

Spring

1997

MONO



LAKE

N E W S L E T T E R



Mono Lake Newsletter

Spring 1997

Volume 19, Number 4



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COMMITTEE**

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now blankets the Mono Basin in this issue's cover photo, taken in January from Old Marina. In the distance, Negit Island gives up a bit of its dark coloring to white shades of winter.

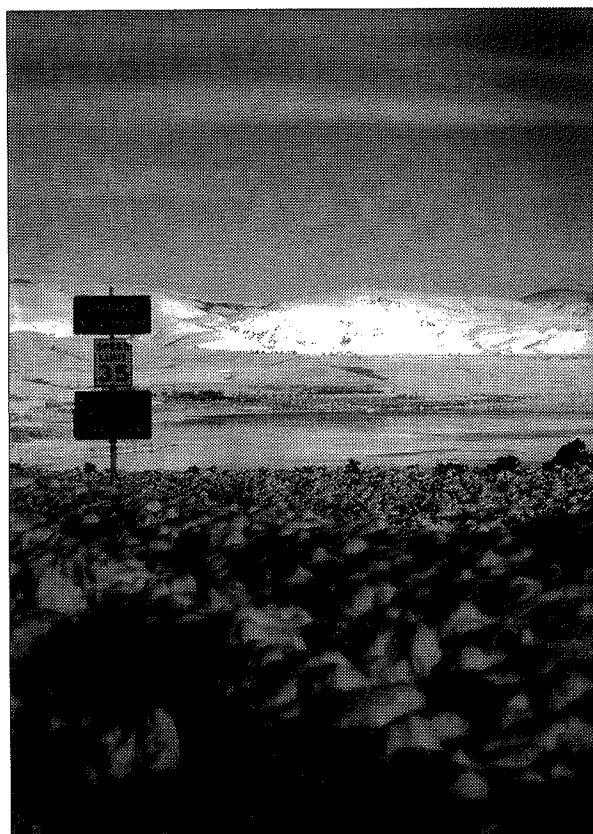
At the Mono Lake Committee, we have a new Executive Director—meet her with the interview that begins on the opposite page, and through her article on page 19!

As for Mono Lake news, the Water Board hearings began, and then were suspended when negotiations showed promise of success (page 7). Meanwhile, discussions about Conway Ranch and Mill Creek continue—see page 6. Also, the Forest Service plan for Scenic Area fees has been finalized (page 20).

The weather has been warm recently, and it's time to start thinking about the summer season. A good place to start is page 14, where you'll find our listing of field seminars for this year. There are more selections than ever, so be sure to take a look!

It's going to be another high water year, with the lake likely to rise at least another foot. See pages 9 and 11 for news of the wet winter, and come on up and see the changes for yourself. We'll be here.

—Geoff McQuilkin



Mono Lake Committee Mission

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

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Meet the Committee's new Executive Director

An interview with Frances Spivy-Weber

Editor's note: Frances Spivy-Weber took over as the Mono Lake Committee's Executive Director on January 1, 1997. You'll be hearing from Fran in this newsletter (see pg. 19), but to introduce her to the Committee supporters, we sat down one day to discuss a few questions...

Mono Lake Newsletter: Welcome to the Mono Lake Committee! Tell us a little about your background, particularly with the National Audubon Society—what was your role there?

Frances: Thank you, I'm excited to be here! When I was at Audubon I was director of the international program and my role was to help local chapters in the U.S. incorporate international issues into their programs—the concept of thinking globally and acting locally.

Audubon also has international chapters in Central America, South America, and a few affiliate chapters in other continents. I worked with them as well.

The third area I worked on was international treaties. I attended treaty meetings and international gatherings that set international policy on the environment. I served on official U.S. delegations, too.

In the past two years you've been working on your Ph.D.—how is that going?

Taking this job with the Committee is not good for finishing a Ph.D.! But, that is my plan. I am finishing my dissertation with the Johns Hopkins School for Advanced International Studies. The dissertation is about half written and, working on weekends, my plan is to finish it by the end of the year. The subject is the role of non-governmental organizations in influencing the evolution of environmental treaties. It looks at where non-governmental groups like the Mono Lake Committee are most effective and what strategies are most effective in influencing government entities to take action.

There's an overlap between my dissertation topic and what the Committee has done in working with, and then being a goad to, some governmental agencies. Playing that double role of being both friend and advocate in a governmental setting is very similar to most effective groups that are active internationally.

Leaving the international scene and concentrating on one specific place could be quite a change in focus for you...?

Not as much as you might think. Mono Lake, as a WHSRN [Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network] site, has shorebirds making the connection between Mono Lake and Argentina each year. I knew about Mono Lake from my international work, so for me it's a very international place. I understand from talking with staff that among German visitors Mono Lake is quite popular, so Mono Lake is very much an international site with people as well.

In addition a lot of the work I did with Audubon was with local chapters, trying to translate large policy issues into something that made sense at the local level. The MLC is working on water policy issues which are both state-wide, national, and international. We are a physical example of how a policy issue affects a place. My experience so far with the MLC has been an answer to a dream to actually work in a place that is so connected to the outside world and so illustrative of why we need good water policy and sound environmental policy locally and globally.

You've come to the Committee at a time when the organization has obtained a reputation for being effective and has built a successful history. What challenges do you see existing today for Mono Lake and for the future of the Committee?

Well, the challenges are going to be different but no less intense than the challenges of the past. For example, the restoration of streams and waterfowl habitat in the Mono Basin is not going to be easy. It's going to create opportunities for the community to discuss what they want for the future, and undoubtedly those discussions are going to lead to some disagreements. So there will be a lot of working within the community to devise a plan. That's a challenge—that's a big one.

Another challenge will be to see the lake and the Mono Basin restored to a healthy state, and to see that economic

continued on page 4



Photo by Mike Weber

Frances Spivy-Weber, left, with Committee staff on a Mono Basin field tour. Frances is the new Executive Director of the Mono Lake Committee.

(continued from page 3) development occurring in the basin is environmentally sound development—where local people can make a living year-round in a way that is compatible with maintaining a healthy Mono Basin. We won't be content to see the Mono Basin survive; we want to see it thrive.

Third, the challenge of water conservation in California in a time when we have so much water, with all the floods, is large. People will still remember the drought and will know another is coming, but getting people to make decisions now to prepare to live within our means in both southern and northern California is going to be a challenge.

I think our programs will be as vigorous, but we'll be focusing on different aspects of issues than in the past, and we're going to need our members to help us.

As you suggest, the drought will come someday, and at that time Los Angeles is going to need water and may see Mono Lake as a potential solution. There are some projects underway now that will alleviate that demand during drought years. Coming in with a fresh perspective, how do you evaluate the L.A. Department of Water and Power's progress in water conservation and recycling?

I think DWP has made some progress in recognizing that finding an unlimited source of water is not in the cards. What we have tried to do, and I will continue to do, is to work with DWP to help Los Angeles be better able to live within its means, and to plan for those dry years down the road. This is something citizens of the Los Angeles area can contribute to, but this isn't just a Los Angeles problem. It's something L.A. shares with northern California and it's something that has to happen all over the country as well.

Clearly you're going to be at Mono Lake as much as possible, but you'll be based out of L.A. What's your plan for the two offices and the Committee structure?

I think it's essential to have a strong presence in southern California, and to be a presence in all of California, be-

cause Mono Lake will not be protected in the future unless we have the support of a lot of people who don't have the privilege of living in the Mono Lake area. So we will continue to have an office in Los Angeles, and I'll be there. It's critical to have someone in the organization in L.A. able to make decisions on the spur of the moment and to plan with DWP and the various government

We won't be content to see the Mono Basin survive; we want to see it thrive.

agencies that are important to the future of Mono Lake. And I do plan to get up to the lake and northern California as often as I can.

As you look at the Committee's internal operations, what areas do you anticipate expanding or improving?

I think we have a very loyal group of members, and I want our members to know they are our highest priority. They are making it possible for us to do our work. So I'll be focusing a lot on making sure that members are getting the quality of services they expect—and increasing that quality.

Second, fundraising is important because, while we've been able to do an enormous amount with the fundraising path we've pursued, it will not be enough for the future. When you see the incredibly cramped offices in Lee Vining you realize it's going to be important to cre-

ate a larger space for staff to do restoration, education, and promote scientific research. I don't want to see the staff grow too large and ruin the family feeling the we have at the Committee, but in order to do the job that we need to do—because it is at least as big if not bigger than what we've done in the past—we're going to need more flexibility. One funding approach is a planned giving program. We're also going to need to make our programs more visible and accessible to foundations. We have done very little foundation fundraising in the past, and I think foundations will be thrilled to be part of this group. There's nothing quite like investing in a successful program that is able to do even more. So emphasis on membership and development will be high on my list.

What were the things that struck you most about the Mono Basin and Mono Lake?

Well, my husband was born in southern California and we've just recently moved back—I lived in northern California for ten years in the 1970s. My husband had not been to Mono Lake in 35 years, and I had never been until I came to interview for the job. Within a day, we were stunned—the place is magical, it is inspiring, and it truly gives you grounding to let you know why it is you are working in an environmental organization or why it is you are carrying environmental values into your everyday life.

It is the most beautiful place I've seen, and I've traveled all over the world, so it's hard to put it into words how pleased I was to get this job. Every program we have must try to incorporate the spiritual and aesthetic values that Mono Lake inspires. It's one of our strengths, it's what keeps people going, and it's what makes people want to make change, and it's what I think will protect the basin for the future.

So, yes, I am extremely impressed with Mono Lake and the Mono Basin, and I'm looking forward to spending more time at the lake in the coming months. Sometimes I have to pinch myself to realize my good fortune is real. ☺

1996 California gull research results

by Dave Shuford

In 1996, Point Reyes Bird Observatory conducted its fourteenth year of research on the ecology and reproductive success of California gulls nesting on islands at Mono Lake. As some of our pop music icons have commented, "What a long strange trip it's been."

While the size of the nesting population in 1996 was close to that in most previous years, reproductive success of the gulls, measured by the number of chicks raised to fledging, was the second lowest since our studies began.

