

Fall

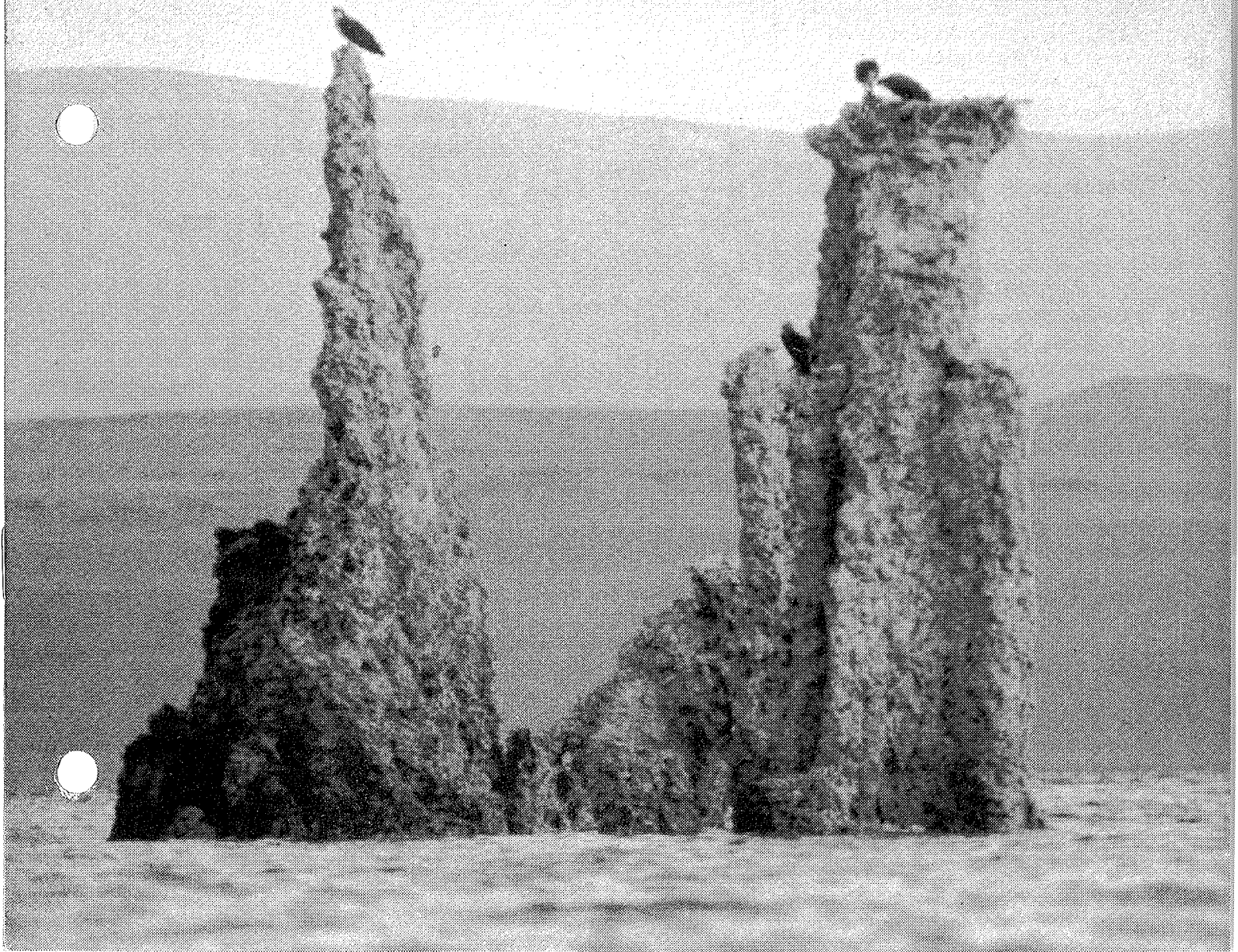
1995

MONO



LAKE

N E W S L E T T E R



# Mono Lake Newsletter

Fall 1995

Volume 18, Number 2

## IN THIS ISSUE



An osprey family is featured in this issue's cover photograph by Don Jackson. Taken from a canoe just before dawn, the photograph captures four osprey: two parents, and this year's young.

Inside this newsletter issue, you'll find our annual gift catalog, the product of many hours of work by intern James Uwins. Featuring Mono Lake merchandise, sales from the catalog support the Mono Lake Committee.

Also enclosed are tickets for the annual "Restore Mono Lake" free drawing, one of our strongest fundraisers. Be sure to enter!

On the news front, this issue reports on the recent courtroom motion brought by the State Water Board—see page 5. Also newsworthy is the recent updating of the Committee's mission statement, explained on page 4.

Stream and waterfowl habitat planning continues; details are on pages 6-8. Draft plans will be circulating in late fall, so watch for more news next time.

The biggest event, though, is the rise of Mono Lake—three feet so far! Page 11 has the news, and a sample of the winter snowpack backs the MLC staff photo on page 15. With summer fading and a few yellow leaves on the trees, we're all wondering how much more water the upcoming winter will bring.

—Geoff McQuilkin

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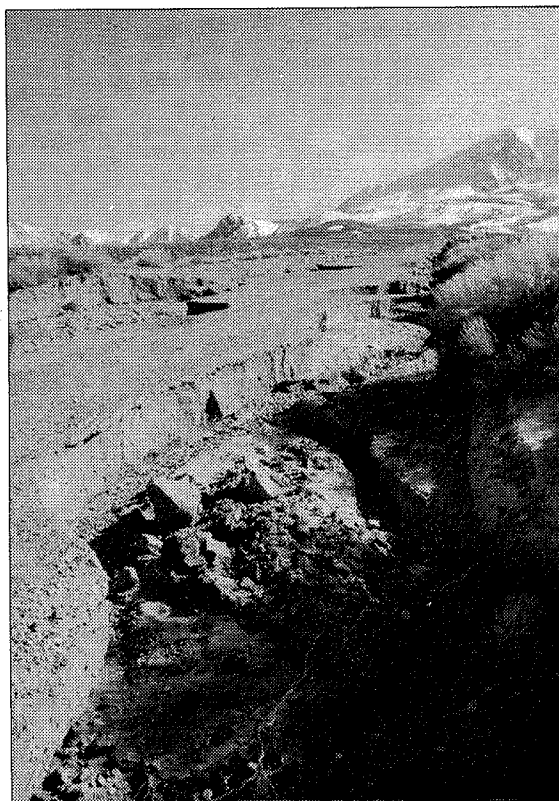
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Winter's abundant snowfall led to heavy runoff throughout the Mono Basin. In some places, streams tried out new courses, such as the DWP road shown above.

### Mission of the Mono Lake Committee

The Mono Lake Committee is a non-profit citizens' group dedicated to: protecting and restoring the Mono Basin ecosystem; educating the public about Mono Lake and the impacts on the environment of excessive water use; and promoting cooperative solutions that protect Mono Lake and meet real water needs without transferring environmental problems to other areas.

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# Night at the spillway

by Geoffrey McQuilkin

A light, late-night wind rustles through the sage but it can't hide the sound I've been waiting to hear: water pushing over the spillway of Grant Dam, burbling along the pavement, headed down the concrete trough to Rush Creek and Mono Lake.

This is it. Grant Lake reservoir is the last of the series of small reservoirs on Rush Creek. They're all full. Grant is full. Now it's a straight shot from melting Sierran snowfields to Mono Lake.

The reservoir hasn't been this high since the early 1980s when the last series of big winters pushed it over the top. Those spills were big news; Rush Creek had otherwise been dry, its flow taken away by the L.A. Aqueduct.

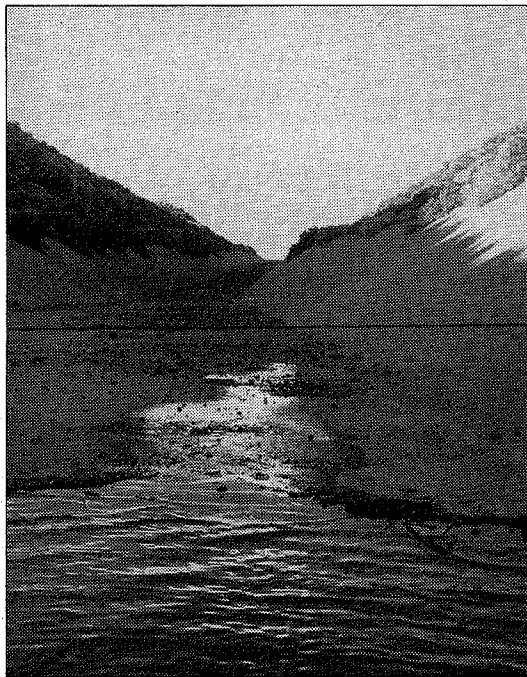
When water shot down the spillway it swept fish along with it, fish that would receive more than their share of court time. Those fish were the basis for lawsuits which successfully won minimum flows for the streams under fish and game laws. Those fish were the basis of litigation which led to the CalTrout II decision requiring creek restoration, a decision which is again the subject of courtroom debate today.

I briefly shine my flashlight down into the spillway and the rippled water scatters the light back up and out the other side. Sagebrush dance by wavering waterlight.

I know it's only a spillway, but out here in the dark where I can't see it, it sounds like a stream. I can imagine the water twisting the half mile to its meeting with Rush Creek, washing out the road in the process. I can imagine it merging with the creek, muddy water mixing with clear. Seeds spreading, meadows flooding, and finally, miles from here, the water tumbling into the lake; the great snowfalls of this past winter moving from mountains into Mono.

I've been coming here for the past three days, early in the morning, to

watch the water creep up toward the crest of the spillway. The first day I marked the water's edge with rocks. The next day they were underwater, a four inch rise; the following two days showed similar rises. This afternoon I drove out under the building thunderheads to make another check. The first rivulet was creeping over the top of the spillway, following cracks in the concrete, powered by waves pushed over by a gentle wind. Now, past midnight, the flow is solid; an up-spillway wind couldn't stop it.



Throughout the Mono Basin, the story of 1995 has been water—plentiful water. Lee Vining Creek has been a current of whitewater for so long it's hard to remember the days of safely wading across it. Walker and Parker creeks are both cascading over their respective diversion structures, washing out roads and threatening Highway 395 with flooding. Trees are thick with green leaves, grasses deep, flowers abundant.


I grab my jacket and run through the night air, racing the stream sounds downhill in search of the water's leading edge. It's out there somewhere in the dark, I know, because I drove through a dry section of the overflow channel to get here.

The spillway angles more steeply, the water picks up speed, then crashes into flow diffusers—big concrete blocks—at the bottom. I could stop and listen to the volume rise as the flow increases ever so slowly . . . but no, onward.

The concrete has ended now, and I'm stepping from cobble to cobble. I arrive at the road crossing but the water has not. There it is, upstream, moving fast: the leading edge. Its pattern is complex; it fills into the gaps between granite cobbles, twists around sagebrush, picks up sediment. It hits a silt deposit and pauses to soak in. Then it fractures into five, six, ten pieces, and jolts forward to explore new terrain.

A car rushes by on the highway, tires humming, lights sweeping the sage, driver unaware of the locally unfolding drama. I crouch down on the dry ground, still warm from the day's heat, and watch the cool water creep toward me. It carries a few souvenirs of the journey with it: dried sage leaves, the husk of an insect, and floating gray pebbles of pumice.

The water hits the edge of the road and pools, gathering strength. Streams of bubbles rise through the water as it sinks into the ground. At a low spot, the water makes its break, snakes across the roadbed, drops off the other side, and disappears.

I watched the water cross the road for a while and then turned back. I walked to my car under the rotating constellations of the night sky, knowing that tomorrow would bring more work to be done, but that tonight in the dark the water was just twisting, winding, flowing, racing down into a slowly rising lake. 

# Committee's mission statement updated

This summer, the Mono Lake Committee Board of Directors and staff worked together to update the MLC's mission statement. In light of the State Water Resources Control Board decision protecting Mono Lake, we feel this is an important first step in charting the Committee's future role in the Mono Basin.

