

Spring

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MONO



LAKE

NEWSLETTER



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n hour ago I was down at the lakeshore getting sunburned on my nose while taking photos of one of the most beautiful cloud displays I have ever seen. And now, as I sit here putting the finishing touches on the Spring 2001 Newsletter the thunder rumbles the floor and the hail pellets outside are a centimeter in diameter. It's spring!

Spring is looking for the first wildflowers, hearing the calls of the gulls announcing their arrival for the summer, big billowy clouds against the deep blue sky, mud on the bottom of your shoes, the smell of rain in the sagebrush, sunshine that warms you all the way through, unexpected snow showers, and the much anticipated spring runoff.

This edition's got a full lineup of articles. For insight into the US Forest Service Scenic Area see the article on pages 4-5. Updates on policy matters with Caltrans and the relicted lands issue are on pages 6 and 7. Don't miss the gift section complete with the new Mono Lake Story video on pages 12-13. And find out how studying the pecking order of chickens can lead to volunteering for the Photopoint Project on page 8.

Have a wonderful spring!

—Arya Degenhardt

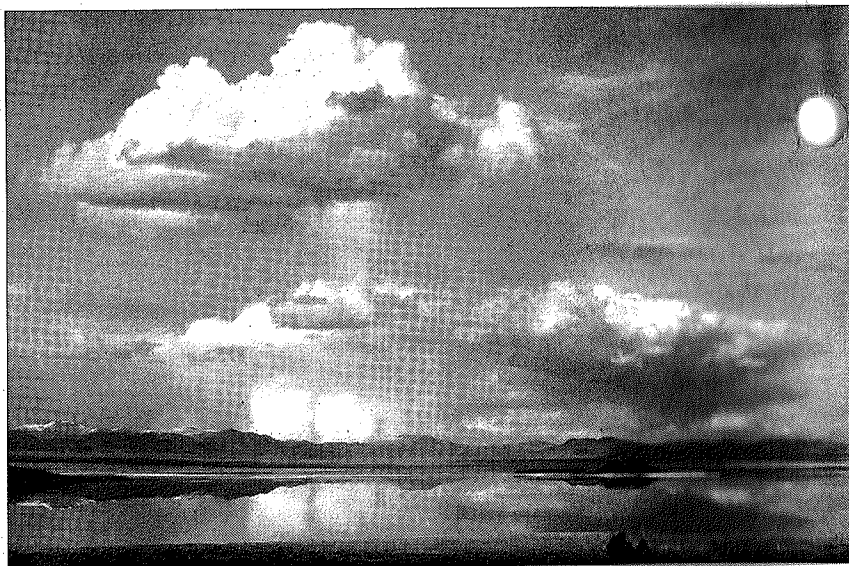


Photo by Arya Degenhardt

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.

Mono Lake is a part of the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network, a member of the international Living Lakes partnership (www.livinglakes.org), designated as an Outstanding National Resource Water under the Clean Water Act, and home to a National Forest Scenic Area and a California State Reserve.

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Easement proposed to protect DWP lands

by Geoffrey McQuilkin

A proposal to protect lands owned by the City of Los Angeles throughout Inyo and Mono counties was put on the table for negotiation in late March.

320,000 acres of land in the Mono Basin and Owens Valley would be affected by the proposal, which would create a conservation easement preventing future development (except where needed for Los Angeles Department of Water and Power water projects) while leaving land available around existing towns for future growth. Public day use of the lands for fishing, hiking, skiing, hunting, and other uses would continue, and the easement would not reduce the current property taxes paid by DWP.

The broad terms of the plan are laid out in a memo of intent which must be signed by all parties in order for negotiations to commence. Once talks are underway, several hurdles must be cleared during a required 60-day negotiation period, and there is no assurance the deal will actually come to fruition. The Department of Water and Power Commissioners and the Los Angeles City Council both need to authorize the agreement, which would give the city \$25 million for the easement. Half the money comes from the Wildlands Conservancy, the land trust leading the

deal, and half from the state Wildlife Conservation Board.

"I think this could be the most important accomplishment in all the time I've been general manager," commented DWP General Manager David Freeman. "For almost 100 years we have been keeping this land pristine. We have no reason to do otherwise. And then the Wildlands Conservancy offers us \$25 million to keep doing what we're doing."


As this Newsletter goes to press many different concerns about the details of the proposal are being raised locally and in Los Angeles. With a mayoral and city council election scheduled for Los Angeles in April, there will no doubt be much political action as the proposal is thought through. Local leaders will need to be involved and details will need to be hammered out, but ultimately the underlying idea of preserving land in the Eastern Sierra through a conservation easement is an exciting one.

If successful, the deal would put a positive end to a long-standing irony. DWP's acquisition of Owens Valley, Long Valley, and Mono Basin lands in the early twentieth century was a legendary part of the growing city's Eastern Sierra water grab. Yet DWP's extensive ownership of

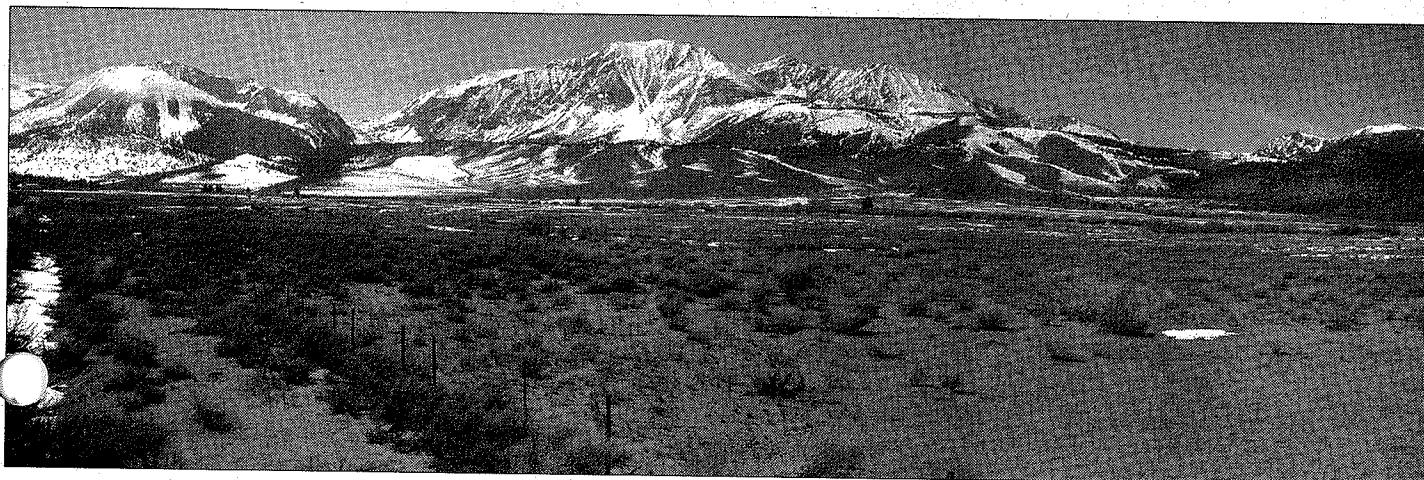
land inadvertently preserved much of the open space and rural values so important in the Eastern Sierra today. In recent years, rumors of DWP selling large parcels of land have often raised concerns about urbanization and sprawl; the proposed conservation easement would put an end to those concerns.

In the Mono Basin, DWP has large land holdings including Cain Ranch below Mono Pass, much of lower Rush Creek, land below Lee Vining, the County Park area, Thompson Ranch, a few remote parcels, and half of Paoha Island. The Committee will make sure these lands, as appropriate, are part of the deal.

Additionally, DWP owns large blocks of land around Crowley Lake, the Owens River Gorge, Round Valley, and essentially the entire floor of the Owens Valley from Bishop south to Owens Lake.

"If this proposal works out, DWP would be giving something back to the Eastern Sierra," observed Frances Spivy Weber, Committee Co-Executive Director, "and making a gift to future generations of Californians." 

Geoff McQuilkin is the Committee's Co-Executive Director. He's gearing up for backcountry spring skiing.



A view of the Cain Ranch—one of the Mono Basin properties owned by DWP that the proposed conservation easement would protect.

Photo by Arya Degenhardt

USFS at Mono Lake:

Scenic Area priorities from MLC's perspective

by Heidi Hopkins

Much of the Mono Basin is public land, and nearly 77,000 acres around Mono Lake make up the Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area. With strong support from Committee members, Congress created the Scenic Area in 1984 to provide protection for Mono's unique geologic, ecologic, and cultural resources. The Forest Service has accomplished many things since then, from building a spectacular Visitor Center and formulating a strong management plan that respects the unique qualities of the area to developing in-the-field interpretive sites and preserving important cultural resources such as DeChambeau Ranch.

Still, strong challenges face the Scenic Area. Numerous funding cuts over the past several years have led to staff cuts, slashed field interpretive programs, and reduced Visitor Center operating hours. Long-term management issues are waiting to be addressed—from non-native plant eradication to studies of special, limited distribution species such as the mountain beaver, Yellow Rail, and Mono

checkerspot butterfly. And Mono's increasing popularity as a recreation destination will require thoughtful, proactive planning to preserve the values that make the Scenic Area so special today.

With much done, yet much to do, the Committee has focused in on a list of current issues that need attention this year. Here, then, is the Committee's list of priorities for the Scenic Area for 2001.

I. The USFS should continue to emphasize Mono Lake and the Scenic Area as unique ecological resources within the National Forest system offering unique recreational and educational opportunities.

