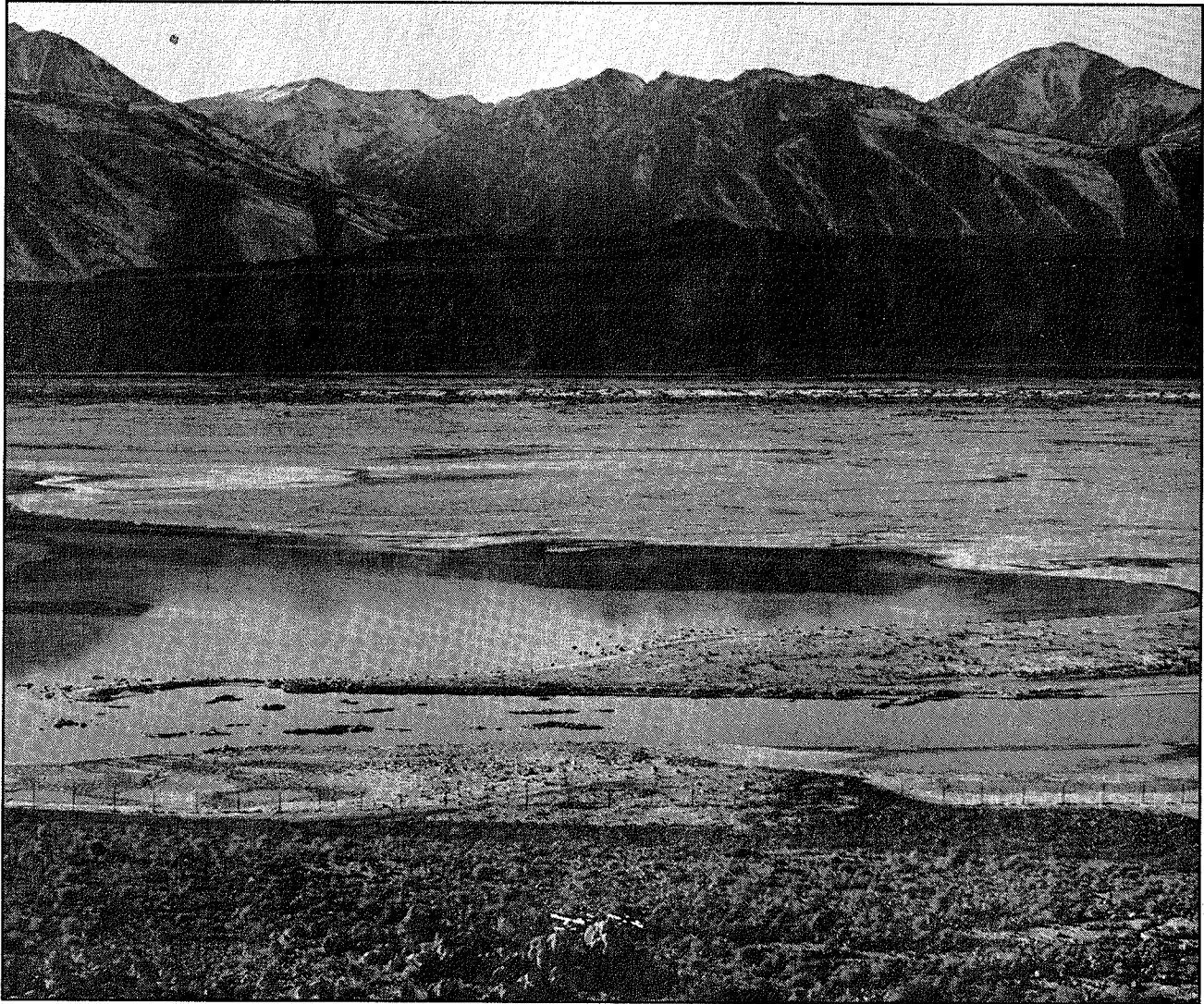


Spring 1990

Vol. 12, No. 4

# MONO<sup>the</sup> LAKE

NEWS LETTER



Lauren Davis

*Negit Island Threatened By Landbridge*  
*Court Orders Water For All Mono's Diverted Creeks*

## On The Cover

In mid-December, Nancy Zapotocki and I hiked to Negit Island. We walked out the landbridge and waded the narrow channel to the island. The water was about an inch deeper than the top of our rubber boots—15 inches. With wet feet we slogged onto the island, followed fresh coyote tracks under the rusted-out predator fence and climbed Negit's northern-most lava flow. The cover photograph of the landbridge was taken from this vantage point.

Obviously, the shallow channel between the island and the landbridge is not presenting much of an obstacle for ranging mammals. As we approached the tip of the landbridge, Nancy and I found a "coyote freeway"—many tracks of different ages converging. On Negit there were fewer tracks, but it was evident that the coyotes were foraging on the island this winter. This does not bode well for the island's nesting California gulls which are returning now to claim their nest sites.

Lauren Davis



This photo of the landbridge from Negit Island was taken on February 8. By comparing it to the cover photo you can see that the lake level has risen slightly, but the channel between the landbridge and the island is still quite narrow. Photo by Mead Hargis.

**THE MONO LAKE COMMITTEE** is a non-profit citizen's group dedicated to saving Mono Lake from the excessive diversion of water from its tributary streams. We seek a compromise that will meet the real water needs of Los Angeles and leave our children a living, healthy, and beautiful lake.

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This newsletter is partially funded by a grant from the *Mono Lake Foundation*, a non-profit, tax-exempt organization dedicated to studying and protecting the Mono Lake watershed. The Mono Lake Committee is a lobbying organization and greatly needs your direct contribution. However, if you wish to make a tax deductible contribution to the effort to save Mono Lake, please write your check to the "Mono Lake Foundation."

## Lake Level Watch

### *Mono's Waters Slowly Rising*

After a steady decline this summer, the lake elevation stabilized by late 1989 at a little over 6375 feet above sea level. At this level, Negit Island is essentially land-bridged, affording predators a route to the island gull colonies.

El Dorado Superior Court's Preliminary Injunction mandated a lake level of 6377 feet, which would provide a water barrier around the island nesting sites. This level would also reduce hazardous dust storms. Although the injunction has provided substantial releases down Rush Creek and now the full flow of Lee Vining Creek, this has yet to raise the lake level appreciably.

Dry conditions have continued into 1990. Despite a recent heavy snowstorm, seasonal precipitation is well below normal for this time of year.

As of January 30, the lake stood at 6375.6 feet and was rising slowly. Hydrologist Peter Vorster projects a lake level near 6376.6 feet by May 29, assuming creek releases are maintained and normal precipitation in February and March. We are all working very hard to protect Mono Lake from the DWP's immoderate water diversions and have been successful in our recent court battles. Now we can only hope for a wet spring and an end to this drought cycle.

Paul Kohlberg

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# Saunters By Mono Lake



Here's March. Blustery, boisterous, March in the Mono Basin. For some reason I've been thinking of the March Hare. I can't even remember the character except that he had something to do with a girl named Alice, a tea party, and seemed rather meek. Which leaves me wondering what March has to do with hare-dom?

Well, the hare family is very active now. We've seen their trails, thick among the lime-green stalks of rabbitbrush. Along the lakeshore, tracks are traced in snow like stitchery, quilting the landscape together.

Walking at South Tufa, we find footprints everywhere. In some places all the separate paths converge into curved-bottomed rabbit streets worn deep by many feet. All this tracery, yet not a movement of life in the cold.

As dusk settles, great horned owls begin to call. We squint our eyes. The dark forms of bushes are moving across the snow—*long-eared* bushes that undulate cautiously over open white fields, then pause. Quivering. Listening. Again the owl's voice booms across the still water and drifts through the tufa forest. The movement of the rabbits tenses, becomes more self-conscious with each call.

