



MONO LAKE

N E W S L E T T E R

Fall 2010

The combination of fall color and thunderstorms has made for unprecedented leaf-peeping of late. Wind your way up into the elbow of a moraine colonized by aspens and it's dripping with color. Sometimes it'll stop you in your tracks and your eyes jump around through the colors as if looking for a way to believe they're real. Yellow, orange, red, washed clean by the rain and electric against dark skies.

Speaking of disbelief, you hold in your hands the very first *Mono Lake Newsletter* on 100% post-consumer waste recycled paper. It has been the goal of many *Newsletter* editors before me, and I can hardly believe it myself.

When recycled paper was first available for our printing needs it came at a very high price—one the Mono Lake Committee couldn't afford. Ever-hopeful, we would check each year—could we do it? Meanwhile, on other fronts, progress was being made: we got a recycling service for the office, we switched to 100% recycled paper for the copy machine. And then, in this year's annual paper check we were surprised to find that, with some stretching, we could make it work.

The new paper is just one small example of the Committee's approach to the challenges we face in protecting Mono Lake. We take things one step at a time, sticking with it, and making our way carefully to a balanced outcome. You'll find it throughout the pages that follow ... from realizing the vision of the synthesis report to righting the airport snafu to the invasive plant removal project, and even when hiking with the Outdoor Experiences program ... it's just one step at a time.

So, check out the nifty eco-audit above—and then take a step outside into an aspen grove and take a moment to believe those trees.

—Arya Degenhardt, Communications Director

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In October the Jet Propulsion Laboratory and NASA brought a prototype Mars rover to Mono Lake to field test its rock-sampling procedures and equipment.

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.



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MONO LAKE
NEWSLETTER

Fall 2010
Volume XXXII, Number 1

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Looking for a 21st century aqueduct

by Geoffrey McQuilkin

The Los Angeles Aqueduct is a fixture in the Mono Basin, and few can remember a time before it existed. Over 70 years old, the aqueduct itself—and its physical limitations—is now at the center of Mono Lake Committee policy work with the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power (DWP).

Of course, the aqueduct has always been a rather important focus, but in years past the issue was how much water was inside that buried concrete pipeline to Los Angeles—and how much remained in the Mono Basin for the lake and streams. That was settled with the 1994 State Water Board decision, which established a long-term ecologically sound management level for the lake, the creation of a restoration program for the desiccated streams, and the provision for export of water beyond these amounts.

But now, with the expert stream scientists' recommendations in hand, the physical aqueduct infrastructure has become the focal issue of the day. Can the pipes, dams, ditches, structures, and valves release water to the streams in an ecologically beneficial way? Are they an obstacle to achieving the promise of restoration? And if they are, what can be done about it?

Two big factors are at work. First, the aqueduct was not designed or built to routinely allow water to pass down Mono's tributaries in an ecologically sound manner. It was designed to capture the full flow of the tributaries, which it did for decades. Since then, stream restoration and the flow of water to the lake have depended on the use of spillways, bypass valves, and return ditches. No one would construct the system that way today—it's just what has been inherited from a bygone era.

Second, the aqueduct is well maintained, but it is getting old. Forget restoration for a moment—major facilities questions are looming for DWP. There are questions about facility reliability, about structural integrity, about the amount of time invested in operations and maintenance, and about operational protocols. DWP can keep maintaining the system it has piece by piece, or it can invest in facilities that meet their modern day mandates—that now include the needs of the lake and streams—for the decades ahead.

My favorite example: one way of releasing water to Rush Creek requires draining the aqueduct pipe, then having DWP employees climb into the aqueduct conduit and barricade the inside of the pipe, then refilling the pipe so it overflows out a nearby bypass gate, then draining it again, then having

employees return to remove the barricade materials. Obviously a modern structure would have a release valve built in—probably one that could be operated and monitored remotely from DWP offices in Bishop.

The feasibility analysis submitted by DWP in July is fundamentally based on what the aqueduct physically can do, can't do, and reasonably could do (see page 4). It's the "what could it reasonably do" part where the Committee is in disagreement with DWP, largely because this important topic went unaddressed in the analysis.



Structural upgrades on the Lee Vining Creek diversion facility allow DWP to better meet State Water Board restoration requirements.

After 70 years, it's time to look a little further down the road. Sure, it's tough to use the current aqueduct to deliver the high Rush Creek flows that are so critical to restoring the stream channel, but what does DWP need to do anyway—regardless of stream restoration—to make these facilities work reliably and effectively for the future? We're confident that solutions for stream restoration, such as modern water release facilities, are also solutions that meet challenges facing Los Angeles, such as assuring compliance with State Water Board requirements and reliably exporting the millions of dollars' worth of Mono Basin water allocated to the city.

There's already an example of how this type of solution can have benefits all around, and it is called the Lee Vining Creek diversion facility. Several years ago an entire section of the dam was removed and a modern real-time adjustable gate was installed. This gate assured that state-mandated streamflow requirements were delivered and that restoration requirements such as passing sediment and peak flows were accomplished. And the benefits for DWP? They gained certainty that streamflow requirements would be met, allowing greater confidence in the export of water, as allowed, from the creek.

This is why the Mono Lake Committee will be focusing on the aqueduct in the months ahead—and the question of what could be done with it, here in the 21st century, to meet stream restoration, Mono Lake level, and DWP goals simultaneously. ❖

Synthesis report charts course for restoration success

But will DWP agree on feasibility?

by Lisa Cutting

This past spring the State Water Board-appointed stream scientists released their final flow recommendations for Rush, Lee Vining, Parker, and Walker creeks. After receiving and incorporating appropriate comments into the report, the scientists submitted the final *Mono Basin Stream Restoration and Monitoring Program: Synthesis of Instream Flow Recommendations to the State Water Resources Control Board and the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power*, or simply the “synthesis report,” to the State Water Board. It will now guide the stream flow revision process (see Summer 2010 *Newsletter* for complete background).

DWP feasibility analysis a disappointment

Finalizing the synthesis report triggered the next step called for in State Water Board Order 98-05: the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power’s (DWP) evaluation of the feasibility of operating its aqueduct system to reliably deliver the new recommended flows. DWP submitted that feasibility analysis to the State Water Board in July.

DWP’s response was considerably less than the Committee had hoped for in terms of realistic operational solutions and creative approaches. It has been long known that facility and operational changes would be required to implement the synthesis report findings. Instead of looking ahead and including ways to improve the increasingly antiquated system, DWP held their ground and most flow recommendations and delivery methods were categorically deemed “not feasible,” “not presently feasible,” “partially feasible,” or “feasible with modification.” This was not a surprise.

The Committee remains undeterred in our position that DWP must implement the final flow recommendations with a water delivery system that it can operate reliably (see page 3 for more). The Committee will file detailed comments to the State Water Board once they open the public comment period,

which is expected to occur within weeks.

Facilitated process may produce solutions

Concurrently with DWP’s feasibility report (and somewhat paradoxically), the Committee and DWP reached agreement on initiating a cooperative, collaborative facilitated process with the goal of working through the various disagreements and decisions that need to be addressed. The recognition that there are many conflicts that need to be resolved before restoration can continue has generated support for the process from all sides.

The goal is to resolve as many differences as possible and then to collectively present a comprehensive proposal for the State Water Board to consider and potentially adopt. Of course, any outstanding unresolved differences between the parties would need to be addressed by the State Water Board. The Committee supports the proposed process and considering the alternative (an immediate State Water Board hearing), believes this is the best option for moving restoration forward.

Restoration plans poised for revisions

Having all the interested restoration parties at the same table working with a facilitator might prove to be helpful in other ways as well. The primary goal remains how to reliably achieve the stream scientists’ flow recommendations while still meeting DWP’s water export allowances. Figuring out how to operate the aqueduct to divert water with the least impact to the natural flow regime will be the challenge.

However, looming on the horizon is a complete revision of DWP’s operating plans for the Mono Basin, a revision that should support the new flows and a new monitoring plan as well. If successful, the facilitated process could be used to wrap up many of the outstanding restoration requirements, thereby systematically achieving a huge body of work and putting restoration on a clear and solid path forward. ❖

State Water Board travels to Mono

At press time, State Water Board members and associated staff visited the Mono Basin. During two days they familiarized themselves with the water system—both the natural creeks and DWP’s water conveyance infrastructure—through an on-the-ground tour of the area, and heard directly from all parties in a formal workshop after the tour. The State

Water Board-appointed stream scientists were able to speak directly to the Board, explaining their flow recommendations in person. Committee staff and experts were part of all the activities and report that progress was made on implementing the synthesis report restoration plan.

Lee Vining Airport clear for take-off (again)

Rehabilitation project now entering final phase

by Lisa Cutting

Right around the time of the Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua this past June, the view out to the east of town started to change. We all knew that the Lee Vining Airport was getting a “facelift”—flattening out the bumpy runway and resurfacing the aging airstrip. But why were those earthmovers buzzing along the horizon day after day? And what was that pile of material to the north of the runway area? And where did it come from?

It wasn't only the Mono Lake Committee asking these questions. It seemed like many people around town had their eyes on the scene and saw how it was changing daily. Rehabilitating the airport runway had long been on the list of Mono County projects and funding from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) had finally come through. The Committee and the rest of the community understood the project to be a simple maintenance project, so why all the earthmovers?

The problems

While investigating these questions, the Committee began to find problematic answers. First, one of the two half-mile-long drainage ditches adjacent to the runway was over-engineered to more than 60 feet wide and 10 feet deep and the excavated dirt needed to go somewhere. Second, flattening the hump in the runway resulted in even more fill dirt. Finally, new FAA requirements stipulated slope ratios and clearance areas adjacent to the runway. The result was the stockpile of material north of the runway—a pile of excavated earth 12 feet high and 10 acres wide—roughly 123,000 cubic yards of dirt.