Few views rival a cloud-strewn sunset perfectly mirrored in Mono Lake; few sounds rival the soft, musical chatter of phalaropes and the lapping of Mono's

salty waves on the shore. Mono Lake and the Scenic Area offer exceptional opportunities for sightseeing, photography, birding, exploration, and solitude. These recreational opportunities are different from the many other kinds of recreation (fishing, skiing) that draw millions of visitors to Mono County—and thus Mono Lake plays a unique role in the county's recreational diversity. A survey the Committee conducted at South Tufa last summer confirmed visitors' opinions about this. Photography was cited by 85% of the respondents as the ideal recreational opportunity at Mono Lake. And 80% of respondents listed motor boating and jet skiing as poor recreational choices for the lake.

II. The USFS should emphasize the recreation and interpretation goal identified in the Scenic Area Management Plan: focus visitor use at the Visitor Center and South Tufa, leaving the rest of the basin available for dispersed recreation, solitude, and self discovery.

Some 250,000 people a year visit the Mono Basin, underscoring the importance of managing where and how people first experience the area. The USFS does a good job introducing visitors to the area at two key sites—the Visitor Center and South Tufa—and more can be done this year to do an even better job. These include:

- increasing its ranger presence in the field to prevent resource damage and provide a personal face to USFS stewardship in the field;
- full staffing for the Visitor Center and

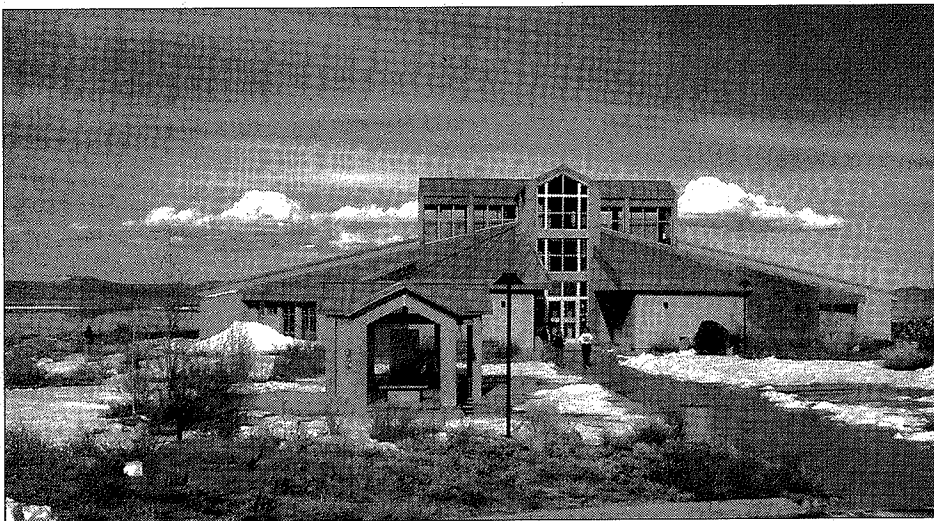


Photo by Arya Degenhardt

Built in 1991 the US Forest Service Mono Basin Scenic Area Visitor Center is a focal point of visitation in the Scenic Area. Unfortunately budget cutbacks have limited staff availability for interpretive programs and ecosystem protection in the area.

interpretive field programs;

- refurbishing field interpretive sites where needed, such as the panels at South Tufa; and
- completing the restoration exhibit planned for the Visitor Center (see sidebar).

III. The USFS should actively assure Scenic Area guidelines are uniformly enforced.

With Mono Lake on the rise, there is increased economic investment in the area. The USFS has excellent guidelines on private land development that are designed to preserve the lake's exceptional scenic values while allowing for reasonable growth. As proposals are developed, the USFS needs to review them carefully and enforce restrictions uniformly, knowing that decisions made today will have long-term consequences. The future of Mono Lake is at stake.

IV. The USFS should use its influence to assure that proposals for Mono Lake highway widening by Caltrans are compatible with the goals of the Scenic Area Management Plan.

Caltrans' Mono Lake widening project, if built, could permanently change the visitor experience along Mono Lake. Because of its responsibility to the American public, the USFS needs to exert its considerable influence to ensure that this highway project does not diminish the area's scenic values.


V. The USFS should actively work with interested sellers to consolidate Scenic Area holdings.

On occasion, one of the private property in-holdings in the Scenic Area is

put on the market by a willing seller. The USFS should pursue every opportunity to acquire such property. This is the best way to permanently protect the Scenic Area.

VI. The USFS should assume a strong role in creating a sound water management plan for north Mono Basin water including Mill and Wilson creeks.

With the acquisition of Conway Ranch, Mono County is taking a leadership role in pursuing resolution to questions surrounding management of Mill Creek water in the north Mono Basin. (The Conway Ranch has rights to Mill Creek water.) As the primary land manager along Mill Creek, the USFS also needs to take a leading role in this process. The USFS has stated it intends to conduct a hydrologic study and complete a watershed management plan, which is a great start.

All in all, the Committee believes the USFS does a good job managing the Scenic Area. When Mono County proposed a zoning change last year that would have conflicted with the Scenic Area guidelines, the USFS spoke out strongly on behalf of the Scenic Area and worked effectively with landowners and with the County to reach agreement. When the Committee and many members of the public raised objections to paving the South Tufa road, the USFS reviewed its plans and dropped this aspect of the project. The Committee is grateful for the agency's commitment. Still, with many competing demands on the lands managed by the Inyo National Forest, the Committee will continue its role making sure the Inyo National Forest gives Mono Lake and the Scenic Area the careful attention they deserve. 

Heidi Hopkins is the Committee's Policy

Major restoration exhibit planned for Scenic Area Visitor Center

Unprecedented restoration is occurring at Mono Lake. The lake is rising, of course, but there's more, like the cottonwood-willow thickets along Mono's tributary streams that are slowly transforming into young forests while fish populations rebound in the streams. The USFS proposes to develop a major interpretive exhibit to bring the story of Mono Basin restoration to life for the hundreds of thousands of visitors who explore the area each year. The exhibit will be housed in the Scenic Area Visitor Center.

The exhibit's conceptual design includes a life-size diorama of the Mono Basin's interconnected ecologic components, from alkaline lake to marshy stream delta to lush stream corridors to the Sierra crest (where the VC's cherished stuffed Sierra bighorn will find a permanent home). It also proposes to cover the history of humans and their impact in the Mono Basin, including what humans are doing today to help restore what was lost.

The Scenic Area Visitor Center a wonderful and appropriate place to introduce the general public to Mono Lake, and the Committee is keenly interested in seeing this restoration exhibit installed. We've committed to helping raise public and private dollars to make this dream a reality. If you're interested in contributing to what should be an outstanding public exhibit, please contact Heidi Hopkins (heidi@monolake.org) at (760) 647-6595.

Director. She's already enjoying the spikes of garlic already emerging from her garden soil.

Committee and community seeing red (or rather, Caltrans orange)

by Lisa Cutting

The Mono Lake Highway Widening Project north of Lee Vining is keeping us all very busy. And although many dedicated individuals—residents, Committee staff, local business owners, Mono County staff—have worked hard hammering out proposals and suggestions, project resolution seems miles down the road. The project's lengthy meetings and non-productive discussions are only fueling frustrations. The choice continues to be whether or how this project should proceed. Recently, the focus has been on the "how" but there is little sign of any acceptable progress.

Many people are concerned with this project. The local community, US Forest Service, California State Parks, Mono County, and Mono Lake Committee have been working with Caltrans to develop a project that incorporates needed safety improvements while limiting visual impacts and wetland degradation. As currently proposed, this project—creating 8' shoulders, adding scenic pull-outs, and addressing rockfall problems—would have serious impacts to the shoreline of Mono Lake. Cut slopes to the west and large retaining walls up to 40' tall to the east are in some cases the only way to widen the existing highway according to Caltrans. Safety features—such as left turn lanes for Tioga Lodge, Mono Inn, and Old Marina—aren't even part of the current proposal, and this is a problem for local residents.

This project was initiated in 1996 through the Mono Basin Regional Planning Advisory Committee as a community-supported project. At the time, widening the shoulders for cyclists and adding pull-outs for tourists sounded like wonderful enhancements to the scenic highway. Little, if anything, was

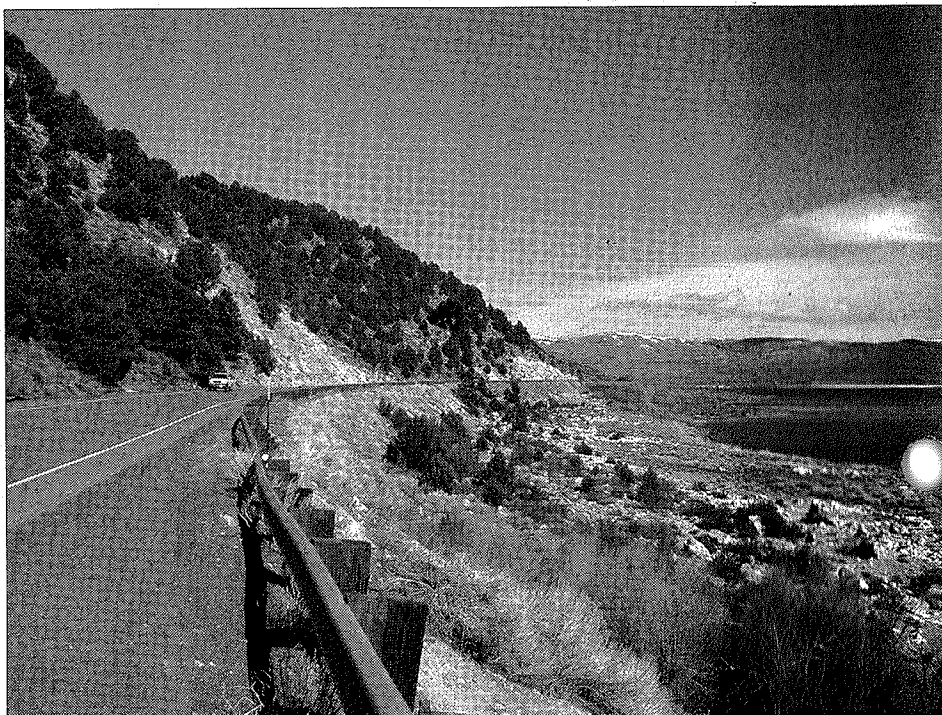


Photo by Geoffrey McQuilkin


One section of Hwy 395 along Mono Lake where expansion is proposed. Road cuts and 40-foot retaining walls would severely change the area and have serious impacts on wetlands.

known then about the impacts that would have to occur to make this dream a reality. As the project evolved and design features were explained, it became clear that the project would have some serious visual and ecological ramifications. So now what should be done?

