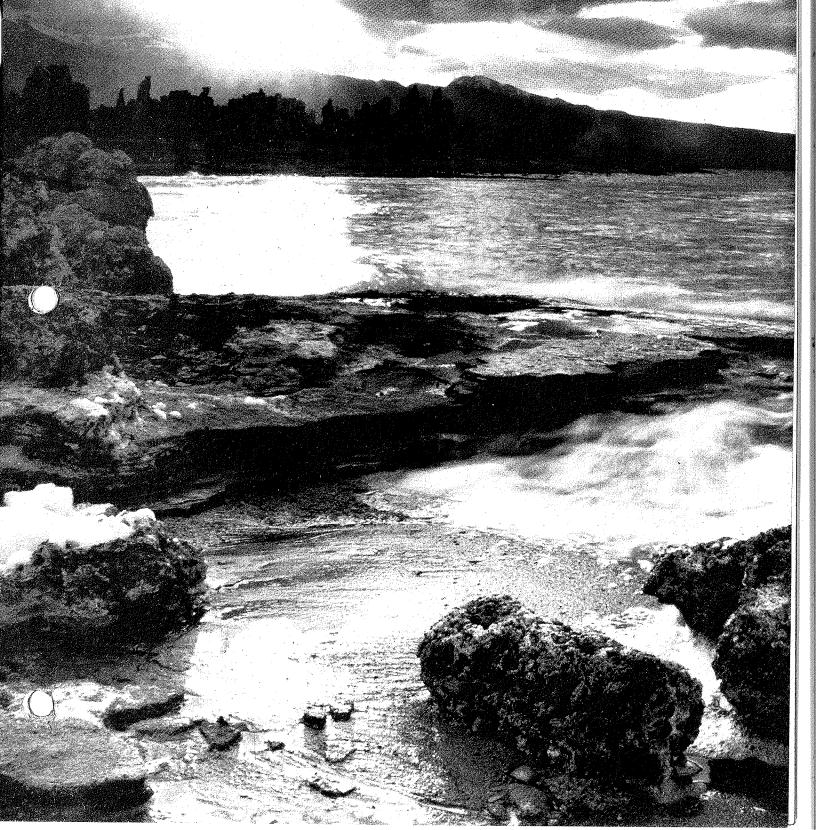
Winter 1992

MONOWS LETTER



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This Issue's Cover:

A magnificent sunrise over Mono Lake seems to offer the right touch of optimism for a new year. The photographer, Bob Bush, is an attorney in the Burbank legal firm of Taylor, Roth, Bush and Geffner. We thank him for several beautiful photographs he donated to the Committee after reading a subtle newsletter request (much like this plea from the Editor in Burbank) for new Mono Lake images.

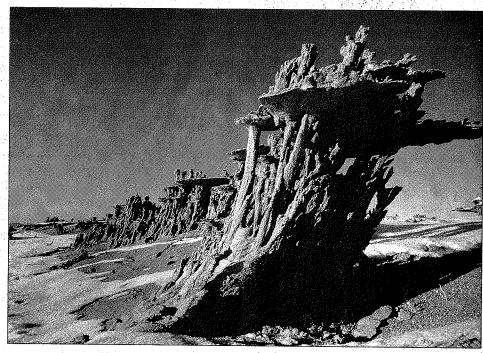
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The Mono Lake Committee is a non-profit citizens' group dedicated to saving Mono Lake from excessive diversion of water from its tributary streams. We seek a solution that will meet the real water needs of Los Angeles and leave our children a living,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

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Sand Tufa

by Meredith Ford

Photo by Larry Ford

Twisting sand castles from sculptors' dreams cluster on the beaches south of the lake. Some are fairy palaces awaiting the arrival of fancily-dressed miniature dancers who will perform minuets on elaborately carved and decorated ballrooms. Other colonies are visions of our future: austere, many-storied launch platforms awaiting their rockets.

Another sand tufa seems to be an elaborate Baroque cathedral, gargoyled and colonnaded, with dark recesses and secret passageways for unseen monks.

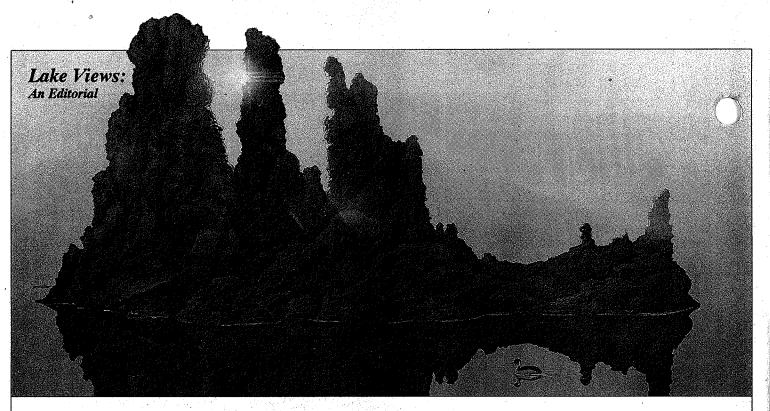
These towers are dark gray, stiff-walled sand creations several inches to eight feet tall. Some are isolated individual columns. Some are forty-foot wide colonies. Like all tufa, these were formed when rising springs full of calcium met lake water full of carbonates to make calcium carbonate. Sand tufa were formed under the sand at the bottom of the lake, rather than in the water itself.

Around the outside of the rising column of spring water, the two chemicals met. Where they came together, the calcium carbonates adhered the sand particles together. Now that the springs have gone and the lake has receded, the loose sand around the tufa has blown away. We are able to see the exposed hollow tubes of sand in various shapes. The bulges and convolutions formed when the spring water found the path of least resistance on its way up. When it met a broad layer of hard sand, it flowed out sideways. Then it would turn and rise again, changing its route as it flowed.

That they remain for us to see is a marvel. Some walls are less than one-sixteenth of an inch thick. Slight pressure of thumb and forefinger can crumble the walls into a pile of loose sand. Broken chunks lie everywhere, disappearing into the sand at our feet. Yet, many colonies have survived the 100 mph winds of the basin, as well as its snow and rain. Some of the fragile sand tufa actually bear the weight of the heavier limestone tufa piled on top. But most amazing is their survival in the face of dune buggies, motorcycles and snow mobiles, for sand tufa are isolated and unprotected, inviting destruction.

Still, they stand. Still, they fascinate. Over and over, visitors circle their wonderful shapes and ponder. We explain the formation and composition, but my mind won't stay with facts. I'm miniature again, waiting beside a sand pillar for dusk when a long procession of hooded monks in dark robes will file past me wafting incense heavenward and droning Gregorian chants far into the night.

"Sand Tufa" comes from Frost and Fire, a natural history of the Mono Basin being written by Meredith Ford and illustrated with photos by her husband, Larry Ford. It was printed in the 1991 edition of Mono Graphs, a literary journal supported in part y the Mono County Arts Council. Mono Graphs features writers of the Mono Basin and is available for sale at local bookstores and at the Mono Lake Committee Visitor Center. To order by mail, see the coupon on page 13.



Department's Magazine Responds to MLC Proposal:

DWP Finds Six-Point Plan Hard To Refute

by Bob Schlichting

After the Mono Lake Committee's Six-Point Plan for protecting Mono Lake and Los Angeles was introduced last April, we heard nothing from DWP. It wasn't until the end of the year, in an article in the November-December edition of *Intake*, a DWP in-house publication, that the department addressed our proposal. Although it did not endorse our plan, DWP could find little about it to criticize.

Under the heading "The Six-Point Solution: A Few Misleading Statements," the DWP magazine Intake announced:

"Mono Lake Committee literature says that the State Environmental Water Fund, [EWF] 'designated by the California State Legislature to help resolve the Mono Lake controversy,' will provide \$60 million for the replacement pf Mono's water—if the DWP, in conjunction with the Mono Lake Committee, will only ask for it."

The article then attempts to debunk this assessment by saying "Only \$12.6 million is expressly reserved for the protection of Mono Lake — the remaining 79 per cent of the money could be made available for other state projects."

"Furthermore, the Environmental Water Funds money is slipperier than it looks. The funds have been allocated but not appropriated, meaning they are not a guaranteed part of any budget. The \$7 million chunk allocated but not appropriated for 1991, the fund's first year, was eliminated by budget cuts."

However, Assemblyman Phillip Isenberg, author of AB 444, the bill that established the \$60 million fund, describes the situation differently. He says that, if any of the fund goes to other state projects, it's because DWP won't even agree to apply for it.

In a November letter to Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley, Isenberg wrote, "Since the Legislature passed the Mono I bill package in 1989, there has been little effort by the city of join with the Mono Lake Committee to apply for all or part of the \$60 million that could be spent to help the city find replacement water and power resources. This delay (along with the state's current fiscal crisis) has caused a whittling away of the money that could be available to the city; further delay will only mean less money will be available."

In other words, by its continued stalling, DWP is creating a self-fulfilling prophecy. Department bureaucrats are not sure the money is there, because, if they wait around long enough, it won't be.

Again, quoting Assemblyman Isenberg: "The legislation appropriates \$7 million to the new EWF each year for four years, beginning in 1991–1992, and \$8 million for four years ... for a total of 60 million. The need for money for last year's state Water Bank prevented any money from being transferred into the EWF — an actual blessing. It meant the money was not available for other, non-Mono Lake-related projects. This money instead will be transferred into the account in future years."

Despite what DWP claims, the EWF was established specifically to help Mono Lake. Isenberg points out that the bill "provides a window in which Mono Lake has priority call on EWF money. (A portion of the money -- 40 per cent each year -- could be used for other purposes if no grant applications submitted.) If no settlement [between DWP and the Mono Committee] is reached by June, 1994, all monies earmarked

exclusively for Mono Lake could be spent on other purposes"

DWP, in its Intact article, claims that "the major son" it hasn't joined the Committee in applying for the funds is that we insist on putting a 6386 lake level in our Six-Point Plan. "The Department, which seeks a lower lake level, would prefer to seek funding on a project-by-project basis, as replacement projects are identified."

Roughly translated, that means DWP wouldn't mind asking for the money, but it is unwilling to make any commitment to protecting Mono Lake.