The stockpile created significant visual impacts. From town, views of the islands and the far eastern shore of the lake were significantly compromised. Once the earthmovers left the site, repair work would be harder to achieve, so time was of the essence in finding solutions. Additionally, Committee investigation revealed a problematic revegetation plan that



The excessively large drainage ditch west of the runway contributed to the size of the stockpile that obstructed views from Lee Vining.

would result in 30 acres of patchy coverage comprised of non-native plant species. Given the urgency of the situation a working group immediately convened to see what could be done.

Collaborative solutions reached

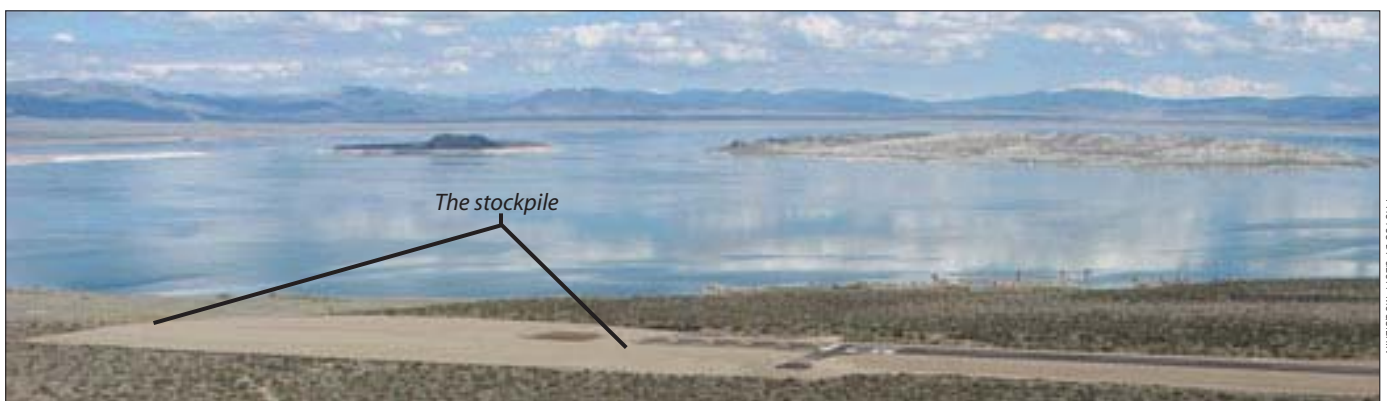
The Mono Basin Regional Planning Advisory Committee, Mono Lake Committee, US Forest Service, and Mono County began a series of weekly meetings and site visits that ultimately led to the following corrective actions:

The stockpile was reduced by over six vertical feet by the removal of approximately 25,000 cubic yards of material and by contouring the slope to match the surrounding natural lands.

Stockpile material was used to partially fill the over-engineered drainage ditch.

When the second round of corrective earthmoving was being done, the working group communicated closely with

Continued on page 24



An aerial view of the north end of the Lee Vining Airport runway and the 10-acre stockpile.

PHOTOS BY GEOFF MACQUILLAN

Take small steps

by Claudia Corona

“Take small steps,” said Santiago Escruceria, Outdoor Experiences Manager, “that’s the trick to hiking on a steeper slope without losing lots of energy,” and the group took it to heart, suddenly looking like the confident hikers that we knew they could be.

The group that came to participate in the Mono Lake Committee’s Outdoor Experiences (OE) program during the first week of July was composed of high school graduates and kids in their early-20s from Los Angeles. They were all part of Urban Semillas, a young adult program that teaches students about water and trees, people’s relationship with nature, where their water comes from, and that nature isn’t something that you just see on TV—it’s real—and when they visit places like Yosemite and Mono Lake, it’s all around them.

We were hiking to Lembert Dome and Dog Lakes, two places that neither I nor the group had ever been to, so we were all as thrilled as if we were still kids going into our favorite theme park, in our case ... Yosemite!

Throughout our all-day hike, I saw reminders of a past not too long ago. Every time I saw the students’ faces light up with the determination to climb Lembert Dome, every time I heard their curious minds asking questions about the surrounding flora, and every time I witnessed their courage when doing the solo walk, it reminded me of my own experiences with the OE program, two and three years prior to now.

I told the group that the first time I realized where my water came from was when I came up to visit Mono Lake during

my junior year in high school. I, just like them, was a city kid, without any knowledge of animal species besides squirrels and pigeons, sadly unaware that everything came from somewhere else and that the Mono Lake ecosystem was being affected by our water consumption down in Los Angeles.

The day went on; they realized that mosquitoes, sometimes considered pesky buggers, were actually a part of a bigger chain of life that fed the dragonflies and in turn the birds. They learned how to hike without disturbing the surrounding flora and fauna, and how to relish nature’s beautiful landscapes and patterns of life. And just like I had, they made their own discoveries about themselves and what they wanted to do with their lives.

I told them that this Outdoor Experiences trip to Yosemite was very near and dear to my heart because it reminded me of my own realization during my first trip here; that there *was* something out there besides skyscrapers and pollution, there was nature’s beauty and life’s wonders. And that now, I was an intern for the very same organization that changed my perspective on the environment. I encouraged them to pursue their goals and spoke to them about the possibility of working for environmental organizations like this one, because they have the potential. Everyone has their own personal mountains to conquer ... the trick to climbing them? Don’t give up and “take small, steady steps.” ❖

Claudia Corona was a Mono Lake Intern during the summer of 2010. She is now back at Williams College.



Urban Semillas on Lembert Dome in Yosemite with past Outdoor Experiences participant-turned-Mono Lake Intern, Claudia Corona, left.

ROSA BREY

Osprey nests soar to record numbers

by Lisa Fields, Environmental Scientist, Sierra District, California State Parks

The nesting Osprey population at Mono Lake doubled from 2009 to 2010 but maintained the same level of reproductive success. There were 4 active nests in 2009 that fledged 5 young, while in 2010 there were 8 active nests that fledged 10 young. The success rate for both years was 1.25 young fledged per active nest. The 8 active nests are the greatest number recorded during the nest monitoring study; the previous record was set in 2005 when there were 6 active nests.



PHOTO COURTESY OF JONAH MATTHEWSON

Osprey nestlings in one of the eight active nests at Mono Lake in 2010.

There was movement once again in the location of Osprey nests at South Tufa. (For research purposes nest sites are named with the area and number; ST01 is South Tufa 1.) The Osprey pair that utilizes ST01, located adjacent to “pirate ship” tufa, was able to use this nest in 2010 although reproduction failed. In recent years, a Canada Goose had been occupying the nest when the Osprey returned from migration. However, ST07, in the west end of the “swimming pool” area, was occupied by a Canada Goose upon Osprey arrival this year. It is possible that the displaced Osprey pair constructed the new nest ST10 since it is in the vicinity. It is also possible that the late nesting on ST09 was actually the pair from ST01, reattempting after nest failure. However, this is all conjecture. When funding is secured to study the adults, it will be possible to test these hypotheses.

Nestling banding, which was initiated in 2009, continued in 2010. Both banding efforts were made possible thanks to the Jeff Maurer Chautauqua Research Grant and Bloom Biological, Inc.

All Mono Lake Osprey nestlings were banded in 2009 and 2010. Two un-hatched eggs were also collected in 2010 during the banding effort; they will be stored until funding can be acquired to pay for analysis. Banding in 2009 was completed during a single visit, while 2010 required two visits. The additional visit was necessary due to the late hatching of young at ST09. As of the end of September, these young were fledging—the adults delayed migration to complete rearing. ❖

26-year-old California Gull comes back to Mono Lake

by Kristie Nelson, PRBO Conservation Science Biologist

In the summer of 2009, while processing and banding gull chicks, field assistant and Mono Lake Committee Birding Intern Nora Livingston read the band number of a nearby adult gull through her binoculars. Strangely, this gull had a white color band above its ankle, which turned out to be a special and rather stunning connection to early Mono Lake Committee history.

Last summer, almost a year later, the results came in: that gull was banded as a chick on Mono Lake in 1983, the first official year of the Mono Lake California Gull Research Project.

The gull was 26 years and one month old, a few months short of the longevity record for the species. Although the band number had not been read previously gull researchers have recalled seeing that gull with the distinctive white color band in the same corner of one of the research plots for at least ten years. It has probably spent winters foraging widely over the Pacific Ocean, and year after year returned to the same tiny

little spot on Mono Lake to raise its young.

In 1976 the Mono Lake Research Group did preliminary gull censuses as part of their ecological inventory of Mono Lake. In 1979 the landbridge formed between the mainland and the California Gull colony, forcing the gulls to move their colony to smaller, still water-bound islets in order to avoid coyote predation. In 1983 PRBO Conservation Science (founded as Point Reyes Bird Observatory) began the Mono Lake California Gull Research Project.

It is wonderful to be a part of something—to keep projects running and sustaining the spirit and motivation that caused that something to be created in the first place. We will certainly be looking for it next year—the gull with the white band above the ankle.

To support the ongoing California Gull Research Project contact Lisa (lisa@monolake.org) at (760) 647-6595.

Countering invasive weeds along basin streams

by Julia Runcie

It's hard to imagine a more peaceful place than the cottonwood groves of the Lee Vining Creek Trail, or Mill Creek's willow-studded bottomlands by Cemetery Road. Yet these very streams witness the waging of a delicate annual battle between native plants struggling to make a comeback and the invasive weeds that threaten to displace them.