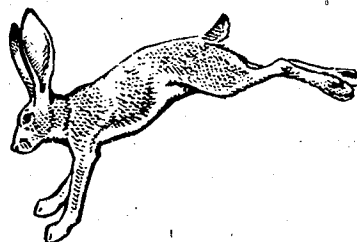
What would it be like to live with your mortality always drifting above you like that? Perhaps amid so many trails, so many rabbits, you imagine you'll not be the one. Or maybe, with late winter hunger clawing at your in-nards, tentative fears don't matter.

The dark birds perch on tufa spires which float up out of the water. When we finally locate their shadowy forms, they are directing their bass voices away from the shore into the watercolor reflections of the lake. Facing the center of the Basin, the owls sing to the deep stillness

of an icy night. Behind them, the ground is all astir, all ears and twitching noses. Back toward the craters, coyotes begin to yap and yodel, their voices as sharp and crisp as the chill. The cold air settles down off the hills and comes to rest along the shore amid the snowy grasses.

Our eyes search again for the long-eared ones silently crisscrossing the white fields. Amid clouds of our frozen breath we imagine their warm fur, bright eyes, and feel at peace as the moon glides up from Cowtrack Mountain. Even surrounded by the hunting calls of their antagonists, the rabbits give little leaps as the moon's light paints long, inky shadows from the tufa towers. There's a generosity to the rabbits; an exuberance. As we trudge up the snowy path, we wonder if, perhaps, that inner zest is the essence of the hare, and their kin, in March.

Lauren Davis



# Legal Update: Another Victory For Mono Lake!

## *But It's Not Over Yet Folks...*

We've had cause to celebrate this winter. On February 23, the Third District Court of Appeals once again ruled in our favor concerning the urgent need to modify DWP's water diversion licenses to require flows to maintain fisheries in Mono's creeks.

Over a year ago this court ruled that DWP's water licenses were not valid because they did not comply with longstanding Fish and Game requirements to protect the fish, and no water has been released down the creeks in order to comply with the law. This lack of enforcement was due to an overly lenient decision by a lower court (Sacramento Superior Court), which did not require the State Water Resources Control Board (State Board) to immediately modify the licenses or order interim water releases while stream studies were in progress. We, California Trout, and National Audubon appealed the Sacramento Superior Court decision back to the 3rd District Court of Appeals.

This recent decision is very specific about how and when the licenses are to be modified. The order directs Judge Finney of El Dorado Superior Court, who is overseeing our combined public trust cases, to order the State Board to insert immediately this language into DWP's water diversion licenses: "In accordance with the requirements of Fish and Game Code section 5946, this license is conditioned upon full compliance with section 5937 of the Fish and Game Code. The licensee shall release sufficient water into the streams from its dams to reestablish and maintain the fisheries which existed in them prior to its diversion of water."

Judge Finney will hold a hearing, May 1-3, to determine what interim releases should be implemented while the State Board completes its stream studies. These flows will then be released immediately down the four streams—Walker, Parker, Lee Vining, and Rush. The court further found that the Depart-

ment of Fish and Game has the expertise to set the interim flows, not the State Board. We hope the interim flows can be released by early summer.

Finally, the order states that DWP and/or the State Board will pay not only legal costs to date regarding this case, but also any future costs involved with the enforcement of this order.

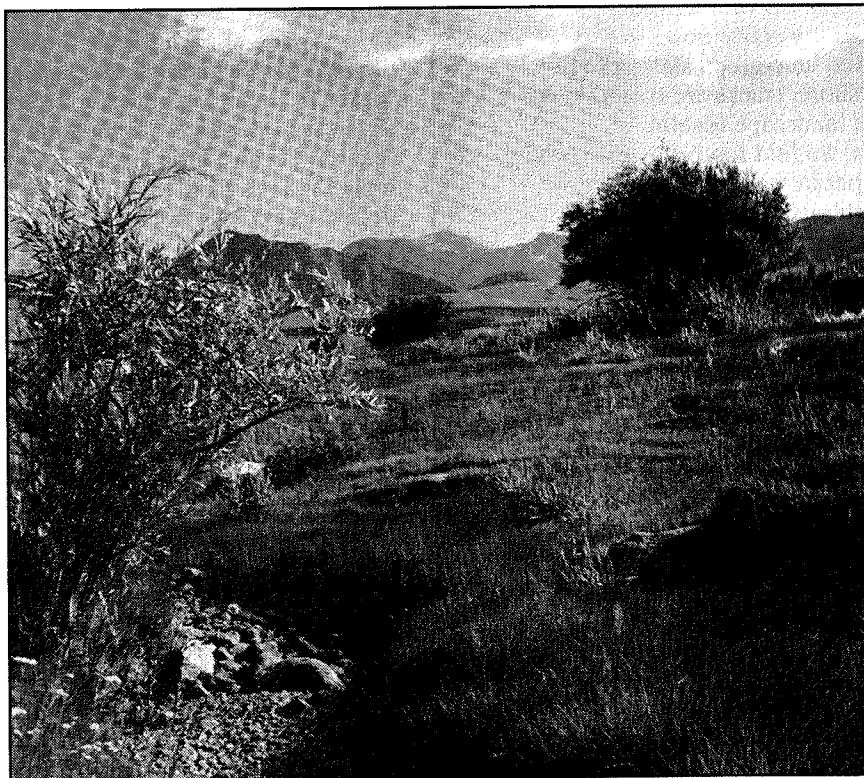
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*"Imprecise compliance is immeasurably superior to no compliance." Third District Court of Appeals Decision, February 23, 1990*

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The judges' displeasure was quite evident during oral arguments for the case on January 23. Obviously angry that their original order from the previous year had not been followed, the court declared that "If every order issued by a court in this world required that the police go out and enforce it, we wouldn't have any legal system." When it became evident that no water had been released into Mono Basin creeks as a result of their order, Judge Blease remarked "zero [releases] is not compliance." Judge Puglia asked the Board if their scheduling of years of study before taking action was their idea of "all deliberate speed" required in the order. He then commented that "It shouldn't take much longer...to put a man

on the moon than it's going to take you [the State Board] to complete these studies." The Board had declined to condition the licenses or require interim flows until they had studied and decided on the public trust values that must be preserved at Mono Lake. The judges made it clear that from a legal perspective, compliance with the Fish and Game codes was a separate issue from determining the lake's needs for water and that the stream case need not wait for the other studies. As stated in the decision, "there is no showing that a gain in precision war-



A portion of lower Walker Creek's dry channel, September, 1989. Photo by Emilie Strauss.

rants a delay of years before acting to comply...It is undeniable that a well-balanced diet is preferable to an unbalanced diet. But starvation is hardly justified by a delayed feeding, however nutritious. No water means no compliance..."

The Third District Court of Appeals decision may have an effect on our public trust case now residing in El Dorado Superior Court, but it's too early to tell what changes will occur. Judge Finney has extended the preliminary injunction on Mono Lake until he makes a decision on our motion to continue water flows through the next water year. A hearing date is set for May 29, 1990. The existing order, which requires DWP to raise and maintain the lake at 6377 feet, would have expired on March 30. The extension came about in response to Judge Finney's decision to hold a full "evidentiary hearing" before deciding on whether to grant an injunction for the next runoff year.