The updated mission (see box) retains the spirit of the original forged by David Gaines, which focused on protecting Mono Lake while meeting Los Angeles' real water needs. Additionally, the update explicitly incorporates goals which have been, and will continue to be, vital to the health of Mono Lake: ecological restoration, environmental education, and environmental problem solving.

## **Guardian for the Mono Basin**

The protection of Mono Lake has always been the overall goal of the Committee. That goal continues, and now includes the Mono Basin in recognition of the ecologically inseparable link between Mono Lake and its watershed (hardly new territory after ten years of work on Mono's tributaries and their restoration).

The Water Board decision issued last fall provided substantial protection for Mono Lake, adopting many of the safeguards the MLC has long hoped for. On the other hand, DWP has indicated that it intends to ask the Water Board to reconsider the Mono Lake decision before the year 2000. Fifteen years of litigation have shown that there will always be demands for Mono Lake's resources. And with today's political climate, environmental protections will certainly continue to be attacked.

On this front, the Committee's role shifts from advocating specific protections to assuring those safeguards remain in place. We must watch over the lake and its streams as a long-term guardian.

**The Mono Lake Committee is  
a non-profit citizens' group dedicated to:**

- ♦ protecting and restoring the Mono Basin ecosystem;
- ♦ educating the public about Mono Lake and the impacts on the environment of excessive water use;
- ♦ and promoting cooperative solutions that protect Mono Lake and meet real water needs without transferring environmental problems to other areas.

## **Ecological restoration**

Restoration of Mono's streams and waterfowl habitat has become an important area of work for the Committee, and it is now included explicitly in the mission.

The Committee is deeply involved in the restoration work ordered by the Water Board. The details are voluminous (see pages 6-8), but the upshot is simple: we must assure that the Water Board decision is translated into ecological health here, on the ground, in the Mono Basin.

## **Environmental education**

The revised mission identifies two linked topics for education: Mono Lake, and the impacts of excessive water use. Both are vital to sharing the value of Mono Lake.

The Committee's educational programs, such as field classes and South Tufa tours, will continue to illuminate the natural history of the Mono Basin.

The growing Outdoor Experiences program is designed to make the link between Los Angeles youth who use Mono Lake water and the lake itself.

"At Mono Lake, young Los Angelenos make the connection between urban

water use and the natural environment," says Stacey Simon, MLC's Public Education Coordinator. "It's a valuable experience for them that opens up new ways of understanding the world."


Through education, we seek to share Mono Lake, and the value of its protection, with the larger public.

## **Cooperative solutions**

The third prong of the revised mission statement commits to continuing the MLC's problem-solving approach.

In L.A., the MLC has helped secure millions of dollars for reclaimed water, assuring that the protection of Mono Lake will not bring undue hardship to the city—or transfer L.A.'s water demands to other sensitive areas. As we work for Mono Lake, we will continue to seek such win-win solutions.

## **Looking to the future**

Through education, cooperative solutions, expertise, and, if necessary, lobbying and litigation, the Mono Lake Committee is committed to protecting and restoring the health of the Mono Basin in the future. 



# MLC back in court for Mono Lake

Last fall's State Water Resources Control Board decision on Mono Lake has received much acclaim for protecting Mono Lake. As a result, many people were taken by surprise when the Water Board recently filed a motion to dismiss a portion of the Mono Lake litigation.

On July 10, the Eldorado County Superior Court heard debate on the Water Board motion, which was opposed by the Mono Lake Committee and others. Attorneys from both sides centered their arguments on one issue: What does it mean to comply with the terms of the court decision commonly known as CalTrout II?

## CalTrout II

The CalTrout II decision, issued in 1990, overturned a lower court's ruling that the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (DWP) did not have to comply with Fish and Game codes 5946 and 5937 until after the Water Board finished its research and hearing process. The two codes require dam owners, particularly in Mono and Inyo counties, to release enough water to keep fish downstream in good condition. Until court orders forced releases in the mid-1980s, DWP generally allowed no water to flow down Mono's creeks.

CalTrout II directed the Superior Court to set interim streamflows in order to immediately protect the fisheries while the Water Board decided final flow requirements. The decision was clear, the Committee asserts, that restoration of the destroyed historic fisheries is expected and that, while flow releases are obviously the key first step, additional measures may be required to do so. A water right holder, the CalTrout II court wrote, "can be compelled as the price of continued appropriation to take reasonable steps to [restore the creeks and their fisheries]."

The CalTrout II court was also clear

about the court's continuing role: "The jurisdiction of the Water Board to enforce [the Fish and Game code] is concurrent with the jurisdiction of the courts to act to protect the fisheries ... the courts may apply any judicial remedies to that end."

As a result of the CalTrout II decision, the Eldorado Court has supervised an "interim" stream restoration program since 1990. Court jurisdiction over stream restoration will end when the Water Board restoration plans are final.

## The Water Board motion

The Water Board, backed by DWP and Power, proposed that their obligations under the decision are complete—and that the case should be closed. The Water Board argued that by setting stream flows and including required boilerplate language in DWP's licenses, they had fulfilled both the explicit and implicit requirements of CalTrout II.

Stream restoration, Water Board attorney Clifford Lee claimed, is not a firm requirement of CalTrout II and falls fully under the Water Board's discretionary authority. While the agency still plans to continue the current restoration planning process, he concluded, it's not something that the court should have continuing authority to review.

## The Committee response

The Mono Lake Committee, National Audubon Society, California Trout, and State Department of Fish and Game argued against the Water Board's reasoning because plans for the restoration of Mono Lake's damaged tributaries are not yet in place (the Water Board anticipates producing a restoration order in mid-1996).

"Contrary to the Water Board's argument, there isn't a principle distinction between stream flows and stream restoration," MLC attorney Bruce Dodge

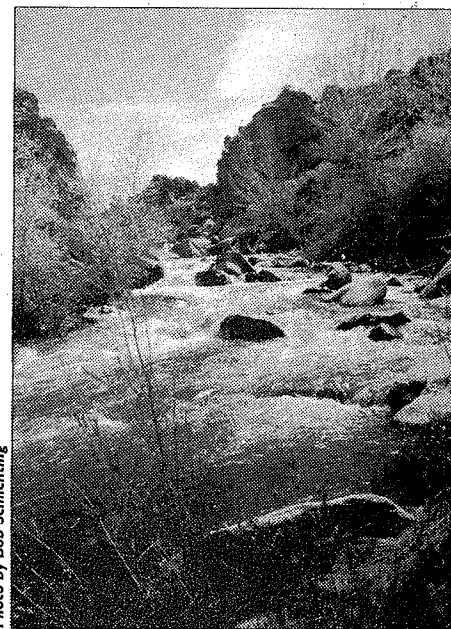


Photo by Bob Schlichting


Streamflows and restoration were the result of the CalTrout II ruling, which required compliance with Fish and Game codes.

points out, "in that both are necessary for compliance with the Fish and Game codes under the CalTrout II decision."

The Committee further argued that dismissing the case would disregard the responsibility of the court to oversee the interim stream restoration process.

## Moot point

"What's odd about the Water Board motion," says MLC Executive Director Martha Davis, "is that it has led to a lot of debate over what should be a moot point. The Water Board is moving forward with the restoration planning process, and if plans are approved next year as promised, the court would probably not be involved. Why waste time and money debating this issue now? It's premature."

The three hours of arguments were heard by Judge Terrence Finney, who has overseen the Mono Lake cases since 1989. His ruling is forthcoming. 



# STREAMS

## RESTORING MONO LAKE'S TRIBUTARIES

**Project:** Creek Restoration Plan.

**Water Board order:** The Department of Water and Power (DWP) must prepare a stream restoration plan to "restore, preserve, and protect the streams and fisheries" of Rush, Lee Vining, Walker, and Parker creeks.

**Deadline:** Draft plan due to the Water Board November 1, 1996.

The three stream restoration scientists, known as the Stream Team, and the stream Technical Advisory Group (TAG) continue with restoration planning. Two draft restoration reports examining restoration goals and potential restoration measures have been released, and the rewatering of a historical Rush Creek channel is planned for this fall.

### Reports on goals, treatments

The Stream Team's first report looks at the prediversion characteristics of the four streams affected by aqueduct diversions, examines the effects of diversions, and considers the accomplishments of restoration activity to date.

The report goes into specific detail by breaking each stream down into segments called reaches. The present-day characteristics of each reach are compared to those of prediversion times by making specific measurements such as channel length, riparian vegetation coverage, and sinuosity (see Newsletter 18.1, page 5 for complete listing). By linking present day and

prediversion conditions, the first report creates a structure for evaluating the achievement of restoration goals. TAG members also expressed interest in creating restoration targets for the goals chosen by the group, but for which quantified prediversion information is not available. These goals include habitat complexity, vegetative diversity, and many others.

The second report profiles potential restoration treatments and places them in a matrix to identify which restoration goals are furthered by each treatment. Treatment options range from management issues, such as removing grazing from stream corridors, to physical work, such as channel rewatering.

The work now before the Stream Team is to link the two reports by choosing, on a reach-by-reach basis, restoration treatments which will achieve the identified goals. That linkage will be the substance of the Stream Team's final report. The Committee is currently preparing comments in response to the two plans.

### High flows

The scientific experts have been studying the effects of this year's high flows on the creeks through field surveys and videotaped overflights. The observations will provide critical information as the Stream Team assesses the effects of flushing flows and the needs of the streams. Of particular interest to the Stream Team are the flows needed to cause bedload transport in the streams—the movement of cobbles and debris which leads to pool scouring and other habitat development. The team was favorably impressed with the effects of high flows on Lee Vining Creek and

plans to evaluate the response of Rush Creek.

### Channel rewatering

Interim work, directed by the three scientific experts, is focusing on the rewatering of a portion of the former main channel of Rush Creek in the habitat-rich bottomlands. In the proposed rewatering area, Rush Creek currently occupies a channel carved by floods in 1967.

The scientists have chosen to rewater the roughly 2,000-foot long channel, known as channel 10, to increase fishery and riparian habitat.

### Team and TAG process

The Stream and Waterfowl (see next page) teams are each made up of three scientific experts contracted by DWP to develop technical analysis and recommendations for restoring the four creeks and waterfowl habitat impacted by water diversions from the Mono Basin, as required by last fall's Water Board Decision 1631 on Mono Lake. Restoration is intended to help mitigate losses resulting from water diversions by DWP.

The Mono Lake Committee, DWP, and other affected parties are part of the stream and waterfowl TAGs, which hired the teams, chose restoration goals, and provide continuing input to the team. Additionally, the Stream Team scientists are directing a court-supervised interim restoration program, which continues until a Water Board restoration order is finalized.

*The Committee's work on the TAG is funded in part by a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.*



# WATERFOWL HABITAT

## RESTORING ONE OF MONO LAKE'S LOST RESOURCES

**Project:** Waterfowl Habitat Restoration Plan.

**Water Board order:** The Department of Water and Power (DWP) must prepare a plan to restore the waterfowl habitat lost at Mono Lake due to diversions.

**Deadline:** Draft plan due to the Water Board November 1, 1996.

Recent field visits and meetings held by the Waterfowl Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and the three scientific experts known as the Waterfowl Team have focused on potential sites for riparian, delta, and near-shore waterfowl habitat restoration.

### **Riparian habitat**

Riparian habitat—along streams—made up a significant portion of the waterfowl habitat resources which existed at Mono Lake before diversions by DWP began. The Waterfowl Team is interested in focusing waterfowl habitat restoration on two stream areas: the Rush Creek bottomlands and Mill Creek.

The Rush Creek bottomlands, historically a meadowed, multichannel stream system, potentially provide excellent riparian habitat for waterfowl. The Waterfowl Team primarily expressed interest in rewatering former distributary channels to recreate some of the ponded water and marsh habitat that once existed.

The Waterfowl Team is particularly excited by the restoration opportunities offered by the Mill Creek corridor

running between Lundy Lake reservoir and Mono's north shore. Rod Drewien, one of the Waterfowl Team's members, stated that "the most important single piece of habitat to restore for waterfowl in the Mono Basin is the Mill Creek watershed, especially the delta and the riparian areas above it." While not subject to Los Angeles Aqueduct diversions in the past, Mill Creek has been frequently dewatered due to diversions by water right holders on the creek.