Any disturbed ecosystem, from a forest recently devastated by fire to a creek bed left dry for decades, is prime real estate for the incursion of plants that specialize in edging out their local competitors. Sweet clover (*Melilotus albus*) has a long taproot that enables it to monopolize limited water resources, leaving more fragile native plants high and dry. Bouncing bet (*Saponaria officinalis*), a particularly resilient weed that can regenerate from the smallest rhizome fragment left in the soil, grows in thick mats that crowd out native plants along stream banks. Invasive plant management is one of the most discouraging aspects of restoration work: weeds are often so abundant and so hardy that curbing them can seem like a lost cause.



A volunteer crew of employees from Patagonia's store and warehouse in Reno pulled bouncing bet near the Lee Vining Creek Trail.

Continuing on from work that started with a grant from the National Forest Foundation, the Mono Lake Committee has stepped up its efforts to control the spread of invasive plants along the basin's streams. This summer, in a series of "pulling parties," 74 volunteers dedicated hours to the manual removal of weeds at the Mill Creek culvert and along the Lee Vining Creek Trail. It was hot, dusty work against daunting odds, but we made real progress: by the end of the season we had uprooted a grand

total of 622 pounds of weeds and cleared large sections of both riparian zones.

There's still a lot to be done, and weeds continue to flourish throughout the basin. The considerable scope of the task requires a high level of adaptive management, and the Mono Lake Committee is working in collaboration with the Forest Service and California State Parks to constantly reanalyze the focus of the project and maximize effort in the directions where it will be most effective.

It's important to keep in mind that restoration is a very gradual process. While complete elimination of these invasive species is scarcely feasible, every weed removed frees up water and soil that contribute to the survival of native plants. The goal is to aid in the recovery of riparian ecosystems until the native plant population is stable enough to outcompete the weeds and a healthy base of natural vegetation is restored along Mono Lake's tributary streams. The battle will continue, and we'll make sure the willows and rose bushes aren't fighting alone.

If you want to lend a hand next year contact Julia (julia@monolake.org) at (760) 647-6595. ❖

Julia Runcie is a Committee Project Specialist. She is planning a ski trip from Lee Vining to Yosemite Valley.

Get out the weeds

by Bartshé Miller

Last spring the Mono Lake Committee and Friends of the Inyo wrapped up the "Get Out the Weeds" project. This collaborative effort involved the Inyo National Forest, Mono Lake Tufa State Natural Reserve, students in the Committee's Outdoor Experiences program, and public volunteers. Over 190 volunteers spent 523 volunteer hours removing invasive plants on 14 acres of land within the Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area.

Invasive plants are subtly, but measurably, altering habitat around Mono Lake. The project helped to analyze and prioritize the threat to determine the removal techniques

that could best be used by volunteers. Though most invasive plant species will never be eradicated in the Mono Basin, we can halt or slow the progress of change in critical habitat.

Non-native plants and animals are a real ecological threat around the world and rarely, if ever, result in a net beneficial change for the local ecosystem. The Mono Basin is not immune, but thanks to a united partnership and funding from the National Forest Foundation, we are gaining knowledge and experience, and making progress in the struggle to control invasive plants.

Dust continues to plague Mono

by Geoffrey McQuilkin

Choking dust storms continue to originate from the exposed lakebed of Mono Lake on windy days, vastly exceeding federal clean air standards and making the area among the very worst sources of particulate air pollution in the nation. In 2010 regulators tallied 16 violations in the Mono Basin by the end of July.

Is there a plan to fix this? Indeed there is. Raising Mono Lake to the long-term average management level of 6,392 feet above sea level is expected to put most of the dust-producing playa under water. In fact, solving the air quality problem was among the top objectives of the 1994 State Water Board Mono Lake decision.

The follow-up question: how is it going? Every three years, the Great Basin Unified Air Pollution Control District—the regional agency charged with implementing clean air standards—produces a report documenting progress made



Specialized air quality monitoring stations are necessary at Mono Lake to measure the frequency and severity of dust violations.

toward achieving compliance with air quality standards. The 2010 report was approved in September at a district board meeting at Mono Lake.

Bottom line, the plan to raise the lake remains the solution to Mono's dust storm woes. But as Great Basin points out, the lake level has fluctuated around an elevation of 6,383 feet over the last 14 years.

A preliminary analysis shows this is due to cyclical below-average precipitation east of the Sierra; however, it also underscores the need for updated lake level models that are run routinely to maintain updated forecasts of when the long-term management level will be achieved (see page 14).

The Mono Lake Committee is committed to doing the work needed to bring this critical information about Mono Lake up to date. Staff are elbow-deep in the computer code of the lake level model, which will forecast when the dust-emitting playa will be covered. ❖

Los Angeles River declared navigable

by Geoffrey McQuilkin

The waters of Mono Lake are rising today in substantial part due to California's constitutional Public Trust doctrine, which requires protection of navigable waters for the people. But what is navigable?

Is Mono Lake? Yes. How about the Los Angeles River?

It turns out that navigability is also critical for ensuring federal Clean Water Act protections, and this summer a longstanding dispute over the Los Angeles River's navigability was put to rest.

Only fragments of the river had been considered navigable by the US Army Corps of Engineers, but Environmental Protection Agency administrator Lisa Jackson overrode that in July and declared the entire river—all 51 miles—navigable. Now water quality and wetlands protections will apply, which is a big boost for the dedicated river protectors at Friends of the Los Angeles River and Heal the Bay. And maybe it's only fair, given that a portion of the Los Angeles River's flow comes

from water recycling facilities—and a portion of that water being recycled comes from the well-protected tributaries to Mono Lake.



A renegade kayak expedition on the Los Angeles River contributed to the case for its increased protection.

Policy notes

by Lisa Cutting, Morgan Lindsay, and Geoffrey McQuilkin

DWP's Solar Ranch

As this *Newsletter* is going to press DWP announced a Notice of Preparation (NOP) of a Draft EIR for the proposed Southern Owens Valley Solar Ranch. The project would involve the development of a net generation capacity of 200 megawatts of solar photovoltaic energy within approximately 3,100 acres in the southern Owens Valley. The 45-day public comment period for the NOP ends on November 15, 2010. The project description and NOP can be found on the project website at ladwp.com/sovsolarranch. The Mono Lake Committee will file official comments; visit The Mono-logue at monolake.org/today for updates.

the environmental review process and public comment period associated with both agencies will hopefully help ensure a balanced solution.

County Park boardwalk fire

Thanks to the quick response of Lee Vining Volunteer Fire Department, Inyo National Forest, and Bureau of Land Management firefighters, a fire at the Mono Lake County Park in early July was contained to a small area and extinguished quickly. The fire still caused significant damage, charring a section of boardwalk 45 feet long and an acre of adjacent meadow vegetation. California State Parks staff closed



PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVE MARQUANT

Fire burned 45 feet of the Mono Lake Tufa State Natural Reserve boardwalk and an acre of land at County Park.

Many eyes on Lee Vining Canyon

The Inyo National Forest is currently evaluating future opportunities for Lee Vining Canyon. For years there has been talk of much-needed plans to restore campsites that are in disrepair and too close to the creek. Now the discussions have expanded to include potentially housing Yosemite National Park seasonal employees, increasing campground capacity, and coordinating public transit services there, all of which would create a greater impact on the area.

Lee Vining Canyon is managed by the Inyo National Forest. However, as part of the Tuolumne Planning Process, Yosemite National Park has been in conversation with the Inyo exploring options that may help the Park alleviate growing pressure from visitor services. Even though increasing visitor services in the canyon might appear to be a positive step for a gateway community, the Committee and many local residents are concerned that Lee Vining Canyon may end up bearing an inappropriate burden of the Park's solution to their problems.

As the Inyo National Forest formalizes their ideas and plan,

the popular visitor location immediately. Repair work was completed and visitors were once again walking the boardwalk to experience Mono Lake within a week of the fire. The cause of the fire remains unknown.

Bodie Hills highlighted

Just north of Mono Lake, the steep sagebrush canyons of the spectacular Bodie Hills are rich in wildlife, including mule deer, pronghorn, and Greater Sage-Grouse, recently found to be warranted for listing under the Endangered Species Act.

This year the Bodie Hills appeared on a preliminary Department of the Interior list of fourteen potential National Monument candidates. There remains no specific proposal to create a National Monument in the Bodie Hills. However, the area's inclusion on the list emphasizes the special value of this unique place.

At the same time, Electrum Resources, a mineral exploration company, is interested in the possibility of mining

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DeChambeau Creek easement protects natural and working Mono Basin lands

Site includes a slice of Committee history

by Geoffrey McQuilkin

One hundred thirty-five acres of land in the Mono Basin now have a well-planned and safe future, thanks to owner Jan Simis. Earlier this year Simis completed a conservation easement with our friends at the Eastern Sierra Land Trust, assuring lasting protection from excessive development and other inappropriate uses.

The property, located along DeChambeau Creek just northwest of Mono Lake, is home to meadows, aspen groves, and agricultural lands and contains portions of the historic Sylvester and DeChambeau homesteads. The easement agreement is customized to protect wildlife habitat, facilitate continuation of a small-scale farm, and allow for educational programs on the property.

Also located on the property is a site with a special significance for the Mono Lake Committee. Here amidst the aspens alongside the creek is where a group of scientists camped for the summer of 1976, conducting the first ecological study of Mono Lake and building the determination to do something about the impacts of excessive water diversions.

The Eastern Sierra Land Trust will play a role in perpetuity by monitoring the easement and maintaining the adaptive management plan that guides future uses. All of this is good news for the people and wild inhabitants that call this special place in the Mono Basin home. ❖



PHOTO COURTESY OF AARON JOHNSON, EASTERN SIERRA LAND TRUST

The DeChambeau Creek easement seen from above.