The evidentiary hearing will take seven weeks, and be far more complicated and costly than any previous court hearings on the Mono Lake issue. During the hearing,

*"With respect to Parker Creek, the only argument appears to be that the absence of an existing fish population makes it hard to know how much water ought to be released. The answer is — enough to restore the historic fishery."*  
*Third District Court of Appeals Decision,*  
*February 23, 1990*

Judge Finney will take testimony from witnesses and water officials regarding the issues at Mono Lake. The MLC had hoped to avoid such litigation because extensive scientific evidence already exists that documents the harm to the lake's ecosystem due to DWP's water diversions. Also, the legal expenses involved with such a trial give DWP an enormous financial advantage over non-profit MLC. However, we view this lengthy forum as an opportunity to demonstrate in detail the wisdom of maintaining the lake at a higher elevation.

*Lauren Davis*

## Understanding the Water Board Review Process

The State Water Resources Control Board (State Board) is reviewing water rights and water use in the Mono Lake Basin as a result of an order from the Third District Court of Appeals. The Court has ordered the State Board to amend the City of Los Angeles' water rights licenses to include conditions that require Los Angeles to release enough water below their Mono Basin dams to maintain the fisheries in good condition.

The State Board has stated that "due to the inter-relationship between flows in the tributary streams and water elevation in Mono Lake, the State Board will also consider the subject of what lake levels will provide appropriate protection for public trust values. Therefore, the State Board will undertake the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to examine the environmental effects of maintaining the Mono Lake water level at different elevations, as well as the effects on the City of Los Angeles of possible reductions in diversions from the Mono Basin. The State Board will also prepare and adopt a revised water quality control plan for the Mono Lake Basin."

The State Board recently released a notice of preparation outlining the scope of the EIR. Overall, the MLC is pleased with the approach the State Board is taking. However, we have a few concerns which we highlighted in our communications with the State Board. The MLC continues to hold that there are specific legal requirements in the Mono Lake case which are beyond the discretion of the State Board. These requirements include: 1) the minimum flows that are required to be maintained in the Mono Basin creeks based on Fish and Game codes; 2) the minimum lake level that will be required to prevent violations in air quality standards in the Mono Basin; 3)

and the lake level that will be required to satisfy the water rights of the federal government, specifically the Forest Service. These requirements are separate and independent of the public trust; only after satisfying these can the State Board determine what additional requirements are mandated by the public trust.

The State Board and MLC also differ widely on the "point of reference" that will be used in the EIR. The State Board wishes to use present day environmental conditions in the Mono Basin as the baseline for their studies. MLC insists that pre-diversion conditions must be used as the baseline for any comparison of alternatives, otherwise public trust values that have been lost will not be considered.

The MLC appreciates the very capable staff at the State Board. We are glad to be working with people who are dedicated to resolving the issues at Mono Lake. Our main concern now is that while the State Board EIR process is proceeding — a project that is expected to go on for three more years — Mono Lake continues to be in grave danger. We have not been able to raise the lake level above the elevation below which the ecosystem experiences serious degradation. Once again we are faced with the grim prospect of losing the Negit Island and Pancake Islet gull colonies to predators crossing the exposed landbridge. Only our lawsuits have delivered any water to help postpone irreversible ecosystem damage while we wait for action from the State Board.

For further information on the State Board's EIR process, please contact: Jim Canaday, Division of Water Rights, State Water Resources Control Board, P.O. Box 2000, Sacramento, CA 95810.

*Lauren Davis*



# Mono Lake Defense Trust

The Mono Lake Defense Trust is a special fund established in 1989 by Mono Lake Committee members donating \$250 or more to finance Mono Lake's defense both in the courts and the legislature. In 1989, more than \$60,000 was contributed to this fund.

These funds enabled the Committee to win a preliminary injunction requiring Los Angeles to raise and maintain Mono Lake above 6377 feet. The Defense Trust also provided the Committee with the resources we needed to defeat a legislative attack on the Public Trust Doctrine, as well as support successful state legislation to benefit Mono Lake.

This year, Defense Trust contributions will be directed primarily to defending the 1989 Mono Lake preliminary injunction from challenge by the Los Angeles Depart-

ment of Water and Power, and to extend this injunction through future years of Mono Lake legal proceedings.

The importance of this legal battle cannot be overstated. The El Dorado Superior Court has scheduled a hearing for this May which will consider extending the preliminary injunction and shape the future of Mono Lake litigation. The court will set the minimum lake level elevation needed to prevent irreparable harm to Mono Lake. For Mono Lake, the court order will mean the difference between the survival of a healthy ecosystem or continued destruction.

We would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank the following members of the Mono Lake Defense Trust for the exceptional commitment they have shown to Mono Lake's protection.

## *Mono Lake Defense Trust Members*

Jeanne Adams  
Beverly Allan  
John S. Anderson  
Lucinda Anskin  
Cholame Township Sportsman Association  
Mrs. Dorothy S. Babington  
J.W. and Marjorie Bailey  
Randy and Susan Des Bailleis  
Richard and Blanca Barrell  
Cameron and Katie Barrows  
Karen Batten  
Betty Bean  
Reid Bennett  
Jack Bertman, M.D.  
Jerome and Judy Blackman  
John and Deborah Bogen  
Andrew and Deborah Bogen  
E. Clark Boli  
Dave and Anne Brower  
Governor Edmund G. Brown  
Allan and Marilyn Brown  
Ken Brunges  
Walter Buhl  
Dale R. Burger  
David W. Burton, M.D.  
Neil T. Burton  
Audrey Buyrn  
Mr. and Mrs. H.A. Caballero  
Eleanor Cameron  
Margaret W. Campbell  
Robert Carr  
Luana Chadwick  
Meg and Will Challis  
Frank Chambers  
Mr. and Mrs. Leslie D. Charles  
Arleen Chin  
Joan K. Chitica  
Ruth Cole  
Jeff Conrad  
Jean and Louis Dale  
Richard and Virginia Davis  
Michiko Day  
Frank and Janice Delfino  
Richard Derevan  
David Devine  
John and Ann Marie Dillon  
Dr. Michael L. Dillon  
Harry Dodge  
Cliff Drowley

Dr. Clyde Eriksen  
Hans Ernst  
The North Face  
Jewish Community Federation  
Jerry Feldman  
Harold Fettes  
Jack and Marguerite Finney  
Lynn Foerster  
The Sam and Helen Walton Foundation  
The Homeland Foundation  
Susan and Jim Fousekis  
Gerald and Brenda Ganz  
E. Louise Gooding  
William Gourley  
Paul and Helen Green  
Ruth Greenberg  
R.J. Greensfelder  
Ed Grosswiler  
Robert Gruner  
Peter H. Hackett, M.D.  
Jim and Annie Hall  
Mervyn and Margaret Hamlin  
Dorothea Hardy  
Alan Harper  
John Healy  
Mrs. W.S. Henderson  
Robert Henigson  
Don Henley  
Peter and Bonnie Herman  
Howard Hesseman  
Mrs. Ward Hinkson  
Jenny Holliday  
Mark and Natalie Hopkins  
Mark and Doniphon Howland  
Dorothy Hunt  
Ron and Barbara Indra  
Toshio and Esther Inouye  
Don and Suzanne Jenson  
Eugene and Leann Johnson  
William F. Jones, P.E.  
Etta Karn  
Mrs. R. Grace Kennelly  
Sylvia T. Kershaw  
Ted Kipping  
Barbara E. Kus  
Mr. and Mrs. E.N. Langbauer  
Mr. and Mrs. Charles Langfelt  
George Larson  
David C. Lauritzen