### **Delta habitat**

Delta habitat, where fresh stream water meets saline lake water, supported tremendous numbers of waterfowl in prediversion times. The Waterfowl Team has examined possible delta restoration projects, such as the creation of duck ponds, and has chosen not to recommend such treatments.

The Waterfowl Team's decision is partially based on the expectation that, as the lake rises, a landscape feature called a ria will form as the lake travels up former stream channels, creating long, narrow pond-like features. Within the rias, the phenomenon called hypopycnal stratification—in which incoming freshwater from streams floats above the more saline lake water—will occur, creating the potential for good waterfowl habitat.

Returning water to Mill Creek would also restore high quality delta waterfowl habitat.

### **Near-shore habitat**

The Waterfowl Team has examined the entire near-shore area for restoration and is currently focusing on two potential

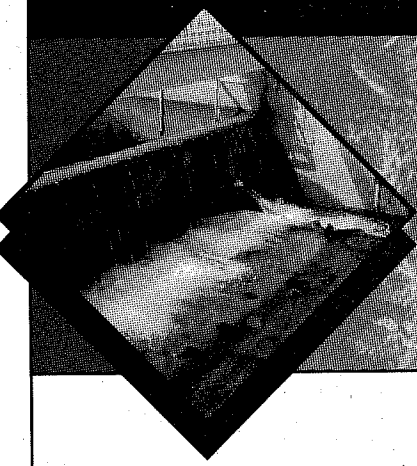
sites: the "County Ponds," located near Black Point; and the Simons Spring—Warm Spring area on Mono's east shore.

The County Ponds are natural depressions which have a high water table. In the past, when irrigation flows have coincidentally watered the ponds, waterfowl have responded well; the Waterfowl Team is looking at the feasibility of enhancing the habitat by providing a more reliable water source.

The ponds are intriguing to the Waterfowl Team because of their proximity to the nearby DeChambeau ponds, a man-made habitat area currently being enhanced for waterfowl in a project not connected with the Waterfowl Team's work. Combined, the County Ponds, if restored, and DeChambeau ponds would create a rich habitat complex which could help mitigate for near-shore habitat losses caused by diversions.

At the Simons Spring—Warm Spring area, the fire suppression efforts of the past fifty years have allowed heavy vegetation to cover marsh areas, limiting waterfowl access. The Waterfowl Team, working with the Tufts State Reserve and DWP, is planning a pilot burn of about forty acres this fall, when the marsh is normally dry. It is hoped the burn will open up ponded water areas and enhance nutritive forage for waterfowl.

*The Committee's work on the TAG is funded in part by a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.*



# WATER MANAGEMENT

## CREATING AQUEDUCT AND GRANT RESERVOIR PLANS

### Project:

Grant Lake Management Plan.

**Water Board order:** The Department of Water and Power (DWP) must create a plan for the efficient operation of Grant Lake reservoir and other diversion facilities in the Mono Basin. The plan should consider the needs of the stream and waterfowl habitat restoration programs and address local concerns.

**Deadline:** Draft plan due to the Water Board November 1, 1996.

The water management Technical Advisory Group (TAG) has been working cooperatively to address both short- and long-term issues. This year's high runoff has required immediate operations adjustments of the aqueduct and revealed some of the long-term operational constraints of the Mono Basin aqueduct system, in particular at Grant Lake reservoir.

Additionally, the Water Board has allowed a small export of water from the Mono Basin and has extended the schedule for development of stream, waterfowl habitat, and water management plans by three months.

### High flow management

At the request of the restoration Stream Team, high flows were limited in Lee Vining Creek in order to prevent damage to recovering vegetation and restoration treatments downstream. Flows in excess of 400 cubic feet per second (cfs) were diverted to Grant Lake reservoir, on Rush Creek. Flows on Walker and Parker creeks were also

limited, largely to prevent flooding on Highway 395. The modest amounts of water diverted from the three streams helped to fill Grant Lake reservoir, causing it to spill, as desired, in July.

### Operational constraints

As part of the effort to restore prediversion conditions on the creeks, the Stream Team and TAG would like to see Rush Creek flows mimic the natural hydrograph—to rise and fall as they would naturally. However, this year's high flows have revealed operational constraints at Grant Dam which make such a flow regime difficult to achieve.

Currently, Rush Creek flows into Grant Lake reservoir. Water then leaves the reservoir and reenters the creekbed via an artificial structure known as the "Mono return ditch." The return ditch has a theoretical maximum capacity of 360 cfs, but DWP limited return ditch flows to 160 cfs this year because it has neglected maintenance on the ditch in recent years.

The result is that Rush Creek flows below the reservoir are artificially capped until the reservoir spills over. This year, for example, a steady 160 cfs was released for several months until the reservoir finally spilled, shooting the total flows up to 400 cfs and higher in Rush Creek below Grant Dam. Although the spill was planned (to allow needed high flows downstream), its sudden occurrence hardly mimicked natural flows.

The situation leaves DWP with little flexibility to properly manage Grant Lake reservoir—and the aqueduct system—for the benefit of lower Rush Creek restoration. The Mono Lake Committee is interested in the possible solution of increasing outlet capacity by

installing an outflow structure which would release water into Rush Creek directly below the dam. This proposal would also facilitate rewatering 2,500 feet of natural creek channel currently bypassed by the return ditch.

### Accelerated export

The Water Board has approved a DWP request to allow the fall export of 4,500 acre-feet of water from the Mono Basin. The minimal export, sought by landowners to augment flows in the Upper Owens River, will not substantially impact Mono Lake and was supported by the other parties. Although Mono had not reached the 6,377-foot trigger level by April 1, at which annual diversions of 4,500 acre-feet are allowed, the lake achieved 6,377 feet by mid-June and is expected to continue rising through the rest of the year.

### Schedule extended

The restoration planning schedule, which applies to the stream, waterfowl habitat, and water management plans, has been extended by the Water Board to allow for more thorough plan development. The scientific experts are now expected to deliver their restoration recommendations to DWP by October 1, 1995. After a month of internal review, DWP will release the plans to the involved parties for comments, which will be due by January 1, 1996. The final plans are due to the Water Board on March 1 and a restoration order is expected by summer of 1996.

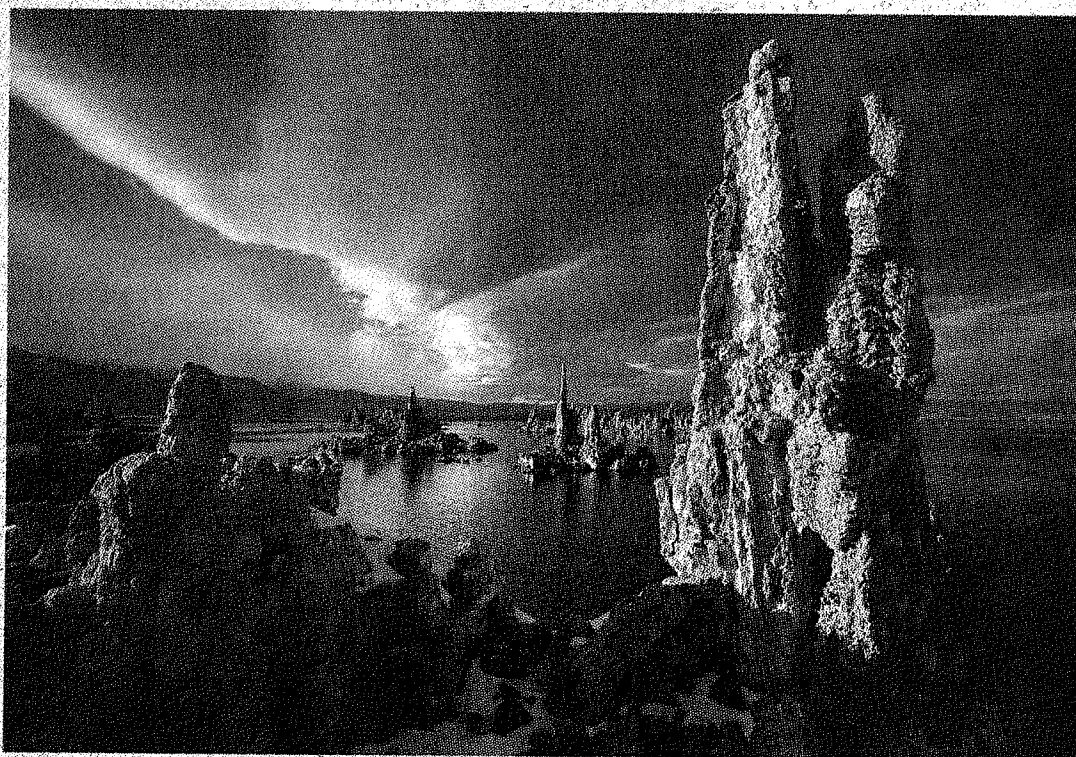
*The Committee's work on water management is funded in part by a Switzer Foundation Environmental Leadership Grant (see page 13).*



# THE MONO LAKE COMMITTEE

## Gift Catalog 1995-1996

### MONO LAKE



#### 1996 CALENDAR • MONO LAKE COMMITTEE

##### 1996 MONO LAKE CALENDAR

An award-winning design with photographs by Jim Stimson, James Randklev, Fred Hirshmann, Don Jackson and other leading photographers, plus an illustrated essay by author and photographer Steven Trimble, captures the unique beauty of this inland sea and the surrounding basin.

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##### SPECIAL CALENDAR DISCOUNTS

Buy 2-4, pay \$9.95 each;  
5-10, \$8.95 each;  
11 or more, \$7.95 each.



The Mono Lake Committee has been selling books, T-shirts, and other merchandise since its founding in 1978. Throughout the years, the goal of the sales program

**ALL PROFITS  
FROM EVERY SALE  
SUPPORT THE  
PROTECTION OF  
MONO LAKE**

has always been the same: to raise money for the Committee's efforts to protect Mono Lake while providing informative, quality products to members and supporters.

**FRIENDS OF MONO LAKE:**

It's hard to believe, but it's Water Board Decision 1631 plus one year ... and what a year it's been! It continues to be a thrill to watch the lake's water silently but steadily overcome long-dry shorelines.

Our sales program continues to prosper, thanks to tremendous work by staff and volunteers alike, and the support of members and visitors.

The 1995-1996 catalog is twelve pages of the best the store has to offer. You'll find new T-shirt designs, lapel and hat pins, many new books (including an exquisite coffee table book on Yosemite), and a bunch of stocking stuffer ideas. Many of our time-honored favorites are back as well, including yet another stunning Mono Lake Calendar. And if you don't know what Auntie Grizzelle really wants, how about a gift certificate? Details are on the catalog's back cover order form.

If you've visited the Information

Center and Bookstore, you know that what's in the catalog doesn't scratch the surface of what we have to offer.

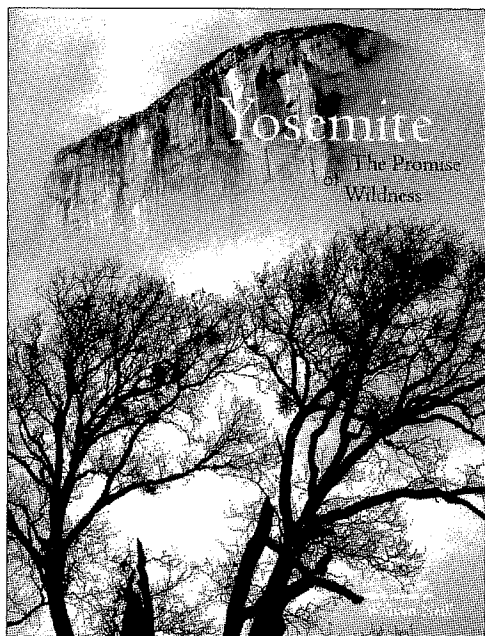
Just because it's not in the catalog, doesn't mean it's not available by mail. **If it's on our shelves, you can order it by phone!** Just give us a call, describe what you'd like, and if we've got it, you've got it! Remember that new Pat Metheny CD you were listening to on your visit last summer? Or that new commuter mug by Mono Basin ceramicist Jack Trefry that matched the pieces you picked up on your last visit, but couldn't quite afford? Now, they're just a phone call away!