Combining our data with that from the Paoha Islets, kindly provided by Dr. Joseph R. Jehl, Jr., we estimated a lakewide breeding population of about 7,500 adult gulls. Of these, 82% occupied the Negit Islets and 18% the Paoha Islets.

The fledging rate on the Negit Islets was 0.40 chicks per nest, and the estimated number of chicks fledged from all of the lake's nesting islands was 9,196 young. The reasons for the low reproductive success in 1996 are unknown.

Although the lake level continued to rise and cover the landbridge, gulls began to recolonize only one of three re-isolated islets. A coyote was found on Negit Island in July and on Twain Islet in August, at a lake level 6.5 feet higher than when coyotes first reached Twain in 1982.

As the lake rises in the future, the proportion of gulls nesting on the Paoha



Researchers and volunteers hard at work banding gulls on one of the Negit Islets.

Islets should decrease and likewise increase on the Negit Islets and Negit Island. Future research will be necessary to document the length of time needed for the gulls to fully recolonize islets abandoned after coyote predation.

We are extremely grateful to all those who have volunteered to collect data on the nesting islands, provided logistical

help on the mainland, or supplied financial support for our research.

Dave Shuford is an expert on Mono's gull population and a longtime Mono Basin researcher. Under his direction, the gull research program continues in 1997—see page 14 to participate.

Photographs needed of Glass Mountain area for PRBO report

From 1991 to 1996, Point Reyes Bird Observatory (PRBO) conducted a breeding bird atlas project to document the distribution, relative abundance, elevational breeding limits, and general habitat requirements of all species of birds breeding in the Glass Mountain region south of Mono Lake.

PRBO is now preparing its data for publication as a monograph and needs photographs to illustrate the area's landscapes and habitats. Most photographs would be reproduced in black and white, though a color landscape photograph of Glass Mountain may be used on the cover. The study area stretches from the Mono Craters,

Cowtrack Mountain, and the Adobe Valley/Adobe Hills in the north to the upper Owens Gorge below Crowley Lake in the south, and from Highway 395 in the west to the east slope of the Benton Range in the east.

PRBO cannot provide any monetary compensation but hopes the photographers will bask in the fame and glory provided by exposure in the scientific literature. If you'd like to be involved, please contact: Dave Shuford, Point Reyes Bird Observatory, 4990 Shoreline Hwy., Stinson Beach, CA 94970; phone 415-868-1221, ext. 14; e-mail dshuford@prbo.org.



Public process to examine North Basin water issues

by Heidi Hopkins

In early February, the Trust for Public Land announced it had secured a six-month extension of its option to purchase the Conway Ranch property in the north Mono Basin. The extension buys time to consider implementation of the Mill Creek restoration proposal and other proposals relating to use of Mill Creek water in the north Mono Basin.

A public process

Nearly everyone involved with Conway Ranch agrees on the need to protect the Ranch's open space. Questions remain, however, about how additional proposals for the land might fit together.

The proposals are diverse: The county is interested in constructing and leasing a fish-rearing facility in some kind of public-private partnership. Certain members of the community are interested in reviving historical agricultural practices that the property supported 100 years ago, including growing fruit trees, alfalfa, and potatoes. Others want to retain the fishery and flows in Wilson Creek. The Committee's primary interest is returning Conway irrigation water to the Mill Creek bottomlands and delta to restore the kind of habitat complex that supported Mono Lake's formerly vast populations of waterfowl and other water birds.

A number of parties are involved in these proposals, including the Mono Lake Committee, Mono County, the Trust for Public Land, People for Mono Basin Preservation, agencies operating in the Mono Basin, and local residents.

Currently these groups are working together to establish a public fact-finding process that will allow all those interested in the Conway purchase and in Mill Creek water to examine the array of ecosystem benefits and impacts, historical values, and operational opportunities and constraints. Ultimately, the public process will help define the scope of any

EIR that may be required should a particular proposal move forward.

The public process will be defined by a Memorandum of Understanding that memorializes the parties' general support for public acquisition of the Conway Ranch and describes a fact-finding process for information gathering. While the public process will focus on the acquisition of Conway Ranch and future management of its resources, the water linkage will likely extend the reach of the public inquiry to *all* areas where Mill Creek water is applied, from Thompson Ranch adjacent to Highway 395 east to DeChambeau Ranch and Ponds.

As described in the winter *Newsletter*, the thicket of issues surrounding Conway Ranch and Mill Creek has grown from two separate but related projects. The first is DWP's waterfowl habitat restoration plan, which is pending approval by the State Water Board, and the second is the Trust for Public Land's option to purchase the historic Conway Ranch.

Water links the two proposals. DWP's restoration plans propose redirecting Mill Creek water, to which the Conway Ranch has irrigation rights, back into the creek's natural stream course for waterfowl habitat restoration in the Mill Creek bottomlands near Mono Lake.

Because the issue is water and possible changes in water use, the State Water Board agreed in January to help design the public process now underway. The public process, which will be based in the Mono Basin, will remain separate from the Water Board restoration proceedings.

Waterfowl habitat restoration

Interest in restoring water to Mill Creek has grown in response to the 1994 State Water Board requirement that DWP restore waterfowl habitat in the Mono Basin. Scientists hired by DWP recommended the rewatering of Mill Creek as the most important waterfowl

habitat restoration action next to raising the level of the lake itself. Redirecting Mill Creek's water back into its natural stream course, argued the scientists, would bring back the former lush bottomland and delta environment that today is depleted of water and associated riparian vegetation. This in turn would recreate a portion of the productive riparian and lake-fringing habitat that characterized pre-diversion Mono Lake and provided refuge for millions of waterfowl and other wildlife.

The twist with the Mill Creek rewatering recommendation is that Mill Creek water has been diverted for over 100 years—for hydropower generation and irrigation—and the diverted flows incidentally created natural values on various properties in the north Mono Basin including irrigated meadows and a year-round stream where none existed before. In particular, the naturally ephemeral Wilson Creek was lengthened and augmented such that the creek now runs year-round and supports a regenerating brown trout population in the section that flows through the Conway Ranch. It does not, however, offer bottomlands habitat upstream from the lake.

The restoration proposal supported by the Committee—which would return much of the Mill Creek irrigation water to Mill Creek, allowing Mill Creek to become a functioning stream with lush bottomlands—could be accomplished with minimal impacts to the irrigated meadows but not without impacts on the year-round flows in Wilson Creek. The public process is designed to engage the community in a thoughtful examination of the opportunities and impacts of changing the current use of Conway Ranch water.

Heidi Hopkins is the Committee's Eastern Sierra Policy Director. She's looking forward to a long spring season filled with corn snow. ♪

Settlement negotiations breakthrough!

Water Board hearing temporarily suspended

by Martha Davis

The late winter hearing held by the State Water Resources Control Board on stream and waterfowl restoration plans for Mono Lake was suspended after five intense days of testimony when the Department of Water and Power (DWP), the Committee, and other parties announced that they had reached conceptual agreement on a settlement proposal.

John Caffrey, chairman of the Water Board and hearing officer for the current round of Mono Lake proceedings, agreed to postpone additional testimony for 30 days to see if the parties could put the agreement into writing.

The terms of the settlement, which the Committee has spent many months working on, are confidential. However, if the parties are successful in translating the verbal agreement to writing, the settlement will be presented to the Water

Board where it will be reviewed at a public hearing. If a written agreement is not produced, the original Board hearing will continue.

Efforts to work out a settlement were begun in the summer of 1996. The Water Board deferred hearings twice on the promise of a possible settlement; however, by late January, no agreement had been reached and hearings commenced. The parties agreed to continue settlement discussions despite their return to the Water Board. The breakthrough was achieved during the second week of the hearing.

Parties to the settlement include the groups which have participated in the Mono Lake hearings for years: DWP, the Mono Lake Committee, National Audubon Society, California Trout, U.S. Forest Service, State Lands Commission,

California Department of Fish and Game, and California Department of Parks and Recreation. Joining the settlement discussion are several parties which joined the proceedings recently because of their interest in the restoration plans; these include the Bureau of Land Management, Arcularius Ranch, and the Trust for Public Land. One party to the proceeding, the newly formed group People for Mono Basin Preservation, declined the invitation to be part of the settlement negotiations.

Keep an eye out for the summer *Mono Lake Newsletter*, which will report on the settlement terms and analyze what they mean for restoration!

Martha Davis, the Committee's former Executive Director, has spent many months negotiating with DWP on this topic. S

DWP clarifies Cain Ranch irrigation policy

As reported in the winter *Newsletter*, DWP has not irrigated its Cain Ranch property below the aqueduct from Walker and Parker creeks for several years. (It has continued to irrigate portions of the ranch from Bohler and Gibbs creeks). This has caused considerable concern among residents of the Mono Basin who have watched portions of the green meadows of Cain Ranch, which lies five miles south of Lee Vining, turn prematurely brown under the summer sun.

Apparently, the problem lies with two separate court orders that are still in place and that give contradictory direction. The matter, however, should be simple to clear up.

When asked recently to explain its reasons for not irrigating, DWP pointed

out to the Committee that a May 1990 order has not been expressly vacated by the parties. This order on temporary interim flows for Mono Basin streams states: "No irrigation shall take place with water flowing into the DWP diversion facilities from Walker or Parker Creeks."

The Committee has been relying on a subsequent, July 1990 order which states: "If DWP continues to make water available for irrigation practices at Cain Ranch, then it shall make appropriate provisions to insure that the stream flows in Parker and Walker creeks are maintained at the flows set by the court..." That is, DWP could irrigate Cain Ranch as long as the court-ordered minimum and seasonal peak flows for Walker and Parker creeks are maintained.

To allow DWP to irrigate Cain Ranch, DWP and the Committee can jointly write a letter to the Superior Court requesting that it strike the May 1990 order. Then there will be no question that the July 1990 order, along with the 1994 State Board decision, sets the requirements for flows in Walker and Parker creeks.

Once the Court acts, DWP will be free to undertake appropriate irrigation of Cain Ranch. The next step will be for DWP, area residents, and the Committee to sit down and work out a responsible plan for irrigation on Cain Ranch. If we are successful, visitors should see the meadows south of Lee Vining stay green far longer into the hot days of summer.