Michael Graff and Nancy Lerman  
Rudolph Light  
Norman B. Livermore  
David Livermore  
Park Loughlin  
Betty W. Ludden  
James and Catherine Marron  
Phillips and Emily Marshall  
Kathleen Mason  
William and Joyce Miller  
Richard A. Mona  
Edith H. Monsees  
Sandy Moore  
Jean Herner Moore  
Christopher Moylan  
Virginia B. Mudd  
Nora Norden  
Francis Odell  
Paul and Katherine Page  
John and Frances Pershing  
Thomas Peters  
Jesse M. Phillips  
Herbert Ploch  
Ann Reimers  
Jacqueline Robertson  
Lois W. Rosebrook  
Miriam and Thomas Schulman  
Rocco and Marion Siciliano  
Edwin and Hazel Simon  
Anthony Sloss  
Laguna Hills Audubon Society  
Mrs. Doris Statham  
Gerald Sterns  
Kathy Stewart  
Dwight Strong  
James Sungar  
Jan Tarble  
Sidney and Betsey Taylor  
Otto Teller  
Don H. Tibbits  
Felicia Titus  
Catherine Toft  
Carole Tunley  
George Turpin  
Carol Valentine  
Soroptimist International of Grass Valley  
James West

# Wildlife Wins In Mono Court Trial

*Just north of the Mono Basin lies the Bridgeport Valley. Visitors traveling through its flat green expanse are treated to some of the Eastern Sierra's most beautiful scenery. Live-stock grazing in the foreground are dwarfed by the jagged crest of the Sierra Nevada rising to the west. A multitude of streams cascade down from the snow-packed crest and join to form the East Walker River. This icy stream meanders its way through the valley and is stored in Bridgeport Reservoir before flowing east into Nevada, eventually ending its journey in Walker Lake.*

Unfortunately, conflicts over water belie the apparent pastoral tranquility of the Bridgeport Valley, as they do throughout the Eastern Sierra. Recently, in Bridgeport's 110-year-old courthouse, a new era in East Walker River water management began. On January 26, a Mono County jury found the Walker River Irrigation District (WRID) guilty of three misdemeanor violations of the California Fish and Game Code.

On September 1, 1988 the outlet gate on the Bridgeport Reservoir Dam was opened, completely draining the reservoir. Considerable amounts of silt and organic materials were flushed downstream into the East Walker River, killing thousands of fish and other aquatic species, and destroying riparian habitat. The dam is owned by, and supplies water to, WRID, an association of ranchers and farmers located mainly in the Smith and Mason Valleys of Lyon County, Nevada.

Mono County District Attorney Stan Eller built a strong case against WRID. He clearly showed that draining the reservoir had violated laws concerning notification of the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG), deposition of sediments into the river, and allowing sufficient water flow for the fishery. The jury saw videotapes showing fish dying in the turbid waters. Scientific testimony explained that draining the

reservoir caused the river to erode the exposed reservoir bed. A ton of silt and accumulated organic material flushed downstream every three minutes.

Several DFG officials testified that they had asked Jim Weishaupt, WRID's general manager, to leave a minimum pool above the dam's outlet. He had refused, saying that the water was owned by farmers and ranchers in Nevada.

Defense Counsel Alan Lilly argued that the waters of the East Walker River are administered under a federal court decree issued by the U.S. District Court in Reno, Nevada. This court appoints five commissioners to administer the decree, and these commissioners hire a Chief Deputy Water Commissioner to apportion waters. Weishaupt, besides being WRID's general manager, is Chief Deputy Water Commissioner for the East Walker River. The defense claimed that though Weishaupt drained the reservoir, he was not acting as WRID's general manager. Rather, Weishaupt was acting in his capacity as Chief Deputy Water Commissioner, and was only delivering water under the authority of the federal court.

The jury deliberated just over an hour before returning unanimous verdicts of guilty on all three counts.

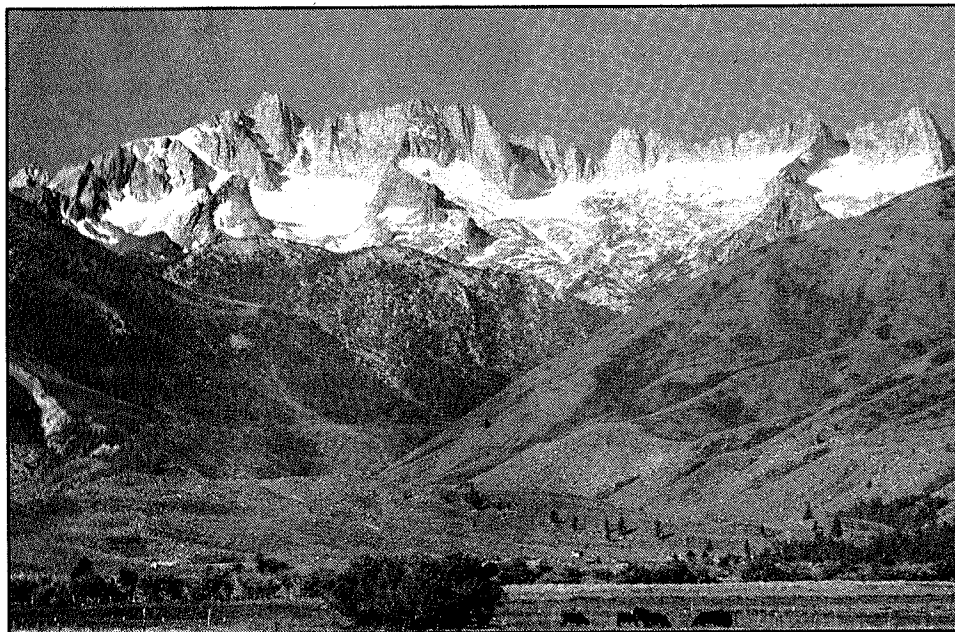
On February 13, the WRID was sentenced by Judge Ed Forstenzer to pay \$4,100 in fines, provide water

releases of 30 cubic feet per second (cfs) during winter months, a flushing flow of 400 cfs for two weeks before May 15, and provide clean gravel to DFG for trout spawning beds. This sentence, although the maximum allowable, will probably not provide as much deterrence as either DFG's pending civil lawsuit against WRID, or Caltrout's request for

modification of WRID's water license to be heard by the State Water Resources Control Board in April.

Photo by Paul Kohlberg

Gary J. Nelson



# Mono Basin News In Brief

## Visitor Center Groundbreaking Scheduled

Congressman Richard Lehman will be on hand for the Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area Visitor Center groundbreaking ceremony on March 17, 1990 at 11:30 a.m. Monophiles are invited and encouraged to attend this gathering, which will be held at the Visitor Center site just north of Lee Vining on Hwy. 395.

One of the last hurdles the Forest Service had to clear before construction could begin was securing ownership of the site. On November 15, the LA City Council agreed to a land exchange between the U.S. Forest Service and Department of Water and Power, making the groundbreaking possible. The Forest Service received 45 acres of land overlooking Mono Lake for the center.

## Scenic Area Plan

The final management plan for the Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area is due in mid-March 1990. The draft EIS and plan, released in September 1988, identified a range of lake levels to protect the Mono Basin ecosystem. The Forest Service will mail out the complete final EIS and/or the plan to those who returned a document request form sent out this past summer.

## Conway Ranch Response

The Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) for the Conway Ranch Specific Plan was released in early February. On February 22, a public hearing was held on the report before the Mono County Planning Commission. At that meeting, the Commission, in a 3-2 vote, recommended that the Board of Supervisors certify that the FEIR fulfilled the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The Commission also recommended that the Supervisors adopt the Specific Plan. They overruled comments by the Department of Fish and Game that the area's wildlife would be significantly impacted. The Commission also decided to adopt the plan even though the FEIR declared that the project would substantially mar the visual landscape of the Mono Basin. Although a scaled back project would be environmentally preferable, they stated that economic considerations led them to support a larger project.