The Mono Basin Scenic Area is a special landscape. This area offers incredible views that should not be compromised by new cut slopes or retaining walls. West shore habitat values are exceptional—wetland, riparian, and lake shoreline all provide refuge for a multitude of creatures and birds.

The Basin's uniqueness begs for this project to be done right or not move ahead at all.

The Committee will continue pressing

Caltrans to approach this project differently—to recognize and respect the scenic and ecological values—and build an appropriately designed highway project, or no project at all. 

Lisa Cutting is the Committee's Environmental Resource Coordinator. She never thought she'd learn so much so fast about highways.

Relicted lands resolution being reworked

by Geoffrey McQuilkin

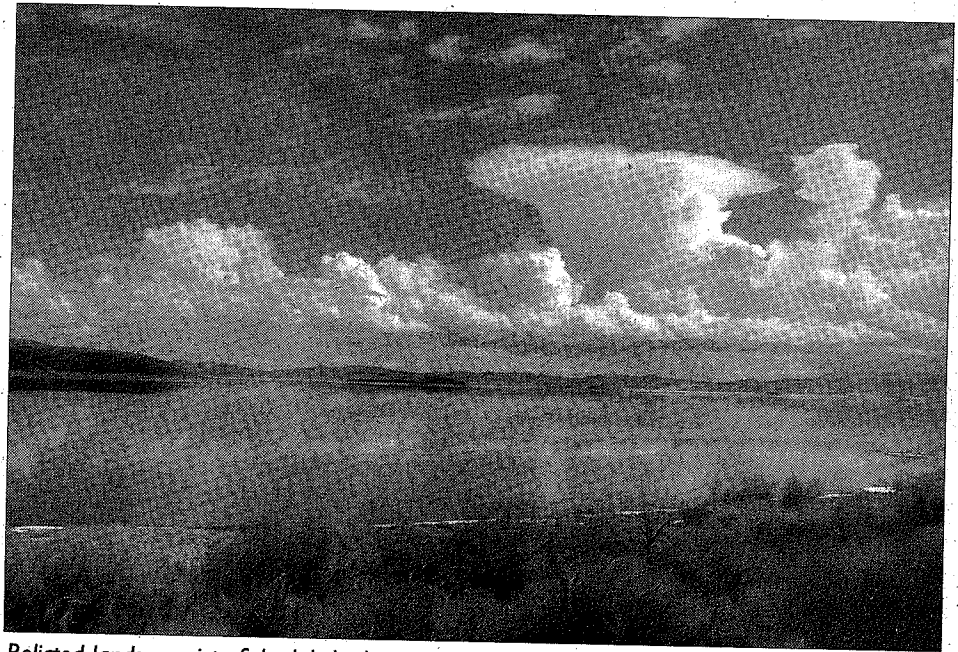
After a contentious year of existence, Mono County's controversial Resolution 00-12 regarding exposed lakebed, historic uses, and the Mono Lake Tufa State Reserve remains on the books. But that's not to say a lot of debate, discussion, and proposals haven't happened in the meantime.

At year-end, an ad-hoc citizen committee had been formed, at the request of the Board of the Supervisors, to shape a new resolution that met the concerns of all involved regarding use of relicted lands. As this newsletter goes to press, discussion is still underway on the language of a proposed replacement resolution.

The directive from the Supervisors was clear: focus the resolution on the land use issue and set the ownership issue aside. The Committee has reviewed extensively the question of who owns the relicted lands and concluded that—barring a successful challenge in the courts—the state is the owner of the exposed lakebed. The relevant law has existed throughout the last century and governs important precedents of public land ownership throughout the state, including public beaches, shifting riverbeds, and other lakebeds such as at Owens Lake. The real concerns at hand, though, lie not in the ownership debate but in the question of historic uses of relicted land.

Many folks have focused on the "historic use" clause of the legislation creating the Reserve, which states "no provisions of this [Act] shall be construed to interfere with any reasonable use of land or other activity existing or occurring on or before January 1, 1981, within the boundary of the reserve that does not conflict with the purposes for which the reserve is established."

The State Reserve, of course, was established to protect Mono's unique tufa towers and to provide overall protection for the environment near the



Relicted lands consist of the lakebed exposed due to water diversions to Los Angeles and exist between the lake and the prediversion lake level of 6417 feet.


lake. The pertinent law regarding reserves reads: "The purpose of a state reserve is to preserve its native ecological associations, unique faunal or floral characteristics, geological features, and scenic qualities in a condition of undisturbed integrity."

There are two reasons landowners are concerned about use on relicted lands. In some cases, property boundaries have been hard to determine on the ground and septic tanks, satellite dishes, and other items have ended up on state land. A recently completed agreement between the state and one landowner for exactly this sort of use shows that these issues can be resolved satisfactorily.

In other cases, historic use of exposed lakebed for picnics, lake access, and even a dance pavilion are at issue, particularly where landowners adjacent to relicted lands wish to reinvigorate these activities. The Committee generally agrees that historic uses—at historic levels—are

allowed, assuming they are compatible with the Reserve, and encourages agreements between landowners and the state that spell out such arrangements. Where new expanded uses are proposed, careful review will be required.

For the public at large, the "historic use" clause is important because it is designed to allow the continuation of long standing local activities like kutsavi (alkali fly pupae) gathering and use of a small skeet shooting area.

The Committee is currently working with landowners on language for a new resolution. While the land ownership issue may require an agreement to simply disagree, Mono County's focus on addressing the issue of land use offers hope that everyone involved can reach an agreement that is both fair and respectful of the unique natural values protected by the State Reserve. 

The Photopoint Project in action

an interview by Lisa Cutting with Chris Holabird

Editor's note: The following is an interview with long-time Committee member Chris Holabird. Chris was looking for a way to become more active with the Committee around the time the Photopoint Project was getting started, and became the first Photopoint Project participant. The project itself involves photographing key restoration sites throughout the Mono Basin every year in order to document the restoration process over time.

When did you first start coming to the Mono Basin?

20 years ago we came the first time because my wife had misunderstood the name June Lake. We had some friends from Los Angeles who had come to a lake up here, and she thought it was June Lake, and it turned out it was Huntington Lake on the other side of the Sierra. So, we came to June Lake and we loved it and we've been coming here every summer since!

What was it about the area that made you want to come back?

Partly it was because as a boy growing up in Chicago we used to go up to northern Wisconsin every summer. My father had belonged to a fishing club up where there were many lakes and aspen and pine trees. And while northern Wisconsin doesn't have mountains, it has low hills, and the country, the aspen and pine trees and everything reminded me of there—so it was really nostalgic for me.

Also we enjoy hiking and canoeing. And again, canoeing was something I'd done way back as a boy and with great fondness. I never particularly enjoyed fishing, interestingly enough, because everybody in my family fished except me.

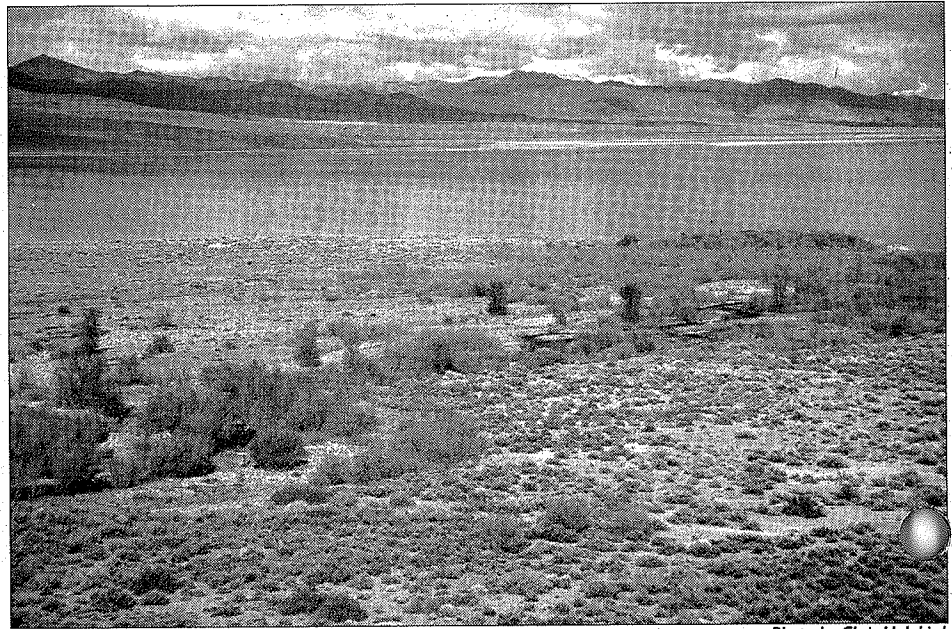


Photo by Chris Holabird

One of Chris Holabird's Photopoint images looking down on the Lee Vining Creek delta.

Frankly, I thought that there were enough other fishermen in my family that we didn't need one more, so I rowed the boat.

