

MONO LAKE

N E W S L E T T E R

Winter & Spring 2012



It seems that the frequency of superstitious behavior increases with unusual weather. I've heard people of all stripes talking about snow dances of late. It's not just ski bums anymore—even people who aren't that into winter seem a little spooked by the lack of snowfall. Just last week it was so nice outside I pulled out the deck furniture—when it was time to put it away I left it out there just to see if I could taunt some weather into the Mono Basin. Needless to say, it didn't work.

Superstitions blur the lines between the things you actually can have control over and the things you can't. As I sit here willing the snow to fall with the articles of this *Newsletter* scattered on my living room floor, I see a theme: people banding together, thinking creatively, and doing what they can for a place they love. Keeping the Mono Lake Tufa State Natural Reserve open ... yes! Speaking up when DWP wants to end limnology monitoring for no logical reason ... of course! Getting Mill Creek water back to Mill Creek ... how can we not? Updating the LA Aqueduct to meet the needs of people and Mono Lake ... absolutely. Superstitions are fun, but there's nothing as rewarding as good old fashioned, honest, dedication. Of course there's no way to know if you're going to be able to achieve the outcome you desire, but you certainly don't know if you don't give it a try.

As we tie up the last pieces of this issue of the *Mono Lake Newsletter* there are actually snowflakes flying, and the weather man seems to be mentioning "Miracle March" more often. As much as I'd like to think that there is something we could actually do about getting more snow to fall in the Mono Basin this year, realistically, there's not. But there are still many, many things that we can and are doing for Mono Lake—and those are the reasons why the Mono Lake Committee has been here day in and day out for 34 years with no sign of slowing down.

So, I don't want to jinx anything, but maybe if I write that it's dry, dry, dry, by the time this *Newsletter* makes it to your mailbox we'll get our snow back? In the meantime, we've got plenty of things that we *can* do.

—Arya Degenhardt, Communications Director



COVER PHOTO COURTESY OF MATT LUDIN, WWW.MATTLUDIN.COM

ARYA DEGENHARDT

This winter the Mono Basin has been graced by the presence of two Trumpeter Swans, *Cyrnus buccinator*, at County Park—an unusual sight.

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 Office Information Center & Bookstore

Highway 395 at Third Street
Post Office Box 29
Lee Vining, California 93541
(760) 647-6595

info@monolake.org
monolake.org
monobasinresearch.org

Los Angeles Office

1718 Wellesley Avenue
Los Angeles, California 90025-3634

Staff

Executive Director..... Geoffrey McQuilkin
Eastern Sierra Policy Director..... Lisa Cutting
Education Director.....Bartshé Miller
Communications Director.....Arya Degenhardt
Office Director Rosanne Catron
Membership Coordinator Ellen King
Information & Restoration Specialist Greg Reis
Policy CoordinatorMorgan Lindsay
Sacramento Policy Associate Betsy Reifsnider
Outdoor Experiences Mgr.....Santiago M. Escruceria
LA Education Coordinator.....Herley Jim Bowling
LA Outreach Education Coord..... Jennifer Odum
Communications Coordinator..... Elin Ljung
Info Center & Bookstore Manager Jessica Horn
BookkeeperDonnette Huselton
Project SpecialistCarolyn Weddle
Info Center & Bookstore Assistant..... Russ Reese

Board of Directors

Sally Gaines, Mammoth Lakes, Chair
Tom Soto, Santa Monica, Secretary
David Kanner, Redwood City, Treasurer
Martha Davis, Riverside
Vireo Gaines, Albany
Richard Lehman, Fresno
Sherryl Taylor, Mammoth Lakes
Doug Virtue, San Pedro

Directors Emeriti

Helen Green • Ed Grosswiler
Genny Smith
Brent Coeur-Barron, Corporate Counsel

Founded by David Gaines in 1978

MONO LAKE NEWSLETTER

Winter & Spring 2012
Volume XXXIII, Numbers 3 & 4

The *Mono Lake Newsletter* is a quarterly publication of the Mono Lake Committee. Written material contained in this newsletter may be quoted or reproduced for review, reporting, educational purposes, or related non-profit uses; a copy of the publication is requested. Reproduction or quotation for other purposes may be approved upon written request.
ISSN #0275-6633. Copyright © 2012 Mono Lake Committee.
Printed on 100% recycled paper.

Mono Lake's state park is, and will remain, open and operating

Grassroots campaign averts state's planned closure

by Geoffrey McQuilkin



ARYA DEGENHARDT

Thanks to a six-month grassroots public effort, the world-renowned state park at Mono Lake—the Mono Lake Tufa State Natural Reserve—was removed from California's 70-park closure list. For Mono Lake friends and supporters this is certainly a cause for celebration.

This means that the Mono Lake Reserve will remain open to the public, drawing hundreds of thousands of visitors to the local economy, providing public access to Mono Lake, offering educational programs, and assuring ongoing public management and stewardship for Mono Lake's unique ecosystem.

A modest parking fee

For Mono Lake visitors, the only change needed to save the Mono Lake Reserve is the establishment of a \$3 per-vehicle parking fee at Old Marina, the most visited state park site. Here's how it will work: Visitors will pay \$3 to park at Old Marina; there is no charge for pedestrians or cyclists. Federal fee passes accepted at South Tufa and Yosemite National Park do not include Old Marina, and vice versa. Also, a morning entrance fee at Bodie State Historic Park will cover an afternoon visit to Old Marina, but not the other way around. The Committee expects future fee system discussions to examine how a universal Mono Lake visitor pass could work.

The December announcement by California State Parks came just in time for this year's 30th anniversary of the park, which was created in 1982.

"The announcement was the culmination of months of hard work and was the best Christmas present we could have ever wished for. The state park is critical to keeping Mono Lake protected for future generations," said Sally Gaines, Mono Lake Committee Board Chair. "It's great news that creative solutions will keep it open."

The Mono Lake Reserve came off the closure list thanks to a broad public outcry combined with a new parking fee revenue solution (see box). The news also put to rest legal questions raised by many, including the Mono Lake Committee, about how Mono Lake was selected for the closure list in the first place.

Committee members and Mono Lake fans near and far wrote letters and signed locally-placed petitions all last summer, opposing closure and offering possible solutions. Over 4,000 letters and petition signatures were hand-delivered to Governor Jerry Brown, Parks Director Ruth Coleman, Mono County's State Assemblymember Kristin Olsen, and State Senator Ted Gaines.

Key support for keeping the Mono Lake Reserve open as a critical piece of the local tourism-based economy came from the Mono County Board of Supervisors, state representatives,

Continued on page 4

the Mono County Film & Tourism Commission, and the Mammoth Lakes Town Council. When the news broke, Assemblymember Olsen said, “I’m thrilled that the Mono Lake Tufa State Natural Reserve has successfully been removed from the state’s park closure list ... I congratulate the community members who have worked hard and creatively to keep Mono Lake open.”

The California State Parks agency, with its highly trained staff and depth of experience, will continue to manage and protect the sovereign state lands and waters of the Mono Lake Reserve sustainably for public enjoyment. The parking fee solution will address the agency’s concerns about the current lack of user fee revenue at the Mono Lake Reserve. The modest parking fee will be put into place at Old Marina, the state’s major west shore visitation site—and all funds collected will be used to offset operating expenses at the Mono Lake Reserve. Given the low cost and high efficiency of the Reserve operation, adding a user fee to the already high level of volunteer and community support means it is possible to substantially strengthen the foundation of the Mono Lake Reserve and keep it open and operating.

Mono Lake is home to many partnerships, and the Mono Lake Committee commends our friends at the Bodie Foundation for stepping forward to operate the new fee collection system. The Bodie Foundation’s special relationship with California State Parks as a non-profit cooperating association allows it to operate park-based

programs such as the museum and bookstore at Bodie State Historic Park. At Mono Lake, that makes it the perfect organization to handle the collection and transfer of fees directly to Mono Lake Reserve operations.

With the Mono Lake Tufa State Natural Reserve off the state park closure list, now is a great time to make plans to visit this summer. The birds and brine shrimp will welcome you to the lake’s salty shore to celebrate another milestone success for Mono Lake. ❖

Geoff McQuilkin is the Committee’s Executive Director. He has been seeing a lot of California geography thanks to frequent work trips to Los Angeles, Sacramento, and points in between.

Many parks still need solutions

Even as we celebrate Mono Lake’s reprieve, 60 California state parks remain in danger and are scheduled to close by July 2012. You can make a difference—from writing your state legislators, to volunteering at your favorite park, to joining the citizens’ group dedicated to protecting the park closest to you. The California State Parks Foundation is working hard to protect all of California’s parks—visit calparks.org to find out how you can help.

A spirited Mono Lake advocate

by Morgan Lindsay

Robert Hanna, active Mono Lake champion and great-great-grandson of John Muir, was dismayed when he heard the Mono Lake Reserve was listed for closure. Like many Californians, Robert treasures the childhood visits his family made to Mono Lake and wants his children to have the same opportunity.

So with his signature approach of infectious enthusiasm and inexhaustible energy, Robert set about doing everything he could to keep the Mono Lake Reserve open. An initial call to the Mono Lake Committee quickly made Robert part of the Mono Lake team and soon he was making an avalanche of calls and personal visits to elected officials and state parks decision makers. Building on thousands of letters from Mono Lake supporters, Robert worked to arrange for both State Senator Ted Gaines and State Assemblymember Kristin Olsen to come canoeing on Mono Lake. They subsequently voiced their key support of the park.

Robert happened to be at our office in Lee Vining when the Mono Lake Reserve came off the closure list, and after the appropriate whooping and cheering, he reminded us, “This is

our legacy—we must all stand up and find solutions to protect the places we love.” Thank you, Robert, for standing up for Mono Lake now and in the years to come and for inspiring others to do the same.