Why? "Cutting out much of LA's cheapest and highest-quality water source makes no financial sense," says the Intact article. "It would make the DWP increasingly dependent on the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD), which is already the DWP's most expensive water source"

Of course, that circular argument overlooks the fact that \$60 million in state funds have been set aside so DWP doesn't have to depend as much as it currently does on MWD. The EWF was created to develop alternative water supplies to those from the Mono Basin, and to ensure that the shortfall was not transferred to another locale, h as the Owens Valley or the San Francisco Bay Delta.

At their heaviest, LA's water imports from Mono accounted for only 15 per cent of DWP's total supply. But that was before California courts decreed that Mono Basin streams must be rewatered and their fisheries restored. Because of that decision. diversions will never be as massive as they once were; use of that water is permanently lost to DWP. The remainder over which the department of is now arguing is only 15,000 acre feet a year -- a mere 2 per cent of LA's yearly water supply.

Meantime, the Intact article concedes that "DWP customers are saving nearly 30 per cent of their water use over 1986." That translates into 210,000 acre feet a year.

Mono Lake Committee's Six-Point Plan Protects Both Los Angeles and Mono Lake The following six points -- three addressing Mono Lake's needs and three addressing to Anoston mosts

Los Angeles' Needs

Develops new, environmentally

sound water sources, using \$60

million State Environmental

Permits dry year diversions if

2. Replacement Water

Los Angeles' needs and inree wavessing are the basis for a lasting resolution of the 50-year controversy. Mono Lake's Needs 1. Management Lake Level

Provides O386 Jeer,
vital Protection for
while ecology and wildlife while reducing toxic alkali duststorms. 3. Minimum Stream Flows Continues water releases 4. Drought Year Protection

already ordered by California courts. 5. Minimum Lake Level -

Requires lake to remain above the absolute minimum water level set by courts.

minimum stream flows and 6. Diversions during Allows limited diversions while replacement projects come on

lake levels are met.

money --

Elsewhere in the magazine, in an article entitled "The Real Cost of Mono Lake," DWP admits "Legal fees, environmental research and the price of the Environmental Impact Report have already ballooned to nearly \$12 million for the Department." That figure will escalate dramatically as DWP lawyers continue to challenge recent court decisions. And looming ahead are the expensive State Water Resources Control Board hearings. [See page 6.]

Instead of squandering millions on legal battles over the already reduced Mono Lake diversions, DWP could be collecting \$60 million -- to develop new,

environmentally-safe water supplies. So far, DWP refuses.

Assemblyman Phil Isenberg sums up the dilemma in his November 7th letter to LA's Mayor Bradley: "I'm not naive enough to think that the city can overcome 50 years of an aggressive water policy in the Eastern sierra and solve this issue overnight. But, frankly, the city's legal position is worse than it was two years ago, and there's nothing that I see to suggest that this trend will change in the future."

"I urge you and the council to come to grips with this issue and begin negotiations with the Mono Lake Committee so that the city can take full advantage of the money in the Environmental Water Fund."



Lake Level Watch:

Snow Less Than Normal, Mono Lake Low

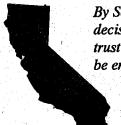
November and December were dry months in the Mono Basin. Despite a year-end storm that brought a foot of snow, precipitation remained about half of normal in early January.

Experts fear that a sixth consecutive year of drought is looming in California. According to DWP spokesman Chris Plakos, the Sierra will need a snowfall of 130 per cent of normal for the rest of the season to make up for the current shortfall.

After the first of the new year, Mono Lake stood at 6374 above sea level -- eight tenths of a foot below last January's lake level of 6374.8.

Last year at this time, local moisture averages were a mere 18 per cent of normal. Then storms in an unusually wet March brought the season totals up to 65 per cent. Spring rains boosted Mono Lake to 6375.2 but, because of normal evaporation during the summer and fall, the level slowly dropped.

If runoff and precipitation are close to average in 1992, the lake will rise a foot by the end of the year. However, if runoff is less than 75 per cent of normal, Mono will drop below the 6374 level for the first time since 1982.



By September 1, 1993, the State Water Resources Control Board must make a decision about how much water will remain in Mono Lake to protect its public trust values. Starting this year, the Mono Lake Committee and its attorneys will be embroiled in hearings as complex as any court case we have yet pursued.

Legal Battle Moves to State Water Board

By Bob Schlichting

In 1940, when granting Los Angeles permits to divert water from the Mono Lake's streams, the State Water Resources Control Board announced, "it is indeed unfortunate the city's proposed development will result in decreasing the aesthetic advantages of Mono Basin, but there is apparently nothing that this office can do to prevent it."

In 1983, the California Supreme Court disagreed. In a unanimous decision supporting "the scenery, ecology and human uses of Mono Lake," the high court decreed "the human and environmental uses of Mono Lake ... deserve to be taken into account. Such uses should not be destroyed because the state mistakenly thought itself powerless to protect them."

Now, 50 years after first announcing it was unable to do so, the State Water Board is taking on the task of balancing Mono's "scenery, ecology and human uses" against Los Angeles' need for water. In a four-year-long process, the board is examining the public trust values of the Mono Basin while reviewing DWP's water licenses.

It was El Dorado County Superior Court Judge Terrence Finney who, at the request of the Board in August 1989, put Mono's public trust litigation "on hold." Noting that the state's Supreme Court had granted *concurrent* jurisdiction to both the Water Board and the courts, Finney gave the state agency the opportunity to resolve the Mono Lake issue through its own administrative process.

Despite this ruling, Finney retained jurisdiction over the final decision, and even stipulated that his court could step in if the Board did not reach a decision by the end of 1993. He also reserved the right to grant interim relief, like the preliminary injunction setting a minimum lake level of 6377 feet that is now in effect.

"Now, instead of a court case, the Committee is carefully preparing for a series of water board hearings over the next two years," said Sally Miller, MLC's Eastern Sierra Representative. "Our legal team from Morrison and Foerster is working with us. As Judge Finney said in July, 'this is a process that conceivably, considering the parties' rights to

appeal, could take until the latter half of the 1990's."

These administrative proceedings will decide how much water should stay in the Mono Basin to protect Mono Lake's public trust resources and streams. Before the

hearings begin, an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) must be prepared by the environmental consulting firm of Jones and Stokes; the report should be ready for public comment in September, 1992.

Mono Lake Committee staff members have already spent months working with the water board and others on the draft version of the EIR. A major concern to the Committee remains the point in time the report will use as a baseline from which to make its comparisons.

"To clearly understand the extent of environmental change in the Mono Basin, the Committee maintains we should look at the *historic* conditions existing before diversions began," said Miller. "That's the only accurate way to assess what public trust uses have been destroyed because of DWP's operations. Unfortunately, the Water Board has selected 1989 as the base year from which comparisons are to be drawn."

MLC Executive Director Martha Davis explained the Committee's objections to this plan. "By 1989, Mono Lake had already dropped over 40 vertical feet. Mono's streams had been substantially dried up for decades, denuded of vegetation and devastated by erosion. Major losses of wildlife and wetlands had already occurred. How can 1989 constitute a reasonable, objective 'baseline' for evaluating the ecological impacts of DWP's diversions?"

The Committee also argues there are several legal stipulations beyond the water board's discretion when it comes to balancing LA's water needs against Mono's public trust values.

"As the courts have decreed, and as Fish and Game codes require, minimum flows must be allowed down Mono's creeks, and the historic fisheries must be restored," said Morrison and Foerster attorney Bryan Wilson. "This is an absolute requirement, not subject to reduction through the 'balancing' process."

Another requirement is protection of Mono's air quality under the Federal Clean Air Act. "Mono Lake's level must be high enough to prevent violations of air quality standards

due to dust blowing off the exposed lake shore," said Wilson.

"Other requirements beyond debate include protection of water rights h by the federal government, a protection of the Mono Lake

Part of the EIR process calls for public comment. That is why Committee member participation will be very important. The Newsletter will continue to update you on the progress of the State Water Resources Control Board process.

brine shrimp under the endangered species act."

"Once these obligations are met," concluded Wilson, are arguing about perhaps as little as 15,000 acre feet of the a year — two per cent of LA's supply."

The EIR currently being prepared by Jones and Stokes should ideally provide a full assessment of the issues concerning the Mono Basin ecosystem. Subjects being investigated include the lake's water quality, now twice as salty as it was before diversions began; current and historical wildlife patterns in the basin; and streamside vegetation and lost wetlands. Recreational opportunities will be taken into account — the ability to hike, hunt, fish, birdwatch, swim, boat or otherwise enjoy the beauty of the Mono Lake region.

According to the state water board's work plan, their agency will use this data to develop computer models of a

range of hypothetical lake levels. From these, strategies for managing Mono Lake as a healthy, productive ecosystem will be explored.

Both the Mono Lake Committee and DWP are deeply involved in providing information for the EIR. Once the report is finalized, hearings will begin in ernest before the State Water Resources Control Board in Sacramento.

Whether the balancing of Mono Lake's public trust values is finally resolved through the water board or the court system on appeal, the findings of the Environmental Impact Report will strongly influence the final decision. That is why Mono Lake Committee staff and its attorneys are working so hard to provide essential information that will stand any legal review.

Legal Update:

DWP Attempts To Disband Restoration Committee!

by Bob Schlichting

DWP went to court in November in an unsuccessful bid to dissolve the committee overseeing restoration of Rush and Lee Vining Creeks.

California superior and appellate court decisions had required rewatering of the two long-diverted Mono Basin eams. In the process, the historic, pre-1941 fisheries — and conditions existing before diversions that benefitted those fisheries — were ordered restored.

In 1990, the El Dorado Superior Court formed a fivemember Restoration Technical Committee (RTC) to oversee the project. Representatives of the Department of Fish and Game, California Trout, the National Audubon Society, Mono Lake Committee and the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power were told to agree on a plan.

The court provided that all RTC decisions needed a unanimous vote of all five members; divided votes were to be resolved by the court. An arduous year of extensive RTC meetings resulted in restoration work in 1991 on the upper sections of Rush and Lee Vining Creeks. This fall, planning continued on how to treat the more severely damaged lower sections of the two streams. Four out of five members had

agreed on how to proceed, with DWP casting the only dissenting vote.