Why did you become involved with the Photopoint Project?

I've always liked to take pictures as an amateur. And in looking at the projects that the Mono Lake Committee offered, some of them would involve more time than I had available because we just come up from time to time. I thought this was one I'd be interested in because I do look forward to living another good little bit. I'm 74 now and have been coming here for 20 years. I pictured this being a very important way of documenting the progress that is being made in a long-range project that really appeals. And I think the idea of reforesting the riverbanks of Rush Creek and Lee Vining Creek makes a great deal of sense from every point of view—partly just the

scenic environmental view which is what I really enjoy coming up for. I think more and more people, and even the business interests now, are realizing that the scenic value of the country is the strongest business resource that they have.

How did you choose your Photopoint sites?

Well, I visited last summer and had been invited to a Committee Board meeting where we toured the overlook to the Lee Vining Creek area. So I remembered where it was, which was a big advantage. And then, the Rush Creek area is one of my wife's and my favorite places to drive and look because it is so nice to see the water coming down. When we first came, we remembered it being dry, and that symbolizes the changes very

Photopoint interview continued on page 9

Photopoint interview continued

dramatically. And it's easier to see than the water line creeping up in the lake.

When you were taking your photographs do you remember having any specific thoughts or emotional reactions or feelings when you were out there?

I remember it was a real climb getting to the top of the bluff with loose soils giving way under you and things. And it was a lovely time of the year because the aspens had gold leaves and I remember just thinking what a lovely expanse it is. Also, where Lee Vining Creek actually goes out towards the lake there are no trees, just sagebrush, and I thought that would show up over time so it was a good location both in terms of both the pictorial aspect and the significant change visible after a while.

This project is part art, and part science—do you see yourself as a scientist or an artist?

My background started off in science. I got a Masters in Zoology at the University of Chicago in the pecking order of chickens. My professor, who really pioneered the study, said he got started in it because he went to so many faculty meetings and observed the pecking order at faculty meetings which inspired him to explore this with chickens. So, anyhow, I got started there and then went into teaching and later became a school administrator. And the art part—I've always enjoyed sketching and I like photography and enjoy nature photography very much. Ansel Adams is a master, and it is wonderful to go see the Mono Inn now turned into a studio the way Sarah Adams has done. And also, I am married to an artist! Rhoda actually had an exhibit at the Mono Inn with some of her pictures. So her interest is very much a part of mine.

Is there anything else that you would like to add?

One thing that really encourages me is the news about DWP's potential conservation easements in the area. What I am impressed and pleased by is the fact that the various commercial interests and people in various little towns up and down the Owens Valley in DWP country seem to agree that this is going to benefit them. Obviously things have changed over the generations because small or limited growth is seen as beneficial. 🐦

We would like to thank Chris Holabird not only for participating in the Photopoint Project, but also for taking the time to share his thoughts and experiences with us. We would also like to thank the Advocacy Arts Foundation for its support of the Photopoint Project.

Walker Lake Arts & Loon Festival

Hawthorne, Nevada, April 20-21, 2001

Don't miss out on this great opportunity to experience the beauty, wildlife, and local arts of Walker Lake!

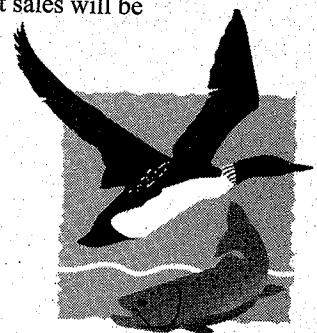
On Friday, April 20, visit the 2001 Walker Lake Arts Festival at the High Desert Arts and Culture Center in Hawthorne from 10AM-4PM where more than 35 artists will be selling their works of sculpture, painting, photography, ceramics, fabrics, and basket weaving.

Saturday, April 21, the Annual Loon Festival will take place with free Walker Lake boat rides for visitors to see the loons firsthand. Boat rides launch from Sportsmen's Beach from 10AM-4PM.

The Arts Festival will continue on Saturday where traditional Native American songs and legends will be

shared. Twenty percent of all art sales will be donated to efforts to preserve the lake. Walker Lake's water level has dropped 130 feet in the past 100 years, and water is needed to sustain the lake's wildlife.

For more information and directions log on to www.walkerlake.org. Or, call the Mineral County Chamber of Commerce at (775) 945-5896.



WALKER LAKE
WORTH VISITING...WORTH SAVING

Committee to host bird conference

June 28–30, 2001

by Lisa Cutting

Folks interested in Eastern Sierra birds will have a chance this summer to learn much more about conservation programs underway. The Mono Lake Committee in conjunction with Point Reyes Bird Observatory will be hosting the Partners In Flight (PIF) and California Riparian Habitat Joint Venture annual conference June 21–23, 2001 in the Mono Basin.

PIF / Compañeros en Vuelo / Partenaires d'Envol is an international network of scientists, educators, agencies, and non-governmental organizations launched in 1990 in response to growing concerns about declines in bird populations. The central premise of the group has been that the resources of public and private organizations in North and South America must be combined, coordinated, and increased in order to achieve success in conserving bird populations in this

hemisphere.

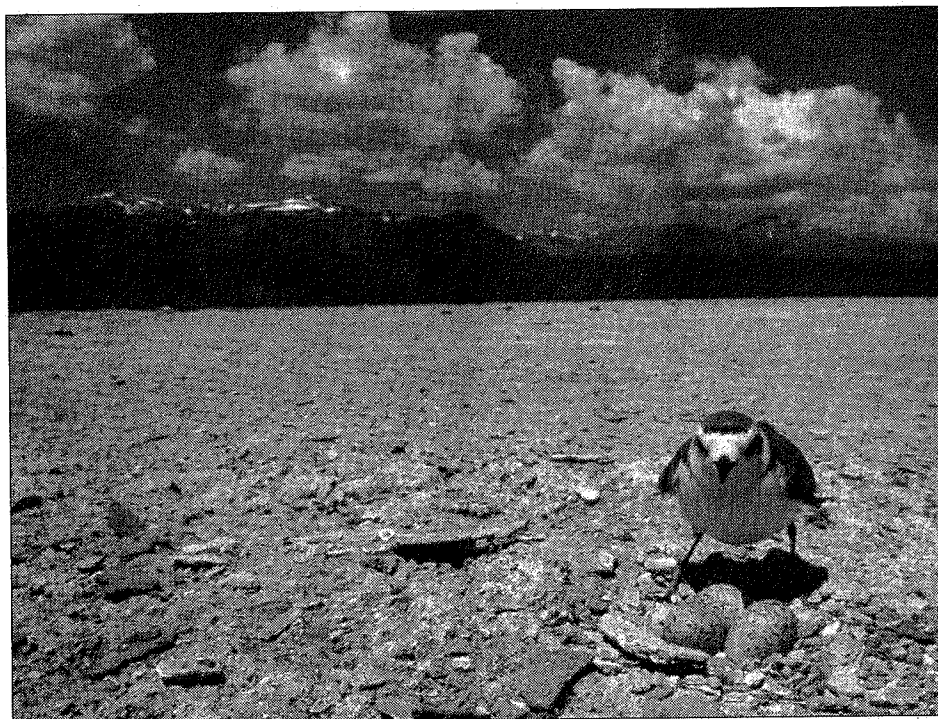
The Riparian Habitat Joint Venture is a project that was initiated by PIF to cooperatively protect and enhance native bird habitats in California. The project's goal is to conserve, increase, and improve riparian habitat in order to protect and enhance California's native resident birds and neotropical migratory birds. By developing a coordinated statewide approach, increasingly fragmented habitat patches are connected and enlarged with an extensive network of riparian forests capable of supporting viable breeding populations of native birds.

Both groups have been active in the Mono Lake area through their involvement with the Eastern Sierra Riparian Songbird Study that began in 1998.

The conference in June will include field workshops, presentations, meetings, and birding activities in order to provide a wide

range of opportunities for both the novice and expert bird enthusiast. The Mono Basin's vast numbers of resident and migratory birds make it a wonderful location to hold such an event.

At this time, the conference program is still being finalized. For more information on PIF see www.partnersinflight.org. For more information on the Riparian Habitat Joint Venture see www.tws-west.org/riparian/rhvjv. For more information on the conference contact Lisa Cutting (lisa@monolake.org) at (760) 647-6595. And check our web page at www.monolake.org for the specific schedule of events.



Eastern Sierra birding trail project in conceptual stage

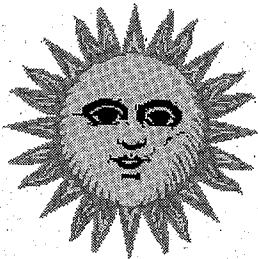
The Mono Lake Committee and Eastern Sierra Audubon Society are teaming up to begin work on an Eastern Sierra birding trail. Preliminary thoughts are that it will extend from Owens Lake to Mono Lake with many spurs, hopefully including Bridgeport Reservoir. A roadmap will identify specific habitats and excellent birding locations. It will also be a way to educate others on the importance of these habitats and help them learn more about the birds of this area. Once the map is completed and sponsorships sought, it will be ready for distribution up and down the Eastern Sierra. If you are interested in helping out please contact Lisa Cutting (lisa@monolake.org) at (760) 647-6595.

Summer Solstice Tour

to Mono Lake and Yosemite

June 22–June 25, 2001

by Shelly Backlar



Last year's luxury bus tour from San Francisco to Mono Lake was so much fun that we've decided to do it again! This time the adventure begins in Los Angeles, following the Sierra Nevada mountains along Highway 395 to Mono Lake on the summer solstice. Our mutual love for Mono Lake brings us together on this four-day, three-night fundraising tour. All accommodations, lunches, dinners, wine, and outdoor activities are included for just \$900 per person*.

