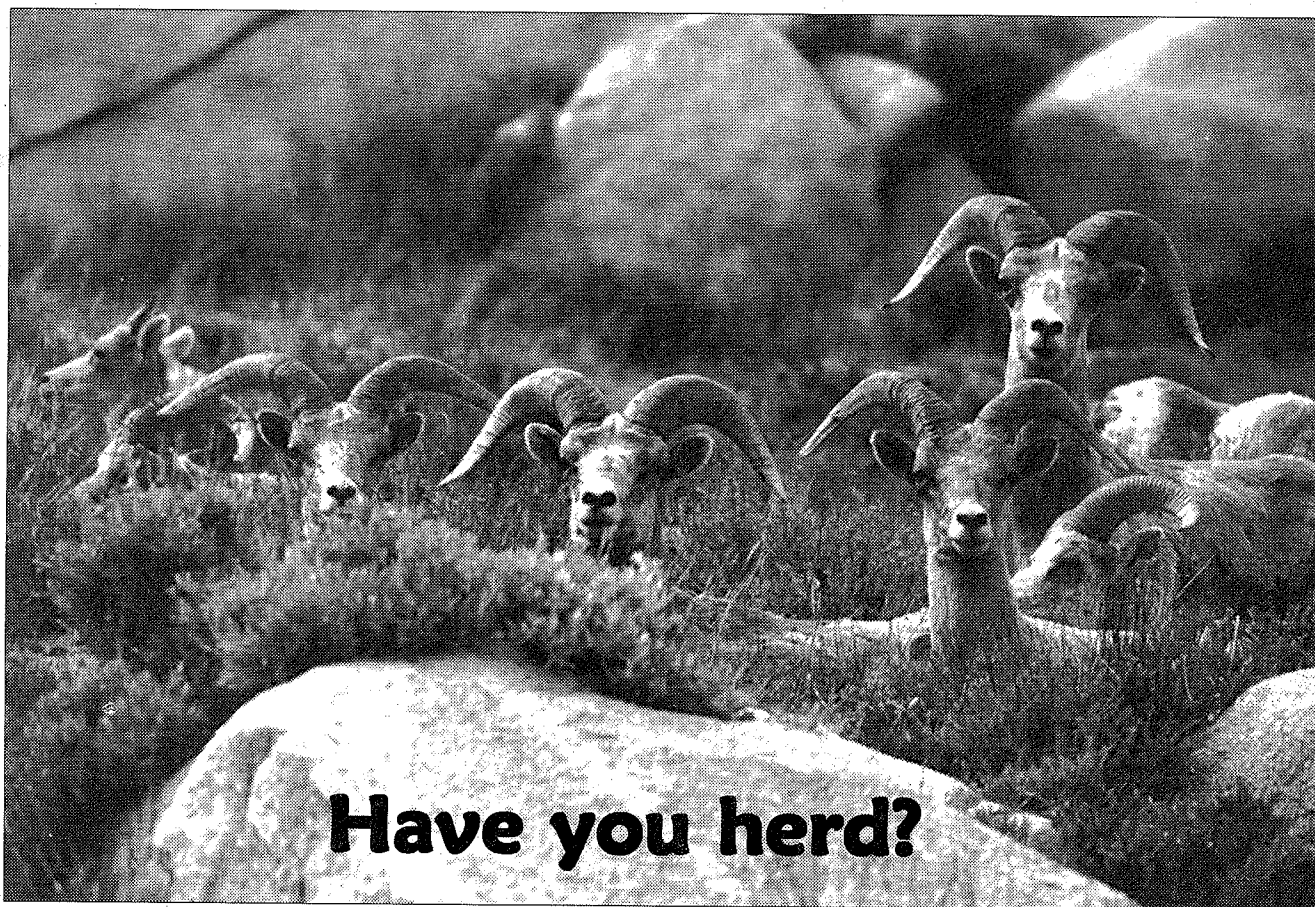
Sam and Patty Mudie of Crowley Lake honored the memory of **David Gaines** with a generous donation.

Waste not, want not

In order to cut down on the paper we use, we do not acknowledge every gift or donation we receive. We do acknowledge gifts of \$100 or more. Please let us know, in advance, if your gift of under \$100 requires a Committee receipt and we will be happy to send you one. Thank you for your cooperation in helping us generate less waste.

Anna Christensen is the Committee's Membership Coordinator. She has been keeping us up to speed on urban professional wear here in the office.

2 0 0 0 F i e l d S e m i n a r s



Have you herd?

Controversy surrounds the fate of the Sierra bighorn, one of the most recent additions to the federal list of endangered species. Join the seminar **Surviving on the Edge: Sierra Bighorn Sheep in the Mono Basin** September 2-3 with instructor John Wehausen who initiated the restoration program that brought bighorn back to the Mono Basin. Discuss the biology and conservation of these animals and attempt to view them—which involves strenuous hiking at the 10,000 foot elevation and above. Sign up now to secure your spot in this year's seminar—or see inside for more choices!

Seminar descriptions and registration information on pages 17-20.



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