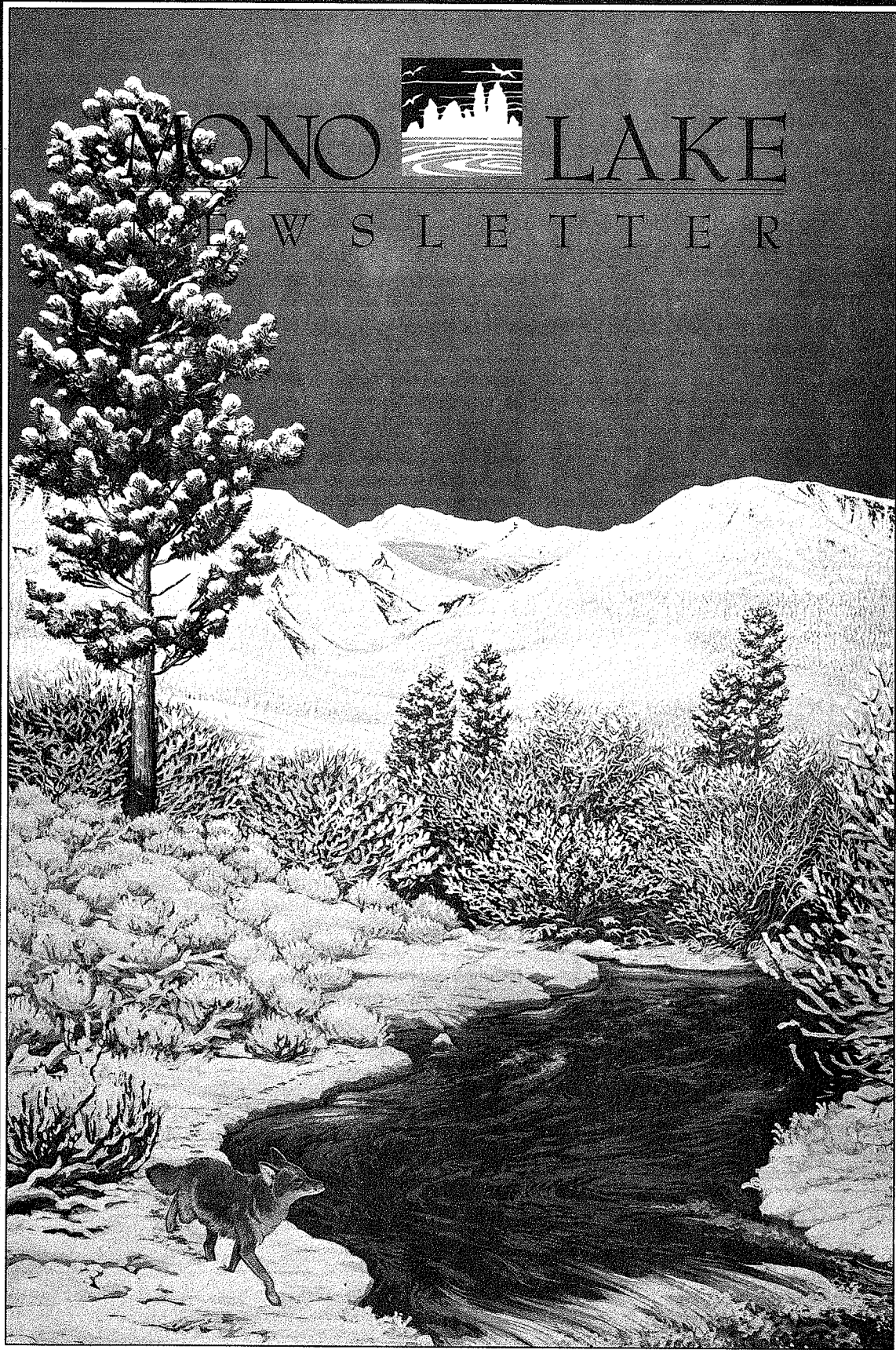


Winter 1993

Volume 15, Number 3



The Mono Basin's Rush Creek

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This issue's cover:

Rush Creek, the largest tributary of Mono Lake, is featured on this issue's cover. Artist **Carl Dennis Buell**, now a resident of Mammoth Lakes, created the illustration for the Mono Lake Committee.

Today, thanks to a series of historic court decisions, water once more flows from Rush Creek's headwaters in the Ansel Adams Wilderness all the way to Mono Lake. Work is scheduled to begin in 1993 to restore what was once a prize brown trout fishery to its former glory after years of diversions had reduced it to a dry, empty desert wash.

The cover also features the new Mono Lake Committee logo, created by the artists at **Patagonia**, the Ventura-based mountaineering and clothing manufacturer.

Since its beginnings almost 15 years ago as part of the Santa Monica Bay Audubon Society, the Mono Lake Committee has used the image of two grebes to identify itself. An alternative logo, a silhouette of Mono Lake, was used on the Newsletter masthead and a few other places.

The new Mono Lake Committee design by Patagonia's **Kitty Botke** combines the themes of water and birds with the unique backdrop of Mono's tufa. We think it better represents the rare and valuable ecosystem for which we are all fighting. 

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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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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."

Meanderings On Mono's Shore

by Gary Nelson

Mono Lake Foundation Canoe Tour Guide

I usually see the South Tufa grove as the gulls and grebes do, by floating on Mono Lake. I have paddled around and through these large tufa hundreds of times during the last four years while giving canoe tours for the Mono Lake Foundation. Although walking through this wondrous statuary is an amazing experience, it is pretty much foreign to me, a confirmed "sailor of the inland sea."

However, come fall, after canoes and paddles are stored away, I am always drawn back to meander along Mono's shore.

This is a quiet time at Mono Lake. By now, most of the grebes have left, along with the tourists. On this clear, crisp morning in early December, most of the passersby are mule deer migrating east across the basin into Nevada. Their tracks are plentiful around the freshwater springs near the shore.

With the onset of cold weather, Mono's population of brine shrimp and alkali flies becomes less active and less numerous. Without the billions of tiny creatures feeding on it, the algae begin to multiply. Staring out from the shore, I can see a green line of algae plastered onto tufa, four or five inches above the water. Its presence above the lake shows the toll evaporation has taken just within the last two or three weeks.

A small tufa island I have canoed around many times is now connected to the shore by a landbridge -- or, perhaps more accurately, a mudbridge. A fledgling gull, hatched only a few months ago, tentatively walks on this newly-uncovered muck, gobbling up alkali flies.

Every so often the gull looks west, to the massive eastern escarpment of the Sierra Nevada. The peaks are covered with a dusting of snow, the remains of the first small storm of the season. It's as if the young bird is sizing up the height of the crest, assessing how much energy it will need to expend in its first flight to the ocean. The gull starts feeding again, fueling up for the journey.

My walk along the shoreline brings me to a broad footpath, the linear trail coming from the empty South Tufa parking lot. Nearby are some of the most photographed tufa in the world. I am surprised to see that these familiar formations are now connected to the land by narrow peninsulas. Faint pathways through the squirrel-tail grass lead out to these former islets.

I am used to seeing these towers from the opposite side, by canoe, looking toward shore. The tiny paths amaze me; somehow I retained the naive impression that the formations were inviolate from land-based predators, either the two-legged or four-legged kind.

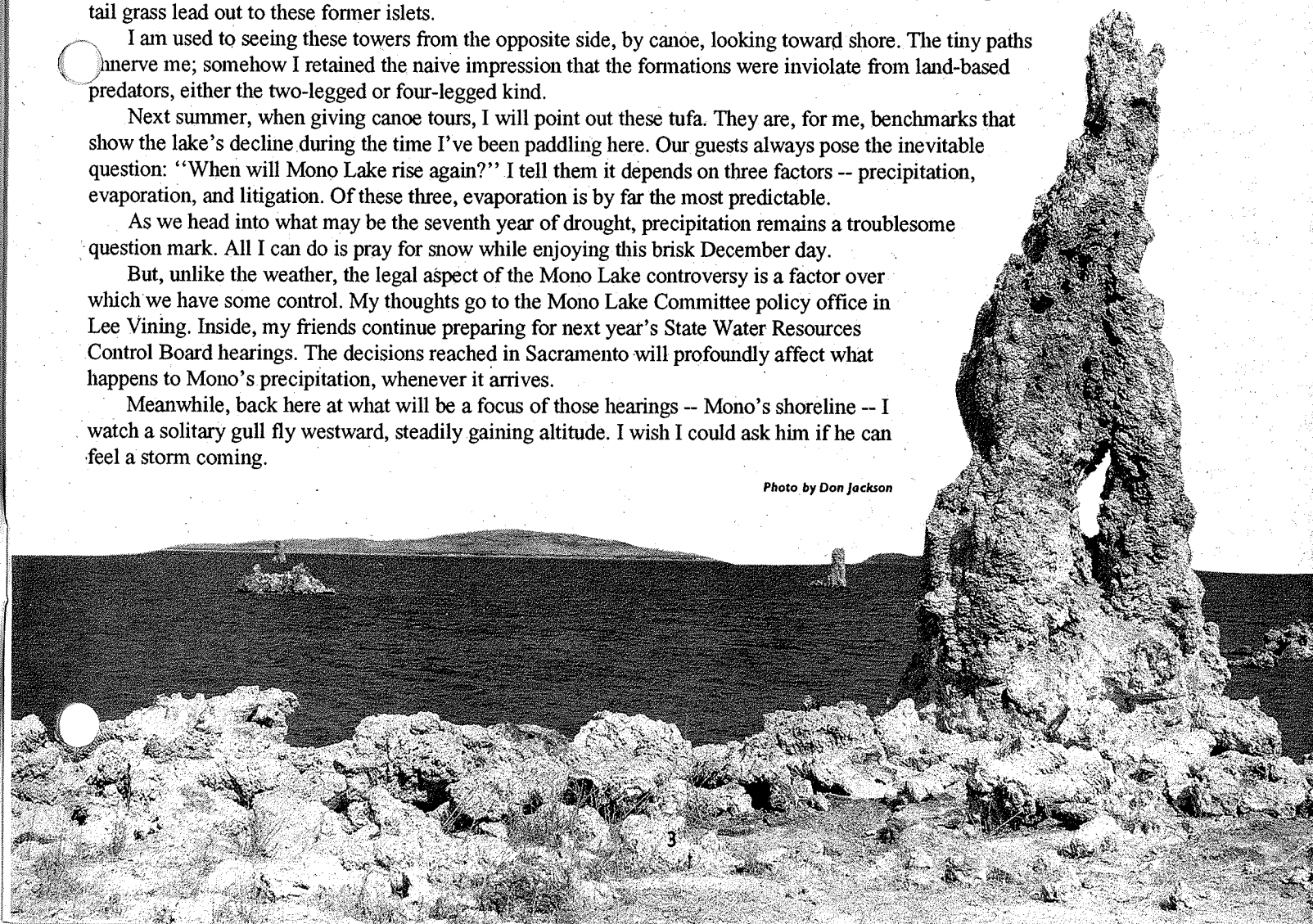
Next summer, when giving canoe tours, I will point out these tufa. They are, for me, benchmarks that show the lake's decline during the time I've been paddling here. Our guests always pose the inevitable question: "When will Mono Lake rise again?" I tell them it depends on three factors -- precipitation, evaporation, and litigation. Of these three, evaporation is by far the most predictable.