Robert Hanna with Assemblymember Kristin Olsen at Mono Lake.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CHRISTIAN KOSZKA, FREETIME PRODUCTIONS

Streams closer to realizing improved flows

Collaborative process tackles infrastructure questions with modeling

by Geoffrey McQuilkin

Intensive analysis and discussion of the Los Angeles Aqueduct system in the Mono Basin is now approaching the one-year mark. The outcome, the Mono Lake Committee expects, will be a plan for a 21st-century aqueduct that meets restoration mandates at Mono Lake while efficiently exporting water to Los Angeles.

The focused discussions with the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power (DWP), facilitated by the Center for Collaborative Policy, are driven by the need to implement the stream restoration flows and measures prescribed in the 2010 Synthesis Report. The Synthesis Report was compiled by the expert State Water Board-appointed Stream Scientists who have been studying Mono Lake's tributaries for the past decade (see Summer 2010 *Newsletter*).

The Synthesis Report requirements don't change the total amount of water flowing to Mono Lake. However, they do shift the flows to a more natural pattern during the year, and across wet and dry years, in order to meet State Water Board mandates to maximize the recovery of stream health—and to minimize the impacts of the continuing diversion of water to Los Angeles.

Interested Committee members have expressed support for the goals and asked what, exactly, are the kinds of things that are being done in this time-intensive process? There are many topics to choose from. Here's one example that goes right to the heart of matter: how can the aqueduct be feasibly modified to implement the flow requirements of the Synthesis Report?

How can the flows be delivered?

The Synthesis Report prescribes critical high flows in the springtime to shape stream channels and restore streamside forests along Rush Creek. But there's an infrastructure problem. The Los Angeles Aqueduct facilities at Grant Lake were built in a different era, and there is no outlet structure at Grant Dam, which means DWP cannot physically release the required flow of water in many wet-year scenarios.

So, what about constructing an outlet that can do the job? This is the type of big question the facilitated group is tackling. Three options have been put forth: a buried pipe, a buried siphon, and an adjustable weir constructed within the existing overflow spillway. Participants have multiple interests, concerns, and objectives, all of which vary with each design option, and they all need to be sorted out so the group can usefully evaluate reasonable options.

For example, the purpose of an outlet would be to achieve full compliance with the required Synthesis Report



Committee staff and experts prepare for discussions with DWP.

streamflows. This means that it's important to be sure that a specific outlet plan would actually work. However, the required flows vary depending on how snowy the winter is in a given year. Also, the amount of water coming out of an outlet depends directly on how much water is behind the dam in the reservoir at any given time. And the weir design only works if specific target reservoir levels are achieved.

With all of this in mind, the outlet concepts have to be analyzed to see if they can deliver the required flows year after year and across a range of snowy years and droughts. That means it is time to power up the computers, roll out the spreadsheets, and develop a model. And that's exactly what the group has been doing. Hydrology experts from DWP, the Committee, and other parties have invested hundreds of hours together to evaluate a previously existing DWP operational model, identify needs, and develop a finely tuned updated model that can simulate aqueduct operations, streamflow, and lake level across decades of hydrologic conditions.

The model is designed to be able to simulate multiple outlet scenarios, each requiring its own specific operating rules. The collaborative group will thus be able to evaluate and compare how well the three outlet concepts perform. Key criteria for outlet evaluation include compliance with the Synthesis Report flows, diversion of approved water exports, and operational reliability.

The model is but one example of this ongoing work, and much remains to be done. The model, however, highlights the potential of this collaborative process. A firm foundation of fact-based information will allow, we hope, identification of solutions that address the legitimate goals of the multiple parties involved. ❖

Limnology monitoring requirements challenged

No merit to suspending the program before Mono Lake reaches 6392 feet

by Geoffrey McQuilkin

In December, a staff member at the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power (DWP) wrote to the State Water Board and recommended that the ongoing scientific monitoring of the ecological health of Mono Lake be discontinued.

Here at the Mono Lake Committee we were, in a word, shocked. Not only is the program a condition of DWP's water export licenses, it is also a part of a signed legal settlement reached between the Committee, DWP, and other parties over a decade ago. Most importantly, monitoring of the lake is the essential scientific tool for measuring the ecological health of Mono Lake and its recovery from decades of excessive water diversions.

In a strange twist, the DWP staff member who wrote the letter is the same person who is charged with assuring that the State Water Board's requirements are met. His letter, sent on his own letterhead, instead asks

There is no sound scientific basis underlying DWP's staff request. The essential concept put forth by DWP staff is that Mono Lake is fine, it has always been fine, and it will continue to be fine, so why spend the money to actually study the lake's ecological health in the real world?

that the requirements be eliminated. There's one more twist: DWP itself did not officially comment on the request, leaving us to wonder if they will stand behind their commitment, and exactly what strategy is at play.

The Committee has responded swiftly and forcefully to the State Water Board to defend the monitoring program, but this unexpected conflict is not yet resolved and is now receiving substantial attention from Committee staff.

No basis in science

There is no sound scientific basis underlying DWP's staff request. The essential concept put forth by DWP staff is that Mono Lake is fine, it has always been fine, and it will continue to be fine, so why spend the money to actually study the lake's ecological health in the real world?

This attitude is like assuming that

Continued on page 7



Despite state requirements, DWP staff now claim that measuring the ecological health of Mono Lake is unnecessary.

you'll be healthy forever because your last doctor's visit went well. It's just not logical.

Experts on salt lake systems, including the very specialists who conduct the Mono Lake monitoring work, have reviewed the DWP staff proposal and found it to lack scientific merit. In letters to the State Water Board they detail a variety of specific issues and make the global point that "ecological systems, such as lakes, respond to multiple environmental factors in complex ways, and it is well known among ecologists that abrupt changes can occur ... we depend on regular measurements to assess [Mono Lake's] condition."

Additionally, the lake has not been at the required long-term management level set by the State Water Board since 1963. A half-century ago little attention was being paid to Mono Lake, and there were no teams of scientists documenting the lake's salinity, the health of the brine shrimp population, or other important indicators of ecological conditions. The lake is rising into ecologically uncharted territory, and to have it do so without taking a measure of its health just doesn't make sense.

A deal is a deal

The lake monitoring program is part of a package of restoration and monitoring requirements set forth by the State Water Board in 1998. In part these requirements came from a legal settlement agreement between DWP, the Mono Lake Committee, and other key parties. That agreement—signed by all—specified that "[DWP will] continue its limnological monitoring plan from the present until ten years after Mono Lake reach[es] its transition level of 6392 feet."

That means two things. First, DWP committed to conducting the program. And second, the program represents a compromise, resulting from negotiations in which other valuable monitoring programs were set aside. Abandonment of the agreed-

upon outcome reopens a much larger conversation about lake chemistry, brine shrimp monitoring, migratory bird surveys, alkali fly populations, and other studies that measure achievement of the ecological health goals set by the State Water Board.

Next steps

The Committee's position is quite simple: since there is no scientific or legal basis for a change, DWP should continue to conduct the monitoring

program without interruption.

This issue comes at a time when we are productively engaged in historic negotiations to find win-win ways to achieve restoration and aqueduct management mandates (see page 5). Given the progress underway there, we are hopeful this issue can be resolved quickly.

You can read documents related to this issue at monolake.org/healthylake. Stay tuned to hear what happens next. ❖

Is the Mono Lake brine shrimp population shifting in size and timing?

In 1982, limnologist Dr. Robert Jellison of the Marine Science Institute of the University of California at Santa Barbara began studying Mono Lake. For 30 years, Jellison has closely monitored Mono Lake's salinity, chemical stratification, nutrient cycling, algae concentration, and brine shrimp population. His annual reports for DWP on the lake's limnology and health fulfill the State Water Board's monitoring mandate.

Like the proverbial canary in the coal mine, Mono Lake's unique brine shrimp reflect how the changing lake level affects the health of the entire ecosystem. Because of many constantly changing factors—including the impact of each year's hydrology and weather as well as lake stratification—there is no singular pattern to the shrimp population over time. However, over the past six years, Jellison has reported a measureable increase in the size of first generation adult shrimp and a more rapid autumn decline in shrimp numbers. In fact, the August 2010 adult brine shrimp abundance was the lowest on record.

It is too early to tell what these changes will mean for birds, but overall, the timing of the brine shrimp population is critical. In general, spring brine shrimp abundance is beneficial for nesting California Gulls while migrating Eared Grebes depend on fall abundance.

Will the trend continue as the lake rises? Will the population dynamic shift and rebalance when the lake reaches its long-term management level? Or, will the population change in an unanticipated way? These critical, fundamental lake ecology questions can only be answered through continued monitoring of the lake's changing chemistry, nutrients, and brine shrimp population. Only with clear, factual, scientific information can we work towards a healthy Mono Lake in the future.



Mono Lake brine shrimp, Artemia monica.

SANTIAO ESPINOCHA

Proposed Caltrans project to address rock fall

Working to improve safety and scenic views on 395

by Lisa Cutting

Caltrans has recently introduced a new highway project slated to address rock fall problems on the west side of Highway 395 opposite the popular lake access site, Old Marina. The project area encompasses the unstable slopes along a one-mile section beginning two miles north of Lee Vining. Rock fall accidents in this particular area have generated the impetus for the project and Caltrans is reaching out early in the process for guidance from the community. Caltrans expects to release the draft environmental document this May.

Last December, the Mono Lake Committee went to the site with Caltrans staff and got a thorough orientation to the challenges and containment options. The Committee has already called upon Michael Hogan, a Tahoe-based vegetation restoration expert who has been assisting with the airport revegetation work (see page 18), to help guide our analysis. According to Hogan, it appears that some of the old road cut scars can be rehabilitated to a much better condition than what they are now, resulting in an improvement in the appearance of the slopes as well as addressing the rock fall problem.



MORGAN LINDSAY

Caltrans Lee Vining Road Maintenance Supervisor Mark Logan at the rock fall project area near Old Marina.

Six slopes within the project area have rock fall issues and Caltrans and the community are considering several containment applications for those slopes. Containment options range from molded concrete retaining walls that sit flush against the slope to steel mesh that holds loose material on the slope in place. One type of the steel mesh has the added benefit of facilitating revegetation because it would also hold soil and plant material on the slope.