But rather than just requesting Superior Court Judge Terrence Finney to resolve the conflict, DWP filed to have the restoration committee disbanded. Glenn Singley, DWP water works engineer, called the move "streamlining the process" in an Inyo Register article on November 6.

Judge Finney declined to grant DWP's motion. He observed that the RTC serves

an important function to try to achieve consensus among the parties that have had a long-term stake in Mono Basin issues.

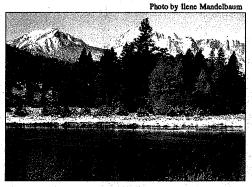
The Audubon Society and Mono Lake Committee had cross-filed a motion asking the court to arbitrate the split four-to-one vote. Instead of acting upon it, Finney ordered all parties back to the negotiating table.

Underlying the debate are the issues of the scope and ultimate cost of the creek restoration effort. The original agreement called for the historic conditions to be identified, and a range of alternatives explored. A consultant, Woody Trihey and Associates, has been hired by the RTC to accomplish these tasks. While calling for the five parties to continue negotiations on how this was to be done, Finney warned that he expects the planning process to proceed in a timely manner, with actual restoration work continuing in the summer of 1992.

From November 20 through mid-December, attorneys for all five members met repeatedly in an attempt to satisfy the Judge's request. No settlement on the restoration planning process was reached, however. Proposed agreements were drafted and redrafted, until DWP pulled out of negotiations on December 16, unwilling to concede any points of agreement.

A hearing is now set for January 13, to have the issues once and for all resolved by the court.

"It's unfortunate, but the history of DWP's behavior on the RTC is one of trying to renegotiate agreements already made," said MLCAssociate Director Ilene Mandelbaum. "Thanks to the RTC's persistence, it has already accomplished much on Walker, Parker, Rush and Lee Vining Creeks. That's why it's so hard to believe DWP wants to abolish it."



Diversion Pond on Lee Vining Creek.



Photo by John Shivik

Invading Coyotes The Probable Cause

Breeding Gulls Abandon Negit Island

by Terry Stonich

Getting to Negit Island from Black Point is no longer difficult to do. Mono Lake is at a low 6374 feet above sea level; the landbridge between the north shore and the island is fully exposed. The quickestroute can be found by looking down and following the tracks —

tracks of coyotes, that is. Few people make the one and threequarter-mile trip across the salt and alkali-encrusted landbridge to the rocky island, but coyotes know this journey well.

Last season, the coyotes caused problems for Mono Lake's population of California gulls. Both the number of the birds and their productivity was down from 1990. Although gulls attempted to start a nesting colony on Negit early in the season, they were eventually forced to abandon the island, deserting a total of 662 nests.

Jan Dierks, an ornithologist with the Point Reyes Bird Observatory who headed this year's gull study, said that both coyotes and their tracks were seen on Negit. "It seems pretty obvious that the coyotes caused the gulls to abandon [their nests]," she said, adding that the hypothesis can't be proven conclusively.

But as long as Negit's landbridge remains exposed, the outlook does not look positive. Unless Mono Lake's level rises appreciably in the coming winter and spring, "it is entirely possible that the gulls won't return to Negit at all next summer," Dierks added.

In 1990, a colony of California gulls nested as usual on nearby Pancake Island, an adjacent small islet. Later that year, Pancake, too, became connected to the shore, and all 400 nests were abandoned. No attempts were made by the birds last season to re-colonize it.

These events mirror the breeding season of 1979 when Negit, then home to over 65 per cent of the Mono Lake gulls, was landbridged by dropping lake levels. In that year, too, the birds abandoned the island. They did not return for another six years, until rising lake water in 1985

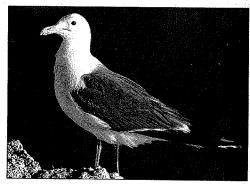


Photo by M. A. Chappell

once again surrounded and protected the black lava island.

While avoiding Negit, the birds shifted their breeding sites to smaller islets; here their reproductive success fluctuated greatly, leading biologists to hotly debate the long-term sustainablity of the population.

Since 80 to 90 per cent of the California population of this species comes each year to Mono Lake to raise their young, 1991's abandonment and subsequent breeding failure has caused irreparable harm to the gull population. What has been lost can never be made up.

"What needs to be protected if the gulls are to reproduce successfully is the integrity of their nesting habitat," said Dave Shuford, another ornithologist with Point Reyes Bird Observatory. And the only way to once again make Negit Island a safe haven for young gull chicks is to raise the level of Mono Lake.

Current preliminary court orders prohibit Los Angeles' DWP from exporting water out of the Mono Basin until the lake reaches 6377 feet; that level restores a shallow barrier of water between Negit and the shore. But merely reaching that minimum lake level is not enough to insure the safety of the nesting birds from invading predators.

"Protection is not certain unless 6377 is maintained, and even this may only be a short term solution," said Shuford, indicating that such a shallow a channel of water may not



Seen from Negit Island, an exposed landbridge stretches to Black Point and the eastern shore. Coyotes find it an easy highway to the nesting gulls.

prevent coyotes from wading across, especially if they are already experienced in the plundering of the gull colonies.

Even with a return to normal precipitation amounts, it take two years or more before Mono Lake rises to the 6377 foot level. "That's one of the reasons the lake needs to be managed at a higher level than the minimum," explained

Committee Executive Director Martha Davis. "A higher level forms a buffer zone, insuring that the lake does not drop below the critical 6377 level, even in times of drought. For the breeding population of California gulls, that's the only way to prevent catastrophes like last year's from happening again and again."

The Joy of Shorebird Counting

by Emilie Strauss



Despitewind and blowing dust, Emilie Strauss, Ed Rodriguez, and Claudia Payison (left to right) count birds on the eastern shore of Mono Lake.

It is August 24, and I am at Mono Lake. In the canyons, summer lingers and the aspens still bear leaves of green, but, near the lake, the yellow blooms of rabbit brush herald the beginning of fall. It's time once more for legions of migrating shorebirds to visit Mono Lake's avian refueling station.

Eight volunteers, including myself, are spread across 60 miles of former lake bottom, binoculars and telescopes in hand, to conduct a survey for the third annual Mono Lake Fall Shorebird Count.

I am covering the northeast corner of the lake, not far from where timber-laden steamboats once docked, 45 feet above the current lake level. To reach the shore in 1991, I must crunch down a mile-long stretch of alkali. A coyote pup stops to watch me curiously. Could I be the first human it has seen?

Far ahead of me, the Mono's mudflats glimmer with miles of avocets and gulls. A prairie falcon glides just six inches above the shoreline, setting off a tidal wave of fleeing phalaropes.

This late in the year, most of the phalaropes are the Red-necked variety, with only a few of the Wilson's still remaining. The bulk of the Wilson's Phalarope population has already come and gone, flying 3000 miles south to their wintering grounds in Argentina, Bolivia, and Peru.¹

Although phalaropes are a shorebird, they are strong, able swimmers, and many of them feed far out on the e. Usually we need a boat to properly count them. This year, however, windy weather aborted the boat census; our

1991 phalarope numbers are therefore inconclusive, although we witnessed many thousands of them. In past years, as many as 6000 Wilson's and 8000 Red-necked Phalaropes have been officially recorded.

Throughout a day of progressively stronger wind and blowing alkali dust, our eight-person crew tallied almost 8000 American Avocets, 3000 Western Sandpipers, and more than 1200 Least Sandpipers.

Some of the more unusual species counted were Baird's Sandpipers, Lesser Yellowlegs, Ruddy Turnstones, Sanderlings, Mountain Plovers and a Semi-palmated Sandpiper. All in all, we observed 22 species of shorebirds, as well as seven species of duck, thousands of Eared Grebes, a few Brant, and a Peregrine falcon.

Soon the falcon becomes a phantom, obscured by heat and blowing dust. Between the dancing heat waves and the strong, high country light, everything on the remote and mysterious east side of the lake seems like a mirage. Truly, as David Gaines once said of Mono, "a dreamy spell-like atmosphere pervades its waters."

¹ Jehl, Joseph R. Jr., 1988. Biology of the Eared Grebe and Wilson's Phalarope in the Nonbreeding Season: A Study of Adaptations to Saline Lakes. Studies in Avian Biology No. 12, 73 pp.

Strauss, a former MLC staff biologist, is now an independent consulting ornithologist.

The Mono Lake Spring and Fall Shorebird Counts are part of an ambitious project to tally shorebirds across the West. Called the Pacific Flyway Project, it is coordinated by the Point Reyes Bird Observatory.

None of the information could be collected without the generous help of many volunteers. If seeing thousands of shorebirds and hiking remote areas around Mono Lake sounds intriguing, join the spring count on April 25–26. Shuttles provided by the US Forest Service facilitate the counting process.

To volunteer or for more information, contact Dave Shuford at Point Reyes Bird Observatory, (415) 868-1221. Update from the LA Times:

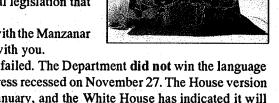
Manzanar vs. DWP

In the November 17 edition of the Los Angeles Times, columnist Robert Jones took DWP to task for their "unsavory" behavior in stalling federal legislation that would make Manzanar a national landmark.

His "Coast Letter" column, the second he has written dealing with the Manzanar bill, so clearly defined the situation that we decided to share it with you.

Since the *Times* published this piece, DWP's stalling tactics failed. The Department did not win the language it was seeking. The Senate passed the bill just hours before Congress recessed on November 27. The House version is expected to be approved when Congress reconvenes in late January, and the White House has indicated it will probably sign it.







The mystery deepens. Six months ago, a bill was submitted in Congress to create a national historic monument at the old Manzanar internment camp. Fifty years after we rounded up the Japanese-Americans and put them behind barbed wire for the duration of WWII, the country finally seemed ready to commemorate the crimes committed there.

The Democrats supported the bill. The Republicans supported it. So did the White House. All the ducks had lined up.

But no bill has left the Congress. For six months it has stewed. And now, with the holiday adjournment approaching, there is an increasing possibility that 1991 will come and go without congressional action on Manzanar.

Why the stew?