The Supervisors will consider the Commission's recommendations in a public hearing on March 13. MLC staff spoke at the Commission meeting and will also attend the Supervisors' meeting to assure that concerns raised by the MLC are addressed.

The developers want to build a destination resort for 1800 people at the historic 878-acre homestead and wetland northwest of Mono Lake. Their plans include 690 units of lodges, townhouses and single family residences, a golf course, lake and other recreational facilities.

Throughout the project review process, the MLC has identified concerns about the developer's proposal. While the FEIR has come a long way in acknowledging these issues, it continues to be deficient in several key areas. While the specific plan avoids building within

some 170 acres of wetlands, the development will surround this sensitive wildlife habitat. This will not preserve the wetlands or the surrounding regions' integrity for wildlife. While the FEIR backs off from earlier claims that the project would create a net increase in water flow to Mono Lake, its analysis of water availability and water consumption impacts in dry years remains deficient. The developer may be forced to resort to greater-than-acknowledged groundwater pumping in drought periods to sustain an artificial lake, landscaping, and golf courses. Thus, the potential impacts of pumping on the flow of groundwater have not been adequately assessed. We are also concerned about the cumulative effects of pesticide use on water quality and wildlife.

At least the FEIR now admits that the spectacular scenic qualities of the Mono Basin will be compromised by this large scale development and calls this a significant, unavoidable impact.

In light of the scenic, natural and cultural values of the Conway Ranch property, we are disappointed that the developer has refused to consider less environmentally questionable alternatives. Why not investigate the creation of a small-scale resort ranch, with the tax-break provided by designation or acquisition of the surrounding lands for conservation purposes? However, the FEIR dismisses this alternative stating that CEQA only requires the EIR to explore alternatives that meet the developer's objectives. For more information contact: Scott Burns, Mono County Planning Department, Box 8, Bridgeport, CA 93517, (619) 932-7911.

## New DWP Commissioners

Signaling a major shift in policy for the Department of Water and Power, L.A. Mayor Tom Bradley appointed former Deputy Mayor Mike Gage and well-known Southern California environmental activist Dorothy Green to the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power Commission. The City Council resoundingly confirmed both nominations.

In making his announcement, Mayor Bradley directed Commissioners Gage and Green to transform DWP into "an environmental trendsetter." Setting environmental trends will be nothing new to Dorothy and Mike. Dorothy founded the organization Heal the Bay in Los Angeles and is its president. She was a board member of the L.A. League of Conservation Voters and is a Mono Lake Committee supporter. Mike Gage is widely recognized as L.A.'s former deputy mayor, but Northern Californians know him best as a State Assemblyman from Napa and as a white water rafting guide. Through his leadership, Mike helped Los Angeles to establish aggressive water conservation and recycling programs.

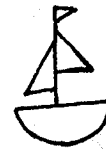
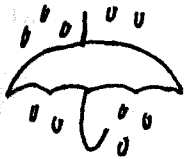
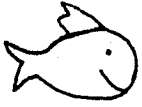
Both Dorothy and Mike have a history of activism and effectiveness in the environmental arena. Their appointment to the DWP Commission was greeted with enthusiastic cheers by the environmental community.

Betsy Reifsnider



# Kids for Mono Lake: Find A Water Word

Find the bold words in the sentences below and circle them in the puzzle. They are printed left to right and top to bottom in the Find-A-Water Word puzzle.



W Q P L A K E F I S H  
A N E S T O P L P W F  
T F L L E A K S K A A  
E V I G U L L S A S U  
R T V A M P C F S T C  
H R E S H R I M P E E  
N M O N O L A K E S T  
A T R S E A Q N P N S  
F A C L O U D S C D L  
D H O M E J S A V E R  
T R K F L I E S G K Q  
E V A P O R A T I O N

1. Mono Lake is **home** to many animals.
2. Remember to fix **leaks** in toilets or faucets. It saves water.
3. Do not leave **faucets** running when brushing your teeth. It **wastes** water.
4. **Fish** live in fresh water streams that run into Mono Lake.
5. Many birds eat the brine **shrimp** and alkali **flies** in Mono Lake.
6. **Clouds** hold water in the sky.
7. The Callifornia **Gulls** feed and **nest** at Mono Lake.
8. **Evaporation** is water rising into the air.
9. Don't **water** your garden too much. Be a water **saver**.
10. Water is important for us and all plants and animals to **live**.

# MLC News and Activities



## Earth Day Extravanzas Planned

### *Volunteers Needed Now*

On the first Earth Day in 1970, the Mono Lake Committee was yet to be born. On the twentieth anniversary of Earth Day, April 22, 1990, the Mono Lake Committee will be an active participant.

In Los Angeles, Mayor Tom Bradley, with help from Mono Lake Committee volunteers, started the 60-day countdown to Earth Day on February 24 by landscaping a residential median strip in Los Angeles with beautiful drought-resistant plants. The City of Los Angeles Board of Public Works is sponsoring several voluntary programs that benefit the environment, including rideshare week, recycling week, household and hazardous waste pick-up week. Mid-March has been dedicated to water conservation, and the Mono Lake Committee is gearing up to work in concert with the City's water program.

In addition, schools have asked the Mono Lake committee to participate in their Earth Day activities. Mono Lake has also become the senior project for one LA-area high school which plans to visit the Mono Basin in early May to help with a special streambed project.

Two huge fairs, one along the Arroyo Seco river park in Pasadena and the bio-diversity fair at LA's Exposition Park, will include the Mono Lake Committee's water conservation program.

*To make these projects successful, we will need the help of lots of volunteers. If you can be a part of the Earth Day 1990 celebration, please call Betsy Reifsnider at our LA office, (213)477-8229. The first Earth Day launched the beginning of a wave of environmental legislation. The twentieth Earth Day could empower millions of people to help save the planet. Come and join the party on April 22nd!*

## Bay Area Earth Day Festivities

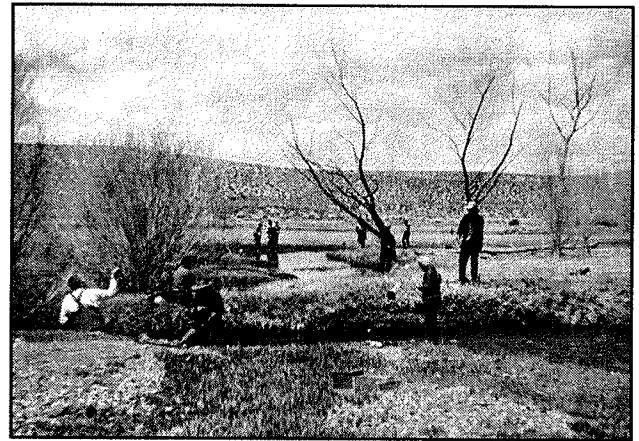
The Greenbelt Alliance is planning a seven-day bike tour much like the Mono Lake Committee's popular annual Bike-a-thon. Cyclists will tour the entire Bay Area, finishing the ride on Earth Day at San Francisco's regional fair. For more information on the bike ride, please call (415) 543-4291.

To find out about other Earth Day events in the Bay Area, please call (415) 346-5263.

## Earth Week Specials On PBS

Mono Lake is featured in two PBS documentaries airing on the first day of Earth Week. Tune in on Monday, April 16 for "*Profit the Earth*," a documentary on innovative environmental problem-solving. The program focuses on people who are seeking solutions which are both environmentally and economically sound. A segment covers Mono Lake and water marketing.

Stay tuned for the national premiere of "*For Earth's Sake: The Life and Times of David Brower*" which profiles the pioneering environmentalist. This includes a tribute to Mono Lake and footage of other magnificent wilderness areas. Check local listings for times.