Outdoor Experiences program seeks 1997 sponsors

by Bartshe Miller

The Outdoor Experiences program enters its third year with a grant from the Los Angeles Urban Resources Partnership (URP). This grant will allow the Mono Lake Committee to continue the successful Outdoor Experiences program at Mono Lake while expanding its watershed education program in Los Angeles. This federal grant, however, requires us to raise a \$20,000 match, and you can help!

The Committee and community organizations—such as Mothers of East Los Angeles, Korean Youth and Community Center, Executive Partners in Environmental Training, and Watts Labor Action Community Coalition—jointly present school programs on Mono Lake, the Los Angeles watershed, and conservation. Students get excited by the Mono Lake story and we then give them and their families the opportunity to receive free ultra-low flush toilets. These new toilets have succeeded in saving over eight billion gallons of water a year in Los Angeles!

Some of these Los Angeles inner-city youth come to Mono Lake in the summer to experience the northern end of their watershed. What a gift it is for these

young people to experience a whole new world. Canoeing, swimming, night hikes, snowball fights, and stream restoration

This is better than Six Flags Magic Mountain!

**— Steve, a ten-year-old
Outdoor Experiences
participant from East L.A.**

work highlight their trip. This summer we hope to bring another 150–200 Los Angeles youth to the Mono Basin.

Groups scheduled to come to Mono Lake have begun to seek matching donations for transportation and food. Together we are asking for your help to make these trips a reality. In addition to food and transportation, we are seeking money for educational supplies, camping gear, and staffing. We will also gladly accept any used camping gear especially large tents, sleeping bags, and sleeping pads!

Success depends on partnerships. The

Mono Lake Committee alone cannot make this program a reality. We depend on the community organizations in Los Angeles and on you for success. Connecting urban California with Mono Lake and empowering individuals and communities in the future of their water resources is what we want to achieve. Will you join us in this partnership?

When a trip to Mono Lake can top Magic Mountain in the mind of one boy from East L.A., then perhaps there is good reason to believe Mono Lake has a rich future.

Bartshe Miller is the Committee's Education Director. He's picking a route for a great desert adventure.

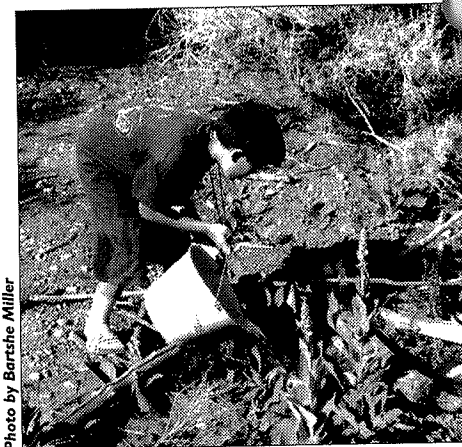


Photo by Bartshe Miller

Yes! I'd like to sponsor the Outdoor Experiences program

I want my donation to go toward educational supplies, camping equipment, transportation, and staffing for the Outdoor Experiences program.

Name _____

Address _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip _____

☐ My check is enclosed (payable to Mono Lake Committee)

Please charge my: ☐ MasterCard

☐ Visa # _____

Exp. Date _____ Phone _____

Donations to the Mono Lake Committee are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.

NLOE97

Please use the enclosed envelope or send to: Mono Lake Committee • P.O. Box 29 • Lee Vining, CA 93541

Monster storm rains in the New Year

by Greg Reis

The warm "pineapple connection" storm that hit California on New Year's Eve brought heavy rain to many parts of the Sierra, melted a large low-elevation snowpack, and caused widespread flooding. The Central Valley, Reno, and northern Mono County were a few of the areas hit hard by the storm. To the west, Yosemite National Park suffered approximately \$178 million in damage.

Here in the Mono Basin the damage was less severe but the high water was still quite eventful. The stage was set when winter storms pounded the Mono Basin from late October through the end of 1996, blanketing the Sierra Nevada with more snow than arrived during the same period of the winter of 1982-83, the wettest on record. The Gem Pass snowpack, at 10,750 feet above sea level in the Rush Creek watershed, tipped the scales with a December 30 water content of 209% of average.

Then, over the two days prior to January 1, the temperature stayed warm, night and day. On New Year's Eve it started to rain; by New Year's morning, Tioga Pass Resort reported heavy rain—at well over 9,000 feet above sea level. The warm temperatures and heavy rain continued into January 2, causing Mono Basin creeks to rise dramatically throughout the day.

Beartrack Creek flooded old Highway 120 and deposited rocks and sediment on the road after its culvert became plugged. Bohler Creek cut a gully through Aqueduct Road and flooded Cain Ranch Road. South Parker Creek flooded and gullied Parker Lake Road. While Grant Lake Reservoir insulates Rush Creek below Grant Dam from upstream events, Walker and Parker Creeks backed up at their Highway 395 culverts, and contributed their flows to Rush Creek further downstream.

I was on Aqueduct Road between Parker and Walker creeks as they were rising on Thursday, January 2, and DWP

crews, who were out repairing damage and monitoring the situation, warned me that I would be stuck if Parker Creek washed out the road, and also mentioned that Lee Vining Creek could peak as high as 600 cfs!

Lee Vining Creek did indeed give the most impressive show. It quickly rose above the top of the gauge on the flume above the diversion dam, which means it was running at over 400 cfs—well above the average peak runoff for early summer snowmelt. The heavy rain continued into the night; then the temperature finally cooled down, and it snowed several inches by sunrise.

Friday, January 3, was a beautiful sunny day. At the Information Center and Bookstore in Lee Vining we recorded 2.33 inches of precipitation (almost all of it rain) between Dec. 31 and Jan. 3. It washed away almost all of the snow on the ground at our elevation. The creeks were still high, and some of the flow of Parker and Walker creeks was being diverted to Grant Reservoir in order to prevent flooding of roads.

At the higher elevations, Tioga Pass Resort had suffered water damage when the rainwater began to run on top of the snow and ice, flooding the lodge, instead of flowing at ground level in the creek. Lee Vining Creek had peaked at over 700 cfs at the diversion dam, causing some minor damage to DWP's aqueduct facilities. During peak flows, about 230 cfs had been diverted from Lee Vining Creek to Grant Reservoir due to concerns about subsidence at the Edison substation.

On lower Lee Vining Creek, where most vegetation was destroyed by past

water diversions and is just beginning to recover, there were significant changes caused by the high flows. The main channel shifted in certain areas, and new pools formed. Some side channels went dry, while the A-4 channel, the most recently rewatered side channel, gained about half of the streamflow. This created new floodplain surfaces and raised the



Photo by Greg Reis

Walkway and railing twisted by high Lee Vining Creek flows. At lower right, a tree trunk made it over the diversion dam.

water table between this channel and the main channel. Scientific fieldwork is planned to document the changes, and the implications for restoration remain to be seen.

All the high stream flows ultimately added to Mono Lake's surface elevation: the lake rapidly rose three tenths of a foot over a two week period—representing an inflow of approximately 12,600 acre-feet—and on Saturday, January 4, the lake stood at an elevation of 6380.4 feet above sea level. It's even higher now—see page 11 for details!

Greg Reis is the Committee's Information Specialist. He's unnervingly cheerful about chasing down high flows on Mono's creeks in the midst of storms and snow.

Mono Basin Journal

A roundup of less-political events at Mono Lake

by Geoffrey McQuilkin

Rippled sand is moving across old paths at South Tufa as the lake's rising waters reshape the well-trodden paths. The waves leave berms of pale sand along the lake margin, atop which lies the winter storm wrack line of pine cones, alkali fly pupae, wood chips, and foam. Standing with my toes in the freshly deposited sand, it's hard not to point out into the waves and recall a time not so long ago when I stood there, under the waves, wondering if the lake would ever rise again.

One evening a gentle, late winter sunset spread across the sky and I took the highway north, skirting Mono Lake. Looking to the east I could see fifty miles to the softly lit mountain peaks of Nevada, yet rounding a curve I glimpsed what appeared to be a fogbank over the north



shore. Slower speed and closer inspection revealed the reality: the great windstorm of the previous week had driven whitecapped waves across the tossing lake for days, and the aftermath lingered on land. The waves had broken against the shore, and now every rock, sagebrush, and tree along the beach was brilliant white, coated with salt spray.

No journal would be complete without mention of comet Hale-Bopp, that visitor from worlds without lakes. Early one morning I watched its luminous tail spread across the stars, and then disappear

into the orange glow of sunrise as a more familiar celestial object, the crescent moon, revealed itself from behind the silhouetted Mono Craters.

Benchmarks

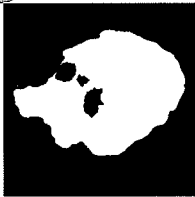


Photo from files of the Aitken case

1930s: Lower Rush Creek in the bottomlands area before water diversions. Ponded and slow-moving water provided excellent habitat for fish and waterfowl.



1990s: Fifty years of upstream water diversions have desiccated the bottomlands. Restoration work will attempt to repair damage such as this by restoring flows and reopening stream channels.



Lakewatch

Record snowpack, highest lake level since 1974...

by Greg Reis

What a winter! Until mid-February it was wetter than the winter of 1982-83.

Storm after storm brought heavy snow to the Mono Basin. The Gem Pass snowpack, which is representative of the Mono Basin snowpack overall, was at record levels on February 1. There were 47.7 inches of water content, which was 150% of normal for that date. The previous recordholder, the winter of 1956, had a similar wet weather pattern, but turned dry after February—the April 1, 1956 snowpack was equal to the February 1 snowpack. Coincidentally, this year looks similar, with no significant precipitation in February.

Some of this year's storms brought rain, raising Mono Lake and filling reservoirs (see New Year's rainstorm article on pg. 9). Grant Lake Reservoir, on Rush Creek, spilled for a week or so, starting on January 25! This is the third year in a row it has spilled, but it has only spilled during January twice: in 1943 and 1983. According to Dave Allen of LADWP, Rush Creek will probably be flow-through this year. This means that the flows released from Edison's upstream reservoirs will make it past Grant Dam, resulting in a more natural hydrograph for lower Rush Creek.