Possibly a long-term fix

Ironically, the instability of the slopes comes from a previous highway project back in the 1930s. To make room for the highway then, steep cuts were made without much consideration for the effect on the slope. This cutting process removed stabilizing vegetation and soils, which exacerbated the rock fall situation. With nothing to hold the rocks in place, all it takes is a good rainfall, melting snow, or even high winds to dislodge them.

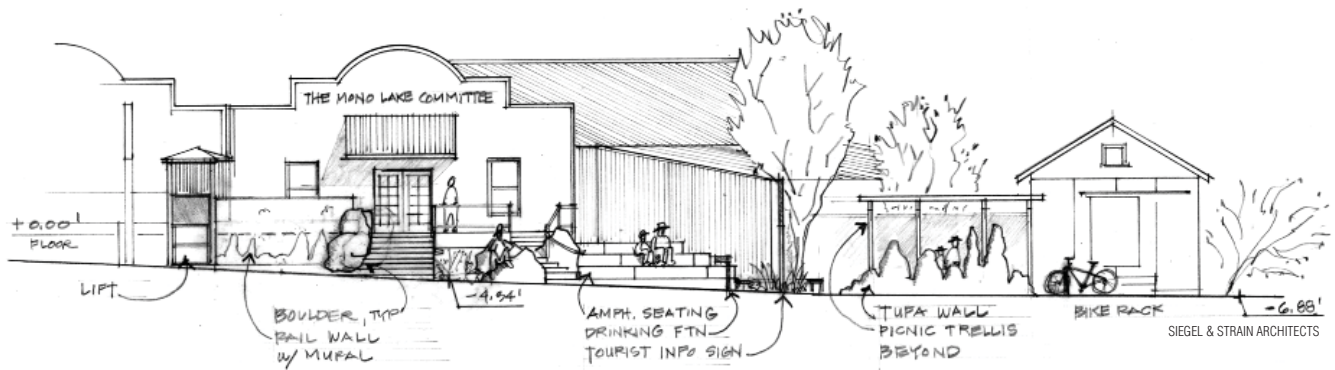
Caltrans history in the Mono Basin

Members may recall the Caltrans Mono Lake Shoulder Widening Project proposed in 2003—this project is very different. The Committee had many concerns with that project because it was on the lake side of the highway as well as the west side; it included many areas of fill slopes down to Mono Lake and cut slopes with retaining walls that would have directly affected Mono Lake; and it would have widened and straightened the highway, thereby increasing vehicle speed. In summary, it was an over-engineered, unnecessary project.

By comparison, the rock fall project addresses a genuine problem with very specific methods. The Committee is well-aware of the unsuccessful revegetation of Caltrans' 12-year-old Rush Creek Project south of town. Revegetating the rock fall project will be more difficult because of the slopes.

Both Caltrans and the Committee have learned a lot about revegetation in the Mono Basin over the years. The Committee is ready to work with Caltrans, sharing the latest science and expertise related to revegetation methods and proper soil preparation. Caltrans will do the engineering, but the Committee will remind Caltrans to take scenic visual impacts into consideration since the project is in the Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area and adjacent to the Mono Lake Tufa State Natural Reserve. ❖

Lisa Cutting is the Committee's Eastern Sierra Policy Director. In sharp contrast to last year, she suspects she'll be heading up to the high country early this season.



Open during construction!

by Jessica Horn

Last summer brought walnut-blasting and subsequent stucco finish to the Mono Lake Committee Information Center & Bookstore façade. This year, in the first week of February, the Mono Lake Committee proudly became the fourth California business to install a commercial greywater system to water the landscaping.

However, this is just the beginning....

The next steps of the Committee's storefront remodel will take us through spring and include: building a deck for increased retail space, installation of a wheelchair lift for an ADA-accessible front entrance, new amphitheater seating, a water bottle filling station, and a shaded picnic area for enjoying lunch or surfing the Internet. Our goal is to draw more visitors to the Committee and to create a more inviting

environment outside for members and visitors alike. All outdoor improvements are made possible thanks to donations from Mono Lake Committee members.

Construction starts in March, and we will remain open! Everyone can visit the bookstore via our back entrance, so be sure to stop by and pick up the latest books, earrings, cards, and gifts on your next trip to Mono Lake. The Monologue (monolake.org/today) will be updated frequently with photos of construction, so even if you can't make it to Lee Vining this spring, you can still watch the progress. The online store (monolake.org/store) is an easy way to shop from home, and as always, you can place a mail order by phone at (760) 647-6595. ❖

Greywater recycling comes to Lee Vining

by Bartshé Miller

The Mono Lake Committee is one step closer to turning on the first commercial greywater project in the Eastern Sierra. As part of the Committee's larger storefront remodel, the new greywater system will connect the public bathroom sink water to the surrounding landscaping, potentially saving thousands of gallons of potable water each year.

The irrigation is sub-surface, and when visitors and staff wash their hands, the water will drain through dedicated plumbing to underground mulch boxes. From there it will slowly seep to native trees and plants, providing critical water during the busy summer season.

The system is simple, safe, gravity-fed, and fulfills multiple water uses at once. According to Regina Hirsch of Sierra Watershed Progressive, "This is a small project that can add up to big water savings when multiplied over time. Right now, this project is the fourth commercial project of its kind in the State of California."

Curious? Stop by the Mono Lake Committee this summer to wash your hands and water the trees.



The Eastern Sierra's first commercial greywater recycling system was installed in the Mono Lake Committee Information Center & Bookstore bathroom!

Mill Creek return pipeline moves forward

Infrastructure to get updated, creek to get water

by Lisa Cutting

With the state of California firmly poised to head into a drought year this summer, water is once again front and center on people's radar. Water conveyance systems peppered throughout the state are important for many purposes—from water supply for urban areas to irrigation for crops and agriculture to electrical hydropower generation. Most systems have been built to serve human needs, but there are also those that return water to natural systems after it has been put to additional use.

The Mono Basin has its share of waterways—both natural and manmade—that are antiquated and in need of repair. In the southern part of the basin the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power's aging infrastructure has insufficient capacity to deliver adequate flows to the creeks (see page 5). In the north part of the basin a system built in 1911 is unable to return water to the creek after power generation. It should be no surprise that water infrastructure systems need maintenance and, sometimes, reconstruction.

The Mill Creek return ditch is finally getting much-needed attention in order for it to function as it was designed.

Let it flow

Despite many daunting hurdles, Mill Creek is closer than ever to realizing its true restoration potential. After a 30-year contested Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) relicensing process that concluded with an agreement among almost all of the parties, and the final approval by FERC last year to amend its operating license, Southern California Edison (SCE) is moving forward with the project.

SCE has designed a new Return Conveyance System (RCS) that will



Committee staff tour the site of the new Mill Creek Return Conveyance System.

dramatically improve the current ditch and allow the legal amount of water to return to Mill Creek. Water has not flowed in the return ditch since 2005, and even then its capacity was significantly reduced with the creek receiving only 21% of what it was legally due (see the Winter & Spring 2011 *Newsletter*).

FERC's approval of SCE's application to amend its Lundy hydropower operating license has launched a series of follow-up implementation actions, including submitting a pre-application of the project plans to Mono County for review at the end of last year. The reviewing body, the Mono County Land Development Technical Advisory Committee (LDTAC) is comprised of representatives from Public Works, Community Development (Building, Planning, and Compliance) and Environmental Health. The LDTAC provides technical review and recommendations on land

development projects in Mono County and helps to facilitate coordination among County departments.

The project description as presented by SCE representatives remains consistent with the final settlement agreement reached in 2005 and adopted by FERC in 2007. The new RCS will convey Mill Creek water from the Lundy Powerhouse back to Mill Creek and will follow the existing path of the powerhouse tailrace and historic Mill Creek Return Ditch. The new RCS will serve Conway Ranch and other established water rights holders along the way by allowing for diversions. The Mono Lake Committee expects that water rights holders will continue to call for and receive their water for uses such as fish-rearing and irrigation—uses that the Committee supports.

The new system will be upgraded to a closed pipe that increases water efficiency and prevents ice from forming in the winter. Mono County identified two permits that would potentially be required: grading and encroachment. The County is also exploring what environmental review process will be required.

Can Mill Creek hang on just a little longer?

Despite decades of having 79% of its natural flow diverted and often running dry before reaching Mono Lake, Mill Creek is still hanging in there. Big water years like last year certainly help to reinvigorate the old cottonwood trees and riparian vegetation by extending their lives another year. But in order to achieve the healthy, functioning system that we know is possible given what we've seen on Rush and Lee Vining creeks, Mill Creek needs its legal allotment of water. Finally SCE will make this happen by building the Mill Creek Return Conveyance System. ❖

California Gull research report

by Kristie Nelson, PRBO Conservation Science Biologist

May 26, 2011, *Krakatoa Islet, Mono Lake: The California Gull nest count is on hold while we wait out a cold, windy storm. Looking out across the channel to Little Tahiti Islet, and further out to Twain Islet, I can tell that gull density is sparse. Lying in my sleeping bag at night I hear the incessant calls of the gulls; a bizarre sound filling a dark night while looking up at the stars. But it isn't as loud and penetrating as it should be—there simply are not very many gulls at Mono Lake this year.*



RUSS TAYLOR

California Gull research on Mono's islets.

PRBO Conservation Science biologists and Mono Lake Committee volunteers have been studying Mono Lake's gulls since 1983. Back then, the colony was severely threatened by water diversions; its future was uncertain. Today, Mono Lake is slowly rising, and the nesting islands are no longer acutely threatened. Yet we continue to monitor the gulls because maintaining this research will enable us to understand and predict how they will respond to future conditions.

In short, 2011 was a terrible year for the gulls. Population size was the lowest ever measured: only 16,774 nests. The cold, wintry spring resulted in fewer brine shrimp—the gulls' primary food source—at the time of the annual nest count (see page 7 for more on brine shrimp population dynamics). 2010 was also dismal; it had the lowest chick production ever recorded. During an average year, there are about 24,000 California Gull nests at Mono Lake that fledge an average of 0.94 chicks per nest. In 2011, the fledging rate was 0.31. In 2010, only 0.26 chicks fledged per nest.