Because the current owner of the Manzanar site has stalled the legislation at every turn, demanding concessions that baffle the bill's supporters, threatening to block the transfer of the land. The current owner, and only the current owner, stands in the way of the bill's speedy passage.

That owner is the city of Los Angeles.

More specifically, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power. The ruins of Manzanar happen to be located in the middle of the city's vast water farm in the Owens Valley. Of the 250,000 acres that the city owns in the valley, Manzanar comprises about 600.

Not a big deal, you might think. But the Owens Valley produces about 70% of the city's water supply. And the department manages that land like England once managed India. Impending change, any change, is greeted with suspicion. Threats are perceived everywhere.

When we first discussed the stall over Manzanar back in August, the department was claiming that its concerns were minor. All that was needed, said board President Michael Gage, was the addition of some "language" in the bill assuring the city that its water rights would not be handicapped.

If you have difficulty seeing how the creation of a 600-acre historic site could threaten the city's rights on its remaining quarter-million acres, join the crowd. No one in Congress understands either. The mystery is enhanced when you realize that the original legislation stated that the city's water rights "shall not be affected."

Nonetheless, everyone tried to solve the department's problem. First, Congressman Mel Levine had a go. Proposed changes flew back and forth between Washington and LA.

Nothing doing. Finally, the House of Representatives went ahead and passed a version the department deemed unacceptable.

Then the bill went to the Senate where Sen. Alan Cranston's office gave it a try. More changes, more new language.

Same result. At one point the department said no to this proposed version:

"Nothing in this Title shall provide any new authority of the Secretary over land or activities outside the boundaries of the site." The "secretary" in that sentence refers to the secretary of the Interior, who administers national historic monuments.

Somehow, in that language, the department saw the makings of mischief. But where? By whom?

A mystery. In fairness, it should be pointed out that the department did offer its own compromise proposals during the negotiations. These proposals, in fact, stand as the only clear statement of what the department really wants, and may offer a clue to the mystery.

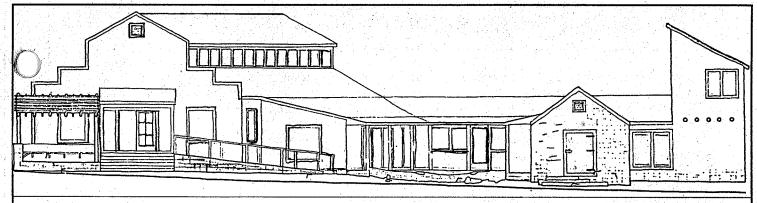
Charles Warren, executive directon the State Lands Commission, scrutinized the proposals for Cranston, and then offered this: "[They] could have the effect of immunizing it [the department] from regulation under the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act, and the public trust doctrine."

In other words, the department appeared to be suggesting an exchange: It would spring Manzanar in return of an exemption from existing environmental laws in the Owens Valley.

This would have constituted no small boon to the department. The valley, you understand, currently suffers from some of the worst dust storms in the nation, thanks largely to the department's activities. There have been lawsuits, there will be more, and the federal Environmental Protection Agency is leaning on the department to heal some of the valley's wounds.

So maybe that explains the mystery. In one sense, it is satisfying to think there is some rational basis, however unsavory, to the department's behavior....

In February, 1942, the executive order that established internment camps for Japanese-Americans was signed by President Roosevelt. Now your letter urging President Bush to quickly sign the Manzanar National Historic Site legislation may help enact it in time for the fiftieth anniversary. Address your requests to: President George Bush, The White House, Washington, DC 20500.



Revitalizing Committee Headquarters

The Rebuilding Campaign Moves Into High Gear

The Mono Lake Committee's Visitor Center has always been critical in the fight to save Mono Lake.

From the time the Committee was formed in 1978, educational displays inside the one—time dance hall alerted visitors to Mono's urgent plight. Hastily—laid—out office space became the headquarters of the political struggle to stop DWP's uncontrolled diversions of water from the Mono Basin. The building's retail area sold merchandise—bumper stickers, books, pamphlets, and T—shirts—to spread the word about Mono Lake and finance the on—going battle to protect it.

Unfortunately, we had never been able to lease the structure, but were forced to rent the Visitor Center on a month-to-month basis. By 1987, Committee founder David Gaines had devised a plan to purchase the building to serve as our permanent home. He recognized there was no alternative if we were to maintain a presence at the lake; to this day our Visitor Center remains the only practical, economical site in Lee Vining from which to lead our battle. A watchdog organization like the Mono Lake Committee has to be here to insure Mono Lake's survival.

After David died in 1988, the Committee fulfilled the first part of his dream, buying the property with money from the David Gaines' Memorial Fund and contributions from generous donors.

But with ownership comes responsibility; the 58-year-old structure is in dire need of repair. That's why a campaign to revitalize the building was announced a year ago. Since then, more than 50 individuals have pledged their time, their money, or their labor and skills to the project.

Here are a few of the volunteers already working to rebuild the Mono Lake Committee's Visitor Center. Thanks to their donated time and talents, response to our call for action has been growing. Their efforts have enabled us to stretch our fundraising dollars enormously.

Just like the fight to save Mono
revitalization is becoming a
everyone can take part.

Lake
gras

Lake itself, the headquarters grassroots project in which

The New Visitor Center Plan!

In the 58 years since the Mono Lake Committee's Visitor Center was constructed, the building has served as dance hall, gift shop, and barber shop. However, through its many incarnations, little was done to maintain the structure. As a result, today floors are rotting away, ceiling panels are falling, and one whole wall is severely water damaged.

The old building was constructed without insulation; it is totally energy inefficient. The slide show room and the display area remain unheated throughout the winter. The plumbing system is woefully inadequate. The electrical system is outmoded.

We must remodel the Visitor Center, if only for safety's sake. We also need to improve it, to live up to the conservation practices the Committee advocates.

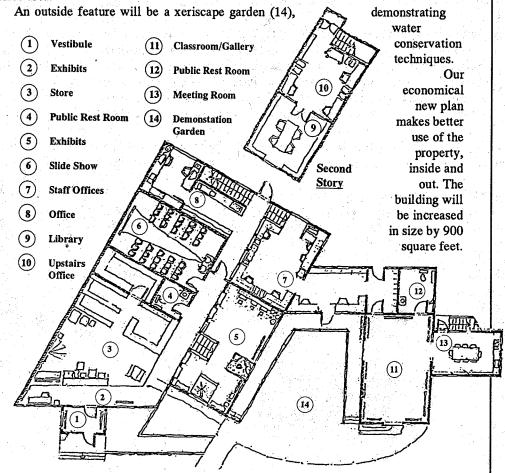
A TOUR OF THE NEW BUILDING

New plans call for a vestibule (1), a weather lock common in cold climates such as Lee Vining. Over the newly-designed and enlarged exhibit areas (2 and 5) and store (3), the roof line will be raised to allow for natural lighting through a series of clerestory windows. A public rest room (4) demonstrating the latest in water conservation equipment will be added.

A newly configured slide show room (6) also serves as a meeting hall. What is now a storage shed will become staff offices (7). The additional office area (8) is already in place, constructed last spring in an emergency remodel.

Upstairs from this area is the room housing our research library (9) with windows looking out over the lake. There is additional office space here as well (10).

Right now, an abandoned ice house stands next to the Visitor Center; this structure will be recycled into a gallery and classroom (11). Behind this will be built another public rest room (12), while a nearby staff meeting room (13) has a mini-kitchen and coffee area.



Since the ca Sividuals h A committe efficiently as po

DESIGNER MICHAEL OLEXO

"Our goal is to repair one of Lee Vining's historic old buildings, to work with what's already in place, adapting it to modern uses without losing its rural

character."



That's how San Francisco architect and landscape architect Michael Olexo envisions the Visitor Center project he's been working on since 1987. "I love the Eastern Sierra deserts and the Great Basin,"he hd. "That's what first brought me to Mono Lake. Our remodel plan incorporates many features

buildings throughout the Mono Basin — clerestory windows for light, tin roofs, inexpensive board and batten siding. We're being respectful of the sense of place."

Olexo has designed other volunteer projects — like San Francisco's Michelangelo Park — where much of the materials and labor were donated. As with the park design, the Visitor Center plan evolved from a series of workshops where the needs and goals of the Committee were carefully delineated. The result will be a

low cost but effective remodel.

"The old building is definitely worth saving," said Olexo. "Its frame is still sound. It's the skin of the building, the roof, and the added—on sheds that are falling apart. The structure needs to be upgraded to meet seismic and safety standards for buildings. We will be doing that, while remaining true to its historical origins."

Visitor Center Advisory Committee

ce the campaign to rebuild the Mono Lake Committee's Visitor Center was announced last winter, more than iduals hat — Junteered their time and talents to the project.

ommittee or skilled advisors has been formed to guide us through the restoration as quickly, cheaply and tly as possible. Here are some of the people working to revitalize the Mono Lake Committee's Visitor Center.

GENERAL CONTRACTOR JIM PERRY



Figuring out ways for the Committee to cut expenses on the Visitor Center remodel is the job of Jim Perry, a general contractor with over 30 years' experience in construction.

"I'm reviewing

the preliminary plans, trying to make money-saving suggestions," said Perry. "There are ways to cut costs and save construction time, all without compromising the structure itself."

"The Committee may be forced to do
the work in stages, as money becomes
ave le," explained the Thousand Oaks
contractor. "Remodeling that way requires
careful pre-planning to be cost-efficient.
I'm looking at what is absolutely essential to
the project and what would be nice,
providing the funds are available."

As part of his analysis, Perry is compiling a detailed materials list, crucial for acquiring items such as lumber, flooring, and electrical supplies. "In-kind donations of supplies can really keep our costs down," he added.

The owner of *Perry Framing* got involved in the project because of his daughter, MLC Development Director Shelly Backlar. "She asked for my advice. After looking over the plans, I became excited about the project and wanted to help. I knew that the only obstacle would be funding."

FUNDRAISER SHELIA GRETHER

"The Mono Lake Committee is truly a watchdog of the lake," says Pasadena stockbroker Shelia Grether. "If Mono is to the committee must have a permanent presence in Lee Vining, to do research, to gather evidence, and to influence

public opinion. That's why I volunteered to help them rebuild their home."