Free Drawing to restore Mono Lake

Deadline extended! Tickets due by December 10th

A huge thank you to the generous folks who donate the wonderful prizes for the Free Drawing, the Mono Lake Committee's annual fundraiser! Send in your tickets today (find them in the center of this *Newsletter*) for a chance to win!

Win...

- passes and rental gear at Mammoth Mountain Ski Area, lodging at the Mammoth Mountain Inn, passes to Snowcreek Athletic Club, dinner at Giovanni's Pizza, and a movie at Minaret Cinemas
- a camping package from Wilson's Eastside Sports that includes gear from Vasque, MSR, Cascade Designs, Osprey, Big Agnes, and Mountain Hardware
- a tour of Mono Lake with Caldera Kayaks, lodging and dinner at the Double Eagle Resort, boating at Silver Lake, passes to Snowcreek Athletic Club, and a movie at Minaret Cinemas
- outdoor adventures with Sierra Mountain Center and Sierra Mountain Guides, passes to Snowcreek Athletic Club, a massage at the Double Eagle Spa, dinner at Base Camp Café, a movie at Minaret Cinemas, and lodging at Rainbow Tarns Bed & Breakfast
- a yacht trip with Captain Kirk's Sailing Adventures, Muir's Legacy vineyard tour and wine tasting, and lodging at the Golden Gate Hotel
- dinner and lodging at Yosemite's Wawona Hotel
- a Yosemite Association field seminar and one-year membership, with lodging at the Sunset Inn and Hotel Charlotte in Groveland
- a Lake Tahoe escape at Sorensen's Resort in Hope Valley
- Wave Rave Snowboard Shop's signature Steepwater 164 snowboard
- Jansport Talus and Catalyst daypacks
- Patagonia clothing: men's lightweight R-4 jacket, women's ascensionist jacket
- a \$250 shopping spree at the Mono Lake Committee
- tickets to a Sierra Classic Theater production and Playhouse 395's spring 2011 musical
- W6 Series 10 x 26 compact binoculars from REI
- CD sets from local musicians and Putumayo World Music
- Mono Lake gift packs: a Mono Lake patch, a Mono Lake T-shirt, license plate frames, a postcard book, a "hatching" T-shirt, and a logo bucket hat



• a yacht trip with Captain Kirk's Sailing Adventures, Muir's Legacy vineyard tour and wine tasting, and lodging at the Golden Gate Hotel



• dinner and lodging at Yosemite's Wawona Hotel



• a Yosemite Association field seminar and one-year membership, with lodging at the Sunset Inn and Hotel Charlotte in Groveland



• a Lake Tahoe escape at Sorensen's Resort in Hope Valley



• Wave Rave Snowboard Shop's signature Steepwater 164 snowboard

• Jansport Talus and Catalyst daypacks

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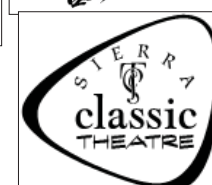
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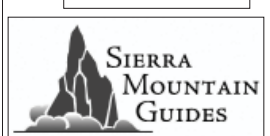
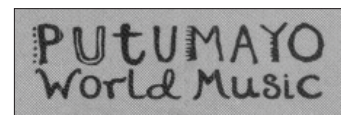
• W6 Series 10 x 26 compact binoculars from REI



• CD sets from local musicians and Putumayo World Music



• Mono Lake gift packs: a Mono Lake patch, a Mono Lake T-shirt, license plate frames, a postcard book, a "hatching" T-shirt, and a logo bucket hat



Land tenure process on track again

by Morgan Lindsay

Preserve open space ... maintain agriculture ... build affordable workforce housing ... concentrate development in existing communities—these were the calls heard during the brainstorming session of a recent Eastern Sierra Land Tenure Project meeting in Lee Vining.

Led by representatives from the Sierra Business Council and the University of Montana Center for Natural Resources and Environmental Policy, 30 Eastern Sierra participants from Bridgeport to Independence explored the possibilities for their communities to address long-term planning goals through land ownership adjustments between private and public entities.

With upwards of 95% of the land in Inyo and Mono counties owned by the federal government and City of Los Angeles, there is a distinct lack of private land available within and adjacent to existing communities for community preservation and expansion. At the same time, many land agencies are charged with the difficult task of managing discontinuous “checkerboard” land parcels.

To that end, the goals of the Eastern Sierra Land Tenure Project are to bring federal and state agencies, Inyo and Mono counties, local tribes, interested citizens, organizations,

and private landowners together to investigate the creation of a land ownership pattern in the Eastern Sierra that better complements collaborative regional goals while preserving private property rights.

The Land Tenure Project began gaining momentum as a subcommittee of the Owens Valley Interagency Committee in 2005. The current effort sponsored by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy stalled during the 2009 state funding freeze but is now swiftly moving forward.

The Sierra Business Council has completed initial stakeholder interviews and is now conducting a series of community outreach and visioning workshops. The final result will be a comprehensive assessment by region with recommendations for each county and land agency to consider when undertaking a potential land exchange. The hope is that a list of possible pilot projects will also emerge so that the process can begin. ❖

Morgan Lindsay is a Committee Project Specialist. This fall she headed up to the high country with her sister for a long walk on the John Muir Trail.

The Forgotten Season

Winter Photography in the Mono Basin

January 14–16, 2011

\$220 per person / \$200 for Mono Lake Committee members

Winter at Mono Lake: a lifting morning poconip fog, tufa towers jacketed in snow and reflected in the mirror of the lake’s surface, ice sculpting crystalline filigree along creek and lake banks. This photography seminar will be based in Lee Vining and will explore locations along the lake to photograph the serenity and beauty that is the Mono Basin in winter.

Instructor Rick Knepp is a former Mono Lake Committee staff member, popular seminar leader, and veteran of Mono winters. His experience will allow participants to take advantage of many winter photographic opportunities.

Come prepared for cold winter weather. This seminar will take place regardless of weather or road conditions. Cost is for tuition only. Participants must arrange their own accommodation. There will be no refunds due to weather. This seminar is limited to 15 participants.



to sign up, call (760) 647-6595 or visit monolake.org/seminars

Streamwatch

Big peak flows restore creeks

by Greg Reis

April and May set new cold weather records, allowing an April-sized snowpack to persist until June. Hot weather in early June caused rapid snowmelt and significant peak flows. Daily average flows of 480 cubic feet per second (cfs) on Lee Vining Creek and 72 cfs on Walker Creek were among the highest passing below the diversion dams since they were built. Parker Creek's flow of 77 cfs was the highest since 1995.

The sound of restoration—the

clunking of boulders rolling along the bottom of Lee Vining Creek—could be heard along the Lee Vining Creek Trail for almost a week. After the flood receded, major channel changes were evident in many places along the creek.

About a month later, the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power (DWP) installed equipment to pump water over the Grant Lake Reservoir spillway to meet Rush Creek's 380 cfs normal-year peak flow requirement. However, it was not needed because all the reservoirs on

Rush Creek filled and spilled. The peak average daily flow below Grant was 434 cfs—the third-highest flow since 548 cfs was released in 1995.

By August, flows had receded to what would be expected in an average year. But the beneficial marks left on the streams—recharged water tables, fresh soil on floodplains, new gravel bars, cottonwood and willow seedlings, reconfigured debris jams, deeper pools, and more complex instream habitat—were certainly not average. ❖

Lakewatch

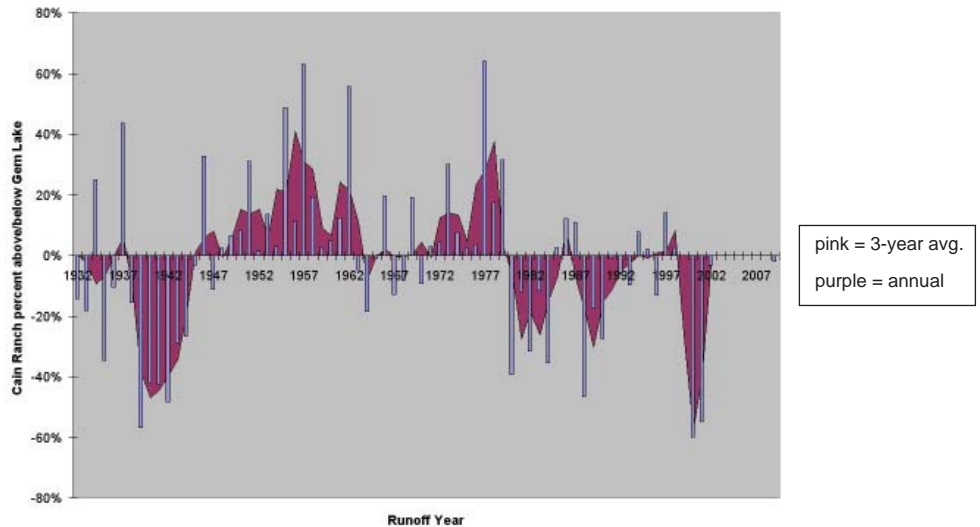
Mono Lake remains at the same level as last year

by Greg Reis

Mono Lake rose in June when the snow finally started melting, and the lake peaked at 6,382.3 feet above sea level in late July. On August 1 of this year and last, Mono Lake was at 6,382.27. It dropped 0.42 feet in August 2010, but only 0.33 feet in August 2009. The bigger drop this August is probably due to the lack of measureable precipitation and higher evaporation (the sky was clear except for one day); in August 2009 we measured 0.36 inches of rain and there were eleven days with clouds.