And what will those flows be? The March 1 runoff forecast for April–September 1997 is 153% of the fifty year average for the Mono Basin! This is categorized as a “wet” year—near the high end of this year type—and the peak flows in the streams can be expected to be close to the ones we witnessed in 1995.

Of course, this forecast assumes average precipitation for the rest of the season. Even if spring is quite dry,


however, we are assured of an above average year. The current snowpack is greater than the April 1 snowpack was in 1996, which ended up being a “wet-normal” runoff year.

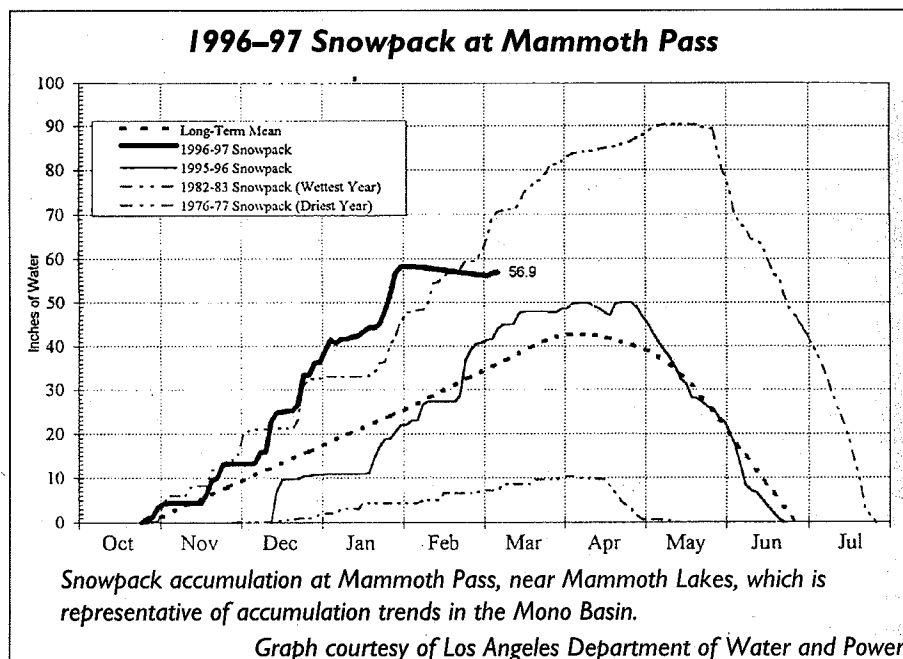
So what does all this mean for Mono Lake? Mono Lake, as of March 6, is already at 6381.4 feet above sea level, the highest level since 1974! It has come up 6.7 feet since the Water Board decision, and 1.7 feet from last year's low point in early November—an average rise of 0.5 feet per month between November and February! Based on this lake level, the Water Board decision will allow DWP to export 16,000 acre-feet of water this year. Nonetheless, by late summer the lake should rise to at least 6383 feet—maybe closer to 6384 if we get significantly more precipitation!

This would be a dramatic rise in a

short period of time, comparable to the 8.5 foot rise between 1982 and 1984.

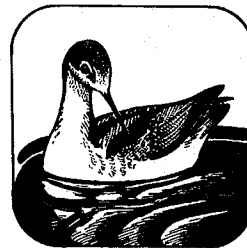
Just as in 1982–84, the rapid rise beginning in 1995 has set up meromixis, and, due to the large amount of fresh water expected to enter the lake this year, this meromictic condition will likely persist (see winter 1997 *Newsletter* for more on meromixis).

Another exciting development at the lake was the presence of a significant amount of ice on the western portion of the lake in January. It wasn't thick enough to support a person's weight, but it sure looked pretty. It broke up during storms, only to return soon after because of the calm winds, freshwater inflow, and cold temperatures. Between the ice and the rising lake level, excursions to the lakeshore recently have been filled with new discoveries. And they will continue to be. 





1997 Mono Lake Committee Field Seminars



BIRDS OF THE EAST SLOPE

David Lucas; May 31–June 1
\$90 per person/ \$75 for MLC members

In spring, the east slope of the Sierra Nevada affords a fascinating mix of birds. Desert birds, waterbirds, and forest birds are all present. Over the course of two days, this field seminar will focus on both migrating and breeding birds in a wide range of habitats. Learn the finer points of identifying these species by sight and song. Well-known for his enthusiasm and knowledge, David Lukas has led over a hundred birdwatching and natural history programs for The Nature Conservancy, Audubon Society, and other groups.

SOUTH SHORE KAYAK

Stuart Wilkinson; June 15
\$60 per person/ \$50 for MLC members

Join a veteran kayaker and explore Mono Lake's south shore. Paddle among spectacular tufa towers and underwater springs. Stuart is well versed in Mono Lake ecology, history, and politics, and this natural history kayak tour will cover a wide range of topics relating to your favorite high desert lake. The tour lasts 4–5 hours; kayaks and safety equipment are provided. Some kayaking experience is a plus, but beginners are welcome.

GEOLOGY OF THE MONO BASIN

Tim Tierney; June 21–22
\$90 per person/ \$75 for MLC members

Perhaps nowhere else in California is the geology more varied than in the Mono Basin, where both glaciers and volcanoes have left their mark. Explore weird mineral towers, volcanoes, and glacial remains. The first day will be spent exploring the area by car and foot. Day two will focus on thoroughly exploring a few special points of interest. Tim is a geologist and author of the Committee's *Geology of the Mono Basin* field guide.

MONO-BODIE PHOTOGRAPHY

Clinton Smith; June 27–29
\$250 per person/ \$225 for MLC members

This seminar begins Friday evening with an exploration of the mysterious ghost town of Bodie through sunset and into darkness, entering buildings not normally open to the public. On the second and third days, visit tufa groves both on land and from a canoe and explore aspen-lined canyons, volcanoes, and other unique features of the Mono Basin. Clinton, a renowned advocate of photography as an art form, gears his classes to stimulate thinking and sensitivity. This class is loosely structured and open to all levels of expertise. A fully adjustable camera is suggested.

MONO BASIN WILDFLOWERS

Ann Howald; July 5–6
\$90 per person/ \$75 for MLC members

The Mono Basin is an exceptional place to see wildflowers—fuzzy desert lupines, delicate streamside orchids, golden Mule's ears, prickly-stemmed "fried egg flower," scarlet gilia, skunk monkeyflower, and many more. Wildflowers are the focus of this seminar, but we won't neglect the insects, birds and other critters that eat them, pollinate them, and distribute their seeds. Join Ann, biology instructor and experienced Mono Basin naturalist, to explore the basin's botanical treasures.

NATIVE AMERICAN BASKETRY

Lucy Parker; July 12–13
\$90 per person/ \$75 for MLC members
\$50 materials fee

In the tradition of the regional Paiute, learn to make a small coiled basket from seasoned willow with a design in split redbud and fresh willow similar to a Pomo-style fast basket used for gathering nuts and berries. Lucy Parker is a descendent of the Yosemite Miwok, Mono Lake Kuzedika'a, and Pomo peoples. She learned traditional

Call the Committee's Seminar Desk to register at 760-647-6595, 9am–5pm daily

Help us protect and restore Mono Lake!

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

New for '97: Special Seminar for Teachers

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AT MONO LAKE: A FIELD SEMINAR FOR TEACHERS

Dave and Janet Carle; July 21-24

\$100 per person (includes one unit of college credit and basic accommodation)

Science, mathematics, social studies, environmental studies, and the visual arts—Mono Lake can be used as a model for a wide range of curriculum concepts. From fourth grade to high school, learn how you can integrate Mono Lake into your class studies. Designed for teachers to enhance their skills in environmental education, this new seminar stresses study in the field and involves some easy hiking. Dave and Janet Carle are State Park Rangers and each hold a Masters degree in environmental interpretation. Cerro Coso Community College will give one unit of college credit for the completion of this seminar. This promises to be a unique experience for teachers. Accommodation will be at the primitive and remote Burger's Retreat. Located at an elevation of 8,000 feet, this pristine mountain locale with aspen, fir, and Jeffrey pine provides a welcome setting for your stay in the Mono Basin. Please call for more details on this special field class for teachers.



handiwork from her mother, a master basket weaver, and will pass on some of her knowledge in this two-day seminar. Lucy will see that you have adequate material to take home after the seminar is over.

STREAM RESTORATION: A HANDS-ON CASE STUDY

Scott English; July 19-20

\$90 per person/ \$75 for MLC members

Explore the magical, hidden world of the Mono Basin's riparian corridors and learn about the evolving art and science of stream restoration in the Mono Basin. What can be brought back and what can't? Why is restoration necessary and how do we gauge its success? After one day of field exploration we will get our hands dirty and actually do some light restoration work on Rush Creek. Scott English has worked as a consulting biologist on stream restoration in the Mono Basin.

MONO LAKE PHOTOGRAPHY: SCENIC AND WILDLIFE WONDERS

B. Moose Peterson; July 25-27

\$175 per person/ \$150 for MLC members

Explore the incredible wildlife and scenery of Mono Lake through your camera lens. The seminar begins Friday night with a slide show. Saturday will be a full day of photography beginning very early with star trails and

sunrise at Mono Lake. After breakfast, we'll be back down at the lake photographing the vast collection of shorebirds, waterfowl, and other avian wonders. After lunch, we will travel to Lee Vining Canyon and explore the beauty of Lee Vining Creek. We'll visit the lake again at sunset and then conclude the day with an evening of sharing slides and prints. On Sunday morning we'll return to Mono Lake for sunrise and a final half-day of activities. Moose is a professional photographer who has developed particular renown for his environmentally sound wildlife photography.

MONO LAKE, MARS, AND BEYOND

Alan Stahler; August 1-2

\$90 per person/ \$75 for MLC members

As night falls, Mono's dark skies set off the stars. This field seminar will focus on learning one's way around the galaxy and the universe. We'll observe at night and by day, studying the sun, the stars, the sky, and also images returned to Earth by spacecraft. We'll discuss how life fits into the scheme of things, and how research at Mono ties into the search for past life on Mars. An amateur astronomer who trained as a biologist, Alan talks about science and the environment on KVMR-FM, Nevada City. This field seminar begins on Friday evening.