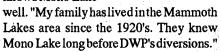
With years of professional experience in fundraising, Grether is assisting the Committee's campaign to finance the Visitor Center's remodel.

Grether has raised money for such varied groups as the Brooklyn Academy of Music, New York's Lincoln Center For the Performing Arts, and the Los Angeles City and County Library Systems. When the Hollywood Library burned to the ground in the early 1980's, it was Shelia who spearheaded the drive to rebuild it.

"But this Visitor Center campaign is different," explained Grether. "It's more

like an old-fashioned barn raising, with people donating not only money but time and materials."

An executive with the securities firm Paine Webber, Inc., Grether knows Mono Lake





FUNDRAISER GRACE de LAET

Almost single-handedly, Grace de Laet raised the final amount of money that, in 1989, enabled the Committee to buy the Visitor Center.

"After Committee founder David Gaines died in an automobile accident in 1988, we planned to use money from his Memorial Fund for the purchase. Unfortunately, we were about \$20,000 short," she remembered. "I spent a month writing personal notes to 65 environmentally-concerned friends. About 35 responded with contributions, enough to complete the purchase."

A board member from 1979 to 1990,

de Laet joined at the request of David Gaines. "It was David's dream to have a permanent display in Lee Vining, to teach people about water conservation and the importance of an ecosystem like



Mono Lake. I'm proud to be part of making that dream come true."

REAL ESTATE LAWYER LEE F. GOTSHALL-MAXON

Attorney Lee F. Gotshall-Maxon is guiding the Committee through the legal intricacies of our rebuilding project.

A member of the full service law firm of Lillick and Charles, Gotshall-Maxon practices in the firm's Real Estate Group.

The San Francisco based attorney has a special regard for the Mono Lake Committee. "I'm an avid fly-fisherman," he explained, "so I'm interested in the preservation of California's water resources and trout habitat. I appreciate the accomplishments the Committee has made."

Gotshall-Maxon has been active in a number of other community endeavors. As

President of the Board of Central City Hospitality House in San Francisco, he has worked to provide shelter and services to the city's homeless.



"My practice emphasizes real

estate leasing, acquisition and finance," he said. "I am aware of both the problems and opportunities presented by growth. Mono Lake is a place where past outmoded practices are being changed, through political and other means. I'm glad to be able to help with this remodeling project."

Photo By Alexis Rhone

MLC Members Pledge Support For Grassroots Rebuilding Project!

Mono Lake Committee members from around the state are pledging their support of the Visitor Center rebuilding project. Since we announced the proposal last year, over 50 have offered their time, labor, materials, or financial support to the grassroots project. Here are some of them, along with their donations:

Money and Skills:

Chester Kubit, Indianapolis, IN Steve Matson, Crystal Bay Chris Paddock, San Francisco Pam and Mark Plank, Twain Harte Brooks Ridder-White, Altadena Laurie Wignot, Winters

Skills and Time:

Laurie Ann Barbour, San
Francisco
James Battagin, Quincy
Mick Briscoe, Pacific Grove
Michael Brotzen, Los Angeles
Neil Burton, Kentfield
Tom Camara, Mill Valley
John Eilts, Mammoth Lakes
Spring Friedlander, Oakland
Allen Green, Sacramento
Jim Hammerle, Lakewood
Gary Kern, San Francisco
Andrew Kirk, Independence
Frank Van Kirk, Occidental
Philip M. Klasky, San Francisco

Bill, Susan Markie, Sacramento Kim Ogburn, San Diego Terry Peters, South Lake Tahoe Etiene Roland, San Francisco Dave Smart, Berkeley Bob Stefan, Lee Vining David Yonenaka, Oakland Emil Zollinger, San Francisco

Labor and Materials:

Jean Adams, Aptos Henry Coil, Riverside Robert Courtemanche, Pollock Pines Terry Parks, Sacramento

Materials:

Associated Building Materials,
Los Angeles
Joe Fuhrman, Inglewood
Milt Mendez, San Francisco
Eugene Majerowicz, Los
Angeles
Robert Siebert, Orange

Other organizations and individuals, too, have expressed an interest in helping to revitalize the Visitor Center. Many have responded favorably to the idea of a grassroots building campaign. Just as neighbors in Amish country come together for a barn raising, the Committee proposes a group effort that can inexpensively yet effectively rebuild our Visitor Center.

The Mono Lake Committee must remain a strong political and educational force if Mono Lake is to survive. Your comments and support will guarantee that happens in the years to come.

Yes! I want to help renovate the Mono Lake Committee's Visitor Center. Please contact me!

I'd like to donate building materials. Please send me a materials list for:

- __ Plumbing and low-flow fixtures
- __ Electrical and lighting
- __ Lumber -- rough and finish
- __ Fasteners and finish hardware
- Wallboard
- __ Masonary products
- __ Sheet metal -- gutters and flashing
- __ Insulation and weather stripping
- __ Solar mechanical -- heating and cooling
- __ Roofing and siding
- _ Doors and windows
- _ Flooring -- wood and carpet
- __ Cabinetry, counter tops and furniture
- Computer equipment
- __ Audio-visual equipment
- __ Appliances
- _ Security system
- Construction trash clean-up and hauling
- Trucking of donated materials
- Other

I'd like to contribute:

- __ My time and labor once construction begins.
- My expertise:
- My financial support with a check for \$
- _ I'd like to know more about your plans. Please send me some information.

Name

Address

City

State

Zip

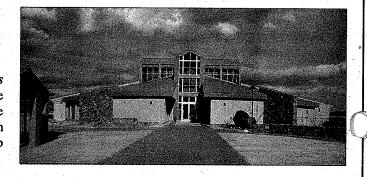
Daytime Phone

Please mail the clipped coupon to the Mono Lake Committee, 1207 W. Magnolia, Suite D, Burbank, CA 91506

Don't Be Confused:

THIS IS NOT THE MONO LAKE COMMITTEE'S VISITOR CENTER!

A new \$5 million federal building, the US Forest Service's Mono Basin Scenic Area Visitor Center, is set to open in Lee Vining this spring. It will house government offices, nature displays, and a bookstore. The building has NO connection with the Mono Lake Committee, the non-profit citizens' group fighting to protect Mono Lake.



Field Notes

Reflections On A Mono Lake Winter

by John Cain

Winter came suddenly this year. Our warm and colorful fall was abruptly swept away in late October by a frigid North wind. The morning after the storm, my front lawn, which had been green the day before, was covered by four inches of snow. Bright yellow leaves from the Cottonwoods across the street were strewn across the frosty blanket.

The yellow leaves juxtaposed against the whiteness of winter spoke to the changes brought by the passing seasons in the Mono Basin. The contrast of color and light from season to season makes one acutely aware of these changes.

The advent of winter has a profound effect on life here. With the first storm, Tioga Pass closes and the horde of visitors that had flooded the basin in summer and fall is gone, disappearing as if blown away by the wind that stripped the trees. Once bustling campgrounds and other tourist destinations are suddenly abandoned to the hardy animals that make the Mono Basin their winter home.

The starkness of winter allows us to see what is usually hidden. Birds stand out in leafless trees and naked willows. Grey-colored coyotes, normally camouflaged in the high desert sage-scrub, are easily seen against the snow. The wandering mammals and birds leave imprints on the white, npressionable surface.

I am waiting for enough snow to fall so that I can get out my cross—country skis and glide down to the shore or climb up the mountain behind town. Last March, during my first week at the Committee, Associate Director Ilene Mandelbaum led me down to the lake on skis. As we approached a lonely stand of Cottonwoods and Jeffery Pines, remnants of the forest that once followed the creek out of the mountains and across the desert plain, Ilene pointed out a huge, magnificent bird high in the tallest Cottonwood — a Bald Eagle.

A week ago I walked down to the mouth of Lee Vining Creek, contemplating the changes water, time, and winter had brought. On the way, in the grey branches of that same Cottonwood, I saw a Bald Eagle once again.

I don't know if it was the same one we saw last year, but I am glad the bird feels welcome. Ever since water began flowing again in the creeks, Bald Eagles have returned to winter at Mono Lake.

Eagles are attracted to open water where they can hunt for fish, injured waterfowl, rodents, and carrion. Winter's white backdrop and harsh storms conspire with the eagle to weaken, expose, and kill usually swift and camouflaged prey.

I followed the creek, now a sinuous band of white ice frozen in a field of river cobbles. Near the lake, water read into a series of marshes; as I approached the cattails ad willows, a Common Snipe nervously burst into flight — disturbed that I had invaded its solitude.

In a small stretch of stream that hadnot frozen over, I spotted celebrated winter resident, the American Dipper or Water Ouzel, bobbing and singing in the icy water, seemingly oblivious to the harshness of winter. John Muir once called it "the hummingbird of flowing waters," and, since the creeks have begun to flow again, Dippers too have returned.

The creek led me down to the water's edge. Since August, the lake's elevation has dropped a full foot. Sediments that were deposited by the creek this summer have



Photo by Don Jackson A bald eagle near Mono Lake.

been exposed by the receding water and then undercut by wind-driven waves. Now there is an abrupt one-foot drop from the latest sandy terrace to the water. Marching up the shore is a series of such shallow terraces, sad signs of Mono's decline.

On the horizon, silhouettes of waterfowl dotted the lake. Through binoculars, the winter plumage of a Ruddy Duck came into focus — black head and beak, brown and grey body, conspicuous white cheeks, and pronounced tail feathers. As he swam, his stiff tail feathers served as a rudder, leaving an unusually large wake behind him. I counted approximately 500 ducks. I wondered if the eagle had been feeding on them.

Waterfowl — Cinnamon Teal, Shovelors, Green—Winged Teal, and Canada Geese — once used to come to Mono Lake by the hundreds of thousands in fall and winter. One knowledgeable old timer who conducted censuses for the US Pacific Flyway Survey counted a million waterfowl near the mouths of Mono's creeks on a November day in the 1940's.

I wondered where they had all gone. Could the lake be too salty now to attract large numbers of waterfowl for extended periods of time? Did the dewatering of the streams and the destruction of associated wetlands deprive them of fresh water and suitable habitat?