Travel in comfort and style on a spacious California Parlor Car Tours motor coach with reclining seats, large tinted windows, air conditioning, and a restroom. There will be stops along the way at scenic locations to take in the beautiful surroundings, stretch your legs, enjoy refreshments, and get acquainted with one another.

Friday night's stay is at Murphey's Motel in Lee Vining, overlooking Mono

Lake, with a 14-foot spa. On Saturday everyone will choose both a morning and an afternoon activity in the Mono Lake area such as canoeing, birding, hiking, strolling at South Tufa or exploring the ghost town of Bodie.

Sunday we head to Yosemite National Park with stops at Tenaya Lake, El Capitan, and Bridal Veil Falls, with time to relax or hike after brunch at the Ahwahnee Hotel.


Monday's highlight is a guided tour of the San Luis Wildlife Refuge Complex to see Tule elk, migrating shorebirds, hummingbirds, and songbirds.

Fine wine and gourmet meals abound on this special trip. Dine at the Still Life Café in Olancha, and the Mono Inn at Mono Lake. Have a catered lunch at Mono County Park, dinner at the Double Eagle Resort and Spa in June Lake, brunch at the Ahwanhee in Yosemite, and lunch at España Restaurant in Los Banos.

The final evening will be spent at a charming 100-year old converted ranch—the historic Sierra Sky Ranch in Oakhurst. Enjoy 14 acres of natural beauty—fishing in Lewis Creek, hiking to

Corlieu Falls, swimming, or relaxing on the sun deck before dinner on Sunday. We have reserved all the rooms at this rustic lodge so our last night together will be a special one.

All proceeds from the Summer Solstice Tour go to help with the protection and restoration of Mono Lake and the continuing education programs in and about the Mono Basin.

Space is limited so sign up for the Summer Solstice Tour today! For more information contact Shelly Backlar (shelly@monolake.org) at (818) 716-8488, or visit the Committee's website www.monolake.org and download the flyer. 

Shelly Backlar is the Committee's Development Director. She made her most recent Mono Basin appearance in a gown and gloves!

**The fair market value of the Summer Solstice Tour is expected to be \$650. The balance of your payment may be tax-deductible.*

Experienced volunteers needed for the April 21 shorebird count

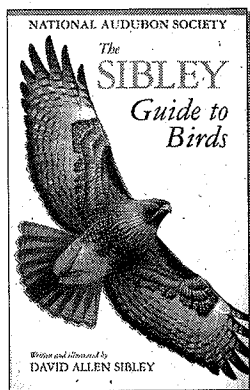
In April you can expect to find American Avocets, Eared Grebes, White-faced Ibises, Western and Least Sandpipers, ducks and geese, with the potential to see Snowy Plovers, Dunlins, Dowitchers, and much more! This is a chance to explore remote parts of Mono Lake and count shorebirds,

ducks, and other birds. Help us monitor birds and establish a growing database as changes to lakeshore habitat occur.

The count takes from a half to a full day of hiking, and weather can be variable. You'll need plenty of water and food for a full day in the field. There's a high probability of hiking

through some mud or soggy areas. Binoculars and a working knowledge of common shorebirds are essential. A spotting scope and 4WD vehicle would be useful, but are not necessary.

For more information contact Bartshe (bartshe@monolake.org) at (760) 647-6595.

**THE SIBLEY GUIDE TO BIRDS**

Written and illustrated by David Allen Sibley

This Audubon publication is from one of America's most gifted contemporary painter of birds. The captioned illustrations show many previously unpublished field marks, species in flight, subspecies and geographical variants, voice descriptions, maps, distribution, and migration routes. This comprehensive guide is one of the hottest bird books to be released in a long time! Book measures 9 3/4" x 6 1/2".

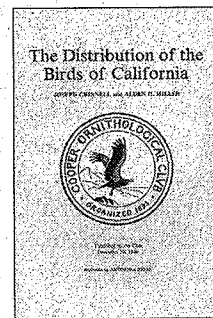
Soft cover, Alfred A. Knopf Publisher, 545 pages: \$35.00 (#1814)

THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE BIRDS OF CALIFORNIA

By Joseph Grinnell and Alden H. Miller.

With a forward by David Gaines, Mono Lake Committee co-founder, and introduction by Miller, co-author, this book gives a systematic list of species and subspecies, comprehensive data on the native and introduced species of California as well as a nomenclature update. Book measures 9" x 6".

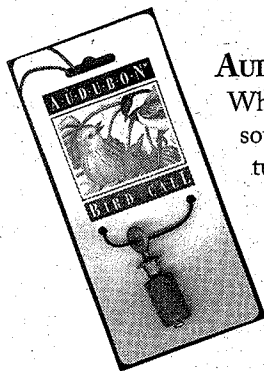
By Cooper Ornithological Club, December 30, 1944, reprinted by Artemisia Press, April 1986, 615 pages: \$18.00 soft cover (#456) or \$20.00 hard cover (#455)

**BIRDS OF YOSEMITE AND THE EAST SLOPE**

By David Gaines with illustrations by Keith Hansen

This book, authored by Mono Lake Committee co-founder David Gaines, details the distribution, status, abundance, and habitat of every species known to occur in the Yosemite and Mono Lake region of the Sierra Nevada. Book measures 9" x 6".

Soft Cover, Artemisia Press, 352 pages: \$15.00 (#278). Limited quantities available

**AUDUBON BIRD CALL**

When twisted, this remarkable birchwood and metal instrument will make a variety of sounds that attract wild birds. Each Audubon birdcall is handmade, individually tuned, and strung on a necklace for convenience.

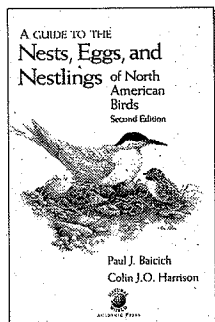
Bird call measures 2 1/4" x 3/4": \$6.95 (#3481)

BIRDS EVERY CHILD SHOULD KNOW

By Neltje Blanchan

Originally published in 1907, this book is a collection of story-like descriptions of more than 100 birds commonly found in the United States. Detailed descriptions, physical attributes, nesting and mating habits are outlined in this book. Some chapters read like fairy tales. Book measures 7 1/2" x 5".

Soft cover, University of Iowa Press, 281 pages: \$15.95 (#1626)

**A GUIDE TO THE NESTS, EGGS, AND NESTLINGS OF NORTH AMERICAN BIRDS**

By Paul J. Biacich and Colin J.O. Harrison

This second edition text is perfect for the scientific ornithologist as well as the amateur birdwatcher. This book provides a thorough species-by-species guide to the breeding biology of the birds of North America. Beautiful color plates and ink drawings accompany this comprehensive guide. Book measures 9" x 6".

Soft cover, Academic Press, 347 pages: \$22.95 (#610)

CALL (760) 647-6595 BETWEEN 9-5 DAILY TO ORDER.

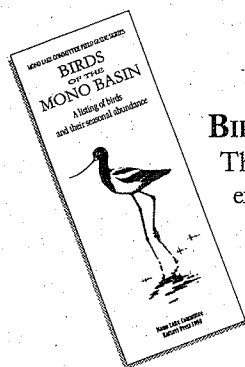
By George Lepp

Soft cover, Lepp and Associates Publishers, 168 pages: \$32.95 (#254)

By George Lepp

Soft cover, Lepp and Associates Publishers, 159 pages: \$32.95 (#253)

These books are written for the outdoor photographer who wants to learn new techniques that will improve their images of natural subjects. These books are designed for easy interesting and enjoyable reading. Each photograph illustrates the concepts and equipment combinations with a demonstrative range of possibilities that particular techniques can achieve. George Lepp a Committee member and an independent photographer who's work appears in magazines such as Outdoor Photographer, Natural History, PC Photo, Wilderness, and National Geographic to name a few. Visit the Mono Lake Committee Information Center and Bookstore to see George Lepp's work on display in our exhibit room. Photographs and prints available for sale. We ship!



BIRDS OF THE MONO BASIN CHECKLIST

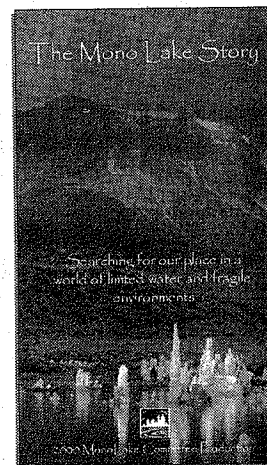
This checklist, which includes over 325 species of birds, is essential for novice and expert birders visiting Mono Lake. Information on seasonal occurrences and abundance as well as nesting records are included in the pamphlet.

Bird Checklist, 11" x 17" folded pamphlet: \$1.00 (#277)

THE MONO LAKE STORY VIDEO

This beautifully photographed 30-minute video of the Mono Lake Story slideshow chronicles the natural and human history of Mono Lake. The video explores the geology, ecology, and recent struggles that have led to the protection of this high-elevation saline lake. The Mono Lake Story summarizes the latest significant court decisions and political events that have led to Mono's current protection.

30 minute video available in both VHS and PAL format—please specify: \$15.95 (#1647)



ORDER BY PHONE: (760) 647-6595, FAX: (760) 647-6377, OR EMAIL: BOOKSTORE@MONOLAKE.ORG

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SHIPPING RATES

Up to \$25	\$5.00
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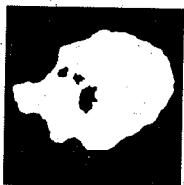
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California law requires us to charge sales tax on shipping

Phone: (760) 647-6595

Fax: (760) 647-6377

Mono Lake Committee P.O. Box 29 Lee Vining, CA 93541



Another below-average year: Mono expected to continue dropping

by Greg Reis

On March first the Department of Water and Power (DWP) predicted 73% of average runoff for the April–September period in the Mono Basin. The Gem Pass snow pillow in the Rush Creek watershed was reporting 74% of April 1 snow water content as of March 19. This will likely generate the lowest runoff since 1994—the year of the Water Board decision, when only 62% of average runoff occurred in the Mono Basin.