**CONTINUED ON
PAGE 15** ➡

Call the Committee's Seminar Desk to register at 760-647-6595, 9am-5pm daily

Research Opportunity on Mono Lake's Islands: California Gulls Need Your Help

GULL RESEARCH ON MONO'S ISLANDS

May 22-26, July 3-6

\$120 per person per day

Overnight; meals included

Your participation and seminar fee will allow 14 years of research to continue on Mono's islands and will provide you with a field expedition opportunity and a desert island adventure you will not soon forget! Collect data on the Mono Lake gull colony and gain hands-on experience in field survey techniques. You'll enjoy the rare adventure of visiting Mono Lake's spectacular Negit Islets, and at close range you'll observe the second largest California gull breeding colony in North America.

Will this be the year that California gulls return to nest on Negit Island? Will the widening channel between Negit and the landbridge deter coyotes' access to the gulls? Last year coyotes returned to Negit Island and Twain Islet at a lake level six feet higher than when coyotes first reached Twain Islet in 1982. Further research is needed to document the length of time needed for gulls to recolonize abandoned Negit Island and Islets. Join a research team directed by the Point Reyes Bird Observatory as they continue monitoring this vital gull rookery.

Sign up for one to five days in late May or early July. You'll camp on Krakatoa Islet, inside the movie set volcano from the 1950s classic *Fair Wind to Java*. You can expect **very rugged** field conditions, long hours in hot sun or cold wind, hearty meals, and the hue and din of 35,000 nesting gulls. The remote experience and incomparable views of Mono Lake and the Sierra Crest make this research seminar a unique experience. You bring your gear, curiosity and energy, we provide training, food, fresh water, and boat transportation.

NEST COUNT

May 22, 23, 24, 25, or 26

The size of the gull population will be estimated by counting nests over a five-day period on Negit Island and all the Negit Islets. Field workers count nests and mark nearby rocks to avoid duplicative counts.

CHICK BANDING

July 3, 4, 5, or 6

The reproductive success of the gull colony will be estimated by counting and banding all gull chicks found in eight study plots. Banding aids in making final survivorship calculations, and data from the study plots is extrapolated to form an overall picture of the gull population.

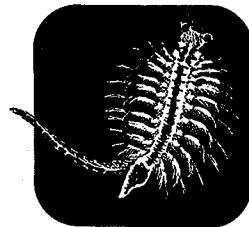
WEEKEND CANOE TOURS

One-hour tours every Saturday and Sunday at 8 A.M., 9:30 A.M., and 11 A.M.

June 21 through September 7

Adults \$15, kids \$6 (Sorry, no kids under 4)

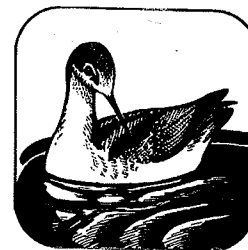
Join expert guides for natural history from a unique perspective: the lake itself. Starting at Navy Beach (near South Tufa), you will canoe among tufa spires along Mono's shoreline and learn about this ancient, life-productive lake. Special group tours can be arranged. All participants must wear the life jackets provided and obey safety rules. Please arrive 30 minutes before departure time. *Reservations are strongly recommended for these popular tours: call (760) 647-6595 (9 A.M. to 5 P.M. daily) and ask for canoe reservations.*



Call the Committee's Seminar Desk to register at 760-647-6595, 9am-5pm daily



1997 Mono Lake Committee Field Seminars



◀ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

VOLCANOES OF THE MONO BASIN

Tim Tierney; August 9-10

\$90 per person/ \$75 for MLC members

The region we call the Eastern Sierra has been volcanically active for millions of years. Learn when and why volcanoes have erupted, and how to spot them nearly everywhere in this region. The first day we will explore the local area and learn about the ancient volcanic history of the region. The second day will be spent hiking and driving within the Mono Basin, discovering the present and future volcanic story. Tim is a geologist and the author of the Committee's *Geology of the Mono Basin* field guide.

FALL BIRD MIGRATION

Dave Shuford; August 16-17

\$90 per person/ \$75 for MLC members

The east slope of the Sierra Nevada is a major migration route for birds traveling from northern nesting areas to warm southern habitats. As a result, early autumn is the time of year to see the greatest diversity of landbirds, shorebirds, and waterbirds in the Mono Basin and on Crowley Reservoir. Dave Shuford is an expert on birds and well acquainted with where to find them in the Eastern Sierra.

HIGH COUNTRY WILDFLOWERS

Mark Bagley; August 23-24

\$90 per person/ \$75 for MLC members

Optional group campground facilities included

A big winter in the Sierra promises a fantastic, late summer wildflower show! The headwaters of Lee Vining Creek, near Tioga Pass and Saddlebag Lake, feature some of the best and most accessible locations for studying the magnificent flower displays of the High Sierra. After reviewing the basics of plant structure, the workshop will

journey through subalpine forests, across meadows and fell fields, along cascading creeks, and around jewel-like lakes identifying up to 150 species of flowers, trees and shrubs. Mark, a consulting biologist in the Eastern Sierra, will lead this field seminar's easily paced 2-4 mile hikes at the 10,000 foot elevation. The seminar has reserved a group campground at Saddlebag Lake (elevation 10,000 ft.) for those who wish to use it.

PAOHA ISLAND KAYAK

Stuart Wilkinson; September 13

\$60 per person/ \$50 for MLC members

Wind and weather permitting, visit Paoha Island for a picnic lunch! Stuart is well versed in Mono Lake ecology, history, and politics and this natural history kayak tour will cover a wide range of topics relating to this high desert lake. Plan on four to five hours for the tour. Some kayak experience is recommended for this trip to Paoha Island. Kayaks and safety equipment are provided.

MONO BASIN FALL PHOTOGRAPHY

Richard Knepp; October 10-12

\$125 per person/ \$100 for MLC members

The Mono Basin in autumn is one of the greatest photographic experiences in the country. Spectacular foliage and skies combine with exceptional light, presenting ample subject matter for photographers in both color and black and white. Join accomplished photographer Rick Knepp to explore varied shoreline locations at sunrise and sunset and to discover fall color in nearby canyons. Subjects for discussion include composition, exposure techniques, filtration, basic theory of the Zone System, and developing a personal vision. Photographers of all levels are welcome; a fully adjustable camera of any size or format is suggested. This seminar begins on Friday evening.

Call the Committee's Seminar Desk to register at 760-647-6595, 9am-5pm daily

1996 Mono Lake Defense Trust Members

The Mono Lake Defense Trust was established to assure that, wherever the fight for Mono Lake might lead, financial resources would always be available. Members of the trust made gifts of \$250 or more in 1996. We'd like to thank the Defense Trust Members for their exceptional commitment to Mono Lake's protection, restoration, and rising future.

California Alpine Club	Thomas and Dorothy Atwood	Jay Byers	Robert and Nancy Drake
Conejo Valley Audubon Society	Ara and Ellen A. Avak	Cathleen Caballero	Rudolph W. Driscoll
Eastern Sierra Audubon Society	Harold Bailey	Campy and Ski Camphausen	Cliff Drowley
ExPERT	Virginia Barber	Lester and Jill Cannon	Frank R. Dutra
IBM International Foundation	Lynne H. Barnes	Eric Carson	S. M. Egashira
Mono Lake Coalition	Richard and Blanca Barrell	John Caywood	Charlotte Ellen
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation	Kathleen Barry	Park Chamberlain	Debbie Elliott-Fisk
NDC Systems	Joyce Bartlett	Mark and Susan Charlton	Hans Ernst
Patagonia	R. A. Baumgartner	James J. Childress	Kenneth B. Everett
Pressure Cast Products Corp.	Helen H. Bayne	Eunice M. Childs	Davis Factor
San Francisco Foundation	James A. Belton	Joan K. Chithea	Gail Fadenrecht
Sierra Club	Doron and Lucinda Ben-Avi	Theresa Cholar	Carl Feldman
South Coast Audubon Society	Ed and Mildred Bennett	Robert Clear	Neal Feuerman
Southern California Gas Company	Todd and Betty Berens	Ruth Piersen Cole	Patrick J. Flinn
Sun Microsystems Foundation	Jerome and Judy Blackman	David Collamer	Susana Cox Fousekis
World Wildlife Foundation	Robert E. Blau	Jim Compton	August and Susan Fruge
	George and Kay Bloom	Ed and Anne-Berit Condit	Jerry Ganz
	Brigitta Bock	Carolyn B. Conner	Pamela J. Gates
	Alberta Bodes	Kyle Corson	John and Andrea Genette
W. J. Abeling	Deborah and Andrew E. Bögen	Rich Costello	Edwin Parsons Gillis
Susan Adelman and Claudio Llanos	Ray and Betty Bogucki	Patricia Cummings	Rob and Diane Gingell
Roland and June Adler	Mark and Rochelle Bookspan	Bill Daniell	Frederik C. Gjessing
Raymond and Marie Alberti	Scott Breeden	Bryant and Judith Danner	Martin and Enid Gleich
Geoff and Judy Alexander	Melvin J. Brial	Bruce Dau	Reuben Goldberg
Howard and Harriet Allen	Colin Brown	Dick and Ginny Davis	Warren and Anita Goldshine
Jane Annan Allen	Janet E. Brown	Richard Davis	E. Louise Gooding
J. G. Alton	Ralph A. Bruns	John S. de Beers	Richard and Marcia Grand
O. Kenneth Anderson	Stephen Buckhout	Rick and Grace De Laet	Michael Grandcolas
Bryan Andrews	Tom Buckingham	Paul M. Deauville	Paul and Helen Green
James R. Arnold	Walter F. Buhl	Frank and Janice Delfino	Ruth Greenberg
John S. and Marlene Arnold	Neil and Mimi Burton	Gwendolyn Dhesi	Robert J. Greensfelder
Rich and Erin Atwater	Robert Bush	Tom Dodson	Paul Grishaber
	Nancy L. Buth	Kenneth Douglas	Margaret Gross

Get ready for Eastern Sierra century cycle!