By October 1, Mono Lake had dropped to 6,381.6 feet—a tenth of a foot drop for the 2010 Water Year. Precipitation during the year was 108% of average in Lee Vining, and runoff was about 103%. With above-average precipitation and runoff, why did Mono Lake remain at about the same elevation as last year? In fact, shouldn't it have risen?

The answer appears to lie in below-average precipitation east of the Sierra Nevada. Precipitation at Cain



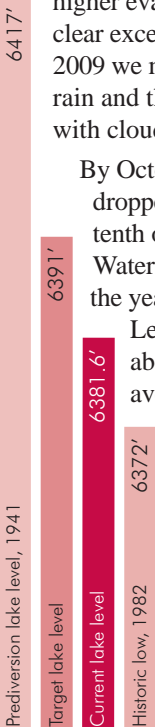
Precipitation east of the Sierra crest does not directly track Sierra precipitation. Instead, analysis of available data shows a cyclical relationship.

Ranch (more representative of east-of-the-Sierra areas) was only 74% of average. If precipitation there had been average, we should have expected Mono Lake to rise at least 0.1 feet. Less groundwater inflow from three years of drier conditions has also had an effect.

Additionally, we found that the last 14 years averaged 100% for runoff but only 75% for precipitation at Cain Ranch. This decrease to the east could be cyclical, as the graph above suggests. Adjusting DWP's annual lake level forecasts for this decrease resulted in a prediction very

close to actual lake levels.

To see how actual Mono Lake fluctuations compare to predictions, we need access to a working, updated lake level forecast model. Last winter, the Committee dusted off some floppy disks containing the 1992 update of Peter Vorster's 1985 annual Lake Level Forecast Model—the most detailed of the three existing models. We are in the process of updating that model and are working with stakeholders to update the monthly forecast model used by the State Water Board for D1631. ❖



Mono Basin Journal

A roundup of quiet happenings at Mono Lake

by Geoffrey McQuilkin



GEOFF MCQUILKIN

The Mono Basin is a big place and that means there are a lot of surprises tucked away. Some, like ancient lakeshore terraces, are so large that they are hidden in plain sight; you have to await the sun striking at just the right angle at just the right time of year to reveal them.

Others are smaller, remote, and hard to find, but they too are often hidden in plain sight. Get yourself rolling down Highway 167 on a clear, crisp fall morning, drive the arrow-straight highway until you reach the border with Nevada, take a left onto a bouncy dirt road, jog right, curve left again, avoid the high center boulders, and keep rolling to the northeast.

There you are: the scent of sagebrush, a grand and expansive view, the quiet of places far removed from the

highway. No noise but the wind, nearly a constant presence out here, and the creator of the hidden treasure of the day.

To the wind, add sand. To the landscape, add three-million-year-old black volcanic basalt. Mix the wind-blown sand, the basalt boulders, and lots and lots of time. Then look carefully by your feet and you'll find them: *ventifacts*, as the geologists call them. Spectacularly eroded basalt formations, grooved, shaped, contoured, worn down by the day by day by day passing of millions of grains of sand. Remarkable structures that are reminders of how richly grand this Mono Basin truly is. ❖

Geoffrey McQuilkin is the Committee's Executive Director. He enjoys seeing the work of wind in nature—it's much more fun than seeing its work on his roof, and the subsequent shingle hunt.

Benchmarks



February 2000: The dynamic Rush Creek delta supports shorebirds, ducks, and other waterfowl. Lake level: 6,384.3 feet above sea level.



PHOTOS BY GEOFF MCQUILKIN

October 2010: The delta is always changing as Mono Lake's level fluctuates. A lake level of 6,381.6 feet shows how lake currents rework sediments.



2010 Fall Catalog

See all products
in color online at
**MONOLAKE.ORG/
STORE**



MONO LAKE IS FOR LOVERS THERMAL

Information Center & Bookstore Manager (and newlywed) Rose and her husband Bayard are in love with this new thermal. It's soft, warm, and has the fun "Mono Lake is for lovers" brine shrimp design. The men's version is dark brown, the women's is plum; both are 60% cotton and 40% polyester.

Men's Mono Lake is for lovers thermal, dark brown, S-XL: \$24.00, XXL: \$26.00

Women's Mono Lake is for lovers thermal, plum, S-XL: \$22.00, XXL: \$24.00

GULL AND ALKALI FLIES T-SHIRT

Scientific illustrator and Mono Lake Intern Logan Parsons drew this incredible image of a California Gull running after Mono's alkali flies. Modeled here by Outdoor Experiences staff Rosa and Michael, these shirts are perfect for your favorite Monophile.

*Gull and alkali flies T-shirt, white, please specify women's v-neck or men's crew neck, S-XL: \$21.00
XXL in both styles: \$22.00*



ONE BROWN BEAR T-SHIRT

Caelen and Ellery McQuilkin were happy to show off a shirt with so many fun critters on it! This 100% organic cotton shirt features all of the animals, including a deer, fox, coyote, squirrel, and more, whose combined weight is the same as one brown bear.

*One brown bear T-shirt, youth sizes
S-L: \$19.00*



MONO LAKE COMMITTEE MESSENGER BAG

New for the holiday season, this messenger bag features an adjustable strap and two toggle latches, with a drawing of brine shrimp swimming around the message "Mono Lake is for lovers." The bag is tan, and the design is brick-red.

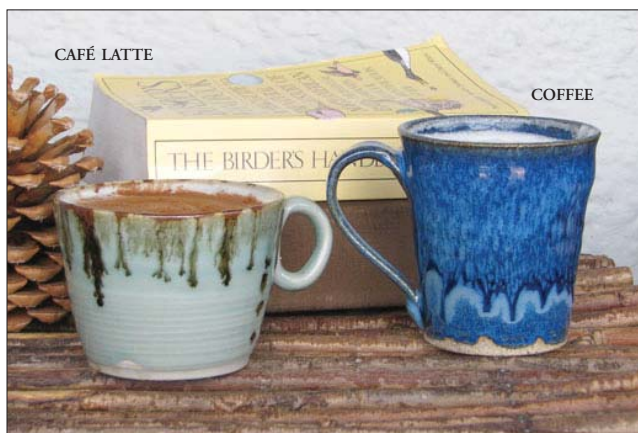
Mono Lake Committee messenger bag, measures 11" x 15": \$24.00

order at www.monolake.org/store & (760) 647-6595

SONGBIRD CANDLES

These sweet candles are made from 100% beeswax and will burn for 20 hours. Available in upright or pecking bird shapes, each bird stands 3½" inches tall, and has a natural beeswax color and a mild natural beeswax scent.

Songbird candle, please specify upright or pecking songbird: \$9.00



HANDMADE MUGS

BY MICHAEL COOKE

Local artist Michael Cooke created two styles of handmade mugs just for the fall catalog! Wheel-thrown and hand-glazed, the café latte mug features a pale green background with brown drip glaze, while the taller coffee mug has a brilliant blue glaze. These cups are handmade, so glaze patterns will vary.

Handmade mugs, 14-oz each, please specify green café latte or blue coffee mug: \$24.00

LACE DISHES

BY DANA MORTON

Bestsellers in the store last summer! Sonora artist Dana Morton uses vintage linens and textiles to create the designs on these unique dishes. Measuring approximately 6" x 6", these pieces of art are handmade and will vary slightly.

Lace dish, please specify red oval swirl, blue square, or black oval flower: \$28.00



EASTERN SIERRA SOAP

Local soap maker Coleen Randolph makes this cold-process soap with olive oil, coconut oil, palm oil, goat's milk and natural essences. Each soap comes in a 2" x 3½" box with the Mono Lake Committee logo and mission statement printed on it. Choose from lemongrass, oatmeal, rose, grapefruit, or lavender scents.

Eastern Sierra soap, please specify lemongrass, oatmeal, rose, grapefruit, or lavender: \$9.00



order at www.monolake.org/store & (760) 647-6595



BRINE SHRIMP ORNAMENT

Wild Bryde creates these unique ornaments, modeled after Mono Lake's very own unique brine shrimp, *Artemia monica*. Shown at actual size, these are a perfect reminder of Mono Lake during the holidays or all year round!

Brine shrimp ornament, please specify silver or gold: \$10.00

HAND-BLOWN GLASS ORNAMENT

These hand-blown glass ornaments from Nepal have beautiful multicolored streaks and spots. Ornaments measure 3" and vary in pattern. Each ornament comes in a sage-green box with the Mono Lake Committee logo in silver on top.

Hand-blown glass ornament: \$14.00



BRINE SHRIMP EARRINGS

Wear Mono Lake's unique species of brine shrimp as delicate earrings! They're even anatomically correct—the female has a small pearly bead representing her egg sack, and the male has claspers.

Brine shrimp earrings, measure 1" excluding ear wires, please specify male or female and gold or silver: \$14.00



TALL MONO LAKE COMMITTEE MUG

Perfect for those days when you need a big cup of coffee or tea, this 14-ounce ceramic mug has the Mono Lake Committee logo in white on a shiny navy blue background.

Tall logo mug, 14-oz, dark blue: \$7.50



BIRDWATCHER EARRINGS

Show your love of feathered friends with these fun earrings depicting a cheeky warbler perched atop a pair of binoculars.

These are a great gift for your favorite birding buddy.

Birdwatcher earrings, measure 1" excluding ear wires, please specify gold or silver: \$20.00

CLASSIC MONO LAKE COMMITTEE MUG

This eight-ounce blue, matte finish mug features the classic Mono Lake Committee logo.

Classic logo mug, 8-oz, light blue: \$6.95



order at www.monolake.org/store & (760) 647-6595

WENDY MORGAN HOLIDAY CARD SETS

Artist Wendy Morgan's lively, bold images grace these holiday cards. Each set includes 10 cards of the same image. The inside reads "May you have a Happy Holiday and a Joyous New Year!" The White-crowned Sparrow set features three cheeky, spirited birds perched on snowy grasses. The pika set features this small, alpine mammal holding a bundle of holiday grasses in his mouth.