Perhaps with time and water the waterfowl will return in historic numbers to join the Dipper and the Bald Eagle in Mono's winter.

BOOK REVIEWS

"A Handbook For Change" in LA

Promising "an astonishing tour of one of the world's most unique urban environments," The Amazing L.A. Environment traces the environmental evolution of the West's largest city.

Divided into chapters on Water, Air, Energy, Garbage, Sewage, Oceans, and

Wilderness and Parks, the self-described "handbook for change" is chock full of fascinating facts and terrific graphics. Eminently readable and easily understood, it explains the historical context of each issue, and reveals "Who's In Charge" of solving such problems as air pollution and smog. Best of all, each chapter offers tips on how "We Can Do Better" and presents a look into the future with "LA 2210."

The section "Sweet Smell of Success," focuses on those organizations that have improved the quality of life for Angelinos while protecting the environment. The Mono Lake Committee is singled out for having "made us rethink the real water needs" of LA and making us aware that "the environment—the scenery and the ecology of an area—must be considered in the overall picture of water use in California."

The Amazing L.A. Environment was written by Mary Nichols and Stanley Young. Nichols is a senior staff attorney for the National Resources Defense Council and a Commissioner on the LA DWP Board; Young is a free-lance writer for publications like Whole Earth Review and People.

The two authors give Los Angeles residents ample reason to explore, celebrate, and heal their city. Their book reminds us that the LABasin is "one of the world's most unique environments waiting behind the smog and beneath the concrete for us to recognize and reclaim it."

Reviewed by Betsy Reifsnider

The Amazing L.A. Environment, by Mary Nichols and Stanley Young, published 1991 by Living Planet Press and Natural Resources Defense Council, \$6.95, paperback.

Ways To Be Water Wise

In the 1990's, water efficiency is becoming a concern in cities from Georgia and Florida to California. Calling water "our most precious resource," the recently published How To Get Water Smart is designed as a comprehensive, easy—to—use guidebook to saving water around the house.

The book's Santa Barbara publisher, Jim Stein, says "filling these pages are user-friendly products and practices that make saving water effortless."

The book is divided into five helpful

sections, covering water conservation in the areas of: bathroom; kitchen; laundry; yard, garden and pool; and auto and garage.

On toilets alone, How To Get Water Smart offers a variety of water-saving possibilities. It rates new low-flow models, but also

explains inexpensive "low tech" options and simple adjustments you can make to your present commode to reduce water use by a third or more.

The section on "Yard, Garden and Pool" discusses xeriscape gardening; it also explains how to assess soil types and moisture content, while offering simple tips on how to mow your lawn to make it as water efficient as possible. Drip irrigation systems — which can be up to 98 per cent effective — are described in detail. The merits of cisterns and home greywater systems are also debated.

Loaded with product names and company addresses, How To Get Water Smart offers a smorgasbord of great ideas. Whether the reader lives in a large home or a small apartment, this handy, readable guide offers practical choices to create a watersaving dwelling.

Reviewed by Bob Schlichting

How To Get Water Smart, by Buzz Buzzelli, Peggy Good, Janice and John McCormick; published 1991 by Terra Firma Publishing; \$9.95, paperback

Murder Mystery For Monophiles

Marcia Muller, prolific pioneer of the contemporary female private eye novel, sends her heroine to fight crime in Mono County in Where Echoes Live. The twelfth book in the Sharon McCone series finds the San Francisco investigator at fictional Tufa Lake, where "the lake's feeder streams are siphoned off for the faucets and swimming pools of Southern California."

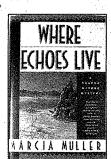
Readers familiar with Mono Lake will enjoy this story in which the lakeside town of "Vernon" sounds suspiciously like Lee Vining and the ghost town of Bodie is the

inspiration for "Promiseville". Members of the fictitious environmental group "Friends of Tufa Lake" even drive down highway 395 to discuss strategy with the staff of the Mono Lake Committee.

When the giant multinational Transpacific Corporation announces plans to reopen a gold mine near the abandoned mining town of Promiseville, environmentalists features.

that commercial mining will destroy the ecosystem and damage the historic old buildings. Investigator McCone joins a former colleague at nearby Tufa Lake, looking into the plan for the California Coalition for Environmental Protection.

McCone quickly becomes involved in deceit, kidnapping and murder in the Eastern Sierra. Author Muller weaves historical events and fiction together with a fascinating locale. Her detective is a



refreshing protagonist, one who offers both complexity of character and a female perspective in a once male-dominated literary genre.

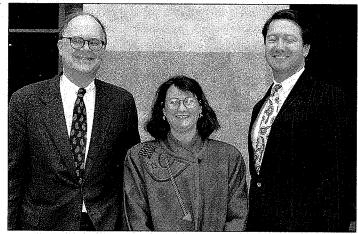
Reviewed by Elizabeth Webb

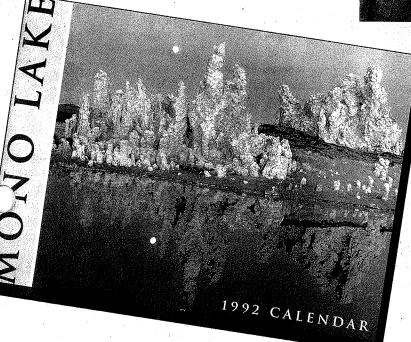
Where Echoes Live, by Marcia Muller, published 1991 by Mysterious Press, \$17.95, hardback.



Best Management Practices Signed December 11

Martha Davis, MLC Executive Director (center) joins California Secretary for Resources Douglas Wheeler (left) and Jim Strock, Secretary of the California Environmental Protection Agency (right) on the steps on the Capitol in Sacramento. The occasion was the December 11 signing of a statewide Memorandum of Understanding, a historic urban water conservation blueprint. Also known as Best Management Practices, the agreement sets a new standard for water conservation. 123 water agencies and public interest groups including the Mono Lake Committee signed the charter, designed to annually save the amount of water used by 2.5 to 5 million Californians. (The pact was explained in detail in the Fall 1991 edition of the Mono Lake Newsletter.)





Sale on 1992 Mono Lake Calendars! Formerly \$995

Now\$4.95!

Plus! We're offering a special rate on shipping!

calendars ... order several at this specially reduced price! Or purchase any of the books mentioned in this newsletter ... We'll send as many as you want for the special low shipping cost of only \$2.50!

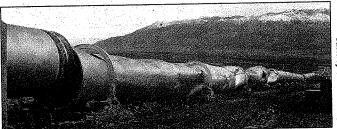
Money-Saving, This-Issue-Only Mail Order Form

Number	Description	Price	Total
	1992 Mono Lake Calendars	\$4.95	
	The Amazing LA Environment	\$6.95	
	How To Get WaterSmart	\$9.95	
	Where Echoes Live	\$17.95	
	Monographs: Writers of the Mono Basin	\$2.95	
	CA residents add applicable	sales tax	
	Special shippir	ig rate!	\$2.50
		Total:	
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	sa Card	1992 Mono Lake Calendars The Amazing LA Environment How To Get WaterSmart Where Echoes Live Monographs: Writers of the Mono Basin CA residents add applicable Special shippin Sa Card Number Signature	1992 Mono Lake Calendars \$4.95 The Amazing LA Environment \$6.95 How To Get WaterSmart \$9.95 Where Echoes Live \$17.95 Monographs: Writers of the Mono Basin \$2.95 CA residents add applicable sales tax Special shipping rate! Total:

1991at Mono Lake: TEYEAR IN REVIEW

January

Closing arguments in Mono Lake litigation are held January 17, concluding one of the longest preliminary injunction hearings in California history. Started in June, 1990, the hearing stretched out over six months.



DWP's collapsed pipeline led to the rewatering of the Lower Owens Gorge, dry since 1953.

March

1200 feet of DWP's pressurized pipeline collapses; water spills into the Lower Owens Gorge, prompting Mono County to file suit to permanently rewater the once-famous trout stream.

Surprise storms help alleviate the worse drought of the century. Even so, runoff in the Mono Basin is only 60 per cent of normal.

April

The Committee issues its "Six Point Plan" to protect Mono Lake, using \$60 million in state funds to secure environmentally—sound replacement water for Los Angeles. DWP does not respond.

Superior Court Judge Terrence Finney issues his Preliminary Injunction decision, declaring that Mono Lake should never fall below 6377 feet. He calls Mono Lake "a national environmental, ecological and scenic treasure that should not be experimented with even for a few brief years."

In response, DWP requests the judge to reconsider his decision for the second time.

May

State Lands Commission proposes a plan using state funds to retire selenium—contaminated farmland in the San Joaquin Valley. Water previously used for irrigation would be freed up to partially replace Mono Lake diversions.

Because of the drought, Los Angeles imposes water conservation — a mandatory 15 per cent cut. LA residents respond by reducing water consumption

by 30 per cent.

Lt. Governor Leo McCarthy addresses the Committee's annual Wine Cellar Drawing in San Francisco.

June

DWP releases water into the lower Owens Gorge after Mono County threatens to sue. Discussions begin to set minimum flows, based on a precedent set with Mono Basin streams.



Lt. Governor Leo McCarthy, at May's Wine Cellar Drawing

July

Nesting gulls abandon landbridged Negit Island.

Judge Finney turns down DWP's request for reconsideration of his April decision; he rules DWP must pay attorney fees to National Audubon Society and Mono Lake Committee.

US Forest Service upholds the Management Plan for the Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area. DWP challenged it because of its recommendations to protect the wildlife, geologic and scenic resources of Mono Lake.

DWP asks Congress to add amendments to the Manzanar National Historic Site bill which would exempt DWP from Clean Water and Clean Air Acts in the Eastern Sierra. MLC opposes the move.

August

Mono Lake officially becomes part of the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network, one of 17 worldwide.

Court-ordered restoration work begins on Rush and Lee Vining Creeks, overseen by the Restoration Technical Committee, comprised of the Department of Fish and Game, National Audubon Society, California Trout, MLC, and DWP.

The 12th annual Bike-A-Thon raises \$95,000 for Mono Lake. LA Councilman Zev Yaroslavsky runs the final portion of the Bike-A-Thon, joining in the rehydration ceremony with State Senator Patrick Johnston.