A final note: I'd like to thank you on behalf of the Committee's staff for choosing to put your shopping dollars work on the lake's behalf. It really does matter!

— Rick Knepp, MLC Sales Manager



MONO LAKE COMMITTEE 1995 - 1996 GIFT CATALOG • CALL (619) 647-6595 TO ORDER



### YOSEMITE: THE PROMISE OF WILDNESS

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*Hardcover, 120 pages, 70 color plates: \$29.95, #0107*

### BLAZING STAR T-SHIRT

Sales Operations Coordinator Julie Clothier in a Tom Berto designed shirt featuring one of the Mono Basin's most striking wildflowers: the blazing star.

The brilliant yellow of the blossom is set against a purple field. A definite must for lovers of wildflowers.

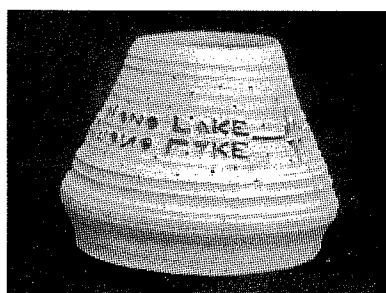
*Shirt colors: Select from white or sage; Short sleeve: \$15.00, #0209*



### WILD BRYDE CHRISTMAS ORNAMENTS

Beautiful keepsakes, these gold-plated ornaments celebrate the season with some of our our favorite furred and feathered friends. 2 1/2" - 3" in size (slightly larger than shown here).

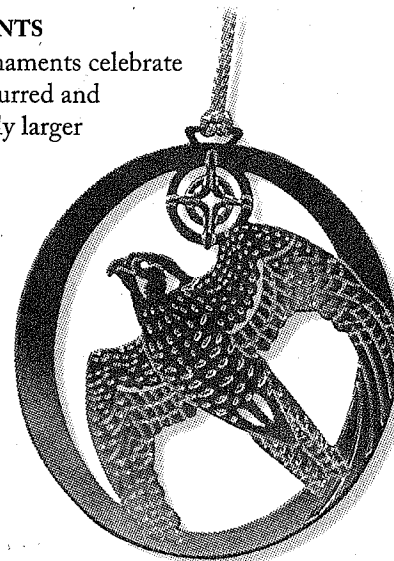
*Coyote #0307, Peregrine #0308: each \$9.00*



### MONO LAKE CANDLES

Reflected tufa and night sky are carved into this unglazed stoneware with a poured wax candle. In a darkened room, patterns of light and shadow will dance across the walls when the candle is lit.

*Approximately 7" in diameter and 5" in height: \$24.00, #1114*



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### NIGHT TUFA T-SHIRT

This shirt has been our best seller for over a year now. Hien Nguyen and James Uwins sport this stylized design of gray and black tufa with the Sierra skyline set against a starry night of deepening blue, all reflected in the lake's water.

Shirt Color: White; Short sleeve: \$16.00, #0204; long sleeve: \$21.00, #0205

### LAPEL PINS

The Committee's tri-color logo as a 3/4" x 7/8" pin with a military clutch. A must for collectors and Monophiles ... and an excellent stocking stuffer! \$2.95, #1113



### IMPROVED! MONO LAKE BIKE BOTTLE

Now sporting an extra-wide mouth and a rubberized grip strip! Mono's own *Artemia monica* swim across these squeezable bottles. Great for bikes, hikes and tikes with trikes! (Also spill-free drinks for auto touring.)

24 oz. capacity: \$5.95, #1102



### NEW! "RESTORE MONO LAKE" LICENSE PLATE HOLDER

With the favorable Water Board decision last fall, much of our activity now focuses on efforts toward restoration of the basin's historical habitats and ecosystems. Our new battle cry: "Restore Mono Lake!" Be among the first to show your support with this sturdy metal license plate frame.

Heavy duty metal frame: \$5.95, #1111



### "SAVE MONO LAKE" LICENSE PLATE HOLDER

We still have a few dozen of the time-honored "Save Mono Lake" frames. ...soon to achieve collectible status!

Heavy duty metal frame: \$4.95, #1104

### SPECIAL COMBO OFFER!

Buy one of each (for front and back plates) and save \$2.00! License plate combo: \$8.95, #1116

### BRINE SHRIMP EARRINGS

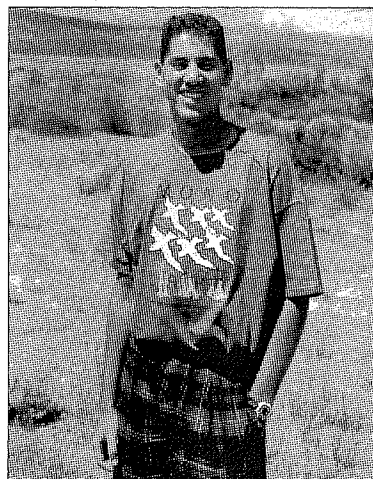
A Mono Lake exclusive, this Wild Bryde design features a silhouette of one of Mono's most important species. Shown actual size.

Select from gold #0301 or silver #0302: \$12.00



MONO LAKE COMMITTEE 1995 - 1996 GIFT CATALOG • CALL (619) 647-6595 TO ORDER





### MONO MODERN T-SHIRT

With a message encouraging friends to support the Committee's efforts, this Escher-esque shirt features patterns of gulls and waves before a grove of tufa. Summer intern Matt Mòule definitely thinks Mono Lake needs your help.

*Shirt colors: Select from slate or red; Short sleeve: \$15.00, #0202*



### NEW!

### MONO LAKE COMMITTEE LOGO PATCH

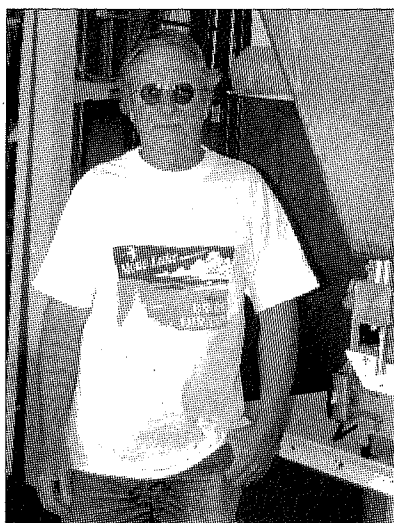
Our colorful logo can now be applied to the garment, hat or pack of your choice! Backed with heat-activated adhesive, you can iron or stitch it onto almost any fabric.

*Adhesive-backed patch; 2 3/4" x 3 1/8": \$2.95, #1101*

### NEW! MONO LAKE BRINE SHRIMP T-SHIRT

Be the first in your family to own this shirt featuring the actual logo from the Mono Lake Brine Shrimp Company. Shrimp Company owner Tim Hansen always wears one when he is at work.

*Shirt colors: Select from white or ash; Short sleeve: \$15.00, #0215*

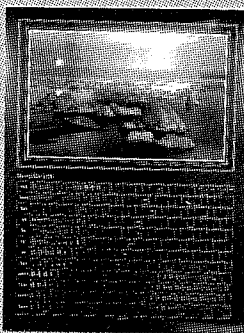


### MONO LAKE COMMITTEE LOGO T-SHIRT

Looking good is first priority (well, maybe a close second!) for Canoe Director Pete Bischoff and Summer Intern Kurt Foster in this popular Patagonia-designed t-shirt or sweatshirt. The Committee's logo is on the upper left front, and on the back, a tri-color graphic of Mono's fluctuating lake levels.

*Shirt Colors: Select from white or ash; Short sleeve: \$15.00, #0291; long sleeve: \$20.00, #0293; heavy duty sweatshirt: \$26.00, #0295*

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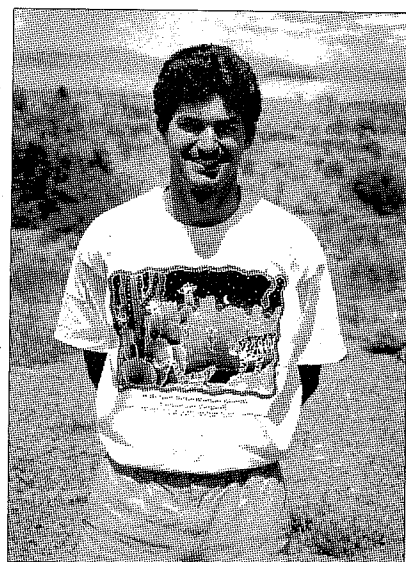
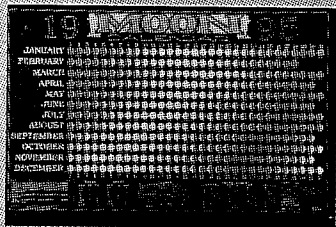


### 1996 MONO MOONSHINE CALENDAR-POSTER

Dennis Flaherty's full-color moonrise photo graces this lunar calendar printed on mirror-like Melinex, so your face becomes that of the person-in-the-moon!  
*Poster, 18" x 24". \$16.95, #0902*

### 1996 MOON CALENDAR CARDS

The phases of the moon, organized by month, for the new year. An essential for photographers, amateur astronomers, and people of taste, this attractive chart is perfect for the desktop or Christmas stocking!  
*10 1/4" x 6 1/2". \$2.00, #0116*

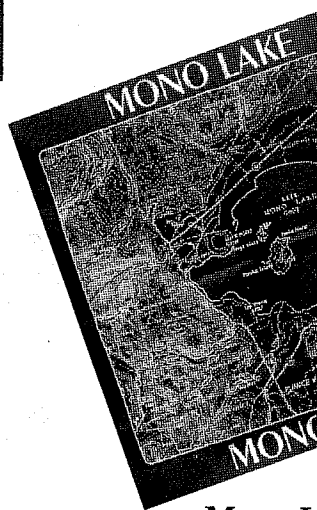


### BOB MEETS LIZ T-SHIRT

"Get lost in the desert. Meet stars, the moon, and wild animals. Breathe the night wind. Find yourself." So reads the preservation of deserts and canyons message on this T-shirt featuring the meeting of Lizard

and Bobcat. Intern Greg Reis models this shirt printed in contemporary Southwestern pastels.

*Shirt colors: Select from white or ash; Short sleeve: \$15.00, #0216*



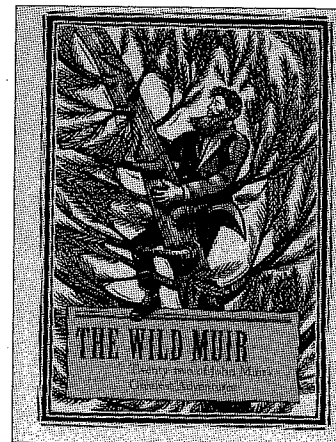
### MONO LAKE TOPOGRAPHIC T-SHIRT

Guaranteed to never get lost in the Mono Basin with this shirt on is Committee Volunteer Laura Maltby. This Committee classic is offered in two colors this year.

*Shirt colors: Select from ash or jade; Short sleeve: \$15.00, #0201*

### TOPO BANDANNA

The ever-popular topo design is also available on a 24" x 24" bandanna! Choose from red, natural, white, or teal:  
*\$3.95, #1105*

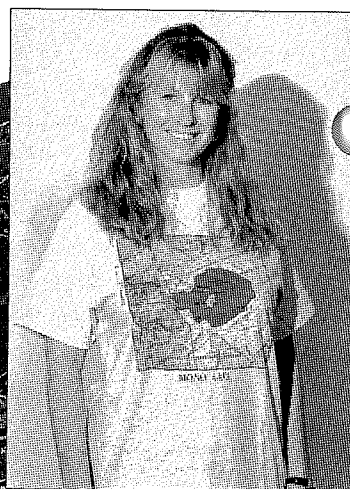


### THE WILD MUIR: TWENTY-TWO OF JOHN MUIR'S GREATEST ADVENTURES

Here, in his own words, is a collection of John Muir's most thrilling experiences, from his famous snow avalanche trip down a side canyon in Yosemite Valley to his dizzying ride in the top of a tree during a fierce

windstorm. Striking black and white scratchboard illustrations complement the text.