Morgan holiday card set, 10 cards with envelopes, please specify White-crowned Sparrow or pika: \$13.50



STEPHEN INGRAM EASTERN SIERRA WINTER CARD SET

These stunning cards by local photographer Stephen Ingram perfectly capture the solitude and beauty of the Eastern Sierra in winter. The set includes two cards of each image; cards are blank inside.

Ingram winter card set, 8 cards with envelopes: \$20.00



NANCY OVERHOLTZ WILDLIFE CARD SET

New! Local watercolor artist Nancy Overholtz created a wildlife set featuring an American Avocet, Great Horned Owl, Mountain Chickadee, cottontail, bobcat, California Quail, bear cub, and coyote exclusively for this holiday season. Cards are beautifully printed on watercolor paper with deckled edges.

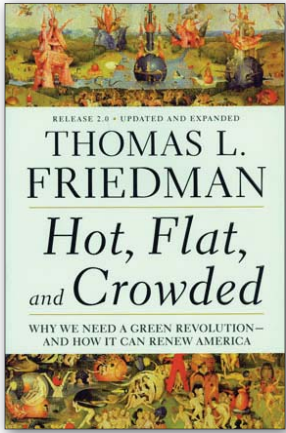
Overholtz wildlife card set, 8 cards with envelopes, blank inside: \$23.00



AROMATIC EVERGREEN SACHETS

These sachets by Juniper Ridge bring the natural, long-lasting scent of Douglas fir or Christmas fir into your home. A perfect gift for the holidays, and great to have all year long.

Aromatic evergreen sachet, please specify Douglas fir or Christmas fir: \$8.00

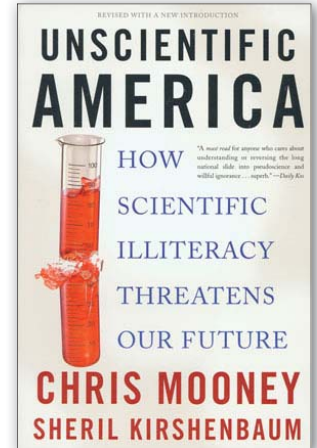


HOT, FLAT, AND CROWDED

BY THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN

Friedman focuses on two interlinking issues in this fearless book: American spirit and nationalism, and the devastating condition of the global environment. With fiery, incisive language, he argues that Americans can gather together and start a green revolution that could capture the world and rebuild the country at the same time.

Hot, Flat, and Crowded, softcover, Picador, 516 pages, 5½" x 8¼": \$16.00



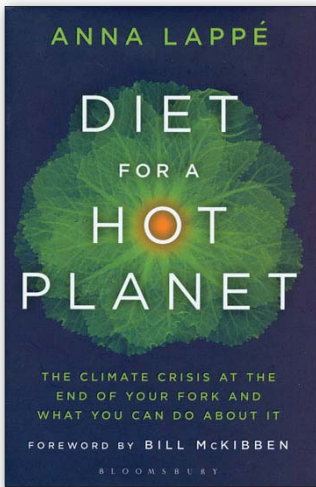
UNSCIENTIFIC AMERICA:

HOW SCIENTIFIC ILLITERACY THREATENS OUR FUTURE

BY CHRIS MOONEY AND SHERIL KIRSHENBAUM

What happens when many people are woefully ignorant of the scientific issues that face America and the world today? This book urges us all to engage in science and bridge the current gap between scientists and the general public.

Unscientific America, softcover, Basic Books, 209 pages, 5½" x 8¼": \$15.00



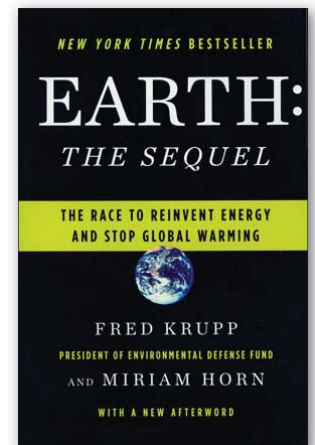
DIET FOR A HOT PLANET:

THE CLIMATE CRISIS AT THE END OF YOUR FORK AND WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT

BY ANNA LAPPÉ

Lappé suggests that we can help the planet's ecology and health, as well as our own well being, by making informed decisions about what we eat. She goes into detail about the terrors of industrial agriculture, and urges readers to eat local food. This is a great book for farmers, urban planners, ecologists, and really, anyone who eats!

Diet for a Hot Planet, hardcover, Bloomsbury, 313 pages, 6½" x 9½": \$24.00



EARTH: THE SEQUEL

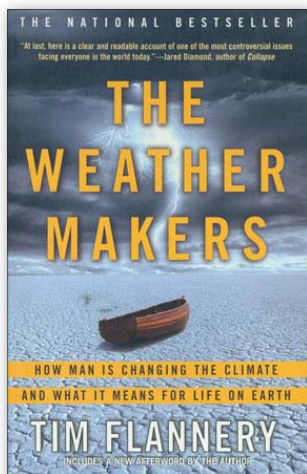
THE RACE TO REINVENT ENERGY AND STOP GLOBAL WARMING

BY FRED KRUPP AND MIRIAM HORN

This is a hopeful, engaging book about how policy decisions can spur inventors and businesses to be innovative in making products that lower carbon dioxide emissions. With varied examples of the creative business practices that reduce carbon emissions today, Krupp and Horn prove that stricter environmental policy decisions would actually increase inventiveness and capitalism.

This is a concrete, fascinating, and incredibly timely book.

Earth: The Sequel, softcover, WWNorton, 296 pages, 5½" x 8¼": \$24.95



THE WEATHER MAKERS: HOW MAN IS CHANGING THE CLIMATE AND WHAT IT MEANS FOR LIFE ON EARTH

BY TIM FLANNERY

Flannery makes a compelling case linking the sometimes devastating effects of climate change with global warming, and shows how our daily choices make us "weather makers." This is a poetic and engaging book on the sciences of global warming, climatology, and economics.

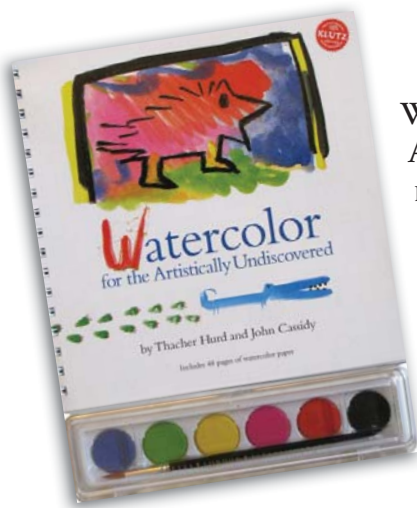
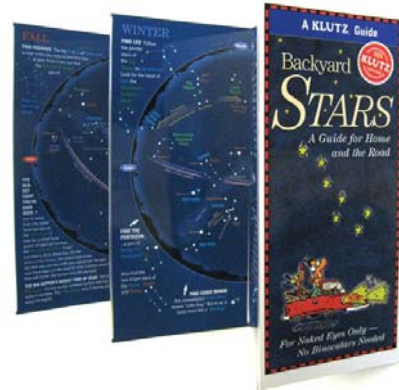
The Weather Makers, softcover, Grove Press, 360 pages, 5½" x 8¼": \$15.00

order at www.monolake.org/store & (760) 647-6595

FOLDING STAR GUIDE

This accordion-fold laminated guide is perfect to have in your pocket, backpack ... or right next to your back door. With no binoculars needed, it shows the most visible stars and constellations in all four seasons and has a map of visible features on the moon too.

Folding star guide, Klutz, 4" x 9": \$4.95



WATERCOLOR FOR THE ARTISTICALLY UNDISCOVERED

BY THATCHER HURD AND JOHN CASSIDY

This kit contains everything you need to unlock your creativity, including 48 pages of watercolor paper, a brush, a six-color paint set, and a book full of ideas and techniques to get you going. A great all-in-one gift for kids age 8 and up.

Watercolor for the Artistically Undiscovered, Klutz, 72-page booklet with paint set, 9" x 11½": \$19.95

MONO LAKE COMMITTEE TOTE BAG

New! This 100% organic cotton flat-bottomed tote has the Mono Lake Committee logo in vibrant blue. It is nice and roomy, making it a great tote for groceries, books, and everyday items.

Mono Lake Committee tote bag, measures 13"x 16": \$17.00



NON-TOXIC ART SUPPLIES

Clementine Art makes non-toxic and very popular children's art products. Natural paints come in the six colors of the rainbow in individual 17-ounce pots and are appropriate for children age 3 and up. Crayon rocks are extremely cute, eco-friendly crayons that are just the right shape for little fingers (age 5 and up). Soy crayons are easy to grip and don't have any annoying paper to peel off. Each crayon is 2½" long and is appropriate for children age 3 and up.