September

Mono Lake declines to 6374.2 feet above sea level, its low ebb for 1991.

October

DWP asks Judge Finney to disband the Restoration Technical Committee since DWP often disagree with four out of the five members.



Superior Court Judge Terrence M. Finney

November

Judge Finney turns down DWP's motion and orders storation work to continue.

US Senate rejects DWP's request for Amendments to the Manzanar bill which would harm the Eastern Sierra. Neutral language supported by MLC and the city of LA is adopted. The bill is expected to pass into law in January.

December

MLC joins statewide environmental and water leaders in Sacramento to sign the Best Management Practices.

DWP's request for a rate increase is rejected. LA City Councilman Zev Yaroslavsky calls for DWP to end "wasteful" expenditures and negotiate a settlement on Mono Lake to obtain state funds from AB 444 for conservation and reclamation.

2

Three Adventure Tours To Benefit Mono Lake

Journeys to three out-of-the-ordinary wilderness areas are being planned in the on-going series of adventures that benefit Mono Lake. Included in the cost of each trip is a tax-deductible donation to the Mono Lake Foundation.

The first proposed Mono Lake Adventure Tour is an 11-day cruise through the Inside Passage and Gulf of Alaska in August of 1992. The ship Society Explorer will probe the pristine backwaters of remote Alaskan fjords, discovering breathtaking stas of the coastal dountains. Zodiac landing craft will ferry travelers to secluded places beyond the reach of ordinary travel. Expert naturalists will be on board to point out the fascinating animal, bird and sea life.

The second cruise the tip of explores the opposite end of the world — the Antarctic Peninsula — in January, 1993. During the long days of the Antarctic summer, this 15-day trip will pass by dramatic seacoasts and spectacular icebergs. Zodiacs will ply the icy waters, taking guests ashore under the guidance of renowned naturalists to visit penguin colonies and bird rookeries.

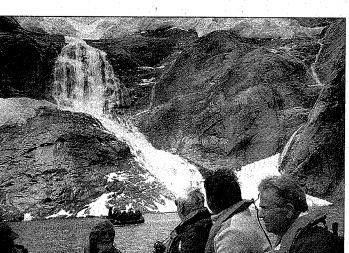


Photo by M. Bennett

Zodiac landing craft approach Romanche Glacier, near the tip of South America.

A trip to the southernmost tip of South America is proposed for February, 1993. On the 21-day journey to **Patagonia**, travelers will experience the isolated wilderness of both Paine and Glacier National Parks. Patagonia is a

wonderously diverse area rich in unique plant and animal life and human history.

"These are three of the most beautiful, least-spoiled places on earth," said Mildred Bennett, Mono Lake Committee Travel Coordinator. "In each case, the mountain scenery, the seascapes, and the wildlife are truly magnificent."

"Prices and other details

of each trip will be finalized

as soon as we learn of people's wishes," Bennett explained. "Let us know of your interest, and we'll send information as soon as it's

available. And don't forget -- each trip includes a donation to help save Mono Lake."

To learn more, fill out the coupon below and mail it to:
M. Bennett
2719 Marin Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94708

Please s	Mo end information on the fo	e Committee when it is available		Tours:	2-8
	Alaska, August 1992	Antarctica, J	January 1993		Patagonia, February 199
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Address			City/State/Zip	-	

Green Leaves Board, Becomes Director Emeritus

Long-time Mono Lake activist Helen Green has resigned from the Committee's Board of Directors, becoming a Director Emeritus. The Berkeley resident served as Secretary since becoming a board member in 1986.

"After five years, I felt the Committee needed to get new blood," said Green, explaining her departure. "I felt I had given what I had to give."

Green grew up in Bishop, and frequently returned to the Eastern Sierra to backpack after she moved to the Bay area. A Sierra Club notice in 1979 alerted her to the formation of the Mono Lake Committee.

An active Audubon Society member, Green helped organize a year-long campaign in 1980 with the Golden Gate Audubon chapter, raising funds for the Mono Lake Committee.

She spearheaded the making of a Mono Lake quilt that raised \$6,700; a direct appeal brought in another \$10,000.

Both Helen and her son Mike became volunteer gull researchers at the lake, where they met Committee founder David Gaines. "It was David who brought my name before the board," she explained. "He wanted a member who was a likeminded conservationist, birder, and Monophile."



Photo by Bob Schlichting Paul and Helen Green, at the Awards Ceremony for the 1991 Bike-A-Thon. Helen was singled out for her years of service to Mono Lake.

Now she plans to put more emphasis on birdwatching; she leads the Golden Gate Audubon chapter's field trip to Mono Lake each June.

Helen and husband Paul will remain important participants in the yearly LA to Mono Lake Bike-A-Thon — she has made the 380-mile bike ride five times, while he has ridden three. They both have served as support drivers in other years. The couple has always been among the event's top fund-raisers.

At the end of last year's ride, in recognition of her work on Committee's Board of Directors and the Bike-A-Thon, she and Paul were presented with a special award — the book Save The Birds — signed by all the cyclists.

"Helen has been so very valuable as a board member, " said Martha Davis, the

Committee's Executive Director. "She is our board's resident bird expert, with an incredible love for Mono Lake and the Eastern Sierra. More importantly, she has been our 'sounding board', a great listener with a real common sense approach to problem solving."

"We made Helen our second Director Emeritus. We couldn't imagine letting her go," concluded Davis.

Environmental Lawyer Joins Mono Lake Board



Dian M. Grueneich, a San Francisco attorney specializing in environmental, energy, and water matters, joined the Mono Lake Committee's Board of Directors in early November.

A founding partner in the law firm of Grueneich, Ellison and Schneider, Grueneich co-manages the firm's environmental practice. Their client list includes citizens' groups, environmental

organizations, government agencies, trade organizations, and alternative energy producers.

Grueneich successfully represented the San Luis Obispo Mothers For Peace and the Sierra Club in lawsuits challenging radioactive waste storage at the Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant, while her opposition of a trans—Sierra power transmission line for a Nevada citizens' group resulted in the cancellation of the project.

Promoting energy-efficient design and conservation, she provides legal assistance to the Natural Resources Defense

Council in proceedings before the California Energy Commission in Sacramento. She successfully represented the California Coalition for Alternatives to Pesticides before the state's Department of Food and Agriculture.

As an outside council, she serves such diverse governmental clients as the California Department of General Services, the county of Santa Cruz, and the Regents of the University of California. She is also familiar with the southern part of the state, having represented both the city of Los Angeles and the South Coast Air Quality Management District.

"Dian has argued for wise energy use just as our Committee has fought for water conservation," explained Ed Grosswiler, co-chair of the Mono Lake Committee Board. "We welcome her expertise, especially as the Mono Lake Committee begins the lengthy, involved hearings before the State Water Resources Control Board in Sacramento over the next 18 months."

Also a member of the Board of Directors of the California League of Conservation Voters, Grueneich graduated from Stanford University in 1974. She received her law degree from the Georgetown University Law Center.

Shooting Begins on Mono Lake Documentary

by Shelly Backlar

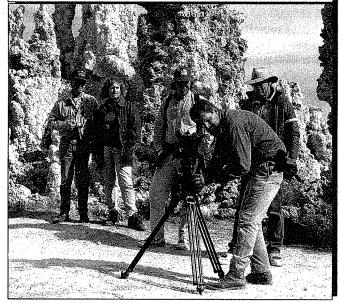
This October, taping began on a 30-minute television program about Mono Lake entitled "The Lake That Speaks." Emmy Award-winning film-maker Stephen Fisher is producing the documentary in association with San Jose's Public Broadcasting station KTEH.

"The program is being taped over the course of a year to show Mono Lake as a living entity, changing from season to season," said Fisher. "During our first shoot, we captured the serenity of Mono Lake during the fall, before the snow hits. We also documented the lake at its second lowest level in recorded history."

"The Lake That Speaks" will illustrate Mono Lake's ecological and legal significance. Emphasis will be placed on the precedent—tting use of the public trust octrine as a tool for undoing past

"The Lake That Speaks" began shooting this fall. Seen left to right is Director Stephen Fisher, MLC Development Director Shelly Backlar, Intern Terry Stonich, Cinematographer Witt Monts, and Publications Editor Bob Schlichting. These MLC staff members, including Carolyn Callahan, John Cain, and Betsy Reifsnider, volunteered their time to scout locations, arrange interviews, and carry equipment.

Photo by Don Jackson



nelly and

environmental mistakes.

A celebrity host, teaming up with various scientists and legal experts, will travel throughout the basin to tell Mono Lake's story.

Special thanks go to KTEH executive producer Danny McGuire and to cinematographer Witt Monts for their support in the early stages of production. Also to City TV of Santa Monica for providing editing equipment, and to Pat and Jim Flynn of the Swiss Chalet in Mammoth Lakes for donating lodging for the crew. Elden Vestal and his wife Mary Ethel participated in the first round of taped interviews.

A production grant from the Michael J. Connell Foundation enabled filming to begin, while a grant from the California Council for the Humanities has just been awarded for research and script development. Additional funding came from Patagonia, Inc., the

Strong Foundation, and Mavis Cain.

"The Lake That Speaks" will begin airing in the fall of 1992 if funding continues successfully. For more information or to assist with fundraising, please contact Shelly Backlar at (818) 972-2025.

A three-minute sample of this work in progress can be seen in conjunction with the "At Mono Lake Exhibit" at the Fullerton Museum, Fullerton California, from January 23 through February 23, 1992.

In Celebration

Mono Lake Committee Board member Dave Phillips and Ali Pearson were recently married in Hawaii. Several anonymous donations were made in celebration of the San Francisco couple's July 27 wedding.

Although Ann Howald and David Leland were married in July, contributions made in their honor continue to arrive. Richard and Gayle Leland of San Rafael added a gift to those reported in the last newsletter.

Mort and Edith Gaines made a donation to help celebrate the 50th anniversary of their long-time friends, Janice and Sidney Margolis, of Palm Springs.

In Memory

Sonia Cook of Davis made two memorial donations, one

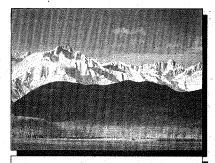
in honor of her mother, Harriet Cook, and one in honor of T. Elliot Weier.