Start training, because on Saturday, September 13, we hope you'll be pedaling one hundred miles through the scenic back country of the Eastern Sierra with your friends and family.

This year's Century ride will be similar to last year's event in many ways: fully stocked SAG stops, on-course mechanical support, lightly-traveled country roads, beautiful scenery, a post-ride party, and lots of fun!

A few things will be different, too—the ride will start at Whitmore Pool, and this year your entry fee will

include an event t-shirt and a special commemorative patch! There will also be optional ride photos and a pre-ride dinner.

Why the changes? The Mono Lake Committee has joined forces with the Sierra Cycling Foundation, a local foundation dedicated to improving the safety and quality of cycling in the Eastern Sierra. Their goals include bike path maintenance, rider safety, and distribution of helmets to young kids.

There will be two ways to participate in this year's ride: you can pay a flat fee to enter (\$35 single, \$55 tandem, \$25

short option) or you can help raise funds for the continued preservation and restoration of Mono Lake and contribute to bicycle safety programs, by getting sponsors and qualifying for fabulous prizes! We're still putting together the prizes, but you can count on them being great.

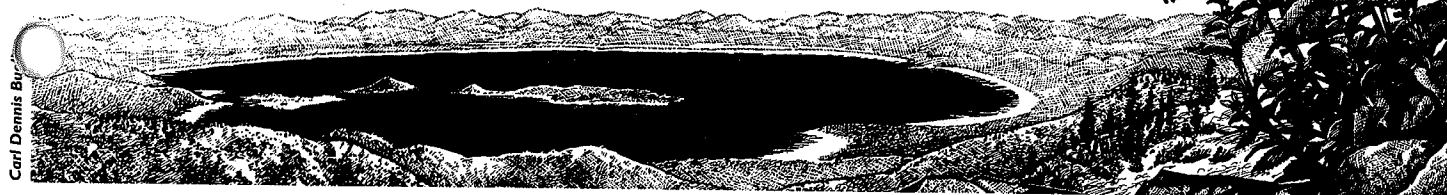
So mark September 13 on your bicycle calendar, start training, and give Kay a call to request a fundraising kit or to ask for more information: (760) 647-6595 or send e-mail to kayo@monolake.org!

Ed Grosswiler
 Dian M. Grueneich
 Charles P. Haber
 Dan and Donna Hafeman
 William Halford
 Newman Halvorson
 Alex Hantke
 Tom Hanton
 Barbara Harootunian
 Alan Harper and Carol Baird
 Cole and Priscilla Hawkins
 Louis and Julia Heller
 Bill and Mary Helwig
 Harriet Henderson
 Robert and Phyllis Henigson
 Don Henley
 David H. Hepler
 Bea M. Hollfelder
 Donald A. Honer
 Sam and Nancy Hopkins
 Edward L. Hubbard
 Doris B. Hughes
 Dorothy B. Hunt
 Gordon L. Huntington
 Sean Hutchinson
 T. Inouye
 Edward A. Jenkins
 B. Jenks
 Carolyn Johnson
 Douglas Johnson
 Vern and Mary Lou Judy
 John and Ann Kadyk
 Warren and Jody Keller
 R. Grice Kennelly
 Sylvia T. Kershaw
 Tom Kimball
 Ellen King
 Kevin Bender Kitz
 Scott Kruse
 Tom and Karen Kuhl
 Charles Y. Kuntzman
 Sarah Kuperberg and Sydney Temple
 Mary Kutz
 Leslie Lamport
 Kay Lane
 Kenneth and Jana Lane
 E. N. Langbauer
 F. H. Lantz
 Kathy Larramendy
 Henry and Beatrice Laws
 Bob Le Mond
 Olaf and Jeanette Leifson
 Janice and Malcom Leiser
 Philip Leitner

Tim Lenehan and Jennifer Fujimoto
 Susan Lenman
 Lawrence and Cornelia Levine
 Alice Levy
 Joseph and Helen Levy
 Jerry, Grace, and Mike Lieberman
 Rudolph H. Light
 Frances Lindquist
 Clara T. Link
 Judith Lion
 James Litchfield
 Martin and Esther Litton
 Tekla B. Loeber
 Jim Loughlin
 Thomas and Holly Love
 John Luther
 Bret and Jenny Lyon
 Yaney MacIver
 Ed Manning
 Steve and Renee Margolin
 Milene Marion
 Mark Markham
 Nancy Marks
 Phil Marshall
 Bob and Karen Martin
 Wilma Martin
 David T. Mason
 David and Terre Mathiasmeier
 Don and Mary Maxfield
 Ralph F. Maxwell
 William McCullough
 John H. McGowen
 John D. McLean
 Peter and Carlene Mennen
 Herbert Meyer
 William and Joyce Miller
 W. J. Minarik
 Russell E. Molari
 Nancy L. Monson and Peter Norquist
 Robert and Mia Morrill
 Virginia Mudd and Clifford Burke
 Patrick Mulcahy
 Elizabeth H. Nelson
 Leland L. Nelson
 Randy Neverka
 Paul Newhagen
 Richard and Gloria Newhouse
 M. Nimkoff
 Francis and Kay Odell
 M. H. Oehler
 Tom Owen

Diane C. Pace
 Dorothee Paterson
 T. Paukert
 Charlotte Pavelko
 E. Kent Peterson
 William Peterson
 Anne G. Phillips
 Hung C. Pon
 Robert Potts
 Gloria M. Raffo
 J. V. and Elizabeth Ralston
 Charles Reed
 Ann Reimers
 Arlene H. Reveal
 Wes and Willie Reynolds
 R. L. Ridolfi
 Charlotte Rieger
 Michael K. Riley
 Kathleen Roberts
 Beatrice M. Robinson
 Newton P. Robinson
 Hazel Louise Rogers
 Catherine Rose
 Daniel C. Rose
 Harvey and Amy Rose
 John H. Rudd
 Warren Salyer
 Richard H. Salz
 John and Dawna Saunders
 Steven A. Schafer
 I. Schmid-Maybach
 Jeanette E. Schneider
 Tom and Miriam Schulman
 Jean Forsyth Schulz
 Gary and Elisabeth Schwarzman
 Carleen and Lary Scott
 Joan L. Seear
 Mitsuko Shimizu
 C. Blaine and Marian Shull
 Rocco and Marion Siciliano
 Jacob Sigg
 Edwin Simon
 Morgan and Esther Sinclair
 Richard T. Siri
 Eric V. Siu
 Glenn Skinner
 Sergei Smirnoff
 Alan R. Smith
 Genny Smith
 Gerould H. Smith
 Leverett Smith and Gretchen Peterson
 Elliott B. Snyder
 Robert K. Soost
 George Speechly

Frances Spivy-Weber and Michael Weber
 Jack and Jill Stark
 Robert and Maria Steinberg
 Frank and Marie-Agnes Stephens
 Roy W. Stephens
 Zach Stewart
 William O. Strohl
 Criss Swaim
 Jan Tarble
 Lawrence G. Tesler and Colleen Barton
 John Thorne
 Felicia M. Titus
 George Tredick
 Eileen Tsai
 Laraine Turk
 Sidney F. Tyler
 Jan Vannatta
 Lee Vellom
 James Wagner
 Victor and Norma Waithman
 John David and Myrlee Wright Walker
 Allen B. Ward
 W. H. Ware
 Robert Warnock
 John S. Warriner
 Norman Waters
 Peter Watkins
 John D. Weeden
 W. J. Werback
 R. R. Westberg
 Edward A. Westphal
 Bryce and Wilma Wheeler
 Debbie Wheeler and Peter Hackett, M.D.
 Richard and Billie Jean Wiebe
 Harold A. Wier and Wendy L. Youngren
 Kathy Williams
 W. H. Williams
 Don Yellen
 Margaret Zeff
 Irwin Zim
 Emil Zollinger



Carl Dennis Bur

Prizes awarded for 1996 Free Drawing

by Kay Ogden

Remember those little pink tickets you received in the mail last spring and fall? The ones for the 1996 "Restore Mono Lake" Free Drawing, which included prizes such as llama treks and Ansel Adams lithographs?

Well, we received thousands of entries and in early November, Committee staff mixed them up in a large plastic bin and picked 17 lucky winners! The Free Drawing has always been one of our largest fundraising events, and it looks like the 1996 drawing raised over \$58,000! Here are the prize winners.

Wendy Craig of San Luis Obispo won the Grand Prize five-day llama trek in either Sequoia/Kings Canyon or Yosemite National Park, donated by **CalNature Tours** and **Trailheads, Inc.**

John Rigter, of San Jose, had his name pulled for the Mono Lake Treasure Prize—a silver-gelatin print of the Ansel Adams photograph "Thunderstorm, Yosemite Valley," donated by the **Ansel Adams Gallery**.

Cheryl Washington, of San Jose, won a two-night stay at the Ahwahnee Hotel in Yosemite, courtesy of **Yosemite**

Concession Services.

The June Lake Ski Weekend, sponsored by the **June Lake Villager Motel** and **June Mountain Ski Resort**, was awarded to **Michael J. Roden**, of San Jose.

Two Mono Lake weekend packages were awarded, one to **Paula Clement** of Orange and one to **Frances Eldredge** of Cobb. The packages include lodging donated by **Murphy's Motel** and a dinner donated by the **Mono Inn**.

Jeff & Karen Fishback, of Los Gatos, will be travelling to the Eastern Sierra for their prize: a Mammoth Lakes Getaway including dinner donated by **Tamarak Lodge Resort** and two days of mountain biking donated by **Footloose Sports Center**.

Terry M. Peters, of South Lake Tahoe, received the Redwoods Getaway Weekend on the Eel River, donated by **Redwoods River Resort** in Legett.

The next ticket drawn had **David H. Bryant's** name on it, earning him the 35mm camera donated by **Olympus** for use in his hometown of Visalia.

Two pairs of binoculars—perfect for birding at Mono Lake—were donated by

Bushnell Sports Optics.

David Dressler, of Redondo Beach, won the 8x42 binoculars, and **Gloria S. Baxter**, of Arcata, took home the 8x30 Natureview binoculars.