As we head into what may be the seventh year of drought, precipitation remains a troublesome question mark. All I can do is pray for snow while enjoying this brisk December day.

But, unlike the weather, the legal aspect of the Mono Lake controversy is a factor over which we have some control. My thoughts go to the Mono Lake Committee policy office in Lee Vining. Inside, my friends continue preparing for next year's State Water Resources Control Board hearings. The decisions reached in Sacramento will profoundly affect what happens to Mono's precipitation, whenever it arrives.

Meanwhile, back here at what will be a focus of those hearings -- Mono's shoreline -- I watch a solitary gull fly westward, steadily gaining altitude. I wish I could ask him if he can feel a storm coming.

Photo by Don Jackson



Lake Views:

An Editorial

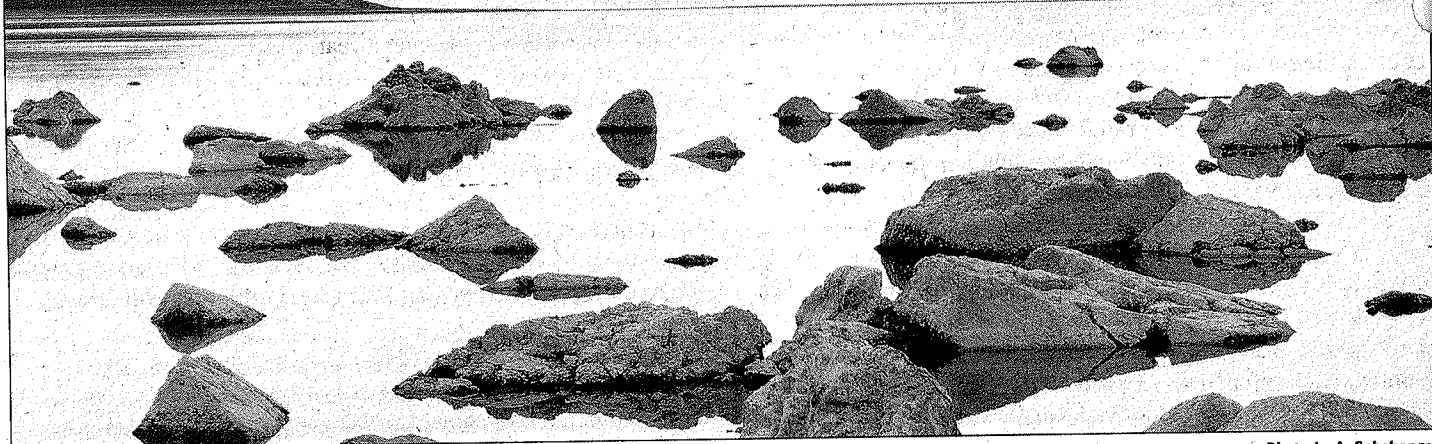


Photo by A. Sahakangas

The Committee's History of Problem Solving:

You Can Lead DWP To Water ...

by Bob Schlichting

It's easy enough to point out a problem. Finding a solution is much more difficult.

Since its beginning, the Mono Lake Committee has worked to bring about solutions.

It was fifteen years ago that a group of scientists and graduate students pointed out the problem at Mono Lake. They had been given a National Science Foundation grant two years earlier, to study the entire Mono Lake ecosystem -- its biology, geology, and hydrology. It was the first time in Mono's history that such an extensive research project had been undertaken; what it revealed was an abundantly rich life cycle on the verge of collapse.

Unbridled water diversions by the city of Los Angeles were causing Mono Lake to drop at a rate of one to two feet a year. Already a landbridge had formed, connecting Negit Island to Black Point. The lake's salinity had doubled. The number of unique brine shrimp and alkali flies living in Mono's waters were decreasing, as were the numbers of birds that visited each year. Critical wetlands had disappeared.

Having identified the problem, several of these scientists set out to solve it. Unable to walk away from the imminent destruction of a unique ecosystem, they formed the Mono Lake Committee.

At first glance, the solution to

Mono's protection seems deceptively simple: if diversions are causing the lake's level to fall dangerously low, don't divert so much water. The Committee discovered that, by cutting back the city's water use by ten percent -- about 70,000 acre-feet a year -- and leaving that much extra in the Mono Basin, the problem would be solved.

But the Department of Water and Power (DWP) was unwilling to negotiate any change in its diversions. Los Angeles needed Mono's water -- available substitute supplies were too expensive to consider, said the Department.

So, to solve the problem of Mono Lake's protection, the Committee began searching for new supplies of water for L.A.

When the citizen's group was first formed back in 1978, water conservation seemed like an unworkable resolution. But slowly, perceptions changed as Californians became more environmentally aware. Conservation became recognized as a cheaper alternative to constructing new dams and expensive canals, and the Mono Lake Committee became involved in the reshaping of water policy

throughout California.

A Committee staff member participated

In 1993, the State Water Resources Control Board in Sacramento will begin critical hearings to balance the water requirements of a healthy Mono Lake against the needs of Los Angeles. How can DWP honestly argue it must have Mono's water when it has turned its back on replacement supplies?

in the intricate negotiations that produced the *Best Management Practices*, an agreement that requires urban water agencies across the state -- including DWP -- to encourage conservation. Today, as a result of such talks, water conservation in California is recognized as a reliable, low cost, alternative water supply. And during the drought in 1991, DWP customers in Los Angeles cut back their water use by over 30 percent.

But while water policies in California have evolved, DWP's position on Mono Lake has not changed. Even though a temporary court injunction has prevented it from taking any water from the basin since 1989, DWP still maintains it cannot do without Mono's water.

So the Mono Lake Committee sought other solutions to the problem of replacement supplies. At our urging, AB 444 was passed by the State Legislature in 1989. A \$60 million fund of investment capital was formed, to be used in Southern California to help build water reclamation facilities. The plan offered Los Angeles a dependable new supply of water that would more than replace diversions from the Mono Basin.

To receive the state money, all DWP had to do was agree to a plan contributing to Mono Lake's permanent protection and co-apply with the Mono Lake Committee for the funds. For over two years, DWP bureaucrats refused to negotiate. Talks finally began this Spring but broke down when none of the proposals were approved by the full five-member DWP Commission.

It was ten years ago that the State Supreme Court issued its landmark public trust decision, decreeing that wildlife and scenic areas like Mono are owned by the public at large and have the right to protection. Additional judgements require water to flow down the Mono Basin's once dammed creeks. The water needed to restore the streams and their fisheries is permanently lost to DWP, but the Department acts as though the court

decisions never happened -- it continues to refuse the replacement water that AB 444 funds could provide.

Now, with input from the Mono Lake Committee, Congress has passed federal legislation which offers yet another answer to Los Angeles' water replacement problems. H.R. 429, an omnibus bill, funds numerous water projects throughout the West (see the story on page 6.) It offers a contribution of federal money for "a project to develop 120,000 acre-feet per year of reclaimed water in Southern California [which] is expected to offset water diversions from the environmentally sensitive Mono Lake Basin."

If DWP agrees to use the federal funds, it can develop half again as much water as the Mono Basin supplied when diversions were allowed. But whether or not DWP claims it, the money offered by H.R. 429 almost certainly will be utilized in Southern California. Already, the West Basin Municipal Water District, an agency independent from DWP, has expressed interest in using the fund to help finance a water recycling plant soon to be under construction in El Segundo.

They have bluntly stated that their program will lessen their demand for Metropolitan Water District supplies by 70,000 acre-feet of water a year. *"Metropolitan will then be able to make this conserved yield available to the city of Los Angeles to replace their lost supply from Mono Lake,"* the district added.

In 1986, L. A. Mayor Tom Bradley wrote a letter to the Commissioner of the Federal Bureau of Reclamation and the Director of the State Department of Water Resources. *"I stand ready to do my part to preserve Mono Lake and to begin the process of exploring possible alternative sources of high-quality and affordable water for the citizens of Los Angeles,"* Bradley pledged. *"I am hopeful that you will join with the City of Los Angeles in contributing the necessary water and financial resources required."*

The Mono Lake Committee took the Mayor at his word and worked to secure funding for replacement water. State legislators Phil Isenberg and Richard Katz took the Mayor at his word and sponsored AB 444. Representative George Miller did his part when he sponsored H. R. 429.

Today, the only holdout is DWP.

The Mono Lake Committee's Six-Point Plan offers a solution fair to both Los Angeles and Mono Lake. It doesn't prevent diversions to Los Angeles. It merely controls them enough to protect Mono's fragile and unique ecosystem. In the process, Los Angeles gains much more water than it loses.

Today, both state and federal governments are offering DWP money to help finance replacement water supplies for Los Angeles. Of course, DWP can reject the federal funds, just as it has refused state funds. But it is becoming more and more difficult for DWP to justify such decisions.

In 1993, the State Water Resources Control Board in Sacramento will begin critical hearings to balance the water requirements of a healthy Mono Lake against the needs of Los Angeles. How can DWP honestly argue it must have Mono's water when it has turned its back on replacement supplies?

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 Los Angeles' needs -- are the basis for a lasting resolution of the 50-year controversy.

Mono Lake's Needs

- 1. Management Lake Level -- 6386 feet.**
Provides vital protection for ecology and wildlife while reducing toxic alkali dust storms.
- 3. Minimum Stream Flows**
Continues water releases already ordered by California Courts.
- 5. Minimum Lake Level -- 6377 feet**
Requires lake to remain above the absolute minimum water level already set by the courts.

Los Angeles' Needs

- 2. Replacement Water**
Develops new, environmentally sound water sources, using offered state and federal funds to help finance Mono Basin replacement water supplies.
- 4. Drought Year Protection**
Permits dry year diversions if minimum stream flows and lake levels are met.
- 6. Diversions during Implementation**
Allows limited diversions while replacement projects come on line.

Bill Allows Redistribution Of California Water

by Bob Schlichting

Passed by an overwhelming majority of Congress and signed into law by President Bush, the Western Water Bill provides dozens of water projects in 17 western states. But its most controversial provision allows restructuring of California's Central Valley Project, which distributes about 20 percent of the California's developed water.

Since the 1940's, the federally-owned project has supplied farmers in the San Joaquin Valley with highly subsidized water from streams on the western side of the Sierra Nevada. Currently the 500-mile network of dams, reservoirs and canals irrigates about 3 million acres of farmland.

Under the old system, farmers were given 40-year water contracts that were automatically renewed on roughly the same terms and rates, and were prohibited from transferring any of their allocated water to anyone not holding a federal contract. It could not be legally exported from the Central Valley.