This will continue our string of drier than average years. In runoff year (RY) 1999, with 92% of average runoff, Mono Lake dropped 0.3 feet, and in RY2000, with runoff about 94% of average, the lake dropped about 0.4 feet. Despite the likely drop of at least half a foot, DWP at this time has no plans to install a new lake level gauge—the present one has been out of the water since September. The Mono Lake Committee is urging DWP to install a new gauge as soon as possible.

A year ago, DWP predicted that Mono Lake would now be half a foot higher than it is now. Last fall's Lakewatch article discussed last summer's "missing lake rise," and suggested that increased evaporation and decreased precipitation was the cause. A search of weather records indicates that this is probably the case.

For both 1999 and 2000, Lee Vining's mean temperature was approximately 1° F higher than average, and last year's mean of 49.86°F was the highest since records began in 1988. More specifically, spring 2000 was 3°F warmer than average, and prior to March 2000, each month as far back as September 1999 was above average, with two of the six months over 5°F above average and three of the six over 2°F above average.

Precipitation east of the Sierra Nevada was also down. Bodie precipitation has

been below average every month since May 1999 with the exception of two months: June and August 2000.

With higher temperatures and less precipitation over the lake, it is not surprising that evaporation is higher. And with an estimated 42 inches of average annual evaporation, a 10% increase, for example, would cause the lake to drop an additional 1/3-foot.

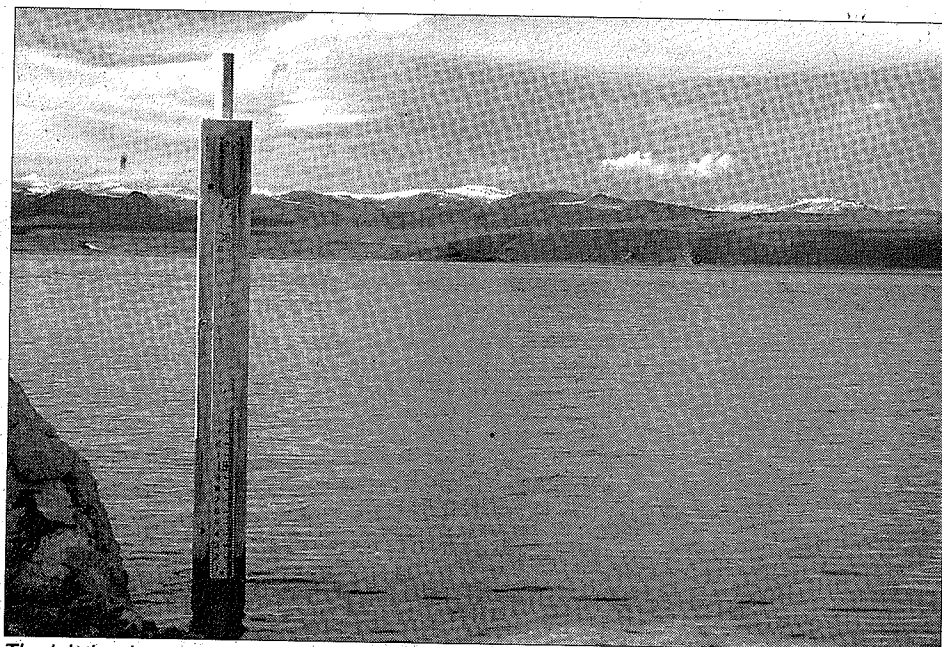
In summary, hydrologist Peter Vorster often likes to remind Committee staff that the future *will be different* than what the hydrological models predict because most models that are used by decision-makers today assume that the climate in the future will be the same as it has been in the recent past—an assumption that is safe, but we can say with certainty, is wrong.

With that in mind, DWP's runoff forecasting uses pretty good models. Last year's actual March–July runoff was only 500 acre-feet less than the 92,260 forecasted. This was 2,400 acre-feet more

than coursed down the streams during the same period in 1999, however in 1999 the lake rose 0.1 foot and in 2000, despite the greater runoff, it fell 0.1 foot, partly because it took an additional 2,500 acre-feet to fill Grant Lake Reservoir, and partly due to the abnormally warm and dry spring.

This year, as of March 18, Grant Lake Reservoir has 1,700 acre-feet more water stored than at this time last year. But it is dropping about 100 acre-feet per day due to the Rush Creek required minimum flows and the allowed 16,000 acre-feet/year water export to Los Angeles. When you combine that with the low snowpack, this year's stream restoration flows on Rush Creek will be lower—along with Mono Lake. 🐾

Greg Reis is the Committee's Information Specialist. He's researching the possibility of going solar in his Lee Vining house.



The lakelevel gauge with the lake at the 0 marker.

Photo by Arya Degenhardt

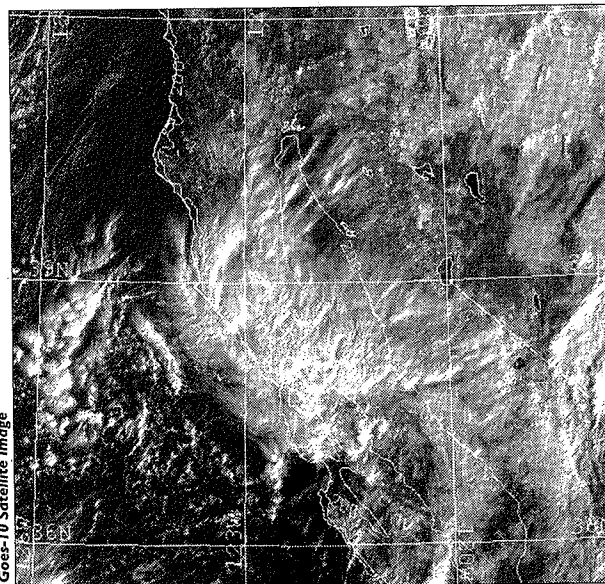
Mono Basin Journal

A roundup of less political events at Mono Lake

by Geoffrey McQuilkin

It's been a season of upslope anomalies, weatherwise. Not that they've been missing in winters past, but it seems that everyone is noticing strange snowstorms that drop more snow in the Mono Basin than on Mammoth Mountain. The clues started to stack up back in January when winds from the northeast whipped froth across the lake and the June Lake loop reported significant snowfall. Then came the big storm, rolling in on the March 3 weekend, leaving four feet of snow in Lee Vining but less in the Mammoth snow magnet zone to the south. Avalanches thundered down steep chutes, closing the highway for over a day, and we all got to revel in the fact that we weren't just hearing about big snowfall, we were living it.


The wet snow of the storm buried bushes, tufa, houses, cars, and mountains. Nearby, the craggy, convoluted top of Obsidian



Mono Lake has a brief moment in the sun between winter storms.

Dome looked like a frothy meringue topping; throughout the basin, sagebrush flats looked like fields of fresh whipped cream. All until the clouds cleared, the sun reemerged, and the snow, slowly, began to settle.

It's also been a fine time for somewhat confused avian inhabitants. A warbler left a body print in the snow on my windowsill as it tapped at the glass, looking in longingly, I supposed, at the fire burning warm and orange in the woodstove. An osprey swooped down dramatically onto the yellow striped lines of the highway, looking for food, no doubt wondering where the streams of the Mono Basin—they used to be here before all this snow—had gone. Meanwhile, owls

hoot plaintively through the night and bald eagles—more accustomed to all this cold weather—spin circles over the lakeshore, reveling in winter, guiding, perhaps, the next snow-laden storm into the basin. 

Benchmarks

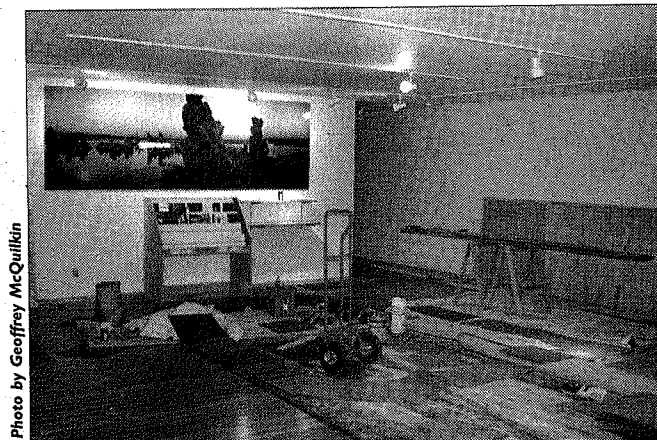


Photo by Geoffrey McQuilkin

Inside the Mono Lake Committee Information Center and Bookstore in the midst of the the store 1993 remodel.



Photo by Arya Degenhardt

Inside the Mono Lake Committee Information Center and Bookstore today. Now we're gearing up for the office remodel!

Policy Notes

State and federal legislation affect State water programs

California water and energy issues are linked

Municipalities pay 50% of their energy costs to move water. It takes 3,000 to 3,300 kilowatt hours of energy to move an acre foot of water from Northern California to Southern California. Of the state's total energy bill, 7% is just for moving water through the state and federal water projects in the Bay-Delta and the Central Valley.

So, as the State Legislature debates a wide range of energy bills, the Mono Lake Committee, working with other water conservation organizations, is urging policy makers to include water in the mix of energy conservation actions.