Accolades

The anonymous benefactor strikes again! Several times in past years an unknown fly fisherman has stopped in the Visitor Center to chat for several minutes, Upon leaving, he makes an anonymous cash donation to the Committee. Whoever you are — we appreciate it!

Part of the funds collected by the United Way in Mariposa and Yosemite were donated this Fall to the Mono Lake Committee. Our thanks.

We inadvertently omitted the name of Nora Norden from our Summer, 1991 newsletter article about the Wine Cellar Drawing. Nora generously donated four wonderful bottles of wine to the event. We apologize for the oversight.



"Winter Sunrise, Sierra Nevada from Lone Pine, California, 1944" signed lithograph by Ansel Adams

1991 Free Drawing Winners Announced

More than 6200 supporters bought tickets for this Fall's seventh annual Save Mono Lake Free Drawing. The drawing, held October 31 in Lee Vining, netted over \$115,000 for the Mono Lake Committee.

"The yearly event promotes awareness of the plight of Mono Lake, while supporting the Committee's fund-raising efforts," said Development Coordinator Liz Fishman Near.

Here are this year's winners, along with the prizes they won

Melanie Carlston of Santa Cruz: the signed Ansel Adams Lithograph, "Winter Sunrise, Sierra Nevada from Lone Pine", from the Ansel Adams Gallery, Yosemite National Park, California.

Vincent Custodio of Pleasant Hill: the Mammoth Summer Weekend, a package donated by the Swiss Chalet, The Mogul, and The Stove, all in Mammoth Lakes, California.

Suzanne Strotz of Lake Isabella: the *Mono Lake Weekend*, furnished by the Gateway Motel, the Mono Inn, and the Mono Lake Foundation.

Don and Diane Harmon of Oakland: the Middle Fork of American River Rafting Trip, given by Friends of the River Foundation, Marina Del Rey, California.

Pat Elward of Santa Cruz: the Yosemite Weekend, donated by the Yosemite Park & Curry Company, Yosemite National Park, California.

Lt. Louis Mosier, based in the Aleutian Islands with the US Navy, won the "Reach for the Sky" Wood Carving, given by Gary "Wiz" Burns, The Tree Wizard, June Lake, California.

Rebecca Alexander of Cornville, Arizona: Eddie Bauer's *Precious Gift Globe*, from Eddie Bauer, Inc., Redmond, Washington.

Leontine Vayssie of San Francisco: the Williams – Sonoma Gift Certificate, donated by Williams – Sonoma, San Francisco, California.

C.B. Case of Berkeley: the Smith & Hawken Gift Certificate, from Smith & Hawken, Mill Valley, California.

Andrew Geiser of Montara: the North Face Travel Bag, furnished by The North Face, Berkeley, California.

"We'd like to thank all those organizations that donated prizes and gave the Mono Lake Committee their support," said Fishman Near. "We also appreciate all those who bought tickets for one of the Mono Lake Committee's most successful events."

Staff Hellos and Goodbyes

by Carolyn Callahan

Goodbye to Lee Vining Visitor Center Manager Melanie Findling. Melanie, who's been part of the Committee staff since 1988, is leaving the Eastern Sierra to pursue other career opportunities and to join her fiancee in Sonora. We are sad to see her leave but appreciate her accomplishments in our mail order, water conservation, and merchandising programs.

Welcome back to Geoff McQuilkin, who will pinch hit until March as the temporary sales manager. Geoff interned with the Committee's Visitor Center during the summer of 1990 and has since graduated from Harvard, with a degree in the History of Science.

Goodbye and Hello to Bryan Flaig, who leaves his position as an MLC intern but remains in the Mono Basin to work with stream restoration crews. Bryan can now be found wading in near-freezing Lee Vining and Rush Creeks, inspecting streambeds and flows.

"Canoe" Sue Judson of Crowley Lake this summer joined the ranks of the slightly alkali-encrusted Canoe Guides led by Gary Nelson. Sue has managed the International Youth Hostel, 35 miles south of Mono Lake on 395, for the past year and will return to help lead the increasingly popular canoe tours next summer.

Mark Lake, who started an internship in March, will stay in Lee Vining until next June. Mark, the Committee's only Eastern Sierra native, also works part time in the special education program at Lee Vining's elementary and high schools.

Summer intern Stacey Simon accepted a temporary position at Bodie State Historical Park before returning to the Bay area; Wendy Robinson, also interning this summer, has gone back to Santa Cruz to finish her degree in Environmental Studies.

Now that it's January, **Terry Stonich**, our Fall intern, will return to Colorado where he received his degree in Environmental Conservation from Colorado University at Boulder.

The LA office, too, had an intern this fall. Elizabeth Webb, a junior at the University of Southern California, took a class through the Jesse Unruh School of Political Science that required her to work at a local environmental organization. Her volunteer internship with the MLC earned her class credit and gave her research experience in fundraising grants and state wide water policy.

Your Photo - A Postcard?

The Mono Lake Committee is adding to its series of beautiful Mono Basin postcards. The cards are used to raise funds and promote understanding of Mono Lake.

The Lee Vining office is now accepting photo submissions. Photographers will receive 100 postcards and photo credit for each photo selected. We will accept transparencies or 5" x 7" glossy prints for non-exclusive reproduction rights.

Please send color images of Mono Lake only, in the horizontal format only. To fit a 4" x 6" postcard, be aware that the images may need to be cropped.

All photos will be returned, but please send duplicates rather than originals, if possible -- we can only guarantee the value of each print or slide to \$10.

Photo submissions must be received by February 28; selection will be made and all photos mailed back by March 31, 1992.

Submissions must include the photographer's name, address, phone number, and a self-addressed stamped envelope with sufficient postage to return

Become a published photographer and help Mono Lake! Send your images to: Postcard Photos, Mono Lake Committee, P.O. Box 29, Lee Vining, CA 93541.

Mono Lake Teaching Packet Available

Now it's even easier for teachers and parents to explain about Mono Lake and why it's worth saving -- with the help of the newly-completed Mono Lake Committee Teaching Packet.

The six-lesson packet is full of activities that are both fun and educational. Designed for grades from three to seven, the material is easily adaptable to all age levels.

Whether you live in Los Angeles or Long Island, the packet will help you spread the word about the importance of water conservation and the preservation of unique natural treasures.

For information on how to obtain a packet, contact Carolyn Callahan, the Programs Coordinator in Lee Vining, at (619) 647-6595.

Speakers Bureau Formed in LA

The Southern California Speakers Bureau is now operational, serving organizations eager to hear the Mono Lake story. The half-hour program comes complete with spectacular slides and a knowledgeable speaker, according to Bureau coordinatorBetsy Reifsnider.

The descriptive talk is often requested by schools, Rotary Clubs, Kiwanis Clubs, and environmental groups like Sierra Club.

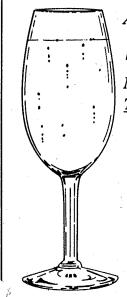
"Our experienced team of speakers is from the greater Los Angeles area," said Reifsnider. "However, if you give us a month's notice, we will try to accommodate speaking engagements in other Southern California counties."

To arrange for a speaker, contact Betsy Reifsnider at the Mono Lake Committee office in Burbank, (818) 972-2025.

MLC Visitor Center Job Now Open

The full-time position of Sales Manager at the MLC Visitor Center is now available. Duties in Lee Vining include the ordering and stocking of merchandise for the Center, administering the mail order program, and developing new products for sale. The manager is responsible for keeping financial records and producing yearly reports analyzing the Committee's sales programs, both retail and wholesale.

Applicants should have some retail experience, computer skills, and a familiarity with bookkeeping. To apply, contact Shannon Nelson in the Lee Vining office, at (619) 647-6595, by February 17th.



Announcing the Mono Lake Committee's

Seventh Annual Fine Wine Cellar Drawing!

NEW THIS YEAR!

Two drawings and wine tasting events will be held in ...





San Francisco
Los Angeles
Thursday, May 14, 1992

- A suggested donation of \$50 includes a chance to win one of several exquisite wine cellars and admission for two to either event
- Only 500 tickets will be sold for each drawing
- Winners need not be present to win
- Participants must be 21 or older

To reserve tickets, mail check or money order to:

The Mono Lake Committee Fine Wine Cellar Drawing

1207 West Magnolia Blvd., Suite D

Burbank, CA 91506

For more information contact Shelly at (818) 972-2025

ACTION ALERT

Will State's Budget Crunch Close Tufa Reserve?

The Mono Lake Tufa State Reserve is on a list of parks to be closed due to budget cuts. The cost-cutting move, announced in the final days of December, would save the state one ranger's salary plus \$12,000 in other operating costs.

If the plan is approved, closure of the park could come July 1.

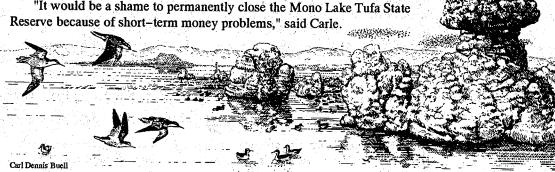
"Shutting down this relatively inexpensive state park operation sends the wrong message when Mono Lake's water issues are at a critical point," said David Carle, ranger stationed at the tufa reserve. "This is not the time for the state to back out of its commitment to the lake. In addition, the number of visitors to the park continues to grow, and the state reserve's guided tours and programs are needed now more than ever."

"The reserve was included on the 'hit' list because we have never charged visitors a fee, so we don't generate any

revenue,"Carle explained.

If you disagree with this budget-cutting proposal, please write in support of the state reserve's continued operation. Address your letters to California's State Parks Director Don Murphy, P.O. Box 942896, Sacramento, CA 94296-0001, or Resources Secretary Douglas Wheeler, 1416 Ninth Street, Sacramento, CA 95814. For more information, contact Ranger Carle at (619) 647-6331.

"It would be a shame to permanently close the Mono Lake Tufa State



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 a 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 taxdeductible, please make your check out to "the Mono Lake Foundation".



Mono Lake OMMITTEE

Lee Vining, California 93541

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