*Softcover, 211 pages, 22 illustrations: \$9.95, #0112*



MONO LAKE COMMITTEE 1995 - 1996 GIFT CATALOG • CALL (619) 647-6595 TO ORDER



### NEW! WILDFLOWERS OF THE SIERRA NEVADA T-SHIRT

Donning our wildflowers of the Sierra Nevada shirt is summer intern Amy Uher. The front of the shirt is a garden of vibrant columbines, lupines, and shooting stars.

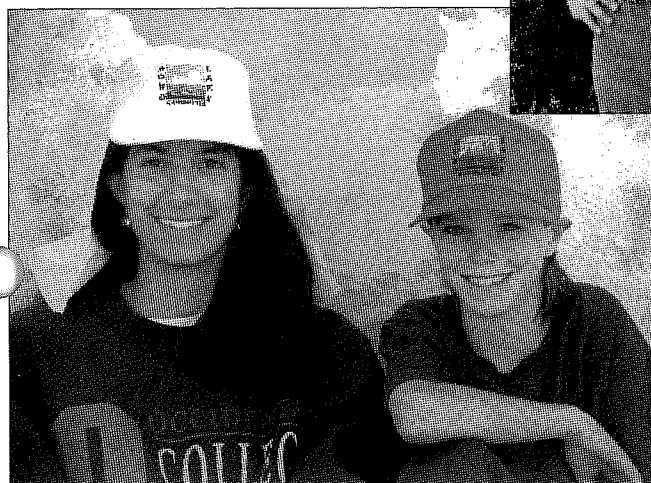
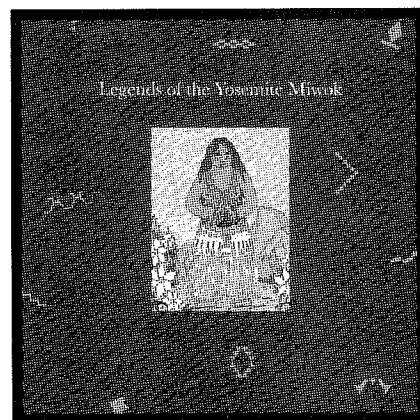
*Shirt Colors: Select from white or sage; Short sleeve: \$15.00, #0212*



### LEGENDS OF THE YOSEMITE MIWOK

Indigenous folklore at its best, this collection of 18 Native American legends from the Yosemite region reflects the earliest and most authentic forms of stories from the Sierra Miwok culture. A great gift for story lovers, graced by 14 beautiful color illustrations.

*Softcover, 89 pages: \$11.95, #0109*

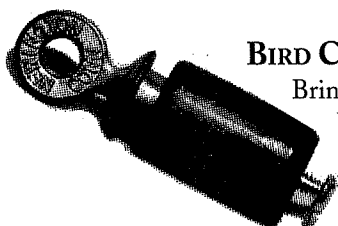


### COMMITTEE LOGO BASEBALL CAPS AND LEGIONNAIRE CAPS

Public Education Coordinator Stacey Simon and friend Chris Trefry keep cool with this sporty headgear. The legionnaire cap offers important sun protection with ear and neck flaps.

*Select from gray, red or royal: \$10.00, #0221*

*Legionnaire cap: Select from khaki or white: \$14.00, #0220*



### BIRD CALL

Bring more songbirds to your backyard or birdwatching expeditions. A great gift for the beginning birder.

*Boxed: \$5.50, #0118*

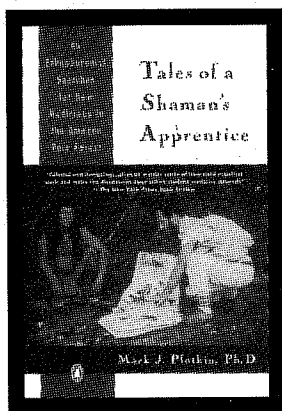
### LIGHTNING BEAR MOCK TURTLE SHIRT

Summer Intern Michelle Hofman shows off one of our new colors in this particular design. Inspired by Native American rock art, this stylized design printed on a heavyweight



preshrunk shirt is a definite for year-round fashion.

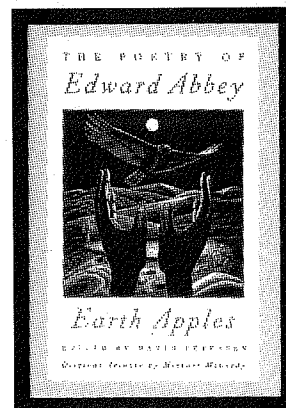
*Shirt Colors: Select from lapis or khaki; Sizes: Men's L, XL, XXL only; Long sleeve mock turtle: \$30.00, #0213*



### TALES OF A SHAMAN'S APPRENTICE

"Every time a shaman dies, it is as if a library burned down," chief ethnobotanist for Conservation International and author Mark Plotkin tells us. He has spent most of the last decade in the rain forests of South America tracking the shamans whose knowledge of the curative powers of plants may hold the cure to some of today's devastating diseases.

*Softcover, 328 pages, 15 photographs: \$11.95, #1603*



### EARTH APPLES: THE POETRY OF EDWARD ABBEY

Although Abbey rarely published his poetry, he was a passionate producer of verse, and these seventy-one original poems—never before published in any form—offer an insightful and wrenching look into the mind of this great man known to some as "Cactus Ed."

*Hardcover, 112 pages: \$14.95, #0117*

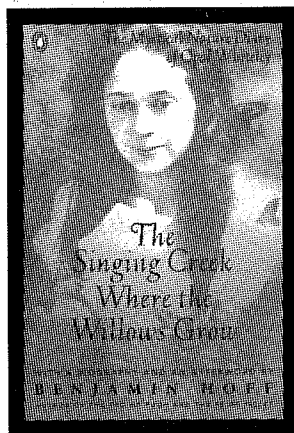
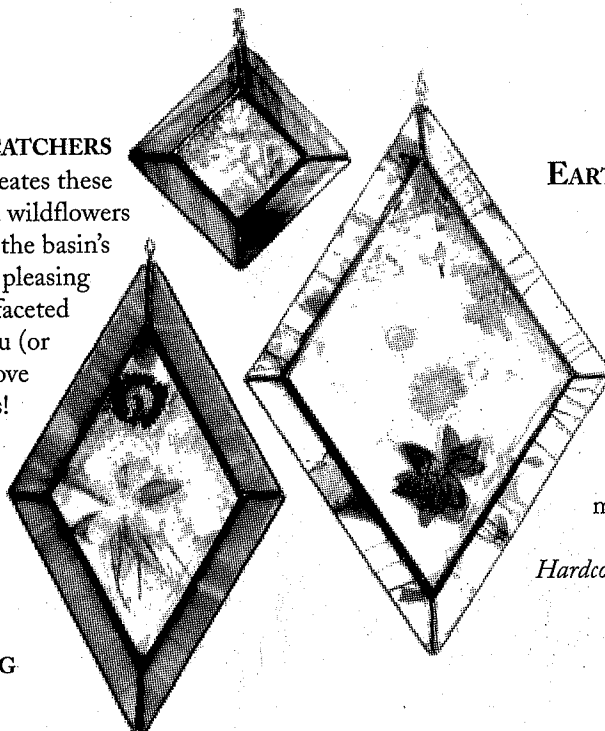
### WILDFLOWER SUNCATCHERS

Local artist Marianne Denny creates these beautiful suncatchers with dried wildflowers conscientiously collected from the basin's diverse flora, and incorporating pleasing color combinations of flower and faceted glass. Let us select a design you (or someone you care for) will love from a variety of shapes!

*Small (2" to 3"): \$15.00, #0501*

*Medium (4" to 5"): \$24.00, #0502*

*Large (6" to 9"): \$36.00, #0503*



### THE SINGING CREEK WHERE THE WILLOWS GROW: THE MYSTICAL NATURE DIARY OF OPAL WHITELEY

Discovering the long-lost childhood diary of a young nature writer named Opal

Whiteley, best-selling author Benjamin Hoff set out to solve the long-standing mystery of its origin. His biography of Opal accompanies the wistful, funny and wise work of a magically gifted child creating a book that will be treasured by children and children at heart.

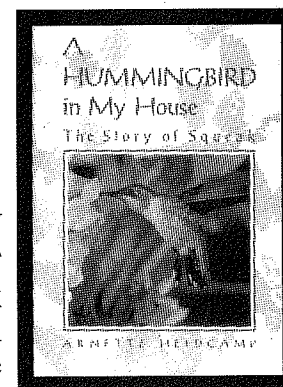
*Softcover, 373 pages, 15 photographs: \$12.95, #1604*

### A HUMMINGBIRD IN MY HOUSE: THE STORY OF SQUEAK

One unseasonably cold day in late October, long after all the other hummingbirds had left

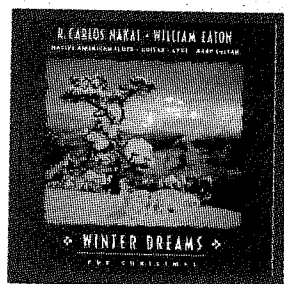
for more tropical climates, Arnette Heidcamp found a young male ruby throated hummingbird in her garden. Squeak became her guest for the winter, thriving happily in the sun-room of her house in Saugerties, New York.

*Hardcover, 116 pages, 56 color photographs: \$16.00, #0108*



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### WINTER DREAMS AT CHRISTMASTIME

William Eaton & R. Carlos Nakai. Beautiful European Christmas melodies in an arrangement blending the acoustic stringed instruments of Eaton with the flutes and drums of the Dine (Navajo) culture of Nakai. The result:

"Melodies (that) carried themselves from the Old World ... to the deserts of the Southwest, where the wind and solitude imbued them with a new enchantment."

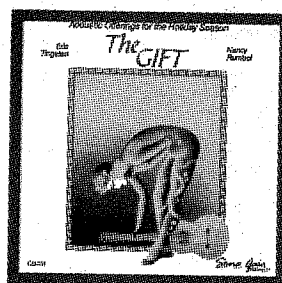
CD: \$14.98, #2501;  
cassette: \$9.98, #2551



### A CHARLIE BROWN CHRISTMAS

Vince Guaraldi. The music from the *Peanuts* special that has become as much a Christmas tradition as mistletoe and eggnog. Vince Guaraldi was a premier jazz pianist/composer and a seminal influence on contemporary artists including George Winston.

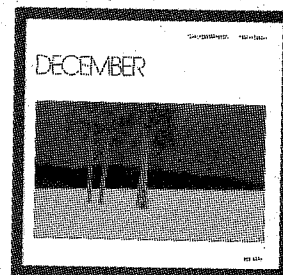
CD: \$16.98, #2502;  
cassette: \$10.98, #2552



### THE GIFT

Eric Tingstad & Nancy Rumbel. These accomplished artists offer *Ave Maria*, *the Coventry Carol*, *O Holy Night* and other traditional holiday favorites performed on acoustic stringed and wind instruments.

CD: \$15.98, #2503;  
Cassette: \$9.98, #2553



### DECEMBER

George Winston. A much-celebrated collection of traditional (*The Holly and the Ivy*, *Carol of the Bells*, *Joy*) and original compositions (*Thanksgiving*, *Peace*) by an acknowledged master of the solo piano.