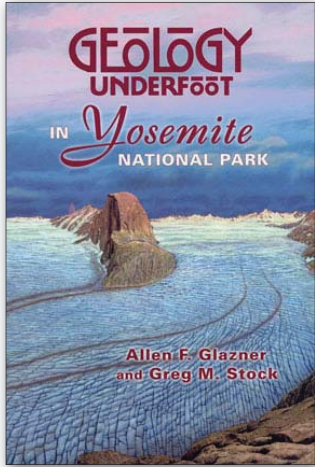
Natural paints, pack of six: \$18.50

Crayon rocks, pack of nine: \$6.50

Soy crayons, pack of six: \$6.50



order at www.monolake.org/store & (760) 647-6595



GEOLOGY UNDERFOOT IN YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

BY ALLAN F. GLAZNER AND GREG M. STOCK

The definitive book for one of the most geologically dynamic and fascinating places in the nation—Yosemite National Park. With photos, illustrations, and great explanations, this book will be illuminating for both the novice and experienced geologist. Learn about the park’s domes, rock slopes, valleys, and vistas. Best of all, Glazner and Stock spend some time examining the Mono Basin, including Mono Lake, Black Point, and Lee Vining Canyon. A truly fascinating read that makes the rocks come alive, whether at home or while visiting the park.

Geology Underfoot in Yosemite National Park, softcover, Mountain Press, 300 pages, 6" x 9": \$24.00

JOHN MUIR MOUNTAINS T-SHIRT

Project Specialist Julia models this navy blue, 100% organic cotton shirt with an image of mountains and John Muir’s inspiring quote: “The mountains are calling and I must go.”

*John Muir mountains T-shirt, unisex, S–XL: \$24.00
XXL: \$26.00*



PADDLE MONO LAKE T-SHIRT

Back by popular demand! Executive Director Geoff sports this stone blue, 100% organic cotton shirt, which depicts a colorful array of kayakers and the words “Paddle Mono Lake” on the front.

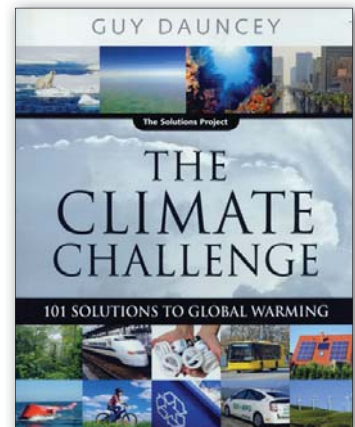
Paddle Mono Lake T-shirt, unisex: S–XL: \$23.00, XXL: \$25.00

**THE CLIMATE CHALLENGE:
101 SOLUTIONS TO GLOBAL WARMING**

BY GUY DAUNCEY

Global warming can seem insurmountable, but Dauncey’s comprehensive book breaks this issue down into manageable chunks and provides concrete solutions to problems both large and small. This is a great book for anyone looking for knowledge and wanting to act—from the individual looking to make day-to-day changes to the politician or entrepreneur.

The Climate Challenge, softcover, New Society Publishers, 308 pages, 7¼" x 9": \$24.95



order at www.monolake.org/store & (760) 647-6595

2011 MONO LAKE CALENDAR

The 2011 Mono Lake Calendar features images of tufa, shoreline sunsets, wildflower displays, fall colors, and beautiful winter scenes. Month grids have inset images of wildlife and scenic photos too. Bring Mono Lake into your home 365 days of the year, and consider our bulk discounts and holiday list options below for gifts this season. Printed in the USA on recycled paper.
 2011 Mono Lake Calendar, 13" x 9½": \$11.95



2011 CALENDAR

BULK DISCOUNTS

- buy 2-5 pay \$9.95 each
- buy 6-10 pay \$8.95 each
- buy 11+ pay \$7.95 each

Easy gift idea! Want your calendars shipped to different addresses? No problem. Just provide us with the address information when ordering, and we will package and send each calendar separately. Please note that shipping rates apply to each address (see mail order form below). Each calendar will be sent in a cardboard mailer and we'll even add a holiday note from you.



MONO LAKE COMMITTEE STAINLESS STEEL WATER BOTTLE

This stainless steel Kleen Kanteen features the Mono Lake Committee logo on one side and "Mono Lake Committee member" in blue on the other.
 Mono Lake Committee water bottle, 27-oz: \$19.95

MONO LAKE COMMITTEE COMPACT BAG

Perfect to stash in your car or bag, this 99% recycled bag features the Committee logo in white on a teal background on both the bag and the stuff sack.
 Mono Lake Committee compact bag, measures 14" x 15" open and 3" x 4" when stuffed: \$10.00



Order by phone: (760) 647-6595, fax: (760) 647-6377, or online: www.monolake.org/store

MONO LAKE COMMITTEE MAIL ORDER FORM

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Daytime phone _____

Check (to Mono Lake Committee) MasterCard Visa Discover

Card Number _____ Expiration Date _____

Signature _____

Quan.	Item	Size	Color	Price	Total
Shipping & Handling: use rates at left					
Subtotal					
CA residents--add 8.25% sales tax to subtotal					
Total					

SHIPPING & HANDLING	
Up to \$25	\$6.50
\$26-\$50	\$8.50
\$51-\$150	\$10.50
Over \$150	Free!

California law requires us to charge sales tax on sales and shipping and handling for deliveries in California.
 International shipping rates by weight.

Phone: (760) 647-6595

Fax: (760) 647-6377

Mono Lake Committee, P.O. Box 29, Lee Vining, CA 93541

the on-site contractor, giving him specific contour and slope information. Now the horizon line of the project area mirrors the natural ancient Mono Lake terraces and the project area “fits” more with the natural landscape.

The working group revised and refined the revegetation plan to ensure a successful outcome. Now, Mono County will seed test plots this fall to determine the best method for revegetating the disturbed area with native plants. Next spring the test plots will be evaluated and the best strategy will guide implementation of the full program. The sites will be monitored for four years and must meet strict and specific success criteria to make sure the revegetation is on the right trajectory. Successful revegetation is critical to reducing the remaining visual impacts of the project as well as controlling erosion and restoring lost habitat.

Project planning oversights

As the Committee researched the history of the project, specifically the environmental process, some significant oversights came to light. Somewhere in the Mono County internal process, coordination broke down between the Public Works Department, which was the lead on the project, and the Planning Department. The result was that the California Environmental Quality Act wasn’t fully adhered to and the required public scoping didn’t happen. There had never been a proper forum to express concerns about visual impacts, the over-engineered ditch, and inadequate revegetation plan.

for gold in the most scenic and wildlife-rich portion of the Bodie Hills, the Bodie Wilderness Study Area. Local and national conservation organizations are keeping a watchful eye on mining-related developments. For more information, visit the website of the newly-formed Bodie Hills Conservation Partnership at bodiehills.org

SERCAL comes to the Eastside

On a cold and windy weekend last May, the California Society for Ecological Restoration (SERCAL) convened its 17th annual conference in nearby Mammoth Lakes. Mono Lake featured prominently throughout the event with an opening roundtable discussion among Mono Lake Committee Executive Director Geoff McQuilkin, David Martin from the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power (DWP), and Mono Basin Fisheries Stream Scientist Ross Taylor. Next was a keynote speech from David Nahai, Senior Advisor to the Clinton Climate Initiative and former General Manager of DWP, who spoke about “Water Supply Challenges in a Time of Reduced Resources.”

The lessons from Mono Lake continued the second day with a technical session developed by the Committee’s Lisa Cutting, which explored policy development and educational outreach as part of environmental advocacy. Engaging

Most important outcome

The Committee highlighted the procedural problems with the project, and with the airport project already underway the goal quickly became making the project be the best it could be, given the situation. Over and over, the point was raised that Mono County should be holding itself and its own development projects to the same high standards it holds private developers.

As a result of this issue, Mono County adopted a new policy that does just that. Now any project proposal in Mono County—private or public—must go through the Mono County Land Development Technical Advisory Committee, which provides scrutiny and assures the correct public involvement.

Now, when you walk down the street in Lee Vining and look out towards Mono Lake you can see how the Mono Lake Committee’s vigilance has made a difference. By engaging in the process quickly, and bringing the necessary people together, we were able to keep the views of Mono Lake as natural as possible. ❖

Lisa Cutting is the Committee’s Eastern Sierra Policy Director. She spent her spare time last summer focused on the installation of a new wood floor at her house (local wood, locally milled, local craftsman). One friend remarked, “now your house feels like being inside a tree.”

presentations by Committee staff Greg Reis, Bartshé Miller, and consultant Peter Vorster were complemented by additional talks on adaptive management, stewardship programs, and other restoration programs. The conference provided an opportune time to reflect on all that has been accomplished in over twenty years of restoration at Mono Lake as we look ahead to the next twenty years.

Bernadette Lovato named BLM Bishop Field Office Manager

Last December Bernadette Lovato accepted the position of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Bishop Field Office Manager, a job which includes oversight of over 130,000 acres in the Mono Basin. Lovato has 20 years natural resource and land management experience working at multiple National Park Service locations and most recently with BLM. Kathy Hardy, BLM Central California District Manager had this to say about Lovato’s style: “She has a collaborative approach to resource management and values building strong relationships with local communities, elected officials, and other partners.”

As the Bishop Field Office Manager, Lovato is responsible for 42 employees and a variety of programs that protect the health and diversity of 750,000 acres spanning the Eastern Sierra, including the Mono Basin. ❖

Thank you Mono Lake Volunteers!

by Erika Obedzinski

Thank you to our ever-dedicated Volunteer Coordinator Janet Carle for making the seventh season of the Mono Lake Volunteer Program a success! The Mono Lake Volunteer Program is sponsored in partnership by the Mono Lake Committee, California State Parks, the US Forest Service, and the Eastern Sierra Interpretive Association. A big thank you to this year's Mono Lake Volunteers:

George Appel, Jo Bacon, Carolyn Balliet, Phyllis Benham, Maxine Binn, Sharon Bluhm, Stan Bluhm, Dorothy Burdette, Elizabeth Corathers, Ken Corathers, Nancy Devon, Jean Dillingham, Kathy Duvall, Judy Erb, Cathy Foye, Rich Foye, Hank Garretson, Edyth Irvine, Linda LaPierre, Chyna Lepley, Karen Murphy-Schlaepfer, Mel Pereira, Bonnie Reinhold, Donna Roff, Mary Shore, Mike Shore, Donna Sidlin, Mike Sidlin, Rhonda Starr, Nancy States, Jackie Stroud, Sherryl Taylor, Igor Vorobyoff, Lee Vorobyoff, and Rosemarie Willimann.