Fishermen on Rush Creek, May 1948. DFG Photo by E.H. Vestal.

## Special Thanks

We would like to express our deep gratitude to Elden Vestal, who was a District Fisheries Biologist for the Department of Fish and Game in the 1940's and 1950's. Elden was a lonely and heroic defender of Mono Basin streams during this period. He has devoted the last two months to painstakingly preparing invaluable historical information on stream conditions for Mono Basin litigation.

## Recent Books on the Sierra

**Mammoth Lakes Sierra: A Handbook for Roadside and Trail.** Edited by Genny Smith, Genny Smith Books, Fifth Edition 1989 \$11.95

Long-time MLC board member Genny Smith has completely revised this classic guide to the Eastern High Sierra. Much new material has been incorporated, particularly in the field of geology. The text is scientifically accurate and clearly written for anyone interested in the natural and cultural history of the region. This edition is well designed and contains a road and trail map, geologic map, thirty-two pages of beautiful photographs, including rare historic photos, and copious illustrations.

**The Sierra Nevada: A Mountain Journey.** By Tim Palmer, Island Press, 1988 \$14.95

Tim has compiled an interesting collection of Sierra "portraits" — images of the people, communities, issues and land that make up this mountain range. The conversational writing style is engaging and reflects Tim's interest with how mountain communities and individuals respond to land use challenges. Although the book's content is valuable, the material is disorganized at times and the author often lapses into long paragraphs of statistics as a means to convey the nature of a place. Overall however, *The Sierra Nevada*, is a book that should be of interest to any lover of the "Range of Light."

Both these books can be ordered through the Mono Lake Committee catalog or call (619) 647-6595 for ordering information.

## Speech, Speech

"If anyone needed to be convinced that the area should be protected, you did it masterfully," wrote the secretary of an LA area service organization. Her group enjoyed a Mono Lake slide show presentation. If your group would like a presentation, please contact Betsy in Los Angeles at (213) 477-8221.

## 1990 Bird-a-thon: On the Loose!

The California Thrashers and Not-So-Oldsquaws are back! These and other dedicated birding teams will return for the Audubon Society's Spring Bird-a-thon on April 28 and 29.

This year the Mono Lake Committee has joined forces with two Bay Area Audubon chapters, Golden Gate and Marin Audubon Societies. This Bird-a-thon weekend will be dedicated to raising funds specifically for Mono Lake. Other California Audubon chapters are also participating. There will even be two Texas birding teams! This will be the only Bird-a-thon for Mono Lake this year.

As with any Bird-a-thon, birding teams gather pledges worth so much per species, and then try to count as many species as they can in one twenty-four hour period.

You can help by: 1) pledging any amount per species for one or more of the teams below, and 2) forming your own team and scouring the woods for birds, pledging per species, and getting others to pledge for you.

After the big day, return the pledge form to: Golden Gate Audubon Society, 1250 Addison Street, Suite 107B, Berkeley, CA 94702. We will send you a list of birds sighted by your team, and a notice for the amount you pledged. Checks made out to the Golden Gate Audubon Society are tax-deductible. For more information, please contact Golden Gate Audubon Society, (415) 843-2222.

## Other Birding Events

**Saturday & Sunday, April 21-22. Mono Lake Spring Shorebird Count.** We will count *all* of Mono Lake's shoreline. Some experience with shorebird identification helpful. You need not participate on both days.

**Saturday, June 16. Mono Lake Spring Breeding Bird Count.** Groups will survey Lundy and Lee Vining canyons, and Mono's western shores.

For more information, please contact Emilie Strauss at (415) 843-6024.

### 1990 Bird-a-thon Pledge Form

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Allen's Hummers, <i>Marin</i>          | <input type="checkbox"/> Gray Jays, <i>East Bay</i>                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Pajaro-thoners, <i>Alameda</i>           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Beasts of Birdin', <i>East Bay</i>     | <input type="checkbox"/> Great Basin Bushbeaters, <i>Mono Basin</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Pauraques, <i>Texas</i>                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cajun Couchbirds, <i>Texas</i>         | <input type="checkbox"/> Loonaticks, <i>San Francisco</i>           | <input type="checkbox"/> Semi-Pulverized Plovers, <i>Bay Area</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cheap T'rills, <i>Oakland</i>          | <input type="checkbox"/> Mines Roadrunners, <i>Marin</i>            | <input type="checkbox"/> So-What Owls, <i>Bay Area</i>            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clean Up-land Sandpipers, <i>Marin</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Murphy's Mob, <i>San Francisco</i>         | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Tyrants, <i>San Francisco</i>      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emmy's Egrets, <i>Marin</i>            | <input type="checkbox"/> Not-So-Oldsquaws, <i>East Bay</i>          | <input type="checkbox"/> Yardbirds, <i>Bolinas</i>                |

☐ I pledge to sponsor one (or more) of the above teams at the rate of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per species.  
☐ I want to support the team with the highest species total at \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per species.  
☐ I want to support the team with the lowest species total at \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per species.  
☐ I will lead my own team and gather pledges totaling at least \$1.00/species.  
☐ I pledge a total contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

All contributions are tax-deductible. Please return this form to: Golden Gate Audubon Society, 1250 Addison St., Suite 107B, Berkeley, CA 94702.

## LA Youth Visit Mono Lake



The Mono Lake Committee hosted members of the Los Angeles Conservation Corps at Mono Lake this past fall. The Corps, modeled on the highly successful California Conservation Corps, hires young people from the inner city to work on community improvement/beautification projects in Los Angeles. The Los Angeles Conservation Corps members work hard and provide an important service to Los Angeles. Plans are afoot to make the LA Conservation Corps trip to Mono Lake a regular event. Photo by Paul Kohlberg.

## Absolut Vodka Donation

We would like to thank David J. Stone and all the wonderful people at SKI Sports Marketing, with the Absolut Vodka Foundation and The Grand Marnier Foundation, for a \$7,000 donation in memory of Brad Schneider. Brad, a local ski racer and restaurateur, was killed in a tragic ski accident last year while warming up for the Absolut Vodka Bartenders Ski Classic. A portion of the proceeds from this year's classic have been donated to the Mono Lake Foundation, a cause that Brad cared deeply about.

## Vanguard Grant

The Vanguard Public Foundation in San Francisco has just awarded an \$11,000 grant to the Mono Lake Committee. Two projects will benefit from this grant: our Mono Lake Defense Trust fund for litigation, and our ongoing water conservation program in Los Angeles. The grant will also allow us to expand this program to Southern Californians visiting the Eastern Sierra resort towns. We wish to thank the Vanguard Public Foundation for supporting our legal and public education programs.

## Accolades

Talented painter and long-time Mono supporter Janet Newton donated a beautiful watercolor of Mono Lake. The painting, done from the Tioga Lodge, shows the lake and Negit Island in 1954. Watch for this graceful scene on display in the Visitor Center this summer.

Kelly Schneider of Lee Vining's El Mono Motel donated lodging for MLC job applicants traveling from afar. Alan Sahakangas donated a lovely framed, matted photograph. Yosemite's Lucy Parker contributed the Paiute legend in the summer newsletter.

Holiday help was provided by Steve "Cedar" Barager and Dave "Bug" Herbst, International Order of Erudite Elves, who processed mountains of mail orders. Anna Scofield, age four, helped decorate the Visitor Center.

Lynna Walker, Debbie Martin, and Elizabeth Arnold are volunteering in our Lee Vining office. Much thanks for all their wonderful help.

Down south, we're thankful to Tom and Cindy Long for donating their Macintosh computer system. Richard and Virginia Davis also donated a Compaq computer system. We'll put both gifts to good use.