But under H.R. 429, the new water bill, farmers will be able to voluntarily sell their rights to such buyers as the Metropolitan Water District (MWD), a

water wholesaler supplying many cities in Southern California. Thus, urban water shortages can now be made up with irrigation supplies.

In addition, new contracts will be renewed for 25 instead of the customary 40 years, with 25-year extensions available at the discretion of the Secretary of the Interior. Water subsidies have been cut for nearly all Central Valley customers, and the old fixed price structure will be replaced with a three-tiered one that encourages water conservation.

"It's a great day for the Golden State," exclaimed Barry Nelson, the director of the Save the San Francisco Bay Association. "This is the first step on a new road with a Central Valley Project that can serve the whole state, not just a few growers."

The new legislation also makes the restoration and protection of fish and wildlife habitat a priority for the first time. Ninety-five percent of the valley's historic wetlands have been destroyed; under the old system, irrigation was the primary purpose of the Central Valley Project. The landmark bill set the goal of doubling historic fish populations in

valley rivers and streams by the year 2002.

H.R. 429 sets aside \$50 million a year from fees on federal water and power sales to fund restoration efforts. In addition, it requires the Interior Department to provide 800,000 acre-feet of water to meet environmental needs; last year the entire project provided approximately 4.5 million acre-feet to farms, cities and industrial users. Until these environmental goals are met, the federal government is prohibited from entering into any new contracts for water.

California's powerful agricultural lobby was opposed to the changes in the Central Valley Project. However, urban water districts, environmentalists, and many of California's business interests were soundly in favor of the proposals.

House Interior Chairman George Miller (D-Martinez), the bill's chief sponsor, argued that the bill would give California a more balanced approach to water policies. Citing "the lock that agriculture has had over [water] for the last 50 years," Miller said the new reforms would stimulate economic activity by spreading federal water throughout the state.

Bill May Allow Water Transfers For Mono Lake

by Bob Schlichting

The federal government's new Central Valley policies may make possible a state plan proposed over a year ago to retire farms that have severe drainage and salt-contamination problems.

In parts of the San Joaquin Valley, irrigation has caused naturally-occurring selenium, arsenic and boron to leach from the soil. In the process, waterways and wildlife habitat have been polluted by toxic runoff. Estimates of the affected acreage run from a minimum of 75,000 to as high as 500,000 acres.

Under H.R. 429, such polluted land

could be taken out of production, and its water rights transferred elsewhere. Such a plan was proposed in 1991 by Charles Warren, Executive Officer of the State Lands Commission under Lieutenant Governor Leo McCarthy. Some of the acquired water could go to Los Angeles to replace Mono Basin diversions, a plan that was endorsed by Mike Gage, then President of the DWP Commission, and by Martha Davis, Executive Director of the Mono Lake Committee.

"H. R. 429 makes water transfers possible and removes one obstacle to the

state plan," conceded Davis. "But lots of negotiation still needs to be done before any settlement is reached."

Theoretically, state money appropriated for Mono Lake relief by AB 444 could be used as "seed money" for the project, providing the Mono Lake Committee and DWP jointly apply for the money. However, the \$60 million fund set aside by the California Legislature in 1989 has shrunk to \$48 million as DWP has refused to negotiate a settlement.

Landmark Bill Singles Out Mono Lake

by Bob Schlichting

The broad-based Western Water Bill signed into law October 30th includes funding to help develop 120,000 acre-feet of reclaimed water for Southern California -- water the legislation says "is expected to offset water diversions from the environmentally sensitive Mono Lake Basin in California."

"DWP has maintained it can't afford the loss of Mono Lake's water," explained Martha Davis, Executive Director of the Mono Lake Committee. "Now it and other water agencies in the Southland can apply for federal funds to finance water reclamation projects that will more than



Photo supplied by West Basin Municipal Water District
The West Basin Municipal Water District, a separate agency from DWP, distributes water to 18 cities with a population of 900,000 in Los Angeles County's South Bay area. Their proposed water reclamation plant seen in the foreground, above, is scheduled to begin construction soon in El Segundo.

The district has already expressed interest in using offered federal funds for their project, which will produce 70,000 acre-feet of recycled water a year. They have publicly stated that the "Metropolitan [water district] will then be able to make this conserved yield available to the city of Los Angeles to replace their lost supply from Mono Lake."

replace Mono Lake diversions."

The Mono Lake legislation, only a small part of the omnibus water bill that provides dozens of major projects in 17 western states, will help to insure that no other California ecosystem is put in jeopardy in order to protect Mono Lake.

"DWP has argued that, by cutting back on Mono Basin diversions, Los Angeles will be forced to import more water from the San Francisco Bay Delta," explained Davis. "But using this federal money for water reclamation adds a whole new source of supply for the city. If Los Angeles takes advantage of this legislation, everyone wins -- the DWP, its ratepayers, Mono Lake, and other threatened ecosystems across our state."

H.R. 429: Other Provisions

by John Cain, MLC Science Associate

H.R. 429 not only dramatically overhauls water policy in California's Central Valley; it also authorizes major water projects and establishes new precedents for water conservation and wildlife protection throughout the West. Despite a few controversial projects, the bill, which affects 17 states, is a big step in the right direction for western water policy.

Here are a few of the other programs authorized by the landmark bill:

- \$922 million for the completion of the Central Utah Project, probably the last giant federal water project. Although not an "environmental" project, intensive negotiations between Utah water interests and conservation organizations produced a settlement

that was acceptable to both parties. Some positive aspects of the bill include strict water conservation standards for all recipients of project water and a multi-million dollar fish and wildlife mitigation fund.

- Provisions to stop or minimize harm to Arizona's Grand Canyon. Studies over the past decade indicate that fluctuating water releases coming downstream from Glen Canyon Dam have damaged the environmental, cultural and recreational resources of the Canyon.
- An \$80 million expansion of the Buffalo Bill dam on the Shoshone River in Wyoming. Although most local and national environmental

organizations are opposed to the project, they were able to negotiate minimum stream flows for the fishery below the dam. It will be the first time that Wyoming has agreed to enforce instream flow laws.

- A \$10 million research project at California's Salton Sea area. To be studied are methods to improve water quality, provide habitat for endangered species, enhance fisheries, and protect human recreational values.
- A comprehensive federal study of all water resource problems in the West. All the programs administered by the U.S. Geological Survey and the Department of Interior will be reviewed.

Restoration Accomplishes Much on Lee Vining Creek

by John Cain, MLC Science Associate

After scores of days of negotiation eventually resolved by over 22 days in Judge Terrence Finney's courtroom, stream restoration work on Lee Vining Creek below the town of Lee Vining got fully underway in August. It was completed by mid-October.

According to Ilene Mandelbaum, Mono Lake Committee Associate Director in Lee Vining, "the project resulted in a significant increase in the quantity, diversity and quality of fish habitat. The restoration specialists, Woody Trihey and Scott English and their coworkers, have done a tremendous job."

The court-ordered goal of the restoration program was to "restore the conditions, or equivalent conditions, which benefited the fishery prior to 1941." Thus, the first step was to identify the way the creek was before diversions began. "Using records of the historical habitat as a model set an exciting precedent in the field of fishery restoration," Mandelbaum said.

A study by an interdisciplinary team of scientists revealed that lower Lee Vining Creek was, historically, a multi-channeled stream that flowed through a lush stream-side forest. Dense vegetation held the narrow channels together and provided complex habitat for a diversity of fish and wildlife species. Fallen logs, protruding roots, and time had collaborated to create deep, slow-moving water that wound through 20,000 linear feet of stream.

Unfortunately, years of water diversions desiccated the vegetation, allowing sudden floods to rip out plant roots and carve away the soil. Following diversions, three-quarters of the historical channels were either obliterated or abandoned. In their place, Lee Vining Creek became a broad, shallow wash.

Rewatering nearly a mile of the historical streambed was the heart of

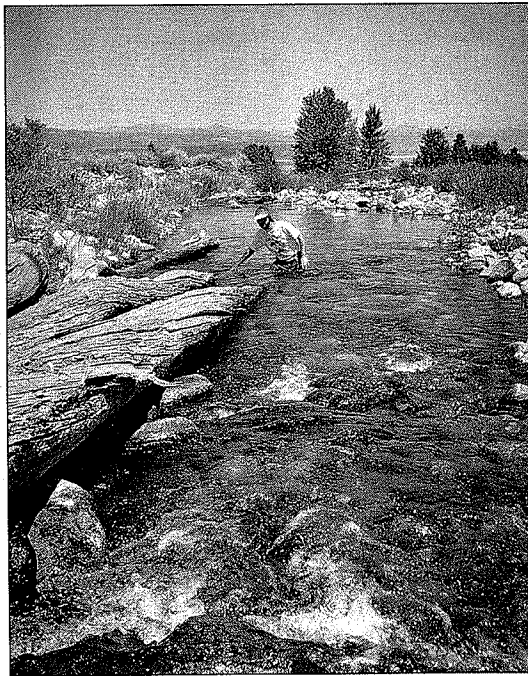


Photo by Ilene Mandelbaum

Science Associate John Cain stands in one of the pools recently dug on lower Lee Vining Creek. Woody debris like the logs on the left were strategically placed in pools and backwaters to provide cover for fish while the streamside vegetation is recovering.

1992's restoration work. Debris that blocked channel entrances was removed. In some sections, the structure of the channel was still intact and did not need modification. In other stretches, it had to be redefined, to restore the sequence of pools and riffles that characterize a natural stream.

Returning water to the abandoned channels caused an immediate recharging of the water table over a wide area of the flood plain. The result was a dramatic increase in wetland acreage. Restoration experts predict this will help the streamside forest to recover and to provide new habitat for a diversity of amphibians, birds and mammals.

The greatest challenge of the restoration project was the shallow, broad, present-day course of Lee Vining Creek. According to Mandelbaum, "the ankle-deep, fast-moving water in these channels presented a significant

impediment to the restoration of the fishery. In the summer, the fish are swept into Mono Lake by fast-moving water. In the winter they suffocate as the shallow water freezes from top to bottom."


After determining that pools would not form on their own in the foreseeable future, Woody Trihey recommended excavating pools and backwaters to provide refuge during high summer flows and harsh winter freezes. Some 2,000 feet of channel were modified this way.

On Lee Vining Creek, the restoration team is now focusing on revegetation plans for the spring of 1993. Although vegetation is recovering well in some places, broad expanses of barren cobble still dominate the landscape. Fortunately, revegetation pilot projects conducted last summer produced much valuable information to help guide next year's efforts.

Restoration of the more complex Rush Creek is the bigger challenge for 1993. Woody Trihey and the planning team will need to carry out feasibility studies, to examine which of the several options shows the most potential for returning the fishery to a healthy state.

DWP objected to two of the six suggested studies. But when the Mono Lake Committee asked Judge Finney to intervene, he ruled that "all six feasibility studies proposed by the consultant shall be conducted and they shall be paid for by DWP."