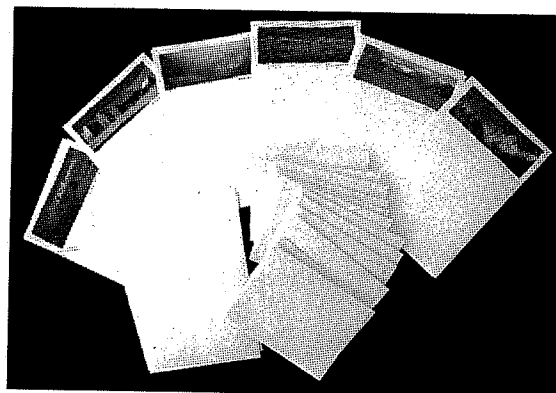
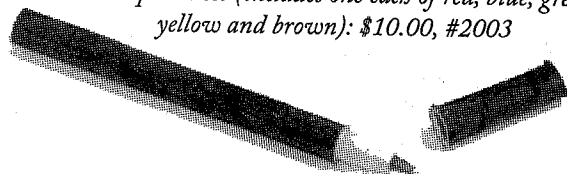
CD: \$17.98, #2504;  
cassette: \$9.98, #2554



### TWIG PENCILS AND PENS

More (and improved!) stuff for the stocking. Lead runs the full length of the pencils, which are now available in a rainbow of color leads in addition to the standard graphite. And introducing the twig pen!

Graphite pencil: \$2.00, #2001; pen: \$3.00, #2002;  
colored pencil set (includes one each of red, blue, green, yellow and brown): \$10.00, #2003

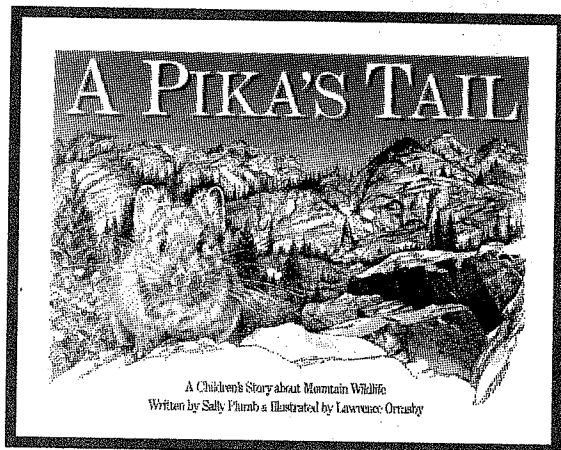


### PEAK PRODUCTIONS EASTERN SIERRA STATIONERY ASSORTMENT

An established favorite. Jim Stroup's photographs capture the magic that shows Yosemite and the Eastside in its "best light." A pack includes 2 illustrated sheets each of Mono Lake, Bodie, Yosemite, Mt. Whitney, Mammoth Lakes and Bishop, 12 blank sheets and 12 envelopes.

5 1/2" x 8 1/2": \$6.95, #0705

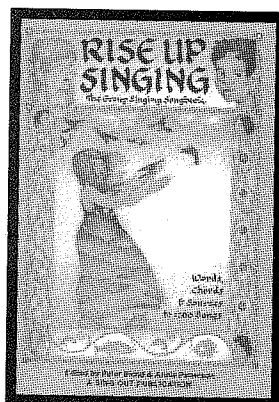
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### A PIKA'S TAIL

A charming children's story of Beejer, a pika who discovers that life can be complete even if you are born without a tail.

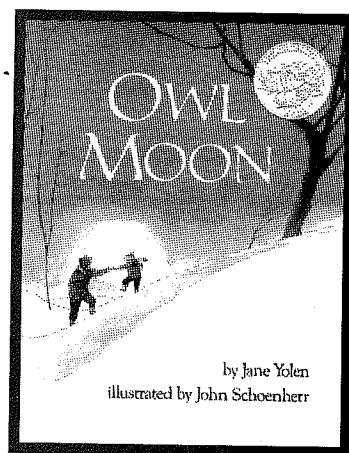
*Softcover, 35 pages, 18 color illustrations: \$10.95, #0113*



### RISE UP SINGING THE GROUP SINGING SONGBOOK

From ballads to Beatles, Bob Dylan to Broadway, here are the words, chords and sources to over 1200 of the songs you most love. The ultimate singalong guide.

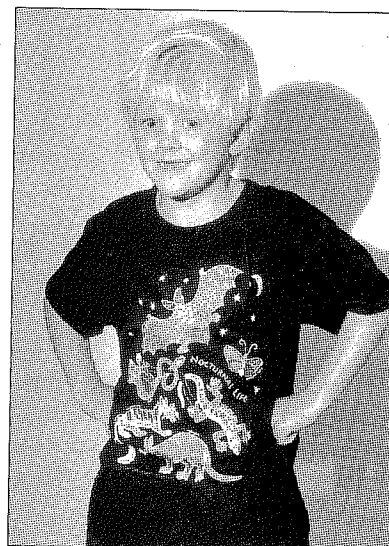
*Softcover, spiral bound, 281 pages: \$17.95, #1605*



### OWL MOON

Late one winter night a little girl and her father go owling. Winner of the Caldecott Medal, this gentle, poetic story is wonderfully complemented by 14 exquisite watercolor illustrations.

*Hardcover, 28 pages: \$15.95, #0115*



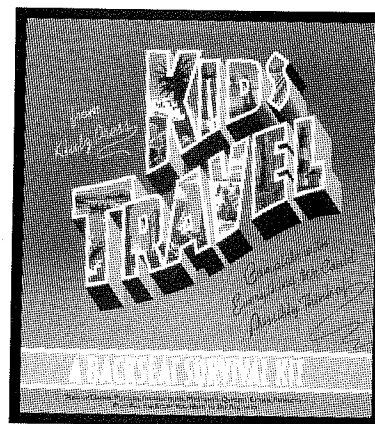
### NEW! KIDS' NOCTURNAL LIFE T-SHIRT

Ready for action day or night is Lee Vining local Bodie Tureson in our glow in the dark T-shirt featuring an

aardvark, a night lizard, an eared bat, and other creatures of the night.

*Shirt color: black; Sizes: kids S, M, L (sizes run a little large)*

*Short sleeve: \$10.00, #025*



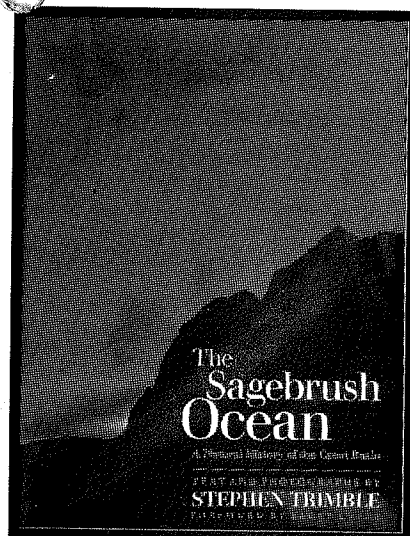
### KIDS TRAVEL: A BACKSEAT SURVIVAL KIT

The folks at Klutz Press have put together a ton of games, puzzles, mysteries, quizzes, and everything else they could possibly think of and created a guaranteed cure for the long trip backseat blahs.

Endorsed by the Save the Parents Society.

*Hardcover, 150 pages plus felt-tip pens, dice, game pieces and more: \$19.95, #1606*

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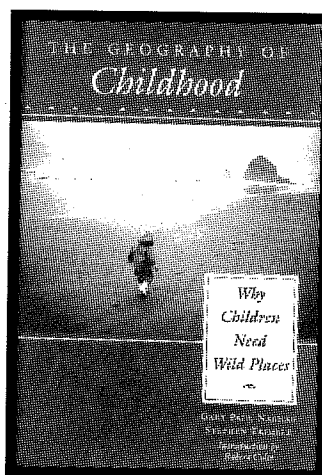


### THE SAGEBRUSH OCEAN:

#### A NATURAL HISTORY OF THE GREAT BASIN

Embellished with exquisite photographs, this is an eye-opening account of an unknown and unappreciated area in North America. Winner of the Sierra Club's Ansel Adams Award and the High Desert Museum's Earle A. Chiles Award.

*Softcover, 248 pages, 136 photographs: \$21.95, #0110*



### THE GEOGRAPHY OF CHILDHOOD: WHY CHILDREN NEED WILD PLACES

In this unique collaboration, naturalists Gary Nabhan and Steven Trimble investigate how children come to care deeply about the natural world. Drawing insights from fields as various as biology, psychology, and education, this book urges adults to rethink our children's contact with nature and makes clear how human growth remains rooted both in childhood and in wild landscapes.

*Softcover, 184 pages, \$12.00, #0122*

### WILDLIFE PINS

Four feathered denizens of the Mono Basin are available for your choosing; these exquisite pins are not only beautiful but very collectable.

Hand-painted, then fire-glazed for durability by dedicated artisans at William Spear.

*Allen's hummingbird:*

*\$10.00, #0303;*

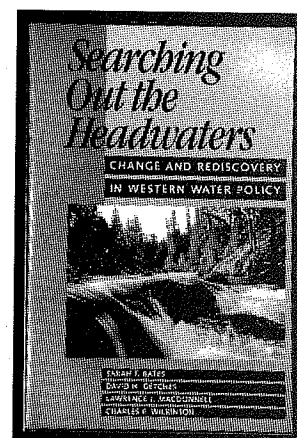
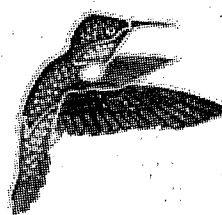
*Chickadee: \$8.00,  
#0304;*

*Peregrine falcon:*

*\$11.00, #0305;*

*Great horned owl:*

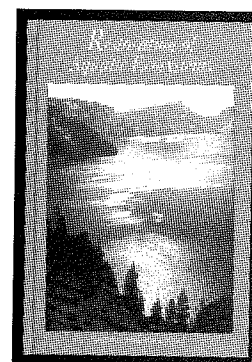
*\$16.00, #0306*



### SEARCHING OUT THE HEADWATERS

Written by Sarah F. Bates, this immensely readable and broadly informative book explores the history and future of western water policy and provides an important framework for understanding the waters of the West and the people whose livelihoods depend on them.

*Softcover, 242 pages: \$17.95, #0106*



### RESTORATION OF AQUATIC ECOSYSTEMS

This comprehensive volume examines the prospects for repairing the damage society has done to the nation's lakes, rivers, streams, and wetlands. The book also outlines a national strategy for aquatic restoration. Featuring case studies of aquatic restoration activities throughout the country.

*Hardcover, 552 pages: \$37.95, #0123*

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• Additional mailing addresses: \$4.00.

• California law requires us to charge sales tax on shipping.

## T-shirt Sizing

Unless otherwise indicated, all our shirts are available in sizes S-XL. Most, but not all, of our designs are available in size XXL; phone your order in to insure availability.

## Gift Certificates

Make certain you give exactly what they want! Gift Certificates work just like cash in the Committee's Bookstore—and via mailorder. Or give the gift that keeps on giving: a membership! *Must be redeemed within a year of purchase.* Available in any amount of \$10.00 or more.



# Wine cellar event honors Bruce Dodge

As the sun cast orange and red rays through the Golden Gate Bridge, the 10th annual Wine Cellar Drawing got underway amidst oak casks of aging Chardonnay and Cabernet. The event, hosted by Rosenblum Cellars at their waterfront warehouse in Alameda, raised over \$15,000 for the protection and restoration of Mono Lake through a raffle of donated wine, fine photography, and special prizes.

## Defender of the Trust

The gathering also honored Bruce Dodge, the recipient of the Mono Lake Committee's 1995 Defender of the Trust Award.

Dodge has been the Committee's lead attorney since the inception of the Mono Lake litigation. He received an ovation for his work on behalf of Mono Lake—and some playful roasting from his friends. Among other gifts, his legendary concern about small aircraft safety inspired the assembly of a custom safety kit, complete with padded baseball cap and emergency rations.

But most importantly, Dodge received the Defender of the Trust Award in recognition of his unflagging commitment to the protection of Mono Lake. In the late 1970s Dodge, then a junior partner at the firm of Morrison & Foerster, pushed hard to have the firm take the Mono Lake case on a pro bono basis. Dodge has been standing up for Mono Lake in courtrooms across the state ever since.

## Drawing winners

By the end of the evening, four wine cellar winners had been drawn from among the 285 ticket holders. John S. Gold, of Menlo Park, was the winner of the first cellar which included Mono Lake Victory Vintage wine and an original Jim Stimson photograph titled "Tufa



Bruce Dodge, the Committee's lead attorney, received the Defender of the Trust Award.