Low gull population numbers are correlated with reduced brine shrimp availability, cold spring seasons, and other factors. Although the last couple of years have been bad, gulls are long-lived creatures. They can struggle through bad years by nesting again in the future when conditions improve.

The complete 2011 California Gull report is online at monobasinresearch.org. For more information or to support this research please contact Lisa Cutting (lisa@monolake.org) at (760) 647-6595. ❖

Annual Eared Grebe census

by Carolyn Weddle

Mono Lake is a significant fall staging site for Eared Grebes, and the annual aerial photo survey is important in providing insight into the overall health of North America's Eared Grebe population. Approximately 30% of the population visits Mono Lake each year.

Last October marked the fourth year of the Mono Lake Committee coordinating the aerial photography survey. Thanks to volunteer LightHawk pilot Geoff Pope and photographer Rick Kattelman, over 400 aerial photographs were sent to Sean Boyd, researcher from the Pacific Wildlife Research Centre in British Columbia, for analysis. Boyd has been using these surveys to study grebe populations for over a decade.

The final count this year was 886,500 grebes—an increase from the last few years. Although this is still lower than past counts, which have been close to two million birds, it is an increase from 2010's 514,000 birds and 2009's 530,000 birds.

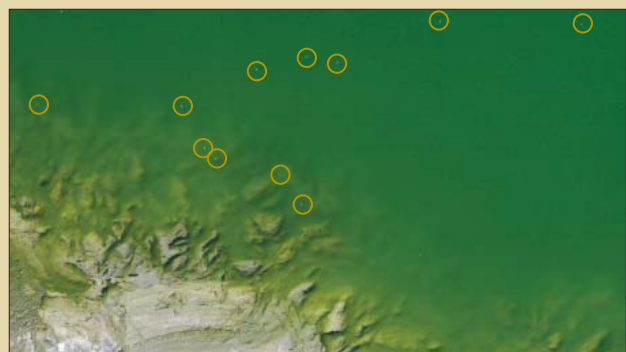


PHOTO COURTESY OF RICK KATTELMANN

Aerial Eared Grebe survey photo—circles indicate grebes.

The trend over the past couple of years indicates that there may be a change happening in the North American Eared Grebe population. However, more research is needed in order to gain a more definitive picture of what is happening with the grebes.

Carolyn Weddle is the Committee's Project Specialist. She has never lived anywhere this snowy ... and it isn't even snowy yet!

Policy notes

by Geoffrey McQuilkin, Lisa Cutting, and Morgan Lindsay

Dire straits for Willow Flycatchers

The Rush Creek Willow Flycatcher population is poised to be extirpated from the Mono Basin once again. The first time was a result of water diversions by the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power (DWP) that led to the destruction of the Willow Flycatchers' riparian habitat. With the restoration of Rush Creek, they returned in 2001 and began making a comeback. But now, another human activity is affecting them—just as daunting in its magnitude, although seemingly simple to reverse.

The Mono Basin population of Willow Flycatchers is failing because of an artificially enlarged population of Brown-headed Cowbirds. Cowbird numbers have risen in the Mono Basin because they get their food primarily at people's bird feeders in Lee Vining and Mono City. Of course, people who use bird feeders love wildlife and do not intend to harm other species by feeding birds, nor are they typically aiming to support cowbirds. But it's exactly these unintended consequences that have allowed the cowbird population to swell to the point of being a problem.

Because the cowbirds don't have

to spend as much time and energy seeking out food, they can more easily parasitize Willow Flycatchers. Cowbirds do this by laying their eggs in flycatcher nests. Once the eggs hatch, the cowbird chicks out-compete flycatcher chicks and the flycatchers do not successfully fledge. Despite Willow Flycatcher pairs continuing to nest and lay eggs each summer, no chicks have hatched since 2009. With the total number of the population at six individuals, nesting success is critical to keep the population alive.

The Mono Lake Committee has been working with residents of Lee Vining and Mono City to try to reverse this bleak trend. The concept is simple—the Committee supplies thistle sock bird feeders and thistle seed free of charge in exchange for a commitment to not scatter bird seed on the ground. Cowbirds cannot eat seed out of thistle sock feeders, so they spend time foraging for food, which keeps their population to a more natural size so that Willow Flycatchers can successfully compete. Thistle sock feeders attract many colorful songbirds.

Given the last two breeding seasons of unsuccessful nesting, this coming season will be particularly critical for the

Willow Flycatchers. If unsuccessful, at some point the migratory adults that are still alive will choose another location to nest or just die of old age. It is ironic that even though Rush Creek is well on the road to recovery and providing excellent habitat, it is not enough. Collectively, we need to act now.

If you are a Lee Vining or Mono City resident and are interested in trading in your open bird feeder for songbird-friendly thistle sock feeders and a supply of bird seed, please contact Lisa Cutting (lisa@monolake.org) at (760) 647-6595 x142. And as always, feel free to contact Lisa with any questions.

SCE refuses to connect Forest Service solar panels

Federal stimulus funds paid for much-needed improvements at the Mono Basin Scenic Area Visitor Center last summer, including re-paving the parking lot and installing a new solar panel array. The solar panels are projected to substantially reduce energy costs for the Inyo National Forest at a time when repeated budget cuts have forced the agency to cut key staff and services, including Visitor Center hours.

But as of press time, the panels have yet to generate any power. Electric utility Southern California Edison (SCE) refuses to connect the solar array to the grid because of an impasse in contract negotiations. The problem is that federal agencies like the Forest Service are not permitted to assume any future financial liability, as required by SCE's standard financial protection clause. Any change to SCE's standard contract requires approval by the Public Utilities Commission, a lengthy process. However, other utilities in California have come to mutually agreeable terms with federal agencies, including the Forest Service and the National Park Service.

At least 24 other solar arrays,

Continued on page 13



BARTSHE MILLER

A Willow Flycatcher chick banded at Rush Creek in 2009.



New solar panels at the Mono Basin Visitor Center are up, but not yet running.

mostly in national parks and forests in Southern California, have been waiting as long as three years for connection. Recent public pressure has increased the visibility of this issue, and SCE has announced it will come to agreement with the Forest Service soon. Help can't come soon enough for the Inyo National Forest as every day the solar panels sit idle is another day the stimulus funds are not put to good use.

DWP gains new watchdog

Los Angeles voters created a new high-level city position last year: ratepayer advocate. The ratepayer advocate's primary duty is to provide independent analysis of the water and electricity rates charged by DWP—including ever-controversial rate increases.

Early in 2012, Frederick Pickel was selected and unanimously confirmed for the new position. Pickel has worked within the utility industry and as a consultant for three decades, most recently as President of the Wilshire Energy Consulting Group. With a calm, analytical approach, Pickel appears to be ready to take on the politically-charged challenge of providing independent factual analysis of DWP rates to DWP leadership, the

Mayor, City Council, and the public. The position is independent of DWP, and Pickel can only be removed from the office by a two-thirds vote of the City Council.

While water issues are not new to Pickel, the bulk of his professional work has focused on energy matters. That's quite relevant, given that the power side of DWP is far larger than the water side. However, Mono Lake supporters are well aware that DWP's water operations in the Eastern Sierra carry their own unique history and set of current issues.

The Mono Lake Committee met with Pickel to share perspectives on Mono Lake's water history and on the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead for DWP. We were impressed with how Pickel looks beyond the present day to the big-picture puzzle of how strategic water system investments, and the rates that fund them, are part of achieving long-term water supply reliability for Los Angeles. It will be up to DWP to make policy for its Eastern Sierra water operations, but in Pickel it appears it will have a savvy ratepayer advocate looking over its shoulder.

Mammoth Water District protects fishery, DWP objects

The Mammoth Community Water District recently completed a 15-year environmental review of minimum flows to protect the fishery on Mammoth Creek, just south of the Mono Basin. In response, DWP filed suit against the District. DWP claims the District's longstanding water rights were improperly granted and that the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) should have studied how the minimum flows would impact DWP's water rights. Mark Drew, California Trout's Eastern Sierra Program Manager, emphasized that the focus of the EIR was to protect Mammoth Creek: "This is a fisheries issue, not a water rights issue."

In the Mono Basin, Lee Vining Creek's flows are carefully balanced to provide water to raise Mono Lake, keep the creek healthy, and supply Lee Vining and Los Angeles. Similarly, Mammoth Creek supports recreational trout fishing and provides the main water supply for the town of Mammoth Lakes before it joins the Los Angeles Aqueduct system upstream of Crowley Lake Reservoir.

Since a 1996 order from the State Water Board, the District has been required to comply with a monthly minimum in-stream flow for the protection of the Mammoth Creek fishery. The District has subsequently worked in close collaboration with California Trout and the California Department of Fish & Game to establish the long-term, science-based minimum flows for Mammoth Creek prescribed in the EIR.

Over the past several years, the District repeatedly contacted DWP to address their concerns and prevent a future lawsuit. The District reports that when DWP failed to engage in the process, they could wait no longer to certify the EIR, the final step before approval by the State Water Board. Looking ahead, the parties plan to

Continued on page 18

Streamwatch

Dry follows wet

by Greg Reis

Last October, we were figuring out what to do with too much water. In trying to test new flow prescriptions, the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power (DWP) failed to release “extra water” to Rush Creek following the summertime peak flow as specified by the State Water Board-appointed Stream Scientists. Grant Lake Reservoir was full and threatening to spill all winter, leading to concerns about high winter flows damaging the Rush Creek fishery.

An additional goal of releasing even lower winter baseflows as recommended by the Stream Scientists did not happen because even though the recommendation comes from the

Board’s own scientists, DWP must pay \$5,000 to file a Temporary Urgency Change petition like it did the previous winter, which it declined to do this year. Instead, DWP released flows to Rush Creek in October that emptied over 7,000 acre-feet of water out of Grant Lake Reservoir. When combined with a dry winter, this prevented the reservoir from spilling during a time when high flows could be detrimental to the brown trout fishery in Rush Creek.