DWP also objected to the plan developed by the restoration team to monitor the recovery of the fisheries. The court is currently listening to highly technical arguments about monitoring.

"Despite these marathon court hearings and long hours at the negotiating table, the sound of water flowing in once-dry channels, and the response of fish and wildlife, has been a most exhilarating reward," concluded Mandelbaum. 

Conservation Corps Visits Mono Lake

by Betsy Reifsnider, Southern California Associate Director; and Fernando Gomez, LACC Member

In August, nine members of the Los Angeles Conservation Corps (LACC) spent a week at Mono Lake, helping with stream restoration work on Lee Vining Creek.

The visiting Corps members were from Central and East Los Angeles, and ranged in age from their late teens to early twenties. For most of them, this was their first camping experience. In addition to restoration work, the Corps members also found time to explore the Mono Basin and hike up nearby 13,000 foot Mt. Dana with Mono Lake Committee Science Associate John Cain.

The L.A. Conservation Corps is a public service program that hires young people from the inner city to work on community improvement and beautification projects in the greater Los Angeles area. Crew members have also built trails, planted trees, and cleared brush as far away as Yellowstone National Park.

The Mono Lake Committee, which funded the week-long project, and the L.A. Conservation Corps hope to turn this pilot project into a permanent program.

Here's how one of the Corp members described his week at Mono Lake:

My name is Fernando Gomez, 18, of Los Angeles, California, and my experience in the Mono Lake "Spike" [field camp] with the Los Angeles Conservation Corps has been a very influential experience in my life. The excitement of sleeping in tents out in the open air, eating, and working in the same environment made it more educational to me. It taught me the wonders of Mono Lake and its surrounding beauty.

The actual work during our week's stay involved building habitat for fish. We loosened gravel and soil in the river bed so

fish could spawn and lay their eggs. For further reproduction of the fishes, we built pools so small fish can be protected from bigger fish or other animals.

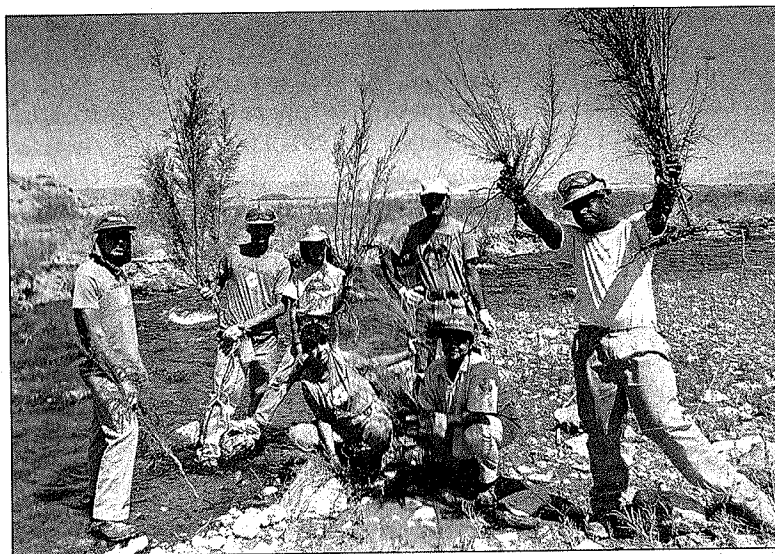
We also got to pull salt cedars, plants that take up too much water and steal the supply from native plants.

Although this was a work project, it was educational because we got to know about the lake. We also got to learn about the people and animals that used to live in these areas of the Sierra Nevada.

Another good thing we learned was why the lake is dying and what we could do

to save Mono Lake. The issues that concern this lake should get people thinking about where water comes from and its effect in nature. People should stop to think what we are leaving our future generations. One question that everyone should be asking is "are we doing the right thing?"

I would like to thank LACC for the opportunity of attending this spike and the Mono Lake Committee for giving city people a chance to see what we need to see. I would encourage the Committee to keep opening more opportunities like this, so other people can learn about Mono Lake.



Jane Dove June Au Photo

LACC members helped with stream restoration along Lee Vining Creek this summer. Taking part were, from left: Idel Rodriguez, Fernando Gomez, Maria Cabral, Betty Aguayo, Alejandro Jayo, Maria Diego, and Barry Taylor. Pacific Iron Works and Patagonia donated tents for the week's campout.

SUMMER JOB AVAILABLE AS CANOE GUIDE

A seasonal position will be available in Lee Vining from June to mid-September for someone to lead canoe tours and explain the Mono Lake ecosystem.

The Canoe Guide/Interpreter will be responsible for guiding trips, taking tour reservations, arranging special canoe and walking tours, and completing other

special projects at the Information Center. Applicants must be able to complete a Red Cross Fundamentals of Canoeing Course, which can be given locally by the Canoe Tour Supervisor. Interpreter/Guides must have sufficient physical strength to load, unload, paddle and steer canoes. Enthusiasm, an out-

going personality and a love of the outdoors are a must! A car is required for this 40-hour-a-week position, and mileage is reimbursed.

For more information, please contact Shannon Nelson at the Mono Lake Committee, P. O. Box 29, Lee Vining, CA. Phone (619) 647-6595.



Photo by Pete Smith
August 31: Cyclists leave downtown L.A., the beginning of the 1993 Bike-A-Thon

1992 LA TO MONO LAKE BIKE A THON

by Bob Schlichting

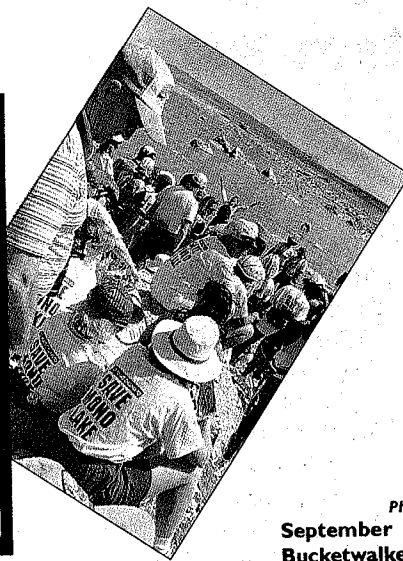


Photo by Bob Schlichting
September 5: Cyclists and Bucketwalkers meet at Mono Lake.

A day-by-day description of the 1992 Bike-A-Thon by some of those who lived it.

On the last morning in August, over 100 Mono Lake supporters gathered outside of DWP headquarters in downtown Los Angeles. After a send-off speech by Cecilia Estolano, the Environmental Deputy for L.A. Mayor Tom Bradley's office, the group dipped water into test tubes from the DWP's reflecting pool and strapped the tubes to their bikes. Then, with a mighty cheer, they pedalled off through rush hour traffic, heading across the city to the mountains, the passes, and the high desert beyond.

It was the start of the thirteenth annual trek by Mono Lake supporters who, after cycling for six days across 350 miles, would pour the transported water into Mono Lake in a symbolic "rehydration ceremony."

This year, 73 cyclists rode the entire Bike-A-Thon, while another nine rode part way while also serving as SAG (for Support and Gear) drivers. SAG drivers set up rest stops along the way, offering water, food, encouragement and aid whenever possible.

First time Bike-A-Thoner Lisa Vihos was both excited and apprehensive as she began the ride out of Los Angeles. "I'd always wanted to do a long bike trip," she

said. "But I couldn't believe I would be able to ride all the way to Mono Lake."

Her boyfriend, Michael Hoover, talked her into making the trip; he had ridden it once before, in 1991. "We started training back in June," she explained, "riding maybe 130 miles a week, especially in traffic, getting in shape for the stretch out of L.A."

Vihos' training hadn't prepared her for the adrenaline rush she felt being one of a large group of cyclists. The excitement lasted all the way through the opening ceremony, out of downtown and across Griffith Park to the suburbs of the San Fernando Valley. "That's when I

discovered there are some surprisingly big hills between L.A. and Palmdale," she said.

Bike-A-Thoners camped the night in McAdam Park in Palmdale. "It was a day of extremes -- first cities, then canyons, and finally high desert. But when I got to Palmdale, I started to believe I could make this trip," remembered Vihos.

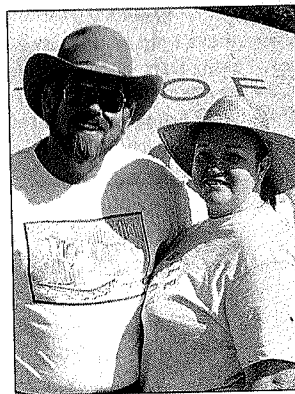
SAG driver Pete Smith's favorite part of the event is day two, from Palmdale to Inyokern. "Everyone is still very excited, but no one seems too tired," he explained. "Between Palmdale and Mojave, we're not riding down any major highways like '395' yet, so traffic is lighter. It's kind of quiet and peaceful. Until Red Rock, the road remains relatively flat. The desert is very beautiful and ... oh, yeah, very hot!"

Indeed, day two is probably the hottest part of the trip, across the Mojave desert. "Everyone appreciates the SAG stops on day two," Smith said with a smile. "The water, the snacks, and especially the shade are very welcome."

Smith has been a SAG driver on six of the last seven "Thons." "Being a support driver is a good way to help the cause without having to pedal a bike," he laughs. "This way, I force myself to make a visit to Mono Lake each year, and I get to see my friends. Many of the 'Thoners



First time rider Lisa Vihos, above right, was talked into the Bike-A-Thon by her boyfriend, Michael Hoover, left.



Pete Smith, above, has been a SAG driver on six Bike-A-Thons. His wife Cherie, right, also helped out for part of this year's event.

are almost like family to me now."

Michael Dressler has ridden the Bike-A-Thon ten times and participated in the other three, either as a photographer or SAG driver. He prefers the ride from Inyokern to Lone Pine.

"I feel a strong sense of history on day three," he said. "You're on your own in the countryside, and the Sierra starts to loom up on your left. You see the remains of abandoned mines, and even charcoal kilns along the route. Stopovers such as Little Lake and Olancho feel like old pioneer outposts, and then the dry Owens Lake appears on your right.

"Seeing that large, empty lakebed -- it always provokes questions. You imagine what Owens Lake looked like before diversions dried it up. It reminds you why we're trying to protect Mono Lake."

At the end of day three, most Bike-A-Thoners camp at Lake Diaz, just south of Lone Pine. "I walk out into Diaz Lake and soak," Dressler said. "This is about the time I realize the trip is speeding by much too fast. I look forward to this week all year long, and now suddenly the trip is half over."

Arthur Sorrell is one of several riders who took a strenuous side trip at the beginning of day four, pedalling 14 miles up the steep road from Lone Pine to the trailhead at Whitney Portal. He called the extra ride "rigorous, but absolutely gorgeous. From the top, you can see the whole Owens Valley stretching away before you. Somehow, after that morning climb, the rest of the day seems leisurely and straight."