Tony Robson and John Dolan fielded visitor questions at our booth at the Globescope conference, an international assembly on sustainable development. Robert Gregory of H.G. Daniels helped design and build the display, while Shari and the guys at LA Art Supply assisted with materials. Robert and colleague Ed Pollard of Gerber Scientific Products designed a water conservation logo.

Many wonderful folks are working to make this year's Wine Cellar Drawing (*see back cover*) a success. Herb Cerwin and Herb McGrew have donated fine wines, and Grace De Laet continues her work for this special event. Grace is also doing incredible work with the Visitor Center acquisition mailing. We appreciate Ed Grosswiler's unfailing support for the work we do.

Three cheers for those who survived YEA (Year End Appeal) mailing madness! Thanks to Katherine Skinner, Grant Williams, Jeannie Edwards, and Paul Falkenstein.

## In Memory

We are very grateful for the generous bequest from the estate of Margretha D. Budd.

## In Honor

Steve Gorin and Judith Meyerson made a donation in honor of long-time Mono Lake supporter, Howard Meyerson, for Chanukah. James Meyerson also honored his brother Howard's birthday with a contribution. A Christmas gift was made in honor of Robert Stewart by Nancy Stewart Haydock.

# THE MONO LAKE COMMITTEE

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Martha Davis ..... Executive Director  
Dave Phillips ..... Treasurer  
Helen Green ..... Secretary

## MONO LAKE OFFICE

P.O. Box 29, Lee Vining, CA 93541  
(619) 647-6595

Lauren Davis ..... Editor  
Melanie Findling ..... Visitor Center Manager  
Matt Graves ..... Programs Manager  
Mead Hargis ..... Associate Eastern Sierra Representative  
Ilene Mandelbaum ..... Eastern Sierra Representative  
Sally Miller ..... Mail & Membership Coordinator  
Gary Nelson ..... Volunteer Librarian  
Peggy Nicholson ..... Assistant Editor  
Stuart Scofield ..... Office Manager  
Nancy Zapotocki ..... Policy Staff Assistant  
Tim Baker, Paul Kohlberg, Robin Supplee ..... Volunteer Interns

## LOS ANGELES OFFICE

1355 Westwood Blvd., Suite 6, Los Angeles, CA 90024  
(213) 477-8229

Shelly Backlar ..... Development Director  
Stacy Brown ..... Business Manager  
Martha Davis ..... Executive Director  
Liz Fishman ..... Special Events Coordinator  
Amber Rae ..... Development Coordinator  
Betsy Reifsnider ..... Associate Director

## CORPORATE COUNSEL

John Paul Hollinrake, Attorney-at-Law  
145 South Washington St., Suite F  
Sonoma, CA 95370; (209) 533-2356

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Helen Green, Berkeley  
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Genny Smith, Mammoth Lakes

## Volunteer Intern Opportunities

Interested in helping save Mono Lake? How about living in the beautiful Eastern Sierra? Then you should become a Mono Lake Committee Volunteer Intern. Volunteer Interns do just about everything: operate the Mono Lake Committee Visitor Center, assist with mail and membership work, provide public education, attend meetings and seminars, and provide general support for all MLC operations. They also work on special projects utilizing their talents. The VI Program is designed to give practical experience operating a non-profit environmental organization.

The VI Programs run for at least 3 months. Housing is provided, and volunteers receive \$15/day for expenses. To apply, please contact Matt Graves, our Lee Vining Programs Manager, at (619) 647-6595.

## Staff Hellos & Good-Byes

A hearty welcome to our two new staff members. A former Yosemite Park ranger, Mead Hargis is now analyzing scientific data and coordinating information exchange between researchers and legal counsel. Mead and his family have lived in the Mono Basin for many years.

We enthusiastically welcome Liz Fishman, who has joined us as Special Events Coordinator. Liz developed a love for the outdoors while spending summers in the Sierra Nevada. She comes to us from UC Berkeley and is excited about working for a cause in which she truly believes.

We say farewell to Amber Rae who is moving on to pursue her acting career in San Diego. Her effervescent personality and creative touch will be sorely missed. We wish her the best. Good-bye also to Becky Montañez-Flores, who worked as our bookkeeper.

Big thanks and hugs to former staffer Daria Walsh, who came back to Lee Vining to help us with our computer systems. Apologies to Paul Kohlberg for not including his photo credit with the last issue's Boardwalk Dedication article.

Personnel consultant Clay Davis braved wintry weather to help staff in both offices assess their skills and strengths in order to work together even more productively. We appreciate Clay's commitment to our excellence — and his wonderful sense of humor, too!

## Wish List

**Lee Vining:** A video cassette recorder, video camera and a portable cassette recorder with a microphone to tape presentations for training and review.

**Los Angeles:** An IBM compatible or Macintosh computer, photo copier, file cabinet and volunteers in the office!



# 1990 Mono Lake Workshops

*Sponsored by the Mono Lake Foundation and the Mono Lake Committee*

We are pleased to offer an exciting array of weekend field seminars this summer. We have old favorites, plus a new mammal class taught by mammal expert John Harris, a member of the original 1976 Mono Basin research team. Capture those gorgeous autumn colors with Clinton Smith, a well-known photographer and instructor. Clinton has recently been featured in the *Los Angeles Times* and on the *Today* show. Jim Parker adds volcanoes to his repertoire, exploring hot spots of Mono County.

To register or for more information, please contact Sally Gaines, Mono Lake Workshops, P.O. Box 153, Lee Vining, CA 93541, or call (619) 647-6496 between 7:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m.



## Birds Of The Mono Basin

**Dave Shuford** June 9-10 \$75/person \$60/MLC member

Dave Shuford of Point Reyes Bird Observatory is a master birder and patient instructor. Beginners as well as experts will enjoy this intimate introduction to Mono's birdlife. We will learn to identify approximately 70 species by plumage and song, and to understand their roles in our environment.

## Mono-Bodie Photo Workshop

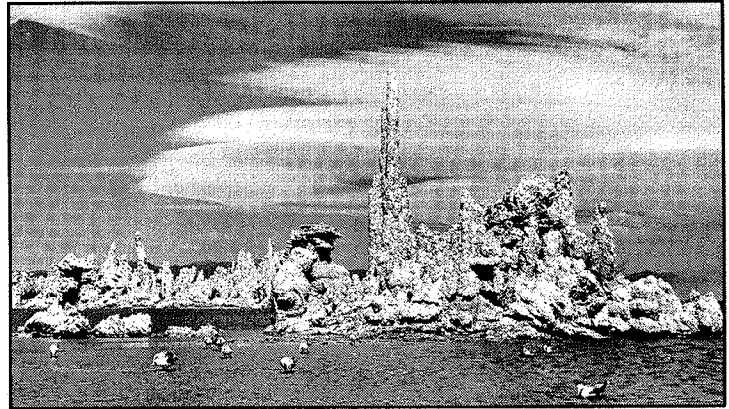
**Lewis Kemper** June 23-24 \$75/person \$60/MLC member

Sunrise to sunset, Lewis Kemper, author of the *Yosemite Photographers Handbook*, will help us explore and photograph the Mono Basin, a photographer's paradise. We will visit glacier-carved canyons, extinct volcanic cones, tufas and the ghost town of Bodie. Instruction is oriented toward both novice and experienced photographers. As in the past, we have arranged by permit to stay after hours at Bodie and be guided into several historic buildings.