Towers, Lenticular Clouds." Cellar number two, comprised of rare Chardonnay & exceptional sparkling wines, went to Terry Cholar, a Marina resident.

Bonita Churney of Pacific Palisades received cellar number three which

included premier release wines and classic carneros. And the fourth cellar, a photo by Warren Marr titled "Dusk, Mono Lake," went to Olaf and Jeanette Leifson of Davis.

A special drawing was also held for several weekend getaway packages. Winners were: John Luther, of Oakland, who will be visiting the Casa Munras Hotel in Monterey; Leverett Smith of El Cerrito, who received a weekend from the Inns of Monterey; and Tony Bernhardt, a Berkeley resident, who has a space for two reserved at the Tickle Pink Inn in Carmel.

Overall, the evening offered good company, great wine, and a chance to appreciate one of Mono Lake's most ardent supporters. Jill Richards, the coordinator of the event, summed up the evening by noting that "every person who participated was a winner because, in the end, each ticket sold will help to restore Mono Lake!"



The tools of the vintner's trade set the atmosphere for the annual Wine Cellar event, which took place at Rosenblum Cellars in Alameda.

# Mono Basin Journal

A roundup of less-political events at Mono Lake

by Geoffrey McQuilkin


Summer snowstorms come in fast; one spent but a few hours in the basin. The clouds clearing from the lake's south shore trailed dark tendrils behind, seemingly wishing to stay longer.

The Mono Basin wildflowers bloomed in crashing waves this year. The desert peach was first. It had almost reached its peak when a snowstorm knocked the bloom down, the pink blossoms frozen under soft flakes of white.

Then came the yellow cheerfulness of the bitterbrush and mule ears. Each used the wet year's resources to best advantage, and the bloom promised to be the largest of recent years—until another snowstorm arrived and got them. Now we're on the third wave, which is rising and falling



of its own accord. But look closely at the mule ears and you'll see today's blossom tucked closely next to the dried trial flower of the early season.

Down at Lee Vining Creek, the summer has been a steady roar of abundant water crashing over rocks, pebbles, grains of sand. One evening, I sat on the gnarled, snaking roots of a Jeffrey Pine as the noise of the creek washed over me and the sun slowly set through the dark green needles and cinnamon cones. The light moved across a sky decorated by a herd of mare's tails in roundup. A nighthawk drifted overhead in the wind, flying one direction slipping toward another. Dark arrived, I departed, and the creek roared on. 

## Benchmarks



January, 1995: lake elevation 6,375.0 feet. The boardwalk at County Park under snow.



July, 1995: lake elevation 6,377.2 feet. The sign has been moved away from the water's edge; note the tufa blocks on the left of the trail now in the water.

cubic feet per second (cfs)



## Lake Level Watch

# Mono Lake up 3 feet and still rising!

Mono Lake has risen enough in recent months to require the installation of a new lake level gauge; the old one had only three inches left before disappearing underwater.

While installation of a new gauge was a happy marker of the lake's rise in this wet year, it also caused a divergence between record keeping and reality. When DWP installed the new gauge, the crew also checked the elevation of the old one—and found it to be at a slightly different elevation than previously thought.

When the old gauge was read the next week, the difference—only a few inches—made the lake appear to go down on paper, although it had clearly been rising steadily. So the lake level records will always show an odd little dip in July, but the lake did not.

And rising the lake has been—three inches per week for the high runoff period! At press time, Mono Lake stood at an elevation of 6,377.4 feet above sea level, a rise of *three feet* from its winter low. It should continue to rise to 6,379

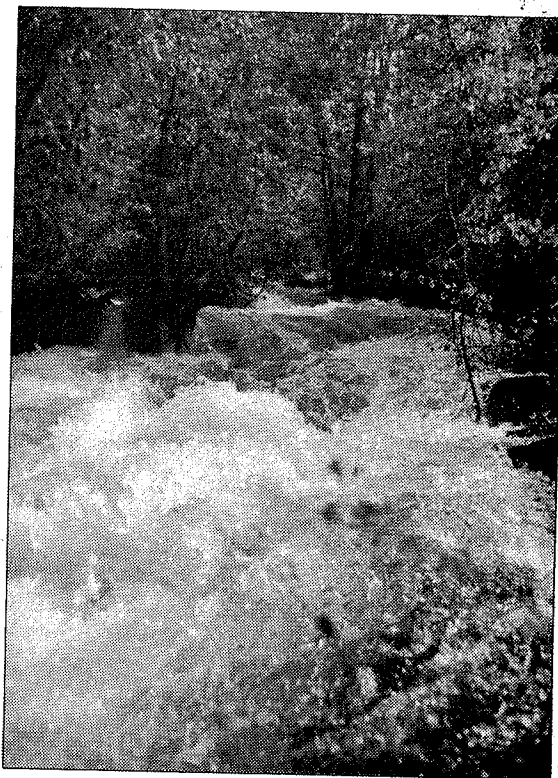
feet by next spring, slowing only briefly in the fall as evaporation catches up to this wet year's inflow.

### High flows

In the last issue of the newsletter, the runoff forecast was 165% of normal, assuming average precipitation in May and June. Those months turned out to be the second wettest on record, so this year's runoff is likely to be closer to 175% of normal.

Lee Vining Creek set a record with a peak flow of 530 cubic feet per second (cfs) in July. Rush Creek, measured above Grant Lake reservoir, peaked in the last days of July at close to 600 cfs.

The high flows quickly filled Grant Lake reservoir. As planned, it overflowed in late July, providing valuable high flows of water to lower Rush Creek.

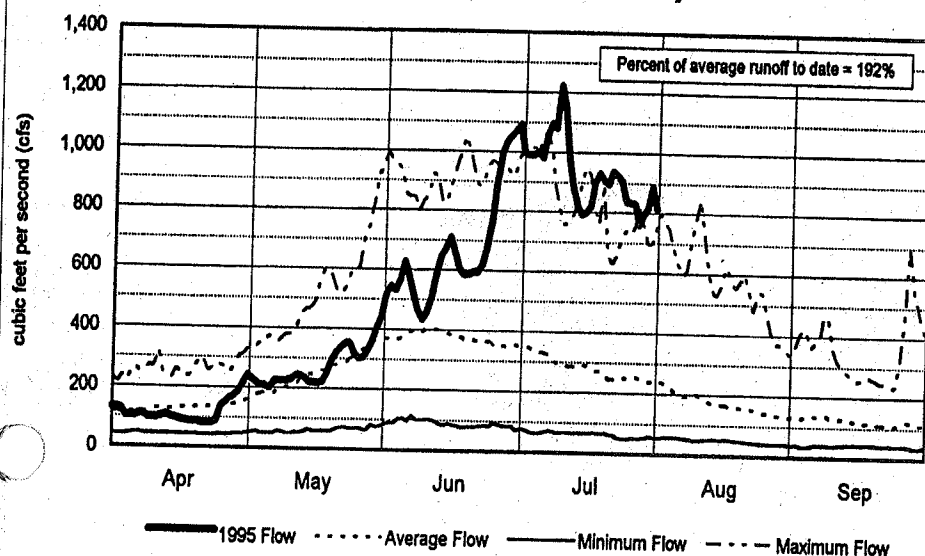


### Meromixis

Researchers from the U.S. Geological Survey spent several weeks on the lake and have found that an interesting condition called meromixis is returning. In a normal year, fresh water flowing into the lake mixes into the lakewater relatively quickly. In wet years like this one, however, so much freshwater enters the lake that a density stratification occurs, with lighter layers of fresh and brackish water floating on top of the denser lakewater. When this condition persists, the lake is said to be meromictic and the usual fall mixing of lakewater doesn't occur.

In the wet winter of 1982–83, the lake went into meromixis. That winter, most of the lake surface between the west shore and Paoha froze (unusual for a saline lake) due to the concentration of fresh water, leading Committee staff to embark on ice skating adventures. Maybe we'll be out there again this year!

Overall Mono Basin runoff—daily flow



Graph courtesy of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power

# Of rising lakes and soggy shoes

by Gary Nelson

The 1995 canoe season at Mono Lake has seen steadily rising lake levels and dramatically increased spring activity. Plumes of shrimp hover above even the smallest of tufa formations, heralding the return of life-giving springwater flows. At the mouths of Rush and Lee Vining Creeks, gulls play in the thick layers of fresh water that float atop the heavier, briny lakewater.

This inflow is rejuvenating Mono Lake and adding excitement to my job as a canoe guide, since the launch site we used for the past seven years is now completely inundated.

At Navy Beach, the only beach left by the rising lake is a narrow spit of sand from two to five feet wide, and about 100 feet long. On one side of this barrier beach the sand, eroded by wave action, drops away gradually into the lake. This eliminates the need to push the canoes out over rocks, making the lakeward side an ideal launch site. On the beach's inland side however, flows of lakewater around the end of the spit have combined with springwater flows to change this

area considerably over the course of the summer. It has gone from being wet, to being muddy, to being mucky, to becoming a backwater swamp.

Three weeks ago I scouted a new launch site, making an end run around the swamp to the east. By the following weekend, the lake had risen enough to inundate this new site before we could even use it. In fact, the beach had become a narrow sand island.


Returning from our first tour, I frantically looked for another way around the swamp. Spotting a mound of dry land just inland from the swamp, I steered my canoe towards it. I had found the swamp's narrowest point!

After unloading my passengers, I pulled the canoe across the beach, shoved it over to the mound, and found that it was just long enough to serve as a bridge between beach and mound. I crossed over, and sat down on the end of the canoe to stabilize it, placing one foot upon the mound. The first users of our "bridge" looked at it somewhat dubiously, but took quick advantage of it

after inspecting the swamp, which by now had taken on the color of sun tea left out a few months too long.

Our bridge worked perfectly. However, being rather pleased with my improvisational ingenuity, I had failed to notice that the mound was tenanted by others who appreciated its relatively lofty and dry position: a colony of red ants! Having sent skirmishing parties up my ankle, and finding the area to their taste, the ants attacked in force. At first I had to ignore the stinging, since passengers were crossing. How I wished they would hurry!

As the ants approached my knee, I knew that the moment of decision had arrived. I asked one of the passengers to stabilize the other end of the canoe. He graciously complied, I waded thigh deep into the lake and felt the final, vicious stings of the ants as they were overwhelmed by the alkaline waters. Needless to say, we changed our launch site.

*Gary Nelson is the Committee's adventurous Canoe Tour Supervisor.* 

## Update: Mono Lake license plate proposal

Several issues ago, this newsletter ran a survey to gauge the interest of members and supporters in a Mono Lake license plate. Volunteer Mark Coolidge has been collecting responses, but no decision has yet been made on proceeding with the program.

The license plate proposal would make license plates with a background image of Mono Lake available as an alternative to the standard California plate. An extra fee, which would

benefit the Committee, would be charged for the plate. Potentially, the Committee could raise thousands of dollars for the restoration and continuing protection of Mono Lake through the program. On the other hand, organizing the program requires a significant commitment of time and startup funds.

Committee staff are still evaluating the project, its benefits, and our ability to manage it successfully. We appreciate all the interest expressed in Mono Lake

license plates so far. Look for more news in future issues of the *Mono Lake Newsletter*.

If you sent in your survey last winter, we still have your name and will notify you if the program moves forward. If you're interested in adding your name to the list or want to know more about the proposal, contact Alan Magree at (818) 972-2025 or write to: Mono Lake Committee, 1207 W. Magnolia Blvd., Suite D, Burbank, CA 91506.



# Awards and honors received

**E**nvironmental struggles like the fight to protect Mono Lake are sometimes lonely affairs. It's always rewarding to receive outside recognition and support for that work, and the past few months have brought several awards and grants to the MLC.

## Awards

Back in April the **City of Los Angeles** presented a certificate of commendation to the Committee "in recognition of your outstanding service to the community on the 25th anniversary of Earth Day."