Five Bike-A-Thons ago, Sorrell signed up for the physical challenge of a 350-mile trek. "That's not so much of an accomplishment any more," he concedes. "But now there is a wonderful camaraderie that builds among this group of caring people. Today, for me, the Bike-A-Thon is a spiritual ride. I care about the cause."

He also enjoys the trip into Bishop. "A lot of us stop at Keough Hot Springs, just south of town. After a soak, it's a beautiful ride to our campsite at St. Timothy's



Three generations of cycling Greens. From left, Logan, 9; Denny, 43; and Paul, 63, all rode the Sherwin Grade on the 1993 Bike-A-Thon.

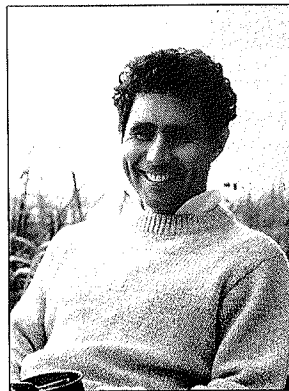
Episcopal Church. Every year the parishioners are waiting to greet us. They always put on a lasagna dinner, and breakfast the next morning. I always feel very welcome in Bishop."

Many of the riders regard Friday as the most difficult day of the Bike-A-Thon. On day five, they attack the dreaded Sherwin Grade.

"From Bishop, you climb over 2,000 feet in about nine miles," laughed Paul Green. "It can be tough."



Michael Dressler has ridden in ten Bike-A-Thons; he helped with the other three.



This was Arthur Sorrell's fifth Bike-A-Thon; he calls it "a spiritual ride."

This was Paul's fourth Bike-A-Thon; his wife Helen, while not riding this year, had made the trip five times before. "And our son Denny also rode it once before, in 1990," Paul said. "Denny met us this year in Bishop."

As a matter of fact, there were three generations of Greens pedalling up the grade, side by side in 1992: Paul, 63, was joined by his son Denny, 43, and his grandson Logan, age nine. "We're all pretty proud of Logan," Paul bragged. "Not only did he make the climb, he did it on a one-speed bike!"

All the Bike-A-Thoners saluted Logan's accomplishment that night at the campground in Mammoth Lakes. Friday is the last night the group is together; over a catered dinner they share their thoughts about the trip. "Suddenly you're aware the week is almost over," Paul explained. "It's an emotional night. I always get a lump in my throat."


Day six proved to be an emotional one for all the cyclists as they triumphantly coasted downhill to Mono Lake's Old Marina. There they met up with 50 or more Bucketwalkers -- people who had hiked from the diversion dam on Lee Vining Creek. Together the two groups poured water into Mono Lake.

"I was crying as Michael and I rode into Lee Vining," remembered first-time rider Lisa Vihos. "It was my 32nd birthday. I had completed the ride. I felt I had really accomplished something."

For Lisa and Michael, the final day would be even more special. "Along the way we had joked that, if we could live through this experience, we could live through anything." That night, after dinner, Michael proposed.

"He carried the engagement ring all the way from L.A.," Lisa laughed.

The two are planning a May wedding. They are also thinking about riding in next year's Bike-A-Thon.

"It's a big commitment of time," Lisa said, "but it's for a cause in which we both believe. It makes you feel proud." 

Top Bike-A-Thon Fundraisers Named

The Mono Lake Bike-A-Thon is more than a challenging ride -- it's a fundraising event as well. Participants convince their friends and relatives to sponsor them on the event with donations to the Mono Lake Committee. Prizes are awarded to those cyclists who meet fundraising goals.

Two grand prizes, each valued at over \$1,400, were donated by Greg LeMond Bicycles. Both the top male and female fundraisers were awarded a LeMond Cromor racing bikes with Shimano 105SC components.

Holly Owen came in first for the women's fundraising division, bringing in donations totalling \$4,483. She was also the coordinator of an eleven-member team cycling in memory of Bike-A-Thon Tom Lyons, who died in May, 1992. The team raised a total of \$7,497.

Paul Green was the top male fundraiser, bringing in pledges of \$2,773.

The runners-up male and female fundraisers each received a set of TriSpoke Composite Wheels valued at over \$1,000. Glenn Robison won second place for the men with a total of \$1,974; Emily Kenyon was the second highest female fundraiser, bringing in \$2,145.

In addition, all riders who brought in over \$1,500 were entered in a drawing for a weekend bicycle trip for two. Glenn Robison won the weekend, courtesy of Backroads Bicycle Tours.

"We're glad to announce that this year's Bike-A-Thon reached its fundraising goal," said Lori Formicola, the Committee's Development Director. "Thanks to everyone who contributed to make the event a success."

1992 Cyclists

Roger Backlar, Scott Barth, Joyce Bartlett, Pamela Braswell, Pam Brown, Ken Brummel-Smith, Karen Brummel-Smith, David Casseres, Rebecca Chamlee, Brent Coeur-Barron, Dave Collender, Jack Collender, Mark Coolidge, Kathy Craig, Victoria Cross, Joyce Dean, Tim Decker, Mary Evelyn Deets, Michael Dressler, A.J. Drexel, Erica Drexel, John W. Emmons, Jim Falin, John Forsyth, Paul Green, Craig Hansen, Suzanne Heininger, Michael Hoover, Rich Howe, Anna Maria Huber, Lorraine Jarvis, Ruti Rost Kadish, David Kanner, Chris Kasten, Larry Kawalec, Kevin Keenan, Emily Kenyon, Dennis King, Julie Klingmann, Barbara Kniffen, Carol Joy Levin, Suzie Lyons, Shari Lyons, Michael Lyons, Robert McAdam, Jackie McCabe, William Mendoza, Kirk P. Miller, Pat Monzo, Douglas Much, Kay Ogden, Andrea Opalenik, Brett Owen, Holly Owen, Cris Pescosolido, David Rice, Robin Roberts, Glenn Robison, Raul V. Romeo,

Alan Rosenbaum, Steve Schmidt, Grace Shohet, Catherine Skinner, Glenn Skinner, Frank Smith, Arthur Sorrell, Nadine Stellavato, George Tredick, Tony Trotta, Clyde Underwood, Norma Vedder, Lisa Vihos, David Wimpfheimer, Shelli Wineman, Dennis Wright, Herb Wright, Stan Yurfest.

SAG Drivers

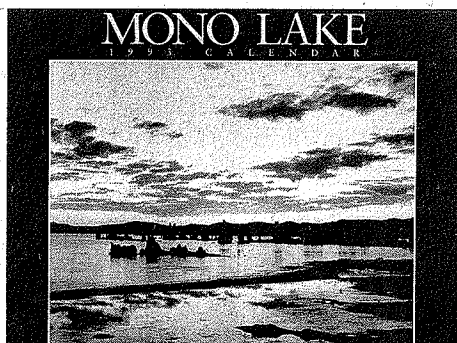
Martha Davis, Joyce Dean, Irving Fatt, Lori Formicola, Helen Green, Ronna Hovevar, Tom Hovevar, Joan Humpheries, Pat Monzo, Geoff McQuilkin, Holly Owen, Betsy Reifsnider, Kathi Richards, Tina Sanders, Bob Schlichting, Katy Taylor, Pete Smith, Yukiko Sorrell, Ann Springer, Jodi Turner.

Sponsors

Honorary Chairperson: Greg LeMond
Avocet, Backroads Bicycle Tours, Cliff Bars, Dole, Global Sportswear, Greg LeMond Bicycles, K-LITE, Mothers Cookies, Motor Vehicle License System, Ooh Ah Pictures, Pace Sportswear, Patagonia, Ryder Truck, Sparklets, Trispoke Cobalt Cycles.

Special Thanks To ...

All the ham radio operators providing communications along the way: Jim Albright, Mary Lou DeLashmutt, John Martin, Roger & Betty Meng, Dennis Smith, Ridgecrest Amateur Radio Club; the parishoners at St. Timothy's Church in Bishop, who once again supplied food and a camping area.



1993 Mono Lake Calendars! Now Half Price! \$4.95!

Act quickly! We only have a limited number of these beautiful, full-color calendars! Featuring the work of some of California's leading photographers, it is a stunning tribute to the wildness of the Mono Basin!

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\$10-\$25	\$3.50
\$25-50	\$4.50
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Order two totes ... you can add a half-priced calendar without increasing your shipping cost!

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Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ County (For sales tax) _____

Daytime Phone ☐ MasterCard ☐ Visa ☐ Check (to Mono Lake Committee)

Card Number _____

Expiration Date _____

Signature _____

Quantity	Item	Design	Price	Total
	1993 Calendars		\$4.95	
	Single Tote (which one?)		\$10.95	
	Both Totes! (A Deal!)		\$16.50	
	Book: Mono Viewpoint		\$5.95	
	Book: Last Oasis		\$9.95	
	Other:			
CA residents add applicable sales tax				
Phone orders: call (619) 647-6595.			Shipping (see above)	
The Mono Lake Committee, P.O. Box 29, Lee Vining, CA 93541			Total:	

Information Center Remodel Proceeds ... Slowly

by Shannon Nelson, Information Center Manager

Remodeling projects are notorious for delays and complications -- and the Committee's Information Center in Lee Vining is no exception.

The staff moved out of our building in October. Some of us are now headquartered in **Bodie Mike's** next door, a bar normally shuttered for the winter. While brass rails and beer signs make for an unusual working atmosphere, the area is warm and fairly comfortable, if a bit crowded.

Our policy staff has moved into the rebuilt icehouse just south of the Information Center. An actual old structure once used for vending ice during the summer, the building is remarkably well insulated. It makes for a warm office area until we can move back into the main building.

While we have started construction on Center, the project is not as far along as we had hoped. Despite plenty of assurances that it would be no problem, insurance complications have limited our use of volunteer labor on the heavy part of the construction.

We have been able to use our supporters on lighter projects. **Larry Breed**, a volunteer from Palo Alto, spent two weeks helping us take things apart and move out of the old building. He fixed everything he could find that was broken and helped us set up our temporary offices. We couldn't have done it without him.

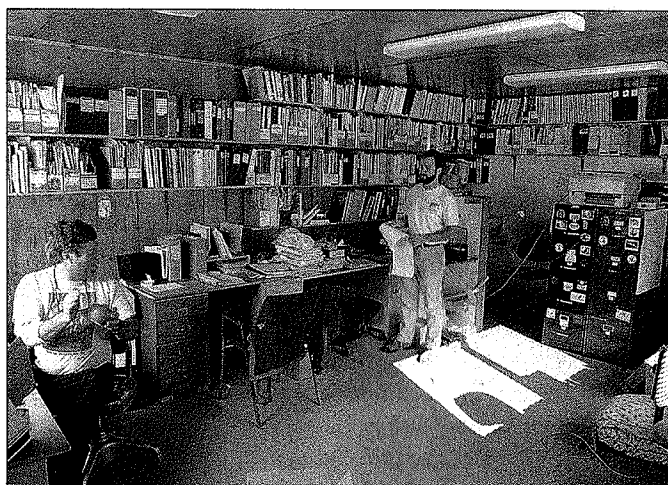


Photo by Rick Knapp

The newly-remodeled icehouse makes a well-insulated temporary office as construction continues this winter on the Committee's Information Center next door. Shown here is volunteer librarian Gary Nelson, left, and Science Associate John Cain.