Since October it has been dry. February 1 snow surveys in the Mono Basin were similar to those statewide: only 37% of average snow water content. There was a big variation

between the Rush Creek and Lee Vining Creek watersheds, ranging from 16% of the April 1 seasonal average at Gem Pass to 28% at Ellery Lake.

This pattern resulted from just one storm in January, and it remains to be seen if Rush Creek will have a much drier year than Lee Vining Creek. So far it is looking very dry for both. As we go to press, the March 1 snow surveys are coming in, and the Lee Vining Creek drainage water content fell to only 36% of average to date. The good news is that because last year was wet, Grant Lake Reservoir will remain high this year just as it did in 2007—the last time a dry year followed a wet one. ❖

Lakewatch

Dry year means a dropping lake and a quick end to meromixis

by Greg Reis

Mono Lake rose one third of a foot in January and February to 6383.91 feet above sea level—about the same level as last summer’s highstand. This rise is typical, even for a dry year. It could keep rising until April, which would make it necessary to move a small part of the South Tufa trail to higher ground.

Yet it has been dry—very dry. The Mono Basin April–July runoff forecast (as of February 1) is 41% of average, which would equal the 1977 runoff, the driest year on record. This is the second-lowest forecast in the state after the Cosumnes River at 32% of average.

Mono Lake could drop a foot and a half this runoff year (April 1, 2012–March 31, 2013) if it is that dry. There is a lot of hope

for a “Miracle March” like in 1991, when Gem Pass snow water content went from 2 inches to 28.5 inches (85% of average) in a single month. Whether or not we get a March miracle, we will likely have a below-average year and a dropping Mono Lake.

Thanks to the limnology monitoring program (see page 6), UC Santa Barbara researcher Dr. Robert Jellison found the lake stratified on December 19 and again on February 16, meaning the lake has become meromictic. Meromixis is a lack of winter mixing of Mono Lake’s upper and lower water layers due to a slight freshening of the upper layer during a wet year. Subsequent wet years strengthen it and dry years weaken it.

The last period of meromixis lasted two winters (2006 and

2007); however, with a dry year this year it may break down before next winter. While likely common in the past, this one-year period of meromixis would be the first time it has been recorded in Mono Lake during the 30-year limnology monitoring program. ❖

Greg Reis is the Committee’s Information and Restoration Specialist. He is enjoying his rainiest winter in 17 years.

6417'

6392'

6383.9'

6372'

Prediversion lake level, 1941

Target lake level

Current lake level

Historic low, 1982



ROSE CATRON

Policy Coordinator Morgan Lindsay reads the lake level gauge.

Mono Basin Journal

A roundup of quiet happenings at Mono Lake

by Geoffrey McQuilkin



GEORGE MCQUILKIN

This now-waning winter hasn't produced stories of great storm systems, deep snowfall, or even thick poconip. Yet wintry legends of another kind have grown: of frozen lakes, glassy ice, and many adventures on skates.

In the late fall it sometimes happens that local lakes (our favorite saline lake excepted) freeze thick enough to support adventurous skaters before the winter snows make the ice impassible. In this uncommonly dry year, smooth ice grew to cover local lakes like Lundy, Gull, and Silver, not to mention water bodies up and down the Sierra. The ice lasted week after week, well into January, while skaters cataloged the

virtues of one frozen location after another.

No discussion could leave out a review of Tenaya Lake, up on the Tioga Road. There we found the once-in-a-lifetime chance to skate, walk, and slide. Views spanned the Yosemite high country, and wild sounds of ice stretching echoed as the sun played across Tenaya's frozen surface. Adventurers drove hours for the experience; indeed, what more could you need for perspective on the world than to be surrounded by the soaring granite domes of the high country in the yellow light of sunset, standing on clear, singing ice, while fish lazily circle beneath your feet. ❖

Benchmarks



JULIA RUNCIE

March 20, 2011: 17 inches of snow. Season to date: 108.4 inches. Season total: 137.7 inches—the second snowiest winter on record since we started keeping daily records in 1989.



ARVA DEENHART

February 25, 2012: 0 inches of snow. Season to date: 16.9 inches—the third least snowiest as of the end of February since 1990. Season total: ? (The season isn't over yet!)



monolake.org/store

See all products
in color online at
[MONOLAKE.ORG/
STORE](http://MONOLAKE.ORG/STORE)



MONO LAKE COMMITTEE CHILDREN'S BUCKET HAT

Caelen and Ellery McQuilkin keep the sun off their faces with these adorable children's bucket hats. The hats are 100% cotton and feature the Mono Lake Committee logo on the front. They are perfect for exploring the shores of Mono Lake! Choose from olive or blue.

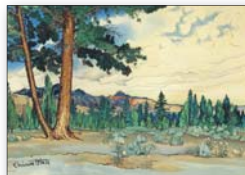
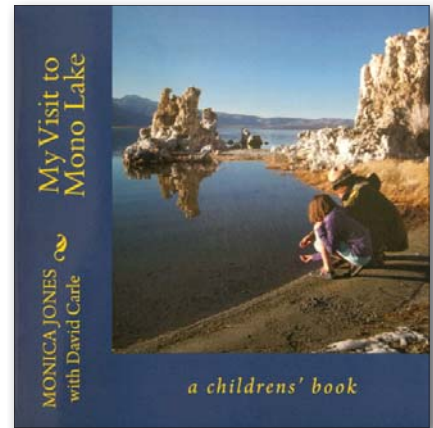
Mono Lake Committee children's bucket hat, please specify olive or blue, one size: \$21.00

MY VISIT TO MONO LAKE

BY MONICA JONES, WITH DAVID CARLE

Educational and fun, this story of Monica Jones' visit to Mono Lake teaches children about the natural history of the lake and surrounding areas. Monica tells of her adventure with park rangers at Mono Lake and how she learns that water travels hundreds of miles to reach her home in Southern California.

This unique book can be read in classrooms or as a bedtime story. It includes photographs on almost every page and a glossary of vocabulary words. *My Visit to Mono Lake, paperback, Phalarope Press, 32 pages, 8½" x 8½": \$11.00*



MORNING AT MONO LAKE



ALONG MONO LAKE



BEFORE THE RAIN



LEE VINING
CREEK TRAIL

CHIURA OBATA NOTECARD SET

This collection of eight Mono Basin cards from watercolor paintings by Chiura Obata can be used for any occasion. The set includes two cards each of four images: Morning at Mono Lake, Along Mono Lake, Before the Rain, and Lee Vining Creek Trail. This card set also makes a great gift, and displays the Mono Lake Committee logo on the back of the set.

Chiura Obata notecard set, blank inside, 8 cards with envelopes: \$16.00



MONO LAKE COMMITTEE CERAMIC TO-GO MUG

Pour 16 ounces of coffee or tea into our new ceramic to-go mug! This white mug comes with a 100% silicone lid for easy sipping on the go. Plus, it has a blue Mono Lake Committee logo on one side so you can show your Mono Lake pride.

Mono Lake Committee ceramic to-go mug, 16-oz: \$23.00

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

Defender of the Trust Award celebration

Mary Scoonover honored

by Geoffrey McQuilkin

“**T**he public trust,” in the words of the California Supreme Court in the landmark Mono Lake case “is an affirmation of the duty of the state to protect the people’s common heritage of streams, lakes, marshlands and tidelands...”

Nearly 20 years ago the Mono Lake Committee created the Defender of the Trust Award to honor individuals who champion Mono Lake and advocate for the Public Trust doctrine. Attorney Mary Scoonover received the 2011 award in recognition of her dedication, vision, and success in protecting the Public Trust at Mono Lake, along its tributary streams, and at critical natural areas throughout California.



Past and present Defenders of the Trust; Richard Roos-Collins, Mary Scoonover, Sally Gaines, and Martha Davis at the award ceremony.

functioning water policy. How much water should Mono Lake have to protect our common heritage? Does public interest in viewing tufa towers argue against higher lake levels? How will we know when Los Angeles has achieved its obligations to restore streams and waterfowl at the lake? Where is the common ground with the City of Los Angeles to actually implement these duties?

The remarkable recovery we see underway today—the rising lake, the recovering health of brine shrimp and alkali fly populations, the long lost features like

hypopycnal rias at the stream deltas, the forests of the tributary bottomlands, the songbirds that live there—is directly linked to Mary’s hard work as a spokesperson for the Public Trust.

Mary has since continued her advocacy for our state’s natural resources, working on issues such as the Lower Owens River, CALFED Bay-Delta programs, and protection of Lake Tahoe. Most recently she has worked in the non-governmental world to apply conservation philanthropy to complex natural resource issues.

Mary has also stayed involved at Mono Lake, and we look forward to working with her in the years ahead to vigilantly safeguard the Public Trust and Mono Lake for all the public to enjoy. ❖

Join the Defense Trust!

The Committee’s presentation of the Defense Trust Award happens once every two years during an exciting three-day event: the Defense Trust Weekend. With hikes, canoeing, scrumptious food, natural history walks, and discussions about the Committee’s work, it’s a great chance for Defense Trust members to connect with staff and Board members.

Defense Trust members donate a total of \$250 in the course of a year. If you’re interested in joining the Defense Trust, please contact Ellen King (ellen@monolake.org) at (760) 647-6595. We’d love to see you for the 2013 Defense Trust Weekend!

Mary came to the Mono Lake legal fight on behalf of the state in the early 1990s via her work in the California Attorney General’s Office. She represented the state in the State Water Board hearings and subsequent restoration program proceedings.