The **California League of Conservation Voters** presented Committee Executive Director Martha Davis with their Environmental Leadership Award for her leadership of the MLC, her dedication to Mono Lake, and her commitment to seeking environmentally sound solutions to the Mono Lake controversy.

In June, the **U.S. Bureau of Reclamation** honored the Committee with the

Long-Term Leader award from its annual Leadership in Conservation Awards. Los Angeles City Councilwoman Ruth Galanter recommended the MLC for the honor.

Also, the Committee has received the **Frank Wells Last Best Place Award** which recognizes the MLC for "forming an effective coalition of Mono Lake advocates, the people of Los Angeles, the people of Mono County and eleven federal, state and local agencies to protect and restore the biological richness of the Mono Lake ecosystem."

## Grants

Mono Lake Committee members continue to provide the bulk of the funding for the Committee's work. Increasingly, though, the Committee has been seeking grants for specific activities relating to ecological restoration and education. The last issue of this newsletter reported on the matching grant provided by the Na-

**tional Fish and Wildlife Foundation.**

Two recent success are also noteworthy.

The Committee is pleased to be a successful applicant for a **Switzer Environmental Leadership Grant**, administered by the San Francisco Foundation. The grant, which is specifically designated to fund the work of a Switzer fellow, will partially underwrite the MLC's participation in the Mono Basin restoration planning process. The grant will fund technical analysis and assistance from MLC consulting hydrologist Peter Vorster, the foremost expert on Mono Basin hydrology.

Lastly, as this issue of the *Mono Lake Newsletter* went to press, the **World Wildlife Fund Innovation Grants Program** confirmed a grant to the Committee to support educational work associated with Mono Basin creeks and restoration. The grant will underwrite public tours, the Lee Vining Creek Trail brochure, and other activities. 🐾

## Gyuto monks visit Mono Lake

**N**ine Buddhist monks from the Gyuto Tantric University assembled on the south shore of Mono Lake in May.

Lifting each of their voices in otherworldly three-note chords, the monks performed a half-hour healing chant for Mono Lake. The ability to produce such multi-note chords is ascribed to persons who have achieved selfless wisdom.

Hundreds of Eastern Sierra residents gathered to witness the chant, one of the largest groups assembled at South Tufa.

The Gyuto monks made their visit to Mono Lake as part of



their U.S. tour, which is intended to draw attention to the Chinese occupation of Tibet and to raise funds for a new monastery.

The Dalai Lama and Gyuto monks fled Tibet in 1959 and reestablished the Gyuto Tantric University, which specializes in higher forms of meditation, in India. They hope to build a new, larger monastery near Katmandu, Nepal, in order to train new monks.

"In our chant for Mono Lake and the future," the vice abbot of the monastery told the gathered crowd, "we pray for this beautiful place to be as it was many years ago."

# Staff migrations

by Martha Davis

**S**aving Mono Lake has demanded tremendous personal sacrifices from everyone—but none more so than from the Committee's oldest staff who have repeatedly postponed leaving the MLC for "just one more year" so that they could help win the legal struggle for the lake's protection. With the State Water Resources Control Board decision in hand, the bittersweet news of long-delayed departures comes as no surprise. We will, however, deeply miss our colleagues and good friends who have done so much for Mono Lake.

**Ilene Mandelbaum**, the Mono Lake Committee's Associate Director, resigned in early summer to pursue a well-deserved restful summer and personal projects long postponed. She joined the Committee eleven years ago, assisting MLC founder David Gaines with a myriad of policy and research projects.

Ilene's assignments quickly expanded into the legal arena where she became MLC's point person on all scientific issues relating to Mono Lake. Ilene worked countless hours helping MLC attorneys prepare winning legal arguments, but her happiest hours were spent walking Mono's reborn creeks, reveling in their recovery and planning additional restoration work.

Fortunately, Ilene plans to stay in the Mono Basin and will continue to give us the benefit of her wisdom. You should be able to catch an occasional glimpse of her sprite-like figure madly pedaling up Tioga Pass in the early morning light.

With great regret, we are also saying goodbye to **Stacy Brown**, the Mono Lake Committee's Business Manager and resident Monophile. Stacy arrived in 1987 to help with our bookkeeping "for a week or so." In September, eight dedicated years after uttering these fateful words, Stacy is returning to her intended career in biofeedback medical care.

During her tenure, Stacy transformed

the Committee's bookkeeping and administrative systems, bringing us out of the shoebox era of nonprofit administration and into the computer age. When not buried in paperwork, Stacy has loved putting together information displays on Mono Lake. We will miss Stacy's lectures on workplace safety (along with her many other thoughtful services to the staff) and hope she will come back to play (not work) at Mono Lake.

In August, we bid a fond farewell to **Julie Clothier**, the Committee's Sales Operations Coordinator. Julie joined the MLC as a winter intern in 1994 and decided to stay on. Her formidable organizational skills have made a lasting contribution to the Committee, but we will miss even more deeply the gentle spirit who has had kind words for us all. Julie is moving to the Bay Area to continue her career in environmental education. We hope she will return to visit us—often.


Courageously moving up the Committee's "corporate" ladder to cover the responsibilities left by these departures are **Sally Miller**, MLC's Eastern Sierra Representative, and **Kathi Richards**, the Committee's Bookkeeper. Sally will head up our Eastern Sierra policy program and coordinate the development of the Mono Basin restoration plans with MLC's consultants and attorneys. Kathi will assume responsibility for the Committee's finances.

With the end of the canoe season, we bid farewell to our skillful and enthusiastic Canoe Program Coordinator **Pete Bischoff**. Pete's living locally now, so we expect to see him in the office again soon.

Happily, we're keeping hold of several members of our summer staff for the seasons ahead. Intern **Greg Reis** will be staying into the winter, giving him more time to learn about the streamflow, and snowfall, cycles of the basin. Super-volunteer **Laura Maltby** has fallen in love

with the Eastern Sierra. She'll be staying on to help with the sales and development programs. And although intern **Amy Uher**, our educational exhibit (and spray mount) expert, is leaving in September she makes promises about returning in 1996.

Most of the summer crew is returning to school. Volunteer **Hien Nguyen**, who has helped extensively with the Outdoor Experiences program, is going back to the Bay Area to finish her master's degree in education. Intern **Matt Moule** is looking forward to his senior year (but not the southern California smog) and is considering a thesis involving the Mono Basin. **James Uwins** is excited to get back to cross-country running competition but says he'll miss his role as publications protege. **Michelle Hofmann** heads back to Humboldt State for her final year but couldn't quite break away from the Mono Basin—she's planning to finish a South Tufa guide over the winter. And **Kurt Foster** may be around for some winter skiing—or he might get his band back together in Seattle—or . . . we'll wait and see what happens.

*Martha Davis is the Committee's Executive Director. She, too, has been here a long time, and we're pleased that she finally escaped the telephone for a few days of vacation this summer.* 

## Matched Gifts

**Jeanne M. Kartenko**, of Glendale, made a donation for Mono Lake which will be matched by her employer, the **Times-Mirror**.

**Rosie Andrews** made a donation which was matched by **Patagonia**.

## Accolades

### In Memoriam

Larry Unger has been remembered with donations for the Committee's Information Center and Bookstore by the following friends:

**Dorothy Arquette** of San Francisco; **Mr. and Mrs. D. C. Basolo** of Tracy; **F. G. Follett** of Roseburg, Oregon; **Thomas and Carol Benson** of San Francisco; **Dr. Jeffrey M. Voorhees** of San Francisco; **Judge Francis Mayer** and **Mrs. Lois Cooper Mayer**, San Francisco residents; and **Roy and Barbara Bouque** of San Francisco.

**Cathy Brown**, of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Ventura, has been joined by co-workers and friends of **Ray Bransfield** to remember his mother **Mrs. Mary Bransfield**.

**April Penaranda** remembered **Lawrence Stewart Conway** with a to the Committee.

**Ms. Berlina Kredo**, of Green Valley, remembered her father **William Kredo** with a gift and wrote to say "Thank you and keep up the fight!"

### Special Gifts

We recently received an extremely generous donation from **Mr. Tim Metz** of Garberville. Mr. Metz, who works for the Institute for Sustainable Forestry and the Environmental Protection Information Center (EPIC), recently inherited a Department of Water and Power bond, which he sold. He writes that he "would like to offer [the Committee] ... the years' profit—kind of a nice turn of events, eh?"

### Condolences

The staff of the Mono Lake Committee would like to extend its deepest sympathy to **Alexa Williams** and her family on the recent passing of her mother. Alexa, her father **Dino**, sister **ndys**, and brother **Greg** have been valued friends over the years, donating their time and talent to numerous Committee events.

## MLC, MLF joining forces

In a special June 3 meeting at the lake, the Boards of Directors of the Mono Lake Committee and the Mono Lake Foundation began the process of joining the two organizations.

When complete, the merger will create a more efficient organization which will carry on the programs of both the MLF and MLC. The Mono Lake Foundation will be the "surviving" organization and will continue to accept tax-deductible contributions. Although the MLF will technically absorb the MLC's programs and staff, it will do business using the Mono Lake Committee name and little will appear different to the outside world.

The Foundation's new Board will consist of eleven members: two from the pre-merger MLF Board and nine from the "disappearing" Mono Lake Committee Board. The two pre-merger MLF members will be **David Marquart**, who will provide expertise in education and natural history, and **Susana Fousekis**, who brings an extensive background in conservation issues and fundraising.


The five retiring members of the pre-

merger MLF Board are taking advantage of the opportunity to turn their attention to other pursuits and projects. We are grateful for their service to Mono Lake.

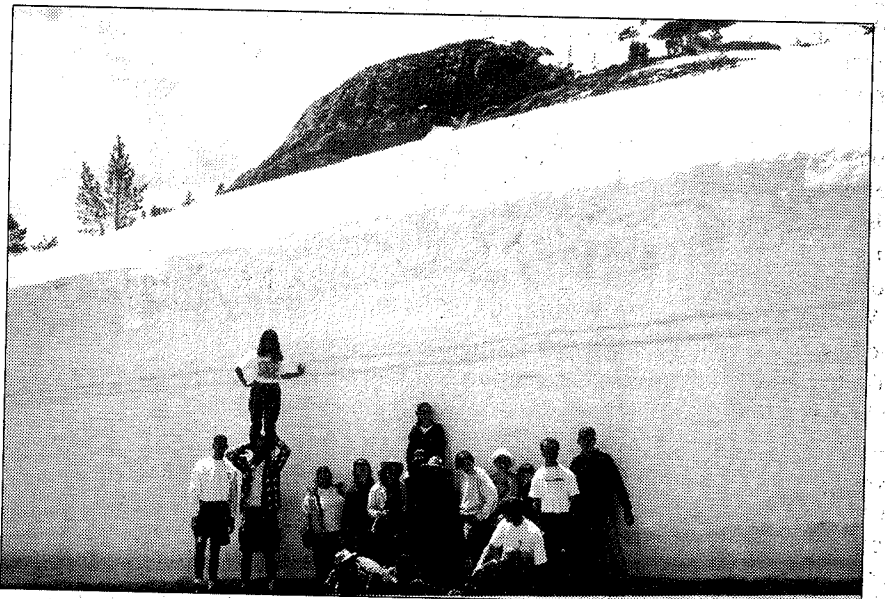
**Mary Hanson**, charter Board member and long-time MLF treasurer, will continue her multitude of Eastern Sierra volunteer involvements. **Hank Levine**, the former MLF secretary, will continue to focus on environmental education as a teacher at Mammoth Elementary school.

**Don Banta**, who provided valuable insight to the Board as a local business owner, will have more time to enjoy the Mono Basin. A former superintendent of Yosemite National Park, **Bob Binnewies** will still have his hands full back east working with the Palisades Park Commission in Bear Mountain, New York.

**Andrea Lawrence**, who lent staunch support to the MLF's seminars and canoe tours, will still be active throughout Mono County as a county supervisor.

And **Genny Smith**, author and expert on the region, will carry on with her publishing business. We expect to meet her roaming the Sierran meadows. 

### June 1, 1995: Committee staff at Tioga Pass



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