Long-time supporter **Don Jackson**, from Forestville, spent a few days moving our telephone system and getting it in working order in our temporary quarters.

Jim Richards, the husband of Kathi Richards, the Committee's Bookkeeping Assistant in Los Angeles, spent several days working on the icehouse and demolishing the old office space in the Information Center. We really appreciate Jim's expertise.

Ruth Ann and Howard Rink, of Redondo Beach, spent a morning taking down shelves and helping us move.

Taking apart an office and setting up temporary quarters took us away from our regular tasks for over a week. Two longtime

members, **Alston Rigter** of Menlo Park, and **Nancy Haggerty**, of Walnut Creek, stopped by and helped **Elaine Light**, our Membership Coordinator, put together and mail almost 1,000 new member packets. It was an immense help.

Others have supported our remodeling project by donating much needed materials. **Jean Adams** contributed insulation, and **Kenny Weiland** came through with new tile for our proposed public bathroom. **Larry Wagner**, a resident of Sebastopol, furnished a set of speakers for the soon-to-be-rebuilt slide show room.

Bill and Andi Lackman, from Buena Park, donated a tent travel trailer to the Committee. It

offered comfortable shelter for some of our volunteers before the weather turned really cold.

The Mono Lake Committee still needs your help! We need financial contributions, to help us with this much-needed remodel of our Information Center.

We can also use donations of materials, to help us keep within our meager budget. **Call Shannon Nelson in Lee Vining at (619) 647-6595 for specifics.**



TOTE BAG SALE!

\$10.95 each but ...

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Two of our favorite full-color designs on natural, heavy-duty 12 oz. cotton totes with full side and bottom gussets.

Use them and save a tree!

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Use the handy order form and envelope on page 12!

1992:

The Year In Review

By Bob Schlichting

With apologies to Charles Dickens, 1992 was neither the best of times nor the worst of times for Mono Lake. While it occasionally seemed the age of wisdom, it more frequently appeared to be the age of foolishness.

It was another year in which the problems of Mono Lake were not solved. Despite the beginning of negotiations, DWP remained unwilling to join the Mono Lake Committee in applying for AB 444 funds that would finance water reclamation projects in Southern California. As predicted, the money began to trickle away. By fall the \$60 million fund of investment capital had shrunk by \$14 million.

It was also a surprising litigious year. While there were no major, landmark issues before the court, the Committee spent over 22 days in Judge Terrence Finney's courtroom, wrangling over the restoration of long-dry streams and fisheries in the Mono Basin. "It's frustrating," Committee

Associate Director Ilene Mandelbaum explained this summer. "It costs more to go to court and argue about creek restoration than to actually do the work. Because of DWP's actions, we find ourselves spending more and more time arguing over less and less."

But wisdom prevailed, at least as far as the Mono Lake Committee was concerned, and Judge Finney ruled in our favor almost every time. Stream restoration on lower Lee Vining Creek finally got fully underway in August; by mid-October, approximately a mile of dry streambed had

been restored and rewatered, while an additional 2,000 feet of the existing stream was repaired. (See the story on page 8.)

Months were spent assembling data and commenting on plans for the State Water Resources Control Board hearings that should take place in 1993. The lengthy and complicated administrative proceedings will decide how much water should stay in the Mono Basin to protect the lake's public trust resources and its streams.

Finally, 1992 will be remembered as the sixth year in which nature refused to come to Mono Lake's aid. While Southern California received heavy winter storms reported to be 146 percent of normal, the Mono Basin experienced only 60 percent of its normal runoff. Even though all the available water was flowing into Mono Lake, its elevation stayed below 6375 feet above sea level. Diversions continue to be prohibited by a temporary court injunction until the lake is above 6377, the minimum elevation needed to protect the ecosystem.

It's too early to predict if the storms of mid-December signal a break in the drought, or if 1993 will become the Mono Basin's seventh dry year in a row.

Here are some of the highlights of the year for Mono Lake:

March

Word is received that the Mono Lake Tufa State Reserve will not be closed on July 1 as threatened. Because of the state's budget crisis, the Tufa Reserve had been on the list of endangered parks. More than a thousand letters were sent to Sacramento on behalf of the reserve.

April

Over 1500 people celebrate the dedication of the Manzanar National Historic Site, an internment camp for Japanese-Americans during World War II. Into the law creating the federal site, DWP had attempted to insert language which would have exempted it "from regulation under the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act, and the public trust doctrine," according to Charles Warren of the State Lands Commission. DWP's ploy failed.

May

Mono Lake hits its high elevation for the year -- 6374.6 feet above sea level, as runoff in the basin's snowpack is 60 percent of normal.

The new Forest Service Scenic Area Visitor Center officially opens in Lee Vining. The \$5 million building is dedicated to the Mono Lake Committee's founder, the late David Gaines who led the fight for federal recognition of Mono Lake.

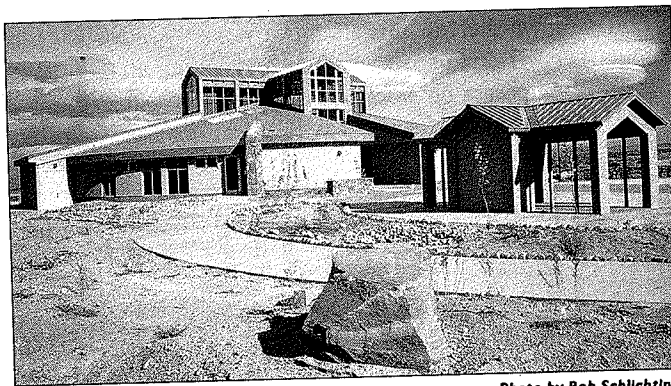


Photo by Bob Schlichting

The Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area Visitor Center opened this past May. The Scenic Area was established by Congress in 1984. Operated by the U.S. Forest Service, the \$5 million building just north of Lee Vining encompasses over 13,000 square feet on two floors. It features a 98-seat theater, almost 3000 square feet of exhibit space, a bookstore, photo gallery and office space for both Scenic Area staff and state park rangers.

June

The seventh annual Fine Wine Cellar Tasting is held at Gump's in San Francisco. The event was originally scheduled for May, but civil unrest caused it to be postponed.

Only four nesting gulls are counted on landbridged Negit Island; the majority of gulls nested instead on nearby Twain and Java Islets. Coyotes are suspected of preying on chicks on Java.

After a year of study, the Mayor's Blue Ribbon Committee on Water Rates proposes a new structure for Los Angeles that encourages conservation.


August

The 13th Annual Mono Lake Bike-A-Thon leaves from DWP headquarters in Los Angeles. Eighty-two riders take part in the six-day, 360-mile event. (see the story on pages 10 and 11.)

October

President Bush signs H.R. 429, the Western Water Bill. Several features of the legislation could supply water to offset Mono Lake diversions. (See pages 6 and 7.)

December

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service agrees to propose granting federal protection to as many as 382 species by 1996. Among the California species that could be added to the endangered or threatened list is the Mono Lake brine shrimp. 

Environmental Lawyer Joins MLC Board

by Betsy Reifsnider, MLC Associate Director, Southern California

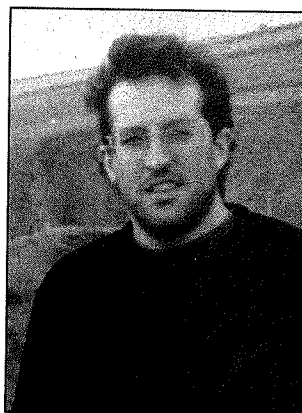
Ed Manning, an environmental lawyer and activist, has become the latest addition to the Mono Lake Committee's nine-member Board of Directors.

The Los Angeles resident practices with the prestigious law firm of McClintock, Weston, Benshoof, Pachefort, Rubalcava and MacCuish. He has been General Counsel to Lieutenant Governor Leo McCarthy and served as McCarthy's alternate on the State Lands Commission. In that capacity, Manning helped develop the Commission's policies on oil spills, wetlands preservation, and mining and grazing on state lands.

It was due in large part to Ed Manning's persistence that the State Lands Commission joined the Mono Lake Committee and the


National Audubon Society in a lawsuit in 1990. The lengthy action against Los Angeles and DWP supported a minimum level of 6377 feet for Mono Lake, and upheld a preliminary injunction that prevents diversions from Mono's streams if the lake is below that elevation.

Before his job with the Lieutenant Governor's office, Manning served as Deputy City Attorney in Santa Monica, where he established an environmental enforcement program. He was also Deputy District



Attorney for the County of Los Angeles, and formerly served as a board member of the Coalition for Clean Air, a Los Angeles based environmental organization. The Loyola Law School graduate is a member of the Los Angeles County Bar Association's Environmental Section.

"Over the years, Ed has had experience with the Mono Lake issue,"

pointed out Board co-chair Sally Gaines. "With his commitment and political expertise, he is a welcome addition to our Board." 

Lake Level Watch:



Mono Reaches DWP's Worst Case Scenario


In late 1990, lawyers for DWP argued in a South Lake Tahoe courtroom for the resumption of water diversions from Mono's streams. If normal diversions were allowed to continue, they assured Judge Finney, the lowest that Mono Lake could possibly be expected to drop 6373.5 feet above sea level.

Fortunately, the judge didn't buy

their arguments. He upheld the preliminary injunction already in effect banning diversions until the lake was above the 6377 foot level.

There have been no diversions from the Mono Basin since 1989. Yet, with all the available water going into the lake, by December, 1992 Mono had fallen to the level DWP had predicted with

diversions -- 6373.5 feet.

Through November, state water experts were still predicting a seventh year of drought for California. While a series of storms in the middle of December helped to fatten the snowpack in the Sierra, it will take many more weeks of stormy weather before they announce the drought over. 

Mono Lake Viewpoint

Reviewed by Denise La Verde, Fall Intern,
Southern California Office

For David Carle, the marvels of Mono Lake are a part of his daily life. Since 1982, he and his wife Janet have shared the one available full-time ranger position at the Mono Lake Tufa State Reserve. His decade of experience enables him to write engagingly about Mono's birds and brine shrimp, tourists and tufa, freezing winter fog and debilitating summer hay fever.

For years, Carle has authored a regular column in the weekly *Mammoth Times*. Now *Artemesia Press* has gathered a collection of his essays, coupled them with impressive illustrations by this newsletter's cover artist Carl Dennis Buell, and produced a witty, easy-to-read tribute to the little mysteries that make the Mono Basin unique.

"This is not a guidebook,"

Carle explains in his introductory chapter. "Yet I set out to inform. Environmental education is a part of my job as a ranger, after all." He then leads the reader through each of the four seasons to a final philosophical section called "In Search of Happily Ever After."