Her challenge was to take the Public Trust duties established by the court and transform them effectively into

Thank you Barefoot Wine & Bubbly

Randy Arnold, Greg Knight, Michael Houlihan, and Bonnie Harvey of Barefoot Wine & Bubbly are true Mono Lake Committee fans. For many years Barefoot has donated delicious wine and champagne to support the Committee’s events. Their support makes great events happen—thank you Barefooters!

enter a 90-day negotiation period. Greg Norby, District General Manager, is optimistic that all outstanding issues will be resolved quickly. “I believe we can reach a negotiated resolution based on the reasonable interests of the District and the City of Los Angeles, and shift this away from a zero sum water rights game to focusing on improved water resources management on a basin-wide scale, to both parties’ long-term benefit.”

DWP to litigate Owens air quality

News is coming in as this *Newsletter* goes to press that DWP is going to court to challenge the latest requirements set forth for controlling dust emissions at Owens Lake. The dust comes from the lakebed, which was dried by DWP’s water diversions in the 1920s. DWP is suing the local Great Basin Unified Air Pollution Control District, the State Air Resources Board, and the State Lands Commission.

Airport remediation stuck in holding pattern

During the summer of 2010, a Mono County project to upgrade and resurface Lee Vining’s small airport resulted

in both intended improvements and extensive, unintentional earthmoving. An oversight in the County’s planning process allowed the creation of an over-engineered drainage ditch that created a 12-foot-high, ten-acre stockpile of fill material at the north end of the runway (see Fall 2010 *Newsletter*).

In response, Committee staff quickly formed a working group consisting of Mono County, the US Forest Service, and the Mono Basin Regional Planning Advisory Committee that was able to reduce the height of the stockpile by half and develop a much improved revegetation plan. Mono County’s planning process was also revised to make sure all public projects receive the same detailed level of review as private projects.

Until recently, the airport revegetation program was proceeding as planned. Restoration specialist Michael Hogan has returned several times to monitor the test plots he established on the disturbed airport stockpile in the fall of 2010. After one year there is good news—results show the best-producing treatment of native seeds, tilling, and mulch is one that utilizes a medium level of effort and cost.

However, the initial project was funded by a grant from the Federal

Aviation Administration, and the remaining funds are not sufficient to cover the full cost of completing the revegetation program. This financial challenge has put full revegetation implementation—originally scheduled for fall 2011—on hold. The County Public Works staff will need to refine the current grant proposal and pursue additional sources to assure funding.

Revegetation is not only critical to helping the stockpile blend with its surroundings, but also to repairing the nutrient poor, compacted soil’s ability to absorb and filter water and provide protection from wind and water erosion. The airport working group is committed to seeing the project through to completion and will be following up with Mono County to make sure the growing vegetation meets strict, specific success criteria over the four-year monitoring period.

Mike Schlafmann leaves Inyo National Forest

After ten years at the Inyo National Forest as Deputy District Ranger for the Mammoth & Mono Lake District, Mike Schlafmann was a reliable and seasoned point-person for the Forest Service on Mono Basin issues. More than anything Schlafmann will be remembered for bringing a community approach to his work. His style of diving into a situation, bringing diverse people together, and seeking workable solutions was consistent throughout the issues he worked on.

Schlafmann has headed north to the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest located east of Seattle and on the west side of the Cascades. Filling in behind Schlafmann on a four-month temporary detail is Lesley Yen, who had previously been working in the southern part of the Inyo National Forest. Unlike Schlafmann, who was often immersed in Mammoth Lakes activities, Yen is stationed out of the Lee Vining Ranger Station. This signals a shift in management priorities and assignments for the position that stands to benefit the Mono Basin. ❖



MORGAN LINDSAY

Revegetation at the Lee Vining airport is temporarily on hold due to a lack of FAA funds.

2012 Field Seminars



ARNA DEGENHARDT

Burned Forest Ecology

June 8–10

Stephen Shunk

\$150 per person / \$135 for members

Join North American woodpecker specialist Steve Shunk for this dynamic introduction to burned forest ecology in the Mono Basin. Western forests evolved with fire as a critical part of their ecological health. For well over 100 years, humans have attempted to suppress fire, in effect removing this crucial component of forest ecology. How do we balance the needs of society with the need for conservation of healthy forest habitats? Steve started birding in 1989 and has studied the ecology of western forests for the last 14 years. He recently completed the *Peterson Reference Guide to Woodpeckers of North America*, and in summer 2012 he will spend his second season studying Black-backed Woodpeckers of the Sierra Nevada.

South Shore Kayak

June 10

Stuart Wilkinson & Mono Lake Committee Staff

\$90 per person / \$80 for members

limited to 12 participants

Late spring reveals snow-capped mountains towering over a glassy Mono Lake—a great time to kayak! Join Stuart Wilkinson and a Mono Lake Committee staff member for a guided naturalist expedition along Mono's south shore. This natural history kayak tour will cover a wide variety of topics relating to this unusual Great Basin lake, such as geology, ecology, history, and politics. Expect to see underwater tufa towers, birds, brine shrimp, and lake-bottom springs. Some kayak experience is helpful, but not necessary; kayaks and safety equipment are provided. This seminar is being offered for the 16th year in a row, and is highly rated by past participants.

**Mono Lake Committee Field Seminars fill quickly every year—
call (760) 647-6595 or register online at monolake.org/seminars.**



ELIN LJUNG

A group of birders investigates the June Lake burn area.

Birding & Bird Photography

June 12–14

Santiago Escruceria

\$150 per person / \$135 for members

limited to 12 participants

This seminar will focus on identifying and photographing birds found in the Mono Basin's diverse habitats. The group will visit sagebrush scrub, open meadows, riparian corridors, and montane forests, combining light hiking with observation and photography. *Participants should have basic photography skills; this seminar is not a course in photography instruction.* Santiago Escruceria is a Colombian-born American citizen who has taught environmental education at the Mono Lake Committee for 12 years. He also runs a birding tour company and leads annual birding tours in the area of Cali, Colombia. This seminar makes a perfect addition to the Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua weekend, which begins Friday, June 15.

Digital Photography Basics

June 22–24

David Gubernick

\$225 per person / \$200 for members

\$10 materials fee

limited to 12 participants

This workshop is designed to demystify the technical terms and functions of your digital SLR camera and enhance your picture-taking abilities in a warm and supportive learning environment. Learn how to get good exposures, read your histogram, understand different f-stops, shutter speeds, shooting modes, ISO settings, depth-of-field, white balance, lens choices, and much more. In addition to mastering the technical aspects of creating images, the group will explore the artistry of photography with an emphasis on composition. Through guided practice sessions, field trips

in the Mono Basin, coaching in the field, and review of images, you will learn to create better images with visual impact. *Participants must bring digital SLR cameras; no point-and-shoot cameras.*

Miwok-Paiute Basketry

June 29–July 1

Lucy Parker & Julia Parker

\$190 per person / \$175 for members

\$80 materials fee

primitive group campsite included (no pets, please)

limited to 12 participants

During this seminar, participants will prepare materials and create a Miwok-Paiute burden basket—used for gathering pinenuts, acorns, and berries. This seminar is designed for weavers of all levels. Participants are encouraged (but not required) to camp with the group, and evenings will be spent around the campfire with traditional songs and stories. Lucy Parker is a descendent of the Yosemite Miwok, Mono Lake Kutzadika^a, and Kayasha Pomo peoples. She learned traditional handiwork from her mother Julia, a master basket weaver. Julia Parker has dedicated her life to learning and teaching basketry and is the only weaver still practicing who was taught by women who wove in the early 20th century.



ARNA DEGENHARDT

Julia Parker weaves a basket during the annual field seminar.

Eastern Sierra *en Plein* Air Oil Painting

July 6–8

Allison Horst

\$160 per person / \$145 for members

limited to 12 participants

Participants in this seminar will practice painting with oils in the Mono Basin, focusing on simplifying compositions, establishing light and shadow relationships, using a limited palette to harmonize colors, and finishing small-format paintings in rapidly changing light. This workshop is geared towards those who have previous experience oil painting, but all levels are welcome. Each participant will complete several sketches daily. Allison Horst is an avid *plein air* oil painter known for her ability to capture California's landscapes from the shores of the Central Coast to the peaks of the Sierra Nevada.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ALLISON HORST

"Granite Wilderness," an oil painting by Allison Horst.

Capturing the Mono Basin in Pastel

July 13–15

Ane Carla Rovetta

\$160 per person / \$145 for members

\$35 materials fee

limited to 12 participants

The sparkling light and radiant skies of the Mono Basin are pure inspiration. Add a set of brilliant pastel chalks and your own unique imagination, and you have an incredible weekend of color exploration and art. Landscape painter Ane Carla Rovetta is known for her realistic depiction of our golden western lands. She will guide students through a value system she modeled after Ansel Adams' work that will help organize the overwhelming hues of the summer terrain.

Each participant will go home with at least one small finished painting and several sketches, color studies, and value experiments that will fuel future artistic endeavors. Ane Carla can provide you with your own set of 72 pastel chalks; *you must reserve your set when you sign up for the class.*

Los Angeles Aqueduct Tour

July 14

Greg Reis

\$90 per person / \$80 for members

The Mono Basin extension of the Los Angeles Aqueduct began transporting water 350 miles south to the City of LA in 1941. Visit all the major aqueduct facilities in the Mono Basin and learn about the aqueduct's effects on Mono Lake, its tributary streams, the Upper Owens River, and land management in the area. The group will discuss the history of water diversions, the effort to save Mono Lake, and the future of habitat restoration. Greg Reis is the Committee's Information & Restoration Specialist and the perfect guide for unraveling the Mono Basin's complex and fascinating plumbing—he has over 15 years of experience in Mono Basin hydrology and restoration and he keeps close track of Mono Basin water management.

The Art of Wildflower Macrophotography

July 20–22

David Gubernick

\$250 per person / \$225 for members

limited to 8 participants

Learn to take creative and beautiful close-up images, further develop your artistic vision, and enhance your photographic skills in the supportive learning environment of this workshop for beginning to advanced amateur photographers. The weekend will emphasize the artistry of macrophotography and the technical means to render such images; this is not a course in botanical identification. David Gubernick, PhD, is an internationally and nationally published and award-winning nature photographer and workshop leader.



PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVID GUBERNICK

Flowering elephant's head.