## Mammals Of The Mono Basin And Tioga Pass

**John Harris** June 30-July 1 \$75/person  
\$60/MLC member

Learn the natural history and identification of mammals of the alpine zone to sagebrush desert. Observe, capture and photograph some of Mono's 80 species of wild mammals, including Kangaroo Rats, six species of chipmunk, Pikas and Pygmy Rabbits. Use of live traps, track identification, mist netting of bats and a demonstration of radiotelemetry will be included.



Rose Certini

## Natural History Of The Mono Basin

**Mark Bagley, Dave Herbst, Jim Parker**  
July 6-8 \$90/person \$75/MLC member  
Add \$25 for 1.5 units college credit

Three instructors, a botanist, a zoologist and a geologist will be present each of the three days for an interdisciplinary view of the Mono Basin. We will range from Mono's shores to the Sierra crest, visiting a host of special habitats. Our emphasis will center on the interconnectedness of earth, flora and fauna in the creation of a unique ecosystem. *Due to the popularity of this special workshop, we are offering two separate sessions this year. The second session will be held August 3-5.*

## Bugs And Butterflies

**Dave Herbst** July 14-15  
\$75/person \$60/MLC member

A member of the 1976 research team, entomologist Dave, a.k.a. Bug, will open our eyes to the strange but marvelous lives of bugs, butterflies, beetles, brine flies and other invertebrates and their roles in the Mono Basin environment. We will visit sand dunes, lake shores, hot springs and many other habitats as we seek a myriad of creatures and learn how they thrive in the high desert.

## Geology Of The Mono Basin

**Jim Parker** July 14-15 \$75/person \$60/MLC member  
Join Jim, geologist/naturalist, to explore recently active volcanoes, earthquake scarps, and get to know a million-year-old lake and its unique tufa towers. This workshop provides a fascinating introduction for the novice rockhound and a wealth of detail for those knowledgeable in geology.

### **High Country Wildflowers**

*Dave De Sante July 28-29*

*\$75/person \$60/MLC member*

Dr. De Sante has spent the past twelve summers studying the ecology of the Harvey Monroe Hall natural area, located at the headwaters of Lee Vining Creek. We will hike through subalpine forests, meadow fell fields, along cascading creeks and quiet lakes identifying, photographing and appreciating as many as 150 species of flowering plants.

### **Natural History Of The Mono Basin**

*Mark Bagley, Dave Herbst, Jim Parker*

*August 3-5*

*\$90/person \$75/MLC member*

*Add \$25 for 1.5 units college credit*

For a description of this popular special workshop, please see July 6-8 above.

### **High Country Birds**

*Dave De Sante August 4-5*

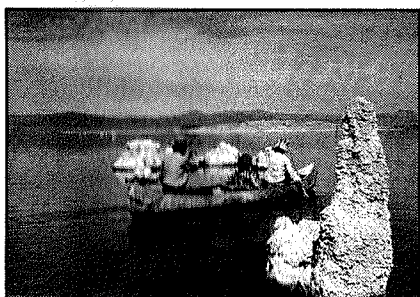
*\$75/person \$60/MLC member*

Up-mountain drift brings large numbers of lower elevation species to the high country to associate with breeding species already there. After twelve summers of intensive avian research in the Harvey Monroe Hall Natural Area, Dave has extensive knowledge of the birds in this area, including such specialties as Pine Grosbeak, Water Pipit, Osy Finch and the White-tailed Ptarmigan.

### **Volcanoes Of The East Side**

*Jim Parker August 11-12 \$75/person \$60/MLC member*

California's most varied and intriguing volcanic terrain is here in Mono County. Join a tour from the Bodie Hills to Devil's Postpile and learn about everything from rhyolites to basalts, glass flows to glowing avalanches. Beginners as well as experts will enjoy this intimate introduction to Vulcan's playground. The workshop will definitely *NOT* be canceled in the event of an eruption!



### **Mono-Owens Hydrology**

*Peter Vorster August 18-19 \$75/person*

*\$60/MLC member*

Join Peter, a consulting hydrologist in the Mono-Owens lawsuit, for a stimulating tour of natural and unnatural hydrology of the Mono and Owens basins. We will follow both surface and ground water flow from the Tioga Pass snows, through natural streams and diversions, down to Haiwee Reservoir in the southern Owens Valley. Peter will present a balanced history of the water issues from 1900 to the present, as well as discuss the bigger picture of water issues in California.

### **Mono-Bodie Historical Tour**

*Arlene Reveal, Lily Mathieu August 25-26*

*\$75/person \$60/MLC member*

We will journey with two local historians and story tellers, back to the days of the Paiutes, prospectors and pioneers, bringing Mono's rough and tumble past vividly to life. We'll explore mining camps, stamp mills, homesteads, graveyards and the ghost town of Bodie.

### **Writing of the Eastern Sierra**

*Lauren Davis September 15-16 \$75/person*

*\$60/MLC member*

Study the literature of Mono Lake and the Eastern Sierra with MLC editor Lauren Davis. Featured writers include John Muir, Mary Austin, David Gaines, and Idaho Strobridge. The workshop will focus on regional qualities in literature. In addition to readings and discussions, we will also write, and critique each other's work, in Bloody Canyon and remote areas of the Mono Basin.

### **Mono Basin Fall Photography**

*Clinton Smith October 5-7 \$150/person*

*\$130/MLC member*

Beginners as well as experts will explore Mono Lake and the surrounding area from sunrise to sunset. On foot and by canoe, the participants will discover the physical and spiritual aspects of this magical place. This will be a rare opportunity to look over the shoulder and into the heart of an acclaimed photographer/philosopher. The class is designed to stimulate thinking and sensitivity.

### **Natural History Canoe Tours**

*Richard Potashin Saturdays & Sundays*

*Memorial Day through Labor Day Adults \$9 Kids \$5*

*Sorry, no kids under 4 years*

Join Richard, a.k.a. Alkali, for natural history from a unique perspective — the lake itself. Starting near South Tufa you will canoe along Mono's shoreline through tufa spires and learn about this ancient, life-productive lake. These one-hour tours, given in the morning, are by reservation only. Special longer group tours can be arranged. *Gift certificates for canoe tours may be purchased beginning this spring.*



Every drop counts  
and

## WE'RE COUNTING ON YOU!

The Mono Lake Committee is proud to announce:

### *The 1990 Fine Wine Cellar Drawing*

Tickets are now available! Suggested donation - \$50.00; only 500 will be sold.  
This is your chance to win one of three exquisite wine cellars valued at over \$500!

*Cellars donated by Mr. Herb McGrew, Mr. Herbert Cerwin of Cerwin & Peck Consulting, San Francisco, and Mr. and Mrs. Robert and Jean Harrison.*

#### **Special Drawing**

In honor of the 5th Annual Drawing, those donating over \$100 will be entered in a drawing to win our Sonoma County Gold Cellar - donated by Mr. Larry Wagner.

Tickets will be drawn on May 4th, 1990 in San Francisco. Winners need not be present to win. Participants must be 21 or older.

For ticket information and wine descriptions call Amber or Liz at (213) 477-8229. Mail check or money order to:

The Mono Lake Committee  
1355 Westwood Boulevard, Suite 6  
Los Angeles, California 90024

## Join Us!

Still not a Mono Lake Committee member? Join us, and increase our strength and effectiveness. We will keep you informed, through our quarterly newsletter and action alerts, of what's happening and how you can help. Regular membership is \$20/year, or \$30 Sponsor, \$50 Supporting Member, \$100 Monophile, \$250 Defense Trust Member, \$500 Monomaniac, \$8 "I Can't Afford More." Checks should be payable to the Mono Lake Committee, and are not tax-deductible. If you would like your contribution to be tax-deductible, please endorse your check to the Mono Lake Foundation.



**THE  
MONO LAKE  
COMMITTEE**

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