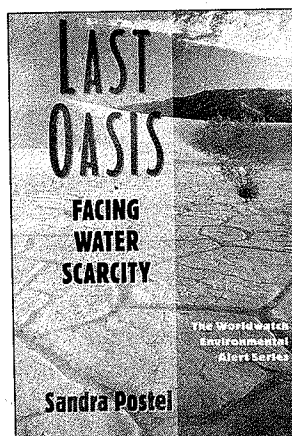
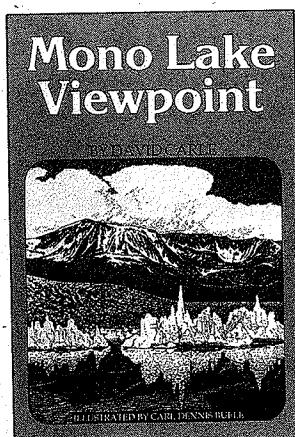
Above all, Carle maintains an imaginative approach to his material. In the beginning, he gives us our first cooking lesson on how to make Mock Mono Lake Soup (create a little of Mono Lake in your very own home!) The section "Spring" celebrates the life cycle of one of Mono's tiny creatures in "The Once And Future Shrimp", a take-off on the T. H. White classic, complete with Merlin the Magician.

For anyone who has not yet explored Mono Lake in summer, the essay "Take a Tour" prepares you for the experience. Here are Tufa towers, the "shy" alkali flies, California gulls,

Mono's young volcanoes, and much more. "The Mystery of the Red-eyed Bird" is revealed in the section "Autumn", and "Winter" brings us "Ouzel Omens."

Carle has ingeniously turned this book of facts and expertise into delightful tales of the Mono Basin to be shared by everyone.

Mono Lake Viewpoint, by David Carle, with illustrations by Carl Dennis Buell, 1992, Artemesia Press, 128 pages, paperback \$5.95.



Last Oasis

Reviewed by Gary Nelson, Mono Lake
Foundation Canoe Tour Guide

For most Americans, water is something that comes out of the tap, ready to drink, whenever we want it. But for many people around the globe, fresh water is a matter of life or death.

In *Last Oasis: Facing Water Scarcity*, Sandra Postel, Vice President for Research with the Worldwatch Institute, clearly shows the many threats to the world's water supply. She also gives examples of how ancient and modern solutions to these problems have found world-wide success.

Like most other environmental problems, global water scarcity is exacerbated by human population growth. Postel points out that 26 countries (home to 232 million people) do not have enough fresh water to sustain

their population. Yet many of these countries continue to have high population growth rates, increasing the demand for water on a daily basis.

Since agriculture claims two-thirds of the planet's fresh water, a good portion of the book is devoted, appropriately, to methods of increasing irrigation efficiency. These range from small-scale, third-world projects such as micro dams, shallow wells, and "water harvesting," to high tech, computer controlled drip and other "micro-irrigation" techniques developed by Israeli researchers.

In fact, one of the dominant themes in "Last Oasis" is that humankind already possesses the techniques necessary to alleviate global freshwater scarcity. African farmers have raised crop yields 30 to 60 percent by constructing stone walls along contour lines to restrict runoff and building deep planting holes to concentrate the runoff from meager rains around plants.

Other prescribed solutions will be familiar to those who have followed the Mono Lake controversy. Water-efficient plumbing devices, xeriscape gardening, marketing of conserved agricultural water, and water recycling are all mentioned; they have been repeatedly proposed by the Mono Lake Committee to help reduce Los Angeles' need for Mono Basin water.

While short term local economics sometimes work against such solutions, the lack of a sense of urgency is perhaps even the reason for inaction. "Last Oasis" will provide the reader with the sense of urgency and an understanding of how we can help solve the global water problem which faces us all.

Last Oasis: Facing Water Scarcity, by Sandra Postel, 1992 by Worldwatch Institute, 240 pages, paperback \$9.95.

Both of these books can be purchased by mail from the Mono Lake Committee. See the order form on page 12.

Winners of 1992 Free Drawing Announced

A record number of tickets were sold this year for the eighth annual Save Mono Lake Free Drawing.

The yearly fundraising event brought in almost 2500 new members to the Committee. Approximately 8530 tickets were purchased before the drawing, which took place on October 31st in Lee Vining.

"The drawing is a wonderful way to get people involved in the plight of Mono Lake," said the Mono Lake Committee's new Development Director Lori Formicola. "It also allows us to, in a small way, reward some of those who donate to the cause of Mono's protection."

"This year's drawing yielded a tremendous response from our members, and far exceeded our fundraising goals," she added.

Here are the 1992 Free Drawing winners, along with the prizes they won:

Lonnie Weinheimer, of Los Angeles, won this year's **Grand Prize**, a week excursion in Holland, Denmark, and Norway, courtesy of *Cal Nature Tours*, Victorville, California.

Grace Knight, from San Francisco, won the signed Ansel Adams lithograph "Aspens -- Northern New Mexico, 1958" donated by the *Ansel Adams Gallery*, Yosemite National Park.

Steve Baker, a resident of Monterey,

won the Mono Lake Weekend donated by the *Mono Lake Foundation*, the *Gateway Motel*, and *The Mono Inn*.

Susan Neyer, of Walnut Creek, won the weekend in Yosemite National Park, donated by the *Yosemite Park & Curry Company*.

Charles T. Chapman, from San Jose, won the Mammoth Lakes weekend, a package donated by the *Jagerhof Lodge*, the *Tamarack Lodge*, *O'Kelly and Dunn*, and *Elliott Aviation*.

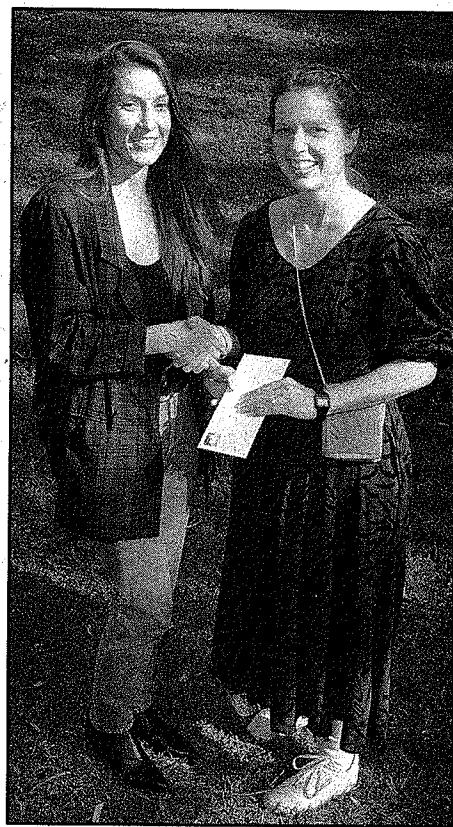
Phillip C. Jordan, of Boise, Idaho, won the rafting trip on the American River, donated by *The Friends of the River Foundation*.

Steve Allison, a Santa Cruz resident, won the South Yuba River weekend donated by the *South Yuba River Citizens League*.

Andrea Portenier, from Los Angeles, won a \$100 Eddie Bauer gift certificate, donated by *Eddie Bauer, Inc.*, Redmond, Washington.

Mr. & Mrs. Richard L. Dryer, Sonoma residents, won two North Face Student Union day packs donated by *The North Face*, Berkeley, California.

"Thanks to all our great sponsors who donated prizes to the 1992 Free Drawing," said Formicola. "We really appreciate their support, and salute all those who bought tickets for one of the Mono Lake Committee's most successful events."



Tina Sanders, (left), Mono Lake Committee Development Coordinator, presents the grand prize certificate to Los Angeles resident Dr. Lonnie Weinheimer. Dr. Weinheimer, a medical doctor with the University of Southern California's Student Health Center, won the two-week trip to Holland, Denmark and Norway, supplied by Cal Nature Tours of Victorville.

Summary of SIERRA NOW Conference Available

by Sally Miller, MLC Eastern Sierra Representative

In August, nearly 500 participants attended a three-day meeting in Sacramento dealing with environmental problems along the Sierra Nevada.

Task forces were organized to explore a broad range of issues including forestry, grazing, water, recreation and tourism, and urbanization and local economic development. Now a free summary book is available

detailing the results of that work.

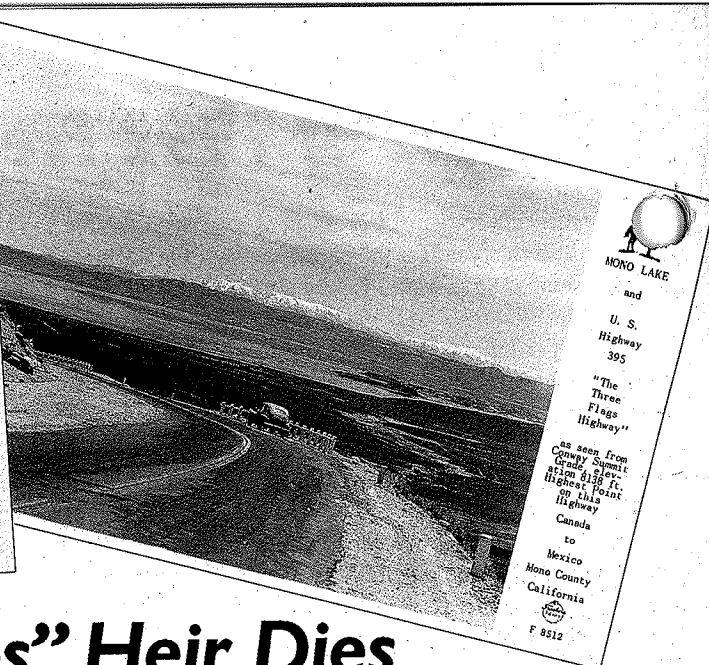
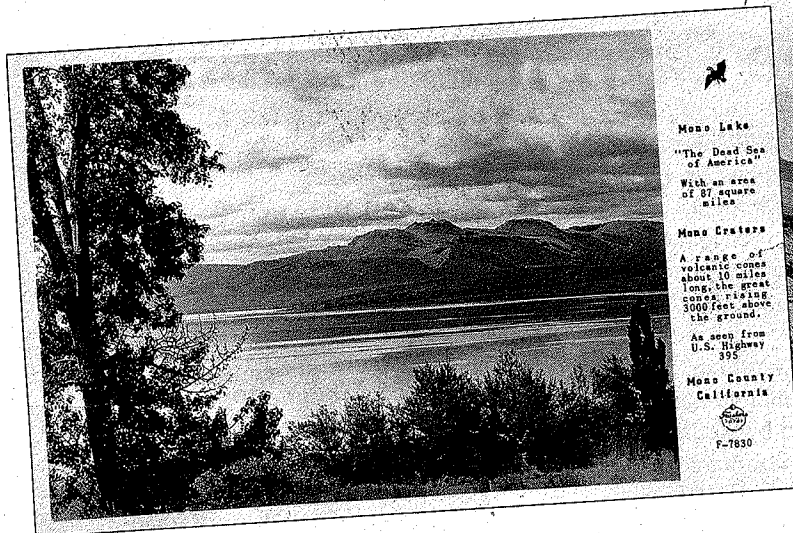
The weekend event brought together a coalition of environmentalists, researchers, local elected officials, Sierra

residents, and business people. Rather than simply reiterate the multitude of problems facing the Sierran environment, SIERRA NOW focused on developing solutions. The summary book incorporates the Mono Lake Committee's Six-Point Plan as a recommendation by the Water Task Force for solving the Mono Lake issue.