Summer Birds of the Mono Basin

July 21–22

David Wimpfheimer

\$140 per person / \$125 for members

This field seminar will concentrate on the identification and ecology of birds that breed in the Mono Basin and others that migrate to Mono Lake during the summer. In sagebrush meadows and riparian and montane forests, the class will explore a number of sites, mixing short leisurely walks with periods of observation and natural history discussion. Woodpeckers, corvids, flycatchers, warblers, and other passerines display fascinating, varied behaviors. However, a major focus will be Mono Lake and other wetlands where phalaropes and other shorebirds feed. David Wimpfheimer has been educating and interpreting birds and California's natural history for over 20 years. His seasoned focus and knowledge make for enjoyable and educational outings.

Introduction to High Country Plants & Habitats

August 3–5

Ann Howald

\$150 per person / \$135 for members

This class will explore the mosaic of habitats found in the Eastern Sierra high country—flower-filled meadows fed by meandering streams, sagebrush-covered slopes, lodgepole pine forests, subalpine lakes bordered by willows, and flowery rock gardens. Sight identification of common trees, shrubs, and wildflowers will be emphasized, as well as the many ways that plants, birds, insects, and other wildlife interact in high country habitats. Ann Howald is a consulting botanist and volunteer for the California Native Plant Society and California State Parks. She has taught popular Committee field seminars for over ten years.



Birders scan for interesting species along Mono Lake's south shore.

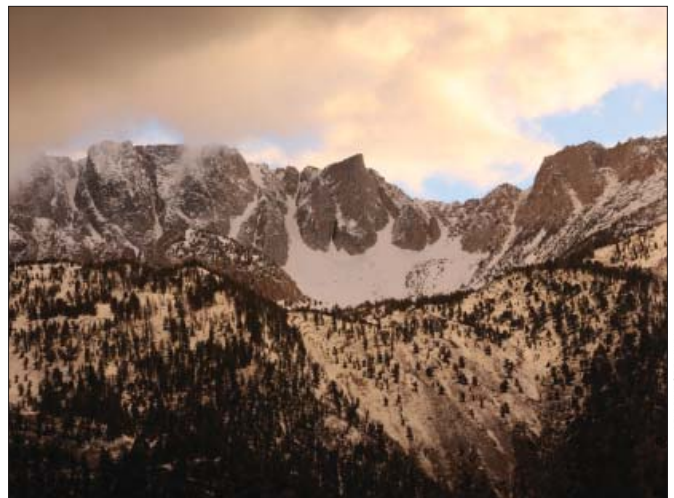
Birding the Migration: Mono Basin & Long Valley

August 4–5

Dave Shuford

\$140 per person / \$125 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, late summer is the time of year to see the greatest diversity of landbirds, shorebirds, and waterbirds in the Mono Basin and on Crowley Lake Reservoir. Dave Shuford has been a staff biologist at PRBO Conservation Science for over 30 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.



The Dana Plateau is a prominent geologic feature in the Mono Basin.

Geology of the Mono Basin: Land of Fire & Ice

August 10–12

Greg Stock

\$150 per person / \$135 for members

From volcanic craters to glacial moraines, earthquake faults to tufa towers, the Mono Basin displays some of the most unique, spectacular, and accessible geology anywhere in the world. This seminar, consisting mostly of field visits to the premier sites, will present in understandable fashion the geologic stories of the Mono Basin. Greg Stock is the first-ever Yosemite National Park geologist. He has studied and interpreted the geology of the Sierra Nevada for over 12 years. He has authored or co-authored over 50 papers and abstracts on Sierra Nevada geology, and is co-author of the book *Geology Underfoot in Yosemite National Park*.

Mono Basin Mammals

August 17–19

John Harris

\$150 per person / \$135 for members

This class will introduce participants to the diversity of mammals found in Mono Basin from desert sand dunes to the forests and alpine meadows of the High Sierra. More mammals occur here than in many states, and the group will try to see as many as possible by live-trapping and field observation. Participants will look for tracks and other signs and learn to identify skulls found in the field, emphasizing identification and adaptations to Mono's varied environments. John Harris is Professor of Biology at Mills College whose interest in Mono's mammals began in 1975 while working as an undergraduate assistant in a study of chipmunks. He went on to study small mammals on Mono Lake's dunes as a graduate student and has worked on small mammals in the Sierra Nevada, San Joaquin Valley, and Mojave Desert of California.



ARVA DEGENHARDT

John Harris holds a Panamint kangaroo rat.

weaver. Julia Parker has dedicated her life to learning and teaching basketry and is the only weaver still practicing who was taught by women who wove in the early 20th century.

Miwok-Paiute Basketry

August 24–26

Lucy Parker & Julia Parker

\$190 per person / \$175 for members

\$80 materials fee

primitive group campsite included (no pets, please)
limited to 12 participants

During this seminar, participants will prepare materials and create a Miwok-Paiute burden basket—used for gathering pinenuts, acorns, and berries. This seminar is designed for weavers of all levels. Participants are encouraged (but not required) to camp with the group, and evenings will be spent around the campfire with traditional songs and stories. Lucy Parker is a descendent of the Yosemite Miwok, Mono Lake Kutzadika^a, and Kayasha Pomo peoples. She learned traditional handiwork from her mother Julia, a master basket

Living on the Edge: Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep in the Mono Basin

September 8–9

John Wehausen

\$165 per person / \$150 for members

The US Fish & Wildlife Service listed the Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep as Federally Endangered in 2000. This field seminar will involve discussions of the fascinating biology of bighorn sheep, their relationship with other mammals (including mountain lions and humans), and their conservation in the field. Past participants saw bighorn 13 out of the last 14 years—while there is a very good chance of seeing bighorn sheep in the wild during this seminar, there is no guarantee. John Wehausen is a research scientist at the White Mountain Research Station in Bishop who has been studying the Sierra Nevada bighorn and working for their conservation since 1974. *Please be aware that this seminar involves very strenuous hiking at the 10,000-foot elevation and above.*



ROSE CARTON

California Gulls bathe and feed at a brackish lagoon on Mono Lake's north shore.



ELIN LIJUNG

Visitors to Bodie State Historic Park can glimpse the area's mining past.

Birding the Migration: Mono Basin & Bridgeport Valley

September 15-16

Dave Shuford

\$150 per person / \$135 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, autumn is the time of year to see late fall migrants and early arriving wintering birds in the Mono Basin and Bridgeport Valley. This seminar will include a guided boat tour on Bridgeport Reservoir. Dave Shuford has been a staff biologist at PRBO Conservation Science for over 30 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.

Mono Basin & Bodie Fall Photography

September 28-30

Richard Knepp

\$300 per person / \$285 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. And, for the seventh year, the class will spend Saturday at Bodie, arriving at the park to photograph the dawn light. Join accomplished photographer Richard Knepp to explore varied shoreline locations at sunrise and sunset, fall color in nearby canyons, and the ghost town of Bodie.

Photographers of all levels are welcome; a fully adjustable camera of any size or format is suggested. This is the 18th year in a row of this popular seminar.

Photography at Burger's Sierra Retreat

October 5-7

Elizabeth Kennedy-Corathers

\$300 per person / \$285 for members
accommodations & meals included

This field seminar will explore photography of the beautiful aspen groves and alpine landscapes above Mono Lake. Practical topics will include landscape representation, macrophotography of wildflowers and other flora, painting with light, night photography, and time studies, as well as



ROSE CATRON

Autumn in the Mono Basin offers excellent photography opportunities.

philosophical and ethical issues in photographing the natural environment. Accommodations will be provided at the rustic and comfortable Burger's Sierra Retreat above Lee Vining, with all meals catered by Linda Dore Food Service. Photographers of all skill levels using either film or digital cameras are welcome. Elizabeth Kenneday-Corathers is an accomplished local photographer who is currently working on a photography book of the Mono Basin.

who has been discovering and documenting aspen carvings for many years. Nancy Hadlock has been a naturalist, interpreter and educator for the National Park Service and US Forest Service for over 30 years.

Arborglyphs & Aspen Natural History

October 13-14

Richard Potashin & Nancy Hadlock

\$160 per person / \$145 for members

A century of sheep grazing brought Basque sheepherders into the Mono Basin's aspen-bordered meadows, and they left numerous carvings—or arborglyphs—on the aspens. Join the instructors for an enchanting journey into the aspen groves to explore this historic art form and to learn about the numerous wildlife, insects, and birds that are drawn to the groves. During leisurely walks the instructors will discuss the history of sheep grazing in the Mono Basin, Basque culture, the cultural significance of the carvings, and efforts to document them. Richard Potashin is a longtime Eastern Sierra resident



Richard Potashin discusses a Basque arborglyph.

Field Seminar Registration Information

To register for a field seminar, please call the Mono Lake Committee at (760) 647-6595 and ask for the seminar desk, or register online at monolake.org/seminars.

More extensive seminar descriptions are available online at monolake.org/seminars.

We accept VISA, MasterCard, and Discover only. We cannot accept personal checks or registration by mail or email. Seminars are limited to 15 participants except where noted. If a seminar receives less than six participants (with some exceptions) the seminar will be cancelled two weeks in advance, and full refunds will be issued. If you cancel three weeks prior to the seminar start date, we will refund your payment (less a \$15 processing fee). No refunds can be issued for any reason if cancellation is within three weeks of the field seminar date, but tuition can be applied to another seminar in 2012.

Participants must sign a liability release form. All seminars operate under permits from the Inyo National Forest and California State Park system.

The Mono Lake Committee works with instructors and field leaders who have received high ratings from past seminar participants. We emphasize a spirit of learning and camaraderie in this magnificent outdoor setting for a reasonable cost. Proceeds from Mono Lake Committee Field Seminars benefit research and education in the Mono Basin.

Mono Lake Committee Field Seminars are open to everyone, but Mono Lake Committee members get advance notice and class discounts. If you are not a current member of the Mono Lake Committee, you may receive the discount by joining when you register.