Five copies of *Storm Over Mono*, signed by author John Hart, were awarded. Lucky recipients **John Finn III** of Mill Valley, **Alfred J. Herrera** of La Mirada, **Ron Ferrell** of Sonoma, **Adrian Bozzolo** of Oakland, and **Gabriel Ross** of North San Jose will be reading up on the battle to save Mono Lake.

The final prize went to **Douglas Corkhill** of Raleigh, North Carolina, who received a limited edition set of eco-friendly notecards donated by **Real Goods**.

The Free Drawing was such a success that we'll be repeating the event in 1997—watch for your entry tickets to arrive in late spring!

Kay Ogden is the Committee's Marketing and Sales Director. She's looking for prize donors for the 1997 drawing while wondering when Tioga Pass will open. ☞

Eastern Sierra Monophiles gather at Whiskey Creek

Approximately 100 Mono Lake friends gathered to share stories and laughter at the annual Eastern Sierra "Thank You!" Party in Mammoth Lakes last November. Hosted by Whiskey Creek restaurant, the party offered a chance to catch up on Mono Lake events, meet fellow Mono enthusiasts, and discuss Mono's future with Committee staff.

Party attendees also had a chance to win one of the 20 door prizes—ranging from framed photos to a keg of microbrew—donated by local artists and business owners. After the prizes were given away, Committee staff presented

outgoing Executive Director Martha Davis a bouquet of flowers and a poem to show their appreciation and admiration. Following the party, those who wished to stay longer met downstairs for dinner, where more great food and conversations were had. All in all, a fun evening was enjoyed by all—we'll see you again next year!

Special thanks go to Sam and Shelly Walker for donating use of Whiskey Creek, lots of wonderful appetizers, and the door prize keg of microbrew.

The following businesses and artists kindly donated services and merchandise for the event: **Access Business Center**

(Katie Thomsen); **Carl Dennis Buell**; **Fabrications** (Leslie Byberg); **In-Touch Massage** (Barbara Phillips & Carrie Plessinger); **Lisa Jaeger, CPA**; **Brad Dawber**, Photographer & Mammoth Gallery; **Richard Knepp**, Photographer; **Tim Sanford**, Attorney At Law; **Sierra Sundance Earth Foods** (Denise & Nick); **The Booky Joint** (Marty Lewis); **The Flower Barn** (Jennie Bouwman); **The Great Outdoors** (Rick Knepp); **The Pet Pantry** (Kim & Jim Dudley); **Jack Trefrey Pottery** (Jack Trefrey); **Wilson Eastside Sports** (James Wilson); and **Sam & Shelly Walker** and the entire Whiskey Creek staff! ☞

Membership services to expand

by Frances Spivy-Weber

As the Committee's new Executive Director, I've been thrilled to find that Committee members are extremely loyal and generous in supporting our work for Mono Lake. It is your membership support that makes the Mono Lake Committee successful, and one of my top priorities is to assure you the highest quality of membership service.

Toward this end, our membership service program moved from Burbank to Lee Vining this spring. I think this will greatly improve our ability to respond to your questions and to process your contributions. We appreciate your patience as we finalize the transfer, and by mid-April we should be up and running smoothly.

If you have a membership need, please call 760-647-6595 and Rebecca Dobert, our new Membership Coordinator, will be happy to help you. I think you will find that our new computerized access to membership records will make checking and updating your member information

faster and more accurate than ever. You will also notice that we are now processing your contributions faster than ever—within one week of receipt—so there will be fewer question marks in your check register.

We've been expanding our range of membership options, most recently with the Guardians of the Lake program (see this newsletter's back cover to join!). Guardians make monthly contributions to the Committee—allowing us to better plan ahead—and receive fewer fundraising mailings as well as special Mono Basin updates. I'm pleased to report that the ranks of Guardians are growing, from 180 in 1996 to over 350 early this year.

I am also planning additional membership programs for the Committee. Are you a Defense Trust member, donating more than \$250 each year to the Mono Lake Committee? If so, you'll be hearing from me this spring asking whether you would like to become more involved with our activities.

And, for all members, I have established a planned giving program, through which you can ensure that Mono Lake and the Mono Basin will have an advocate forever. Your bequest decisions are very private, but if you would like to include Mono Lake in your estate plans we can offer assistance through a number of financial advisors. Please contact me directly if you would like to explore planned giving options for your specific situation.

Rebecca and our entire Lee Vining staff are eager to help you, and if you need to speak to me, my direct line is 310-578-9884; you can also reach me by e-mail at francesw@monolake.org. I look forward to working with you!

Frances Spivy-Weber is the Committee's new Executive Director. We haven't managed to overwhelm her with Mono Lake stories yet. 🐾

June PBS documentary will star Mono Lake

No story of water in the West would be complete without mention of the fight to save Mono Lake, and you'll find just that in the excellent upcoming PBS series *Cadillac Desert: Water and the Transformation of Nature*.

The series is based on Marc Reisner's classic history of water in the West and has four episodes. The first looks at Los Angeles' water supply and airs June 24; the second airs July 1 and focuses on the Colorado River; episode three looks at water projects in the Central Valley on July 8; and episode four concludes the series on July 15

with a look at the global water use picture.

The first episode, titled "Mulholland's Dream" includes an interview with Committee co-founder Sally Gaines, rare footage of a news interview done by David Gaines, and much more.

Mono Lake caps the episode's recounting of the Owens Valley water wars, showing the success of grassroots citizen action and the ascendancy of environmental balance in water use policy.

Produced and directed by Jon Else (*Yosemite: The Fate of Heaven, The Day After Trinity, Eyes on the Prize*) the episode also features interviews with William

Mulholland's granddaughter Katherine, *Chinatown* screenwriter Robert Towne, and *Cadillac Desert* author Marc Reisner.

"Last Oasis," the fourth episode, also includes familiar faces: former Committee Executive Director Martha Davis is interviewed, as is Elsa Lopez, who heads Mothers of East Los Angeles Santa Isabel, one of the Committee's Outdoor Experiences partners.

Both Martha and Elsa discuss how conservation and wise water use represent our last oasis, the best way to create water for our future needs. Don't miss any of the episodes!

Get ready for Restoration Days!

Back by popular demand! Restoration Days are coming this Labor Day Weekend: August 29 through September 1!

We've planned a weekend of fun-filled activities, nature walks, and gatherings. It's all set up to help you explore and discover this very special place ... the Mono Basin!

Here are some of the activities you can look forward to all weekend long: Discovering Mono's Volcanos ... Special early morning birdwatching adventures ... Touring Mono's tributary streams ... Canoeing among the tufa towers ... Exploring stream biology ... and even more!


And don't miss the special highlighted events of the weekend!

Friday night (Saturday too!) you can see the new documentary *Back from Extinction: The Mono Lake Story*.

On Saturday, we'll reaffirm our commitment to Mono Lake with the annual Rehydration Ceremony and then gather at County Park later in the afternoon to enjoy the Mono Lake Picnic for Committee friends and members!

Sunday brings the hard but rewarding work of restoration: watering trees, tallying seedling survivorship, and doing other special projects.

Last year over one hundred supporters participated in Restoration Days, and many commented that working to heal the Mono Basin was some of the most meaningful work they had ever done. You can share this experience—be a part of the restoration team and join us for Restoration Days!

For a schedule of events, more information, or to volunteer send e-mail to Kay at kayo@monolake.org or call (760) 647-6595. 

Forest Service fee plans finalized

The U.S. Forest Service settled on a fee of two dollars per person for visitors to the South Tufa area of Mono Lake as well as the Forest Service Visitor Center exhibits and film, effective April 1. Golden Eagle, Golden Age, and Golden Access passes also will be accepted.

80% of the funds raised though the admission fee are designated for Mono Basin projects ranging from ranger-led walks to facilities maintenance.

Comments on the program are being sought. "We want to know if [visitors] perceive that their dollars are being spent where they should be, and if they are indeed seeing improvements within the Scenic Area as expected," said Forest Supervisor Dennis Martin.

Fee comments and questions should be directed to Roger Porter, Scenic Area Manager, P.O. Box 429, Lee Vining, CA 93541, 760-647-3010.

Walker Lake legal maneuvers continue

by Gary Nelson

Editor's note: We often receive inquiries about the effect of water diversions on nearby Walker Lake. Although the Committee is not involved with Walker Lake issues, we have this update.

Mineral County, in which Walker Lake is located, recently sought relief from a U.S. District Court order which requires the county to personally serve legal notices to all Walker River water rights holders. Such a requirement, the county argued, would require an expensive, nationwide effort of one of the nation's poorest counties.

Mineral County argued that, instead, notice of its intent to enter into negotiations concerning the reallocation of Walker River water could be effectively

accomplished by publishing notices in appropriate newspapers.

Denial of permission to publish such notice by a U.S. District Court triggered Mineral County's appeal to the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco. The three person panel of Circuit Judges dismissed the appeal for lack of jurisdiction, but commented that "Indeed, this case could be a particularly attractive candidate for service by publication..." The appeal was redirected to Reno for re-filing.

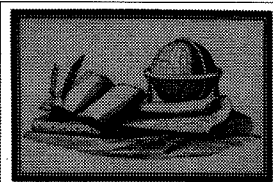
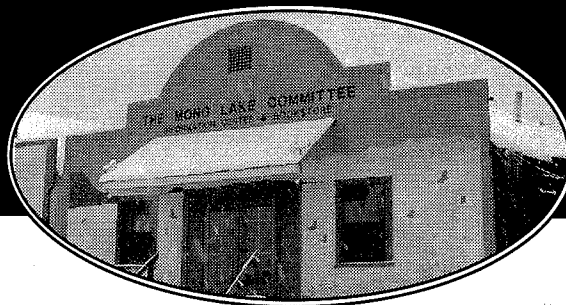
Walker Lake, like Mono, is one of the Great Basin's saline terminal lakes. It hosts a native fishery of Lahonton cutthroat trout as well as numerous migratory birds.

While legal efforts to secure water

rights for the lake are proceeding at a glacial pace, the raging waters which destroyed over six miles of Highway 395 in the Walker Canyon this past January have caused Walker Lake to rise over three feet so far this winter.