In addition, there are energy projects that can benefit water quality. Senator Nell Soto (MLC Board Member Tom Soto's mother) has introduced a bill, SB29x, to help fund an Organic Center in Southern California's Inland Empire, which will clean up dairy waste that threatens groundwater quality, while providing a local source of power.


Reclamation and water quality bills are being developed by California members of Congress

Congressman George Miller has introduced HR 685, authorizing the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation in the Department of Interior to provide funding for new water recycling projects throughout California. Senator Boxer is expected to introduce similar legislation. Congressman Phil Mills is developing a bill on groundwater quality to address issues of arsenic, chromium and other health-related risks. Both the reclamation and groundwater quality bills may expand to include other parts of the United States that share a need for federal support for reclamation and groundwater quality projects.

Mono Lake benefits directly and indirectly when the State's available water is "stretched" through conservation and when groundwater and surface water is kept clean. The Committee will provide information about high priority water bills as they move through the State Legisla-

ture and Congress online at www.monolake.org. If you have questions, please email Frances Spivy-Weber at frances@monolake.org.

The Bay-Delta program seeks funding from Sacramento and Washington

At press time, Senator Jim Costa's bill, SB23, which seeks to provide the Bay-Delta Program (CalFed) with state funds for 2001, has moved through the Senate Appropriations Committee and is awaiting action in the Assembly. Senator Dianne Feinstein is preparing a federal authorization bill for the Bay-Delta program and related issues. Congressman Ken Calvert from Southern California is developing ideas for legislation that will support the Bay-Delta program and the Santa Ana Watershed Project in San Bernardino and Orange Counties. Meanwhile, the Bay-Delta program is in a very "go slow" mode until funding for 2001 is more assured. 

Volunteers needed for May 19th tamarisk removal

Tamarisk is one of those plants that, even if you haven't heard of it, you've probably seen it—maybe even in the Mono Basin.

Also referred to as salt cedar, it is a woody, deciduous tree or shrub with numerous, small, 5-petaled, pink flowers and feathery bright green leaves. It may sound harmless enough, but this Eurasian exotic plant, introduced in the early 1800s as an ornamental used for erosion control, has become a nightmare for riparian restoration efforts across the West.

Since its introduction, tamarisk has quickly spread into natural wetlands and riparian areas where it tends to

form dense thickets along streams—displacing native trees.

Tamarisk can out-compete native plants for water—a single, large tamarisk can transpire up to 300 gallons of water per day—severely limiting available water for native plants.

Tamarisk seeds fast and furiously—up to 500,000 tiny seeds are produced per plant. Seeds are wind-dispersed and can germinate in less than 24 hours. It also spreads by root, trunk, and branch sprouts.

Tamarisk can survive in salty soils because it eliminates excess salt from the tips of its leaves and increases the

salinity of the soil when leaves are shed, further reducing the ability of native plants to compete as well.

Unfortunately the Mono Basin has not escaped the wrath of the tamarisk. Help us work to eliminate this invasive species on Rush Creek by coming out on two workdays:

- **Saturday May 19, 2001**—to celebrate National River Cleanup Week (May 12–19).

- **Sunday September 2, 2001**—to celebrate Restoration Days!

For more information contact Heidi Hopkins (heidi@monolake.org) at (760) 647-6595.

Field Seminars 2001



Photo by Dave Calleri

California Gull Research: Gull Response to a Rising Lake

Dave Shuford / Point Reyes Bird Observatory,
May 24–28

\$120 per person per day (sign up for one to four days); overnight; meals included

Join a research team directed by the Point Reyes Bird Observatory and Cornell University in collecting data on the gull colony. Gain hands-on experience in field survey techniques while investigating whether the lake's changing chemistry—due to Mono's recent lake level increase—is affecting gull reproductive success. Your help is needed in continuing this important research. The rare adventure of visiting Mono Lake's spectacular Negit Islets and observing at close quarters the second largest California Gull rookery in North America is for the stout of body and heart. Please contact the Field Seminar desk for more information on this unique Mono adventure.

Birds of the East Slope

David Lukas, June 9–10

\$95 per person/ \$80 for members

This field seminar will focus on the identification and ecology of birds in the Mono Basin. We will visit a wide variety of habitats, including desert scrub, marshes, riparian forests, and mountain slopes in search of breeding and migrating birds. With nearly 300 species having been observed in the Mono Basin, this course will interest both beginning and more advanced birdwatchers. We will intensively explore a number of sites, mixing short leisurely walks with periods of observation and discussion, taking time to learn about birds by watching them closely. Walks will be chosen for their accessibility, but participants should be prepared and capable of wandering off-trail in pursuit of special sightings. David Lukas lives in the Sierra Nevada and has led over 100 birdwatching and natural history programs for the Nature Conservancy, Audubon Society, and others. He is currently writing a Great Basin bird book and co-authoring a guide to Sierra Nevada birds.

Call (760) 647-6595 to register

Field Seminars 2001

California Gull Research: Chick Banding

Dave Shuford/Point Reyes Bird Observatory, July 1-4
\$120 per person per day (sign up for one to four days); overnight; meals included

This seminar will focus on the actual banding of the gull chicks of the Mono Lake gull colony. See description of California Gull Research seminar above for more details.

Miwok Seed-Beater Basketry

Lucy Parker, June 29-July 1
\$135 per person/ \$115 for members (primitive group campsite included)
\$60 materials fee

Learn to weave a miniature seed beater basket in the tradition of the regional Yosemite Miwok. Participants will prepare and use willow strings and whole shoots to make a miniature oval basket. Plain twining will be used, and split California red bud and creek dogwood will be added to create design bands. This small oval-shaped basket was traditionally used for gathering grass seeds. Lucy Parker is a descendent of the Yosemite Miwok, Mono Lake Kutzadika'a, and Kayasha Pomo peoples. She learned traditional handiwork from her



Photo by Betty Randall

mother, a master basket weaver, and will pass on some of her knowledge in this special three-day/two-night camping seminar. You do not have to camp to participate, but the evenings will be spent around the campfire with traditional songs and stories. **This seminar is designed for those with prior basket weaving experience.**

Mono Basin Wildflowers

Mark Bagley, July 7-8
\$95 per person/ \$80 for members

From the sagebrush scrub to the aspen forests of Lundy Canyon, the Mono Basin is home to a wide variety of wildflower habitats. This workshop is for beginners, as well as dedicated wildflower enthusiasts who want to know more about the plant life of the Mono Basin. We will learn to identify many common wildflowers, trees, and shrubs. We will also review the names of some basic plant parts, describe how to identify an unknown plant and learn how to recognize a few of California's most important plant families. Mark Bagley is a full-time consulting botanist in the Eastern Sierra and Mojave Desert. Mark is well known among past seminar participants for his easy-going pace and engaging teaching style in the field.

Ancient Landscapes of the Mono Basin

Wally Woolfenden, July 14-15
\$95 per person/ \$80 for members

Climate and volcanism have been the chief architects of Mono environments during the past several millennia. Vegetation associations, animal populations, lake levels, weathering rates, glaciers and, more recently, human communities all responded to dramatic changes in climate. Occasional eruptions of magma created numerous rhyolite domes and covered the area with pyroclastic flows and ash. Prehistoric people also left their imprint on the landscape. This field seminar will explore geological and archaeological sites throughout the Mono Basin area and discuss the evidence and methods used by scientists to reconstruct past environments and human cultures. Dr. Wally Woolfenden has lived and worked in the Sierra Nevada as an archaeologist and paleoecologist for the Forest Service over the past two decades. He has recently studied vegetation and climate history from pollen deposited in the sediments of Owens Lake and Glass Creek Meadow. This seminar will involve moderately strenuous hiking into unique Eastern Sierra landscapes.

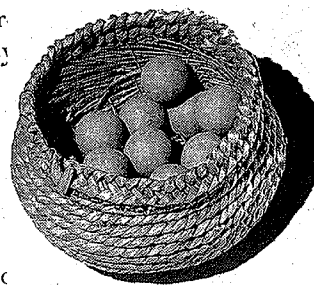
Field Seminars 2001

Mono Basin, Bodie, and Full Moon Photography

Don Jackson, August 3-6
\$235 per person/ \$195 for members

Join award-winning photographer and 15-year Monophile Don Jackson in exploring and photographing the wonders of the Mono Basin and Bodie State Park during the full-moon weekend and peak phalarope visitation. This four-day workshop will be a combination of field sessions and classroom work. Topics covered include the art and technical aspects of creating impactful images, composition, perspective, lighting and exposure, the Zone System, new films, and more. Critiques of participants' work will be an important part of this workshop. Open to color as well as black and white photographers that have a fully-adjustable camera (35mm to view camera) and a basic understanding of its operation.

technique will be used with a three-strand twine for design. Lucy Parker is a descendent of the Yosemite Miwok, Mono Lake Kutzadika'a, and Kayasha Pomo peoples. She learned traditional handiwork from her mother, a master basket weaver, and will pass on some of her knowledge in this special three-day/two-night camping seminar. You do not have to camp to participate, but the evenings will be spent around the campfire with traditional songs and stories. **This seminar is designed for those who either wish to learn a new basket material technique or are beginning basketweavers.**



Pomo twill tute basket by Susana Graves

Surviving on the Edge: Sierra Bighorn Sheep in the Mono Basin

John Wehausen and Karl Chang, September 1-2
\$120 per person/ \$105 for members

Controversy surrounds the fate of the Sierra bighorn, one of the most endangered mammals in North America. (USFW service listed the Sierra Bighorn Sheep as Federally Endangered in 1999). This field seminar will involve discussions of the biology and conservation of these animals



Photo by John Wehausen

High Country Wildflowers

Ann Howald, August 11-12
\$95 per person/ \$80 for members

Late summer is the perfect time to enjoy the botanical riches of the eastern High Sierra. During meandering walks at about 10,000' we'll see streamside red columbine and blue larkspur, yellow sunflowers on the shores of subalpine lakes, a myriad of subalpine meadow wildflowers and their pollinators, all the conifers of the subalpine forest, and even some of the Sierra's above-timberline alpine beauties. We'll focus on plants of all kinds, but won't ignore the birds, bugs, and furry critters that keep them company. All of our leisurely walks will be in areas of moderate terrain. Ann is a biology teacher at Santa Rosa Junior College who has spent more than 25 summers teaching plant classes and studying plants in the eastern Sierra.