Staff migrations

by Rosanne Catron

At the end of the Outdoor Experiences season we said goodbye to the last of the 2011 seasonal staff—Outdoor Education Instructors, **Chelle DeLong** and **Will Jevne**, who spent June through October leading week-long trips in which participants learned about the Mono Basin watershed and the source of the water they drink. Chelle moved on to Bishop, where she is an EMT on an ambulance and volunteers with Inyo County Search & Rescue and the Bishop Volunteer Fire Department. Will is living in the Bay Area teaching Wilderness First Aid and perfecting the ultimate orange-currant scone. We know we'll see Will back in the basin soon, and when we do, hopefully he'll bring some of those scones! Best wishes to both Chelle and Will in their continuing adventures.

Volunteer for Mono Lake

Have you ever wondered how you can lend a helping hand at Mono Lake? Each summer the Mono Lake Volunteer Program facilitates a wide range of great projects—from staffing bird watching stations to helping visitors enjoy their Mono Basin experience by answering questions at the lake. The Mono Lake Volunteer Program is a joint initiative sponsored by the US Forest Service, California State Parks (the Mono Lake Tufa State Natural Reserve), and the Mono Lake Committee, with support from the Bodie Foundation and the Eastern Sierra Interpretive Association.

This year training will be from 1:00–4:00PM on May 23, 24, 30, and 31, and June 6 and 7. After that, we ask for a commitment of eight hours per month, and the schedule is very flexible. You don't have to live in the area to be a volunteer—it's a great excuse to come visit your favorite lake. If you are interested in volunteering or would like more information please contact Rosanne Catron (rose@monolake.org) at (760) 647-6595. ❖

Rosanne Catron is the Committee's Office Director. She is looking forward to spring BBQs and stormy skies, but can wait for the no-see-ums.

Music & Ecology Camp at Mono Lake

Explore Mono Lake through this independent camp for instrumentalists ages 12–18 from August 6–11, 2012 in the Mono Basin.

Study ecology and natural history while horseback riding, hiking, and boating. Play instruments in coached chamber groups and private lessons. For more camp information visit musicandecology.com.



Tioga Pass Run gains triathlon event organizer

by Morgan Lindsay

Over 80 intrepid athletes braved frigid temperatures and freezing rain during their ascent of Tioga Pass last September. The only-one-hill course climbs from the Mono Lake Committee in Lee Vining up 3,000 vertical feet over 12.4 miles to the Yosemite National Park entrance station at the top of Tioga Pass. The run is a great opportunity for outdoor enthusiasts to celebrate the Mono Basin and support its protection and restoration.

In 2011 we welcomed Alana Levin of June Lake Triathlon fame as the new Tioga Pass Run Director. Alana brings vast athletic event experience to the growing event.

The Tioga Pass Run has grown tremendously over the past four years thanks to Ken Corathers and Elizabeth Kennedy-Corathers' steadfast leadership. Ken's determination to attract new sponsors and athletes has transformed the event from a casual run into a successful fundraiser. Elizabeth has handled volunteer coordination and poster design with an artist's careful eye. Thank you!

Special thanks to California Highway Patrol Sergeant Reggie Whitehead, Chris Lizza and Kelly Miller of the Lee Vining Volunteer Fire Department, and the Lee Vining Catholic Church for race support.

Many thanks also to race day volunteers Jill Adams, Erin Bulkley, Kathleen Cecere, Dick Erb, Sally Gaines, Laurie Gehrman, Connie Henderson, Dave Marquart, John & Doris Reilly, Bill Taylor, and Igor & Lee Vorobyoff.

Finally, thank you to the Tioga Pass Resort and Crank Sports for their generous sponsorship. In Lee Vining, special thanks go to Tioga Toomey's Whoa Nellie Deli, the El Mono Motel & Latte Da Coffee Café, Nicely's Restaurant, and the Mono Market. In June Lake, we thank the Double Eagle Resort & Spa. In Mammoth Lakes, thank you to Footloose Sports, KMMT-KRHV radio, State Farm Agent Linda Wright, Mammoth Mountaineering, and Mammoth Hospital. In Bishop, we thank Alex Printing, Sage to Summit, and Wilson's Eastside Sports.



From the mailbag

News from members and friends

by Ellen King

Thank you to all of you who sent in contributions in honor or in memory 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 honor

Marybel Batjer of Henderson, NV made a donation in honor of the **McVicar and Batjer families**, and in memory of her father **Cameron McVicar Batjer**—“All of my life he told me how important Mono Lake is.” **Pat & Bill Bleha** of Carlsbad sent a contribution in the name of her mother **Patricia**. **Marsha Epstein** of Los Angeles sent a gift in honor of **Joy Zimnavoda**. **Melvin Levett** of Portland, OR gave a gift in honor of **Jan & John Le Pouvoir**. **Steve & Mary Melcher** of Eagan, MN wrote to say, “We have a Christmas gift custom in our extended family of contributing to a charity chosen by the recipient. This year, my brother and sister-in-law **Greg & Susan Melcher** [of Davis] asked that our gift be made to the Mono Lake Committee.”

In memory

Doug & Lee Buckmaster of Santa Barbara sent a contribution in memory of **Micky Grout**. **Nancy Cameron** of Palo Pinto, TX made a donation in memory of her father, **Kenneth Cameron**. **Mark Coolidge** of Laguna Hills sent a contribution in memory of **Henry McCannless**. The **Foran Family** of Calabasas made a donation in memory of **Chuck Dailey**.

Edith Gaines of Los Angeles gave a gift in memory of her son **David Gaines**’ birthday. **Walter Huwe** of Pacifica sent a contribution in memory of his friend **Werner Bönisch**. **Ralph Kunin** made a donation in memory of **David Gaines**. **John & Katie Leonard** of Anaheim gave a gift in memory of **Charlie Fry**. **Carol Mathews** of Walnut Creek sent contributions “in loving memory of **Robert Mathews**.” **Kathy and Linda Roberts**, daughters of **Harlan Roberts**

of Antioch, made a donation in his memory. **Sue Rhu** of Sparks, NV gave a gift in memory of her friend **Betty White**. **Phyllis Smoyer** of Hockessin, DE sent a contribution in memory of **Michael Colpo**. We received gifts in memory of **Robert (Bob) Schneider** from **Richard Burns** of Orange, **Mona & Bob Nadland** of Orange, **Mike & Mary Goff** of Corona, and **Randi Zink** of Kirkland, WA. Gifts in memory of **Dr. Cathy Toft** came from **Tom Gill** of El Paso, TX and **Ann Noble & Goran Muhlert** of Davis.

2011 Free Drawing winners

Thank you to all those who entered the drawing and to the generous sponsors for prize donations—your contributions support Mono Lake.

Apple iPad 2: **Marilyn Allen** of Walnut Creek. Canon Digital SLR camera: **Vicki Warner-Huggins** of Reno, NV. Winter Mammoth Mountain package: **Peter Neville** of Sebastopol. Wilson’s Eastside Sports gear package: **Thomas Williams** of Hayward. San Francisco Bay Area package: **John & Marie Lewis** of Los Angeles. Mono Lake Committee shopping spree: **Russell Yermasek** of Camarillo.

Yosemite escape package: **Rosemary Lojo** of Vallejo. Yosemite adventure package: **Teresa O’Malley & Gilbert Siegel** of Poway. Hope Valley getaway: **Mr. & Mrs. Jack Helms** of Moraga. High Sierra stay: **Linda Hoch** of San Anselmo. Friends of the Inyo EVOLVE vacation: **Chuck Hazen** of Pleasanton. Art of the Eastern Sierra: **Geoff Watkin** of Vallejo. Wave Rave snowboard: **Matt Ludin** of Bozeman, MT. Napa Valley wine tour: **Edward Reyes**

of Redlands. Patagonia R4 jackets: **Marcel Iczkowski** of Clovis and **Darren Kruger** of Mountain View.

Dinner-and-movie in Mammoth: **Jennifer Gibson** of Sacramento and **Calder Reid** of Independence. Mono Lake kayak tour: **Barbara Dengler** of Berkeley. Summer Mammoth Mountain package: **Steve & Sandy Moore** of Saratoga. Tahoe Adventure Film Festival tickets: **Randall Smith** of Mission Viejo. REI day pack and binoculars: **William Fjellbo** of Coarsegold. Mono Lake Committee gift packs: **Christopher & Amy Conn** of Bishop and **Timothy Sage** of Livermore.

In memoriam: Carroll Evans

Carroll Evans, longtime Mono Lake Committee member and volunteer, died January 24, 2012 at the age of 82. Carroll lived in Ridgecrest, but spent vacations at a cabin in June Lake. Kind and helpful by nature, he volunteered his services when his expertise met the Committee’s needs—such as constructing the lectern in our Theater & Gallery. Carroll’s interest in astronomy led him to help the Committee by making the dates on our calendar correspond to the phases of the moon specifically for the Mono Basin. Every November he would compute these dates and send them to us with a cover date two years later than the year in which he did the calculations. We will all miss Carroll’s humble nature and his steadfast support for Mono Lake. ❖

Ellen King is the Committee’s Membership Coordinator. She loved trekking in the Himalaya last fall.



MONO LAKE COMMITTEE

Highway 395 at Third Street
Post Office Box 29
Lee Vining, CA 93541

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Mono Lake Committee

the 11th annual

Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua

June 15-17, 2012

registration opens
Sunday, April 15
at birdchautauqua.org



Trail Chic Fashion Show

.....
July 27, 2012
at the Lee Vining
Community Center

.....
a fundraiser for the
Committee's Outdoor
Experiences Program

join us for the

Andrea Lawrence Award Dinner

Friday, April 27, 2012
5:30PM

Parallax Restaurant
Mammoth Mountain



RSVP by April 10 to Carolyn:
carolyn.weddle@monolake.org or (760) 647-6595.

Volunteer at Mono Lake!

Help make a difference for Mono Lake in a hands-on way! Free volunteer training begins in late May.

For more information
contact Rose:
rose@monolake.org
or (760) 647-6595.