A sincere thank you goes out as well to the

many people who have volunteered for short-term projects in our office or in the field around the lake. We couldn't have pulled all those invasive plants, watered trees, built new member packets, and staffed the Tioga Pass Run, Fall Century, or Chautauqua without you! ❖



PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVID CARLE

Staff and volunteers celebrate at the Scenic Area Visitor Center at the seventh annual Mono Lake Volunteer graduation ceremony.

2010 Mono Lake Committee scholars

by Arya Degenhardt

This fall two local students have gone off to college to begin their pursuit of higher education with the help of the Mono Lake Committee Scholarship. Andrew Oliveira of Eastern Sierra Academy and Katie Woodruff of Lee Vining High School were chosen to receive \$1,000 each from a large and impressive pool of applications.

Scholarship applicants must write an essay demonstrating their connection to Mono Lake. Both Oliveira and Woodruff answered the question: "How has Mono Lake or the Mono Basin influenced your life and your choice to go to college?"

Oliveira wrote about how Mono Lake inspired him to pursue a career in mechanical engineering. "When I see Mono Lake, I want to create, to design, to build something that might equal its beauty. I envision a world where my creations spark the same sense of reverence and self-realization that I feel every time that I pass the lake...."



Mono Lake Committee scholars Andrew Oliveira and Katie Woodruff receive the scholarship from Geoff McQuilkin and Arya Degenhardt.

Woodruff's goal is to study Computer Science and Engineering with an emphasis in Forensic Science. "My career goal is to be a lab technician and to work with a team of investigators. I have chosen this career because I want to make the world a safer place, just like it is in the Mono Basin...."



SARAH TAYLOR

For more information about the Mono Lake Committee Scholarship and to see the 2010 winning essays visit monolake.org/mlc/scholarship. This program is possible thanks to Mono Lake Committee members; if you are interested in contributing to the fund, please contact Arya (arya@monolake.org) at (760) 647-6595.

Both of this year's scholars clearly demonstrated a meaningful connection to the Mono Basin, and we hope that the Mono Lake Committee Scholarship will help them reach their academic goals, and that Mono Lake will continue to inspire them in life.

Staff migrations

by Erika Obedzinski

This summer we were pleased to welcome Los Angeles Outreach Education Coordinator **Jennifer Odum**, who works with Herley Jim Bowling and the Outdoor Experiences program (OE) at the southern end of the Los Angeles Aqueduct. Jennifer grew up in the Owens Valley and now lives in Valencia where she also works with the Girls Scouts of Greater Los Angeles, Antelope Valley Office.

Thank you to our wonderful seasonal staff team who, every day from June through September, kept the Information Center & Bookstore open long hours, signed up new and renewing members, led canoe and walking tours at the lakeshore, and answered thousands of visitors' questions about Mono Lake and the area in person, on the phone, by email and regular mail. All this couldn't have been accomplished without you! Here are a few details on what our seasonal staff were up to last summer and where they are now.

After a summer of leading tours and helping on the front counter, Mono Lake Intern **Sarah Bird** has flown off to New York City where she will continue her study of landscape painting. Intern and former OE participant **Claudia Corona** helped out on OE hikes, led a weekly tree watering and

restoration talk, and interviewed Field Station researchers for posts on The Mono-logue. Claudia is now back at Williams College in Massachusetts.

Intern **Hannah Doherty** took weekly groundwater measurements on Rush and Lee Vining creeks, compiled meteorological data, and led weekly tree watering and restoration talks. Hannah is now near another inland sea while she is working in Israel at the Baha'i Center. **Morgan Lindsay** captained the canoe program through another successful summer and we're happy she will stay on once again as Project Specialist for the next year, focusing on policy work.

Intern **Sarah Melcher** did weekly monitoring at Mill Creek and also translated several Mono Lake Committee publications into Spanish. Sarah's now back at St. Olaf College in Minnesota. Birding Intern **Nick Neely** led weekly bird walks at County Park and helped with California Gull research on Mono's islands. He is now working on a writing project and training for the New York City Marathon.

Intern **Logan Parsons** used her scientific illustration skills to create a new T-shirt featuring a California Gull eating alkali flies (see page 16), organized our aerial slide collection, and created a useful map of the Mono Basin portion of the Los Angeles Aqueduct. After some fall hiking time in the Eastern Sierra, Logan is back in Monterey continuing her work as an illustrator; check out parsonsiillustration.com. Intern **Julia Runcie** took weekly groundwater measurements on Rush and Lee Vining creeks, translated several Mono Lake Committee publications into French and Italian, and led invasive plant pulling parties, taking out a total of 622 pounds of invasive sweet clover, woolly mullein, and bouncing bet this season! We are glad that Julia will be staying on in the role of Project Specialist this winter.

If you stopped into the store this summer, you may have talked with one of our Retail Assistants, who made an excellent team. **Jessica Horn's** positive and friendly approach helped keep the store running smoothly all summer long. It's great that she's only flown to June Lake where she's looking forward to exploring the Mono Basin in wintertime. **Russ Reese's** extensive knowledge of the local area and history gave him a leg up on the toughest questions. A long-time eastside resident, we're looking forward to seeing Russ around town and at his favorite winter activity, backcountry skiing.

It's not too early to start thinking about next summer—if you or anyone you know is interested in one of our summer positions, we'll post job descriptions at monolake.org this winter, and will begin accepting applications January 1, 2011. Best wishes to all for a peaceful winter. ❖

Erika Obedzinski is the Committee's Office Manager. She was happy the green peas in her garden survived the changeable weather late into the fall.



The 2010 Mono Lake Committee staff. Top row standing, left to right: Nick Neely, Jessica Horn, Sarah Bird, Russ Reese, Caelen McQuilkin, Geoff McQuilkin, Duncan King, Greg Reis (kneeling), Santiago Escruceria, Ellen King. Middle row: Arya Degenhardt, Bartshé Miller, Lisa Cutting, Morgan Lindsay, Rosa Brey, Claudia Corona, Elin Ljung. Bottom row: Logan Parsons, Julia Runcie, Hannah Doherty, Sarah Melcher, Erika Obedzinski.



From the mailbag

News from members and friends

by Ellen King

Thank you to all of you who sent in contributions in memory or in honor of your friends and loved ones. We appreciate these gifts that help us carry on the work that will keep Mono Lake a special place for many generations.

In memory

We received a donation “from a guitar compadre” in memory of **Jeff Maurer**. **Allison Brooker** of Los Angeles gave a gift in memory of **Marianne J. Brooker**. **Edith Gaines** of Los Angeles and **Rosanne Higley** of Swall Meadows sent contributions in memory of **Vern Judy**, father of Sally Gaines.

Rainier Hoenicke & Kathryn Lucas of Napa dedicated their membership to Kathryn’s mother **Alice Lucas**. **Rolf Jacobs** of East Palestine, IL sent gifts in memory of **Gerald & Christine Jacobs**. **Mary Elliott James** of San Simeon sent a contribution in memory of **Bryce Tingle**. **Tom Keller** of Seattle, WA made a donation in memory of **Georgianne Keller**, “who was reunited with her parents and brother in the Mono Lake Cemetery [in June 2010].” **David Miller & Janet Keller Miller** of Reno, NV

also made a donation in memory of **Georgianne, Norma & Vern Keller**.

Virginia King of Woodland Hills gave gifts in memory of **James King**. **Fred Lucas** of Woodland Hills sent a contribution in memory of **Alice Lucas**—“Mono Lake was possibly her very favorite place.”

Carol Mathews of Walnut Creek gave a gift in memory of **Robert Mathews**. **Maye & Robert McEliece** of Bellvue, WA made a donation in memory of **Grace de Laet**, “in recognition and memory of [her] love of and dedication to Mono Lake.” **Beth Mendoza** of Chino gave a gift in honor and in memory of her husband **Bill Mendoza**. **Yumiko & Roger Myoraku** of Menlo Park sent a contribution in memory of Yumiko’s sister **Ikuko Itai**.

The **Pagni Family** of Sonora gave a gift in memory of **Jim Hardin**.

Michael Sanders of Madison, WI sent a contribution in memory of **Leroy**, “beloved companion and former resident of the intern house.” **Matthew Thiewes** of San Mateo made a donation in memory of his father **Harold Thiewes**—“he really loved Mono Lake.”

Victoria Touchstone of San Diego gave a gift in memory of **Janet Fairbanks**. **Peter Watkins** of Sacramento sent a contribution in memory of his cousin **Alan Rolt**. **Bill Wilson & Leslie Ganick-Wilson** of Oakland made a donation in memory of **Milan M. Senger**. **Kirsten Winter** of Poway gave a gift in memory of **Karen Danielsen**. ❖

Ellen King is the Committee’s Membership Coordinator. The Giants’ postseason performance kept her on pins and needles all fall.

Committee takes the first step to solar—thank you members!

Next time you’re in Lee Vining come by and check out the new solar array at the Mono Lake Committee. We’re really proud of the new solar panels on the “ice house” office. Committee members made the project possible with financial support, and Jim, TJ, and Isabel of Sierra Solar donated their installation labor. The nine panels should entirely cover all power use in the building, plus some of the power consumption of the Information Center & Bookstore building. We hope to get the entire office and Bookstore property down to net zero power consumption eventually, and this is a great first step.



GEORGE MCQUILLIN



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