The initial conference was underwritten by the Malibu-based organization ENVIRONMENT NOW. The work that ENVIRONMENT NOW

began will be continued by the Sierra Nevada Alliance, a coalition formed in late November by grassroots and environmental organizations. The Mono Lake Committee is one of the statewide and national organizations taking part in the newly formed alliance.

To obtain a free copy of the SIERRA NOW summary book detailing the results of the August conference, write to *ENVIRONMENT NOW*, 24955 Pacific Coast Highway, Suite C-201, Malibu, CA 90265.



"Frasher's Fotos" Heir Dies

by Ilene Mandelbaum, Associate Director, Lee Vining

Photos by Burton Frasher, Sr.

Burton Frasher, Jr., son of the founder of historic "Frasher's Fotos," died in October in Twenty-Nine Palms, California. He was 77.

Knowledge of pre-diversion Mono Lake has been tremendously enhanced by the hundreds of spectacular photos, postcards, and films made in the 1920's and '30's by Burton Frasher, Sr. (1888-1955). Burton, Jr., also a prolific photographer, accompanied his father on his many Mono Basin visits, and had many wonderful tales to tell about those early days.

Practically nothing escaped their still and movie cameras. Thanks to them, today we have early images of the Negit gull colony and Paoha Island's lakes.

They photographed Mono's historic excursion boats, early bathing beauty contests and speed boat races on "Mark Twain Days", and the first opening day celebration the Tioga Pass Road. They documented traditional Paiute basketmakers at work.

Realizing the significance and historical value of his father's work, Burton, Jr., the Mono Lake Committee and the Mono Basin Historical Society negotiated agreements under which the films and photos can be used for public education.

Last year Burton, Jr. and his wife Lucille presented hours of historic motion picture footage, some of it on early color film, at a film festival in Lee Vining. He had hoped to find funding to properly

archive the thousands of negatives in his father's collection, and to preserve the vintage motion picture footage in a video format.

The Mono Lake Committee is grateful to the Frashers for their willingness to share their valuable photographs in an effort to protect Mono Lake. We are saddened by the loss of Burton Frasher, Jr., who so generously brought to light lost film treasures and illuminated those early scenes with his colorful reminiscences. It is only because of his past efforts that we have a record of much that has been lost over the past half century; we hope to assist the Frashers in making sure these works are preserved for posterity.

MLC Staff Hellos and Goodbyes

by Amy Gonzales, Mono Lake Committee Fall Intern

Winter has come, dropping several feet of snow here in Lee Vining by mid-December. We are working out of a closed-down bar and a converted icehouse while, next door, the Information Center remodel goes on.

Intern Katharine Ankeny arrived in late August from Bozeman, Montana. A graduate of St. Lawrence University, she has been busy on our computer, cataloging years of data on Mono Lake. Come January, she will return to Bozeman and

Helen Constantine, an intern this past summer, will arrive back in Lee Vining from the Bay area for another internship. Helen will be working on a new guide to plants of the Mono Basin.

I left Lee Vining for Arizona in December, after serving as a Committee intern twice in 1992. I've enjoyed living and traveling in the West; I grew up near the Ohio Valley and West Virginia, and attended the University of Pittsburg.

Down in the Southern California

office, Denise LaVerde, a senior in the political science department at USC, was an intern this fall. Through USC's Jesse Unruh Institute of Public Policy, students gain class credit for volunteering their services to business, political or non-profit groups. Denise researched statewide water rates, helped with fundraising and explored possible financial grants, attended community meetings and contributed the book review on page 16.

Donations Continue in Memory of Peter Fisher and Others

Memorial contributions continue to be received on behalf of Peter Christopher Fisher, who died July 21st. The resident of Mammoth Lakes is survived by his wife Patricia; together they owned *Brian's Bicycles* in Mammoth.

A number of donations made to a memorial fund established in Peter's name were reported in the last newsletter. Since then, we have received additional gifts from these California friends: **David and Janet Fletcher Apostolo**, from Danville; **Mabel Bunneke TTe**, of Ojai; **Vahe and Mary Melkonian**, of Woodland Hills; **Elaine Oldham**, and **Andrea and Noel Weidman**, all from Oakland; **Gerald and Nona Russon**, of Pleasant Hill; **Jeanne Walter**, of Bishop; **Wayne and Shirley Liston**, from Magalia; **Susan Dunn and John Rogerson**, residents of Blue Lake; **Louise and Sanford Feldman**, San Francisco;

bert L. Broman, of Napa; **H. David Michener**, from Berkeley; **Madelyn Montgomery Furze**, of San Jose; **Richard and Susan Hauert**, from Fresno; and **John Dittli and Leslie Goethals**, from Mammoth Lakes.

Also contributing in Peter's name were **James and Raye Warren**, residents of Twin Falls, Idaho; **Ted Hopkins and Su Anne Armstrong**, from Santa Fe, New Mexico; **Robert and Mae Carter**, of Newark, Delaware; **Susan Schley and Robert Harrington**, from Tucson, Arizona; **George and Leah Moore**, from Abilene, Texas; and **Harold and Signe Luscomb**, from Hilo, Hawaii.

Peter's sister, **Patricia Fisher**, works for AT&T International, in Morristown, New Jersey. Her coworkers took up a collection and also made a donation to the memorial fund.

Other Memorials

Napa resident **Patricia Noland Parrish** died recently. For many years she had been an ardent devotee of conservation and wildlife issues; in

memory of their long friendship, Mono Lake supporters **Ethel and Eldon Vestal** made a contribution in her name.

72-year-old **Arlene Manning** died in October, 1991. The resident of Burbank had visited Mono Lake since the 1950's. An avid supporter of the Mono Lake Committee's efforts, she even got her friend **Barbara Tucker**, of Sylmar, involved in the cause by selling her a winning ticket in the yearly Free Drawing. Barbara made a donation in memory of her friend.

Donald Steward was already seriously ill when he discovered Mono Lake in November, 1991. But as the Southbury, Connecticut man walked around Mono's tufa, he was "awed by the spectacular high desert and mountain vistas." That's what his friends **Bill and Lois Clark**, of Santa Ana, wrote recently, adding "we're sure he would be pleased to know that a memorial gift has been made in his name."

Whenever **Steve Schmidt**, of Menlo Park, participated in a Bike-A-Thon and Bird-A-Thon for Mono Lake, he could always count on the support of his uncle, **John R. Moore**, 88, of Camarillo. Mr. Moore died in October; Steve made a contribution in memory of the long-time supporter.

Marjorie Carver, of San Diego, made a memorial donation on behalf of her mother, **Elsa Marston Leigh**, who developed a love for the Mono Lake area when she worked in Yosemite Valley back in 1915.

Santa Barbara resident **Mr. Pierino Merlo** died this summer; in lieu of flowers, the family requested donations to charity. **Jon and Sue Loring**, from Agora Hills, made a gift in his honor.

44-year-old **Jeffrey Trout** supported a dozen environmental organizations, but the Mono Lake Committee was one of his favorites. The San Francisco resident died in October. His friend **Roger J. Purdy**, also of San Francisco, made a donation to honor the area that Jeffrey

loved to hike.

The **Pearson family** of La Crescenta -- Eleanor, Corky, Jay, Sally and Matt -- made a memorial donation on behalf of their friend **David Frazier**.

Lorraine Elrod, of Scotts Valley, sent donation in memory of Placerville resident **Rowland Morris**.

Edward and Dorothy Unger retired to Roseburg, Oregon from San Francisco. When Dorothy died recently, her son **Larry Unger** set up a memorial fund in her name. Contributions have been received from **Paul Ferroggiaro**, **Judith Basolo**, **Barbara Shupin**, and **Dorothy Arquette**, all of San Francisco; and **F. G. Follett**, from Roseburg.

In Celebration

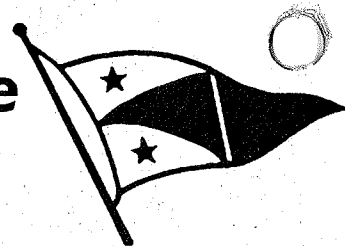
Sacramento resident **Roy W. Stephens** recently celebrated his 80th birthday. An avid outdoorsman, Mr. Stephens is especially fond of Mono Lake and the Eastern Sierra, so his friends and relatives made donations to the Mono Lake Committee to help mark the event. Gifts came from **Jane, Sarah and Chandra Stephens**; **Saul Eisen**; **Don, Darilyn, Eric, Gregg, and Kristen Thaden**, of Sacramento; **Jeffrey Giddley and Elisabeth Robinson**, from Citrus Heights; and **Lee and Mary La Faith**, of Santa Maria.

North Hollywood residents **Ruth and Phil Lewis** just celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. Their long-time friends **Mort and Edith Gaines**, of Los Angeles, made a donation in celebration of the day.

Eldon Vestal is the retired Fish and Game biologist who so effectively testified in court several years ago about the historic conditions in the Mono Basin before diversions began. He and his wife **Ethel** hosted a bus tour of the Eastern Sierra in October for dozens of friends; in gratitude, the **Napa Valley Travelers** and **Clark's Tour and Travel** honored them with donations to the Committee.

The Mono Lake Committee is proud to announce

The Eighth Annual Fine Wine Cellar Dinner and Drawing!

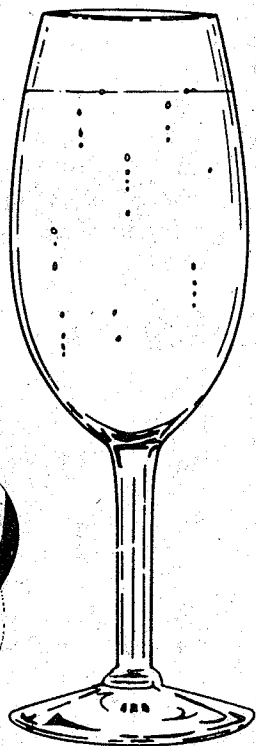


Join us **Friday, May 21st, 1993** at San Francisco's spectacular **St. Francis Yacht Club**

The event includes ...

- A chance to win one of several exquisite wine cellars
- The first Mono Lake Committee Awards Program
- Dinner prepared by the St. Francis Yacht Club

Only 500 chances to win will be sold! Call to reserve yours now!
Winners need not be present to win!



EARLY BIRD SPECIAL!

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Save \$10 and reserve today!

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For more information, call Lori Formicola at
(818) 972-2025.

Participants must be 21 or older.



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