Since no water has been allocated to Walker Lake as of yet, it only receives inflows when all upstream reservoirs and diversion facilities are filled. The past three wet winters have done just that, and they may have bought enough time to reach an agreement on this issue before the lake's fishery is once again threatened by dry winters and increasing salinity.

Gary Nelson is the Committee's Canoe Tour Supervisor and in-house humorist.



JOHN MCPHEE

The Second
John
McPhee
Reader

Staff Recommendation
by Davin Bowker, Intern

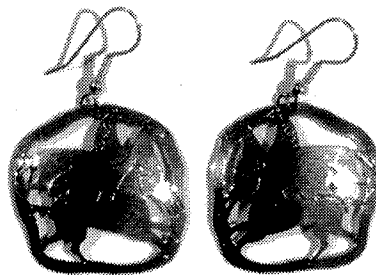
THE SECOND JOHN MCPHEE READER

This book contains excerpts from John McPhee's last eleven books. Known for immersing himself in his subject, you are sure to be captivated by McPhee's descriptive and detailed writing style. Selections from *Coming Into The Country* will give you a good feel for life in rugged Alaska. For you geology fans, four McPhee books are excerpted including *Basin and Range* and *Assembling California*. The latter reveals how the state's diverse topography came into existence.

by John McPhee; 394 pages: \$14.00

NEW! MONO LAKE COMMITTEE WINE GLASSES

These fine wine glasses feature the Committee's tufa, birds, and sky logo and a matching blue stem and base. Two for \$12.00; four for \$23.00. Shipped in special mailers.

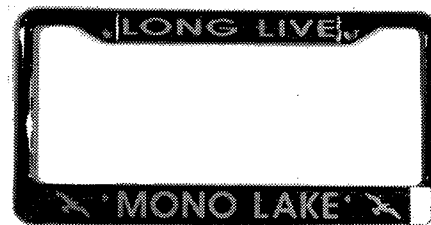


WILD HORSE EARRINGS

Wild horses still roam on the east side of Mono Lake and these hypoallergenic earrings from Alchemists remind us that the Old West is not so distant in the Mono Basin.

Small: \$12.00

Large: \$14.00



NEW! "LONG LIVE MONO LAKE" LICENSE PLATE HOLDER

Equip your auto with the accessory that shows your support for Mono Lake! Easily replaces your current license plate holder.

\$5.95

Also, "Restore Mono Lake" License
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One of each: \$9.95

Use our **postage-paid envelope**
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☐ Check (to Mono Lake Committee)

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	Long Live Mono Lake license holder	\$5.95	
	SALE! 1997 Mono Lake Calendar	\$5.95	
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California law requires us to charge
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Staff migrations

by Frances Spivy-Weber

Top among staff departures is Martha Davis, the Committee's Executive Director of the past 13 years. Martha worked part-time through March, wrapping up a number of issues with DWP and the Water Board. Her next Committee assignment is the Mono Lake Committee Board of Directors and we'll be profiling her in the next issue of the *Newsletter*.

Kudos and farewells go to departing Committee staff members Sherri Kalivoda and Tom Siewert. Sherri has single-handedly carried the load of membership services for the past three years in Burbank and, though she's leaving to take on new challenges, we hope she will always be part of our extended family. Tom, our Sales Manager of the past year, is heading back east to spend time with his nephews and nieces; from there he will return to northeast Germany, where he lived before coming to Lee Vining. Informally, Tom will be the Committee's interna-

tional sales manager, sending us even more European tourists.

We welcome three not-so-new staff members who have taken on new roles at the Committee. Kay Ogden, who has been coordinating our special fundraising events over the last year, has become our Marketing and Sales Director. Kay will be working to enhance the Information Center and Bookstore operations and outreach, and she will be representing the Committee in a number of business forums with our local neighbors.


Working in concert with Kay is two-year MLC veteran Laura Maltby, who has the new title of Bookstore Manager. Laura will be handling the Committee's retail and mailorder sales—watch for her merchandise selections and new products whenever you visit the store.

Information Specialist Greg Reis has shown that tracking accurate, up-to-the-minute information for the policy department and the Committee web site (www.monolake.org) is a job worth

keeping, and he has moved from temporary to full time status.

Brand-new to the team is Rebecca Dobert, the Committee's new Membership Coordinator. Rebecca has experience with the detail-intensive work needed to keep all our membership records in good order, not to mention two seasons' worth of Mono Lake knowledge from her work at the Forest Service. Rebecca will be based in the Lee Vining office; feel free to contact her with any of your membership questions.

New to the intern crew for the spring is Nancy Rehg, a Lee Vining resident of the past few years. Nancy, who is a sculptor, teacher, and Mono Basin enthusiast is working on final completion of the MLC Teacher's Packet.

Frances Spivy-Weber is the Committee's Executive Director. She's new to the organization herself and is interviewed on page 3. 



CLEARANCE SALE!

1997 MONO LAKE CALENDARS FOR ONLY \$5.95

With two-thirds of the year left, what could be better than a Mono Lake Calendar for half off? The calendar features full color monthly photos of Mono Lake and the Mono Basin by renowned photographers such as William Neil, Jim Stimson, and Fred Hirschmann and includes an introductory essay by *Storm Over Mono* author John Hart. Get 'em while they last! Order form on page 21

1997 Mono Lake Calendar: \$5.95

SPECIAL 1998 CALENDAR PRICING FOR LARGE QUANTITY ORDERS!

The Mono Lake Calendar for 1998 will be on the presses shortly, and now is the time to consider advance orders for holiday giving to your employees, customers, or friends! The Mono Lake Calendar is great for office, customer, or client gifts, and sales support the Committee's work. Large quantity orders receive special pricing, and we'll store the calendars until you need them. Call Kay at 760-647-6595 to reserve yours today!

Matched gifts

Marc Yalom of Livermore sent in a donation to the Committee which has been matched by **WMX Technologies**.

Charles and Silvia Harris of Tiburon made a donation which will be matched by **Autodesk, Inc.**

Donald Cragun of San Jose made a gift which will be matched by **Sun Microsystems**.

Michael and Sabra Schell of Huntington, New York, made a donation which was doubled by the **Charles Schwab Corp. Foundation**.

John Saunders of Fallbrook made a gift which has been matched by **Becton Dickinson and Company**.

Michele Sooy of Laguna Nigel made a gift which will be matched by **BankAmerica Foundation**.

Alden Stock of Kentfield made a gift to the lake which will be matched by the **Sara Lee Corporation**.

Michael Malone of San Rafael renewed his Committee membership and will have his gift matched by **Safeco**.

Dan and Ellen Hartford of Palo Alto became new Committee members with a gift matched by **Adobe Systems**.

Robert and Patricia Newell joined the Guardians of the Lake program and have had their monthly gifts matched by **BankAmerica Foundation**.

Your employer may sponsor a matching gift program; check with your company's human resources office. If so, your gift to the Committee will go even further for Mono Lake.

From the mailbag

"I only got to see Mono Lake after it had been robbed of most of its resources by L.A. but even then it was the most beautiful, eerie place I had ever seen. I still get a thrill when we come down 395 or over the Tioga Pass and see Mono Lake. It, and the Eastern Sierra, remain my most favorite place in the country.

"Here's my story of meeting a Mono Lake supporter: We have a 'Long Live Mono Lake' bumpersticker on the back of our car and I was in Cincinnati recently. I found a parking place on the street in the downtown area and as I was putting money in the parking meter, a man asked me if I was from California. I told him I wasn't, but it turns out he was and that he was also a member of the Mono Lake Committee. He was in Cincinnati for an extended business visit and we were both thrilled to meet another party who knew of Mono!"

— Karen Kuhl, Dayton, Ohio

In Memoriam

The Mono Lake Committee staff made a gift to the Scleroderma Foundation in memory of Lee Vining resident, Blue Skies Motel and Deli owner, and Mono Lake booster **Bob Stephan**. Bob will be truly missed here in the Mono Basin.

Bob was also remembered by Mono Lake researcher **Dave Shuford**, who reminisced about seeing Bob's happy face around town.

Dave also sent a kind card in memory of **Pete**, the recently departed, always inquisitive feline companion of staffer **Shannon Nelson**.

Gerald Dickinson of Davis sent in a donation in memory of Committee founder **David Gaines** and Committee intern **Don Oberlin**.

A note and donation arrived in the mail from **Emily Kenyon** in memory of **Irv Fatt** of Berkeley, a longtime Committee supporter and Bike-A-Thon volunteer.

Tomi Solle of Santa Barbara sent in a donation in memory of **Virginia Varney Lambert**.

Paul Atkinson, of Missouri City, Texas, sent in a donation in memory of past Bike-A-Thon rider **Tom Fisher** and he plans a trip to the lake with Tom's son.

Special gifts

One of our newest members, **Jennie Gerard** of Oakland, signed up in honor of her esteemed friend—and MLC staffer—**Heidi Hopkins**.

Marcus Cole of Madison, Wisconsin, wrote us with a gift in honor of the marriage of **Kathy Kramer and Mike May**.

Marian and Blaine Shull, who sponsored the kiosk in front of the Committee's Information Center, sent in a donation in honor of past interns **Rick and Helen Shull**.

Norbert and Suzanne Larky of Culver City made a donation for the lake in honor of cyclist and Bike-A-Thon rider **Robin Roberts**.

An e-mail message arrived one day from **Steve Johnson**, offering to share his latest musical composition. "Song of the Tufa" arrived via e-mail the next day and received a full staff audience! Thanks, Steve. ☺

Guardians of the Lake



A monthly donor program for devoted Monophiles

- ☐ Help the Committee plan for the future by making regular monthly donations
- ☐ Special monthly lake level and news reports
- ☐ No renewal mailings and fewer fundraising appeals
- ☐ Receive a special Guardian of the Lake lapel pin!

YES! I'll help heal the damage done to Mono Lake, its streams, and its waterfowl habitat—and educate the next generation about it. Enroll me in the Guardians of the Lake—my first monthly contribution is enclosed:

☐ \$10 ☐ \$15 ☐ \$20 ☐ Other _____

☐ My check is enclosed (payable to Mono Lake Committee)

Please charge my: ☐ MasterCard ☐ Visa ☐ Discover

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