Pomo Tule Work Basketry

Lucy Parker, August 24-26
\$135 per person/ \$115 for members (primitive group campsite included)
\$60 materials fee

Pomo Tule work baskets were traditionally made by men for fishing materials and tools. Today, Pomo tule work baskets are used for a variety of everyday work tasks. Made of seasoned tule gathered in the fall and winter months these materials are dampened to make them pliable for weaving. A plain twine

Field Seminars 2001

with attempts to view them. This seminar involves strenuous hiking at the 10,000-foot elevation and above. There is a good chance of seeing Sierra bighorn sheep in the wild during this seminar, but no guarantee. John Wehausen is a research scientist at White Mountain Research Station in Bishop.

He has been investigating various aspects of the Sierra bighorn and working for their conservation since 1974. In the late 1970s he initiated the restoration program that brought bighorn back to the Mono Basin. This field seminar is being offered in cooperation with the Yosemite Association.



Paoha Island Kayak

Stuart Wilkinson and MLC Staff, September 8
\$75 per person/ \$65 for members

Wind and weather permitting, visit Paoha Island for a picnic lunch. Join Stuart Wilkinson and a Mono Lake Committee staff member for a guided naturalist expedition to Paoha Island. Your leaders are well-versed in Mono Lake geology, ecology, history, and politics, and this natural history kayak tour will cover a wide variety of topics relating to this unique high desert lake. Plan on four to five hours for the tour. Some kayak experience is recommended for this trip. Kayaks and safety equipment are provided. This seminar is offered for the sixth year in a row, and is highly rated by past participants.

Fall Bird Migration

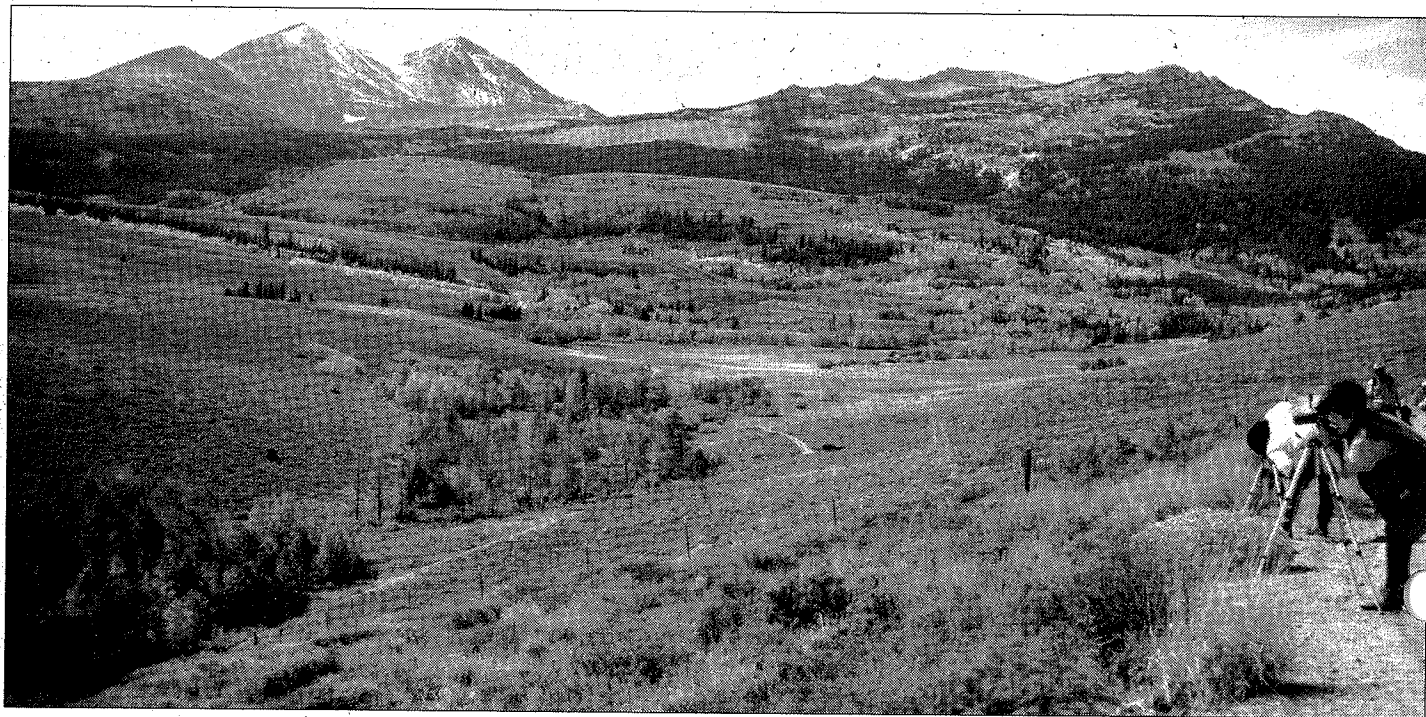
Dave Shuford, September 8-9
\$95 per person/ \$80 for members

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 has been a staff biologist at Point Reyes Bird Observatory for twenty years. He has conducted numerous surveys and research projects in the Mono Basin and beyond, and is well acquainted with where to find birds in the Eastern Sierra. This is one of our most popular field seminars so register early for this one!

Drawing Mono

Moirá Donohoe, September 22-23
\$95 per person/ \$80 for members

Deepen and preserve your Mono Lake experience in a unique portfolio of your own drawings in this new weekend workshop. There will be instructor demonstrations, material discussion, and non-threatening and constructive group/individual critiques. Using the simple materials of charcoal, ink, brush, and graphite on paper, record your impressions of strange and mysterious Mono. We will spend most of each day



Field Seminars 2001

in the field drawing. Moira will cover basic drawing techniques while encouraging individual style. Moira is a professional artist, art instructor, and long-time resident-artist of the Yosemite area. She holds a degree in Fine Art from Northern Arizona University and a Masters Degree in Painting and Drawing from CSU Fresno. She has shown her work professionally since 1983. This seminar is appropriate for beginner, intermediate, or advanced artists who want to further their skill with an experienced area artist.

The Story Behind the Land: Geology of the Mono Basin

Tim Tierney, September 29-30
\$95 per person/ \$80 for members

The Mono Basin is a geological showcase, featuring young volcanoes, glaciated landscapes, stark mountains, and weird mineral towers, all set about ancient and saline Mono Lake. Explore this land with geologist Tim Tierney (UC Santa Barbara instructor and author of the Committee's field guide *Geology of the Mono Basin*) and learn how to recognize the geology, know the reasons behind why things have happened, and what the future may hold. The first day of the seminar will be spent gaining an overview of the area via car and short

walks. The second day will focus on thoroughly exploring a few select areas with extended hikes. Cool fall weather and brilliant colors will highlight the geologic wonders of this popular field seminar.

Mono Basin Fall Photography

Richard Knepp, October 5-7
\$165 per person/ \$135 for members

Autumn in the Mono Basin 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 Richard Knepp to explore varied shoreline locations at sunrise and sunset, and fall color in nearby canyons. Beyond his photographic expertise, Rick is intimately familiar with the Eastern Sierra and Mono Lake locale. 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 photographic seminar is offered for the sixth year in a row, and is highly rated by past participants.

Call soon to reserve your spot as seminars fill quickly!

Registration Information

Call the Mono Lake Committee at 760-647-6595 and ask for the seminar desk to register. More extensive seminar descriptions are available upon request or online at www.monolake.org. Sorry, we cannot accept registration by mail.

• Registration •

Seminars are limited to fifteen people except where noted. If a seminar receives less than six participants, the seminar will be cancelled two weeks in advance and full refunds will be given. If you cancel three weeks prior to the seminar start date, we will refund your payment (less a \$10 processing fee). No refunds after that date, but tuition can be applied to another class in 2001. We accept VISA, MasterCard, and Discover or personal checks payable to the Mono Lake Committee. Participants must sign a liability release form. All seminars operate under permit from the Inyo National Forest.

• Discounts •

Mono Lake Committee members receive discounted seminar prices where noted. If you are not a current member of the Mono Lake Committee, you may receive the discount by joining when you register.

• Yosemite Association partnership •

For more information on Yosemite Field Seminars contact the Yosemite Association at: PO Box 230, El Portal, CA 95318
Phone: (209) 379-2321 Fax: (209) 379-2486

Office remodel effort underway despite obstacles

by Jeff Darlington

The effort to remodel the Committee office has begun again! Many members remember this process from 1993 with the remodel of the Information Center and Bookstore. It is time to move into the other areas of our building that are in dire need.

This winter the problem of the leaking roof finally ballooned into a full-scale hazard. Leaks have caused water damage to the ceiling and the store (see photo) and the need for expanded workspace has come to a head.

Thanks in large part to our supportive membership, the Board of Directors authorized an expansion of the Lee Vining office to include more working space for staff, an additional bathroom, a break room, and a library room. And most importantly, a new (non-leaking) roof! This remodel will enable us to work more effectively on the lake's behalf, and will also include a new interpretive education room adjoining the existing Information Center and Bookstore.

Earlier this year, Mono County informed us of the need to satisfy the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act. This act is a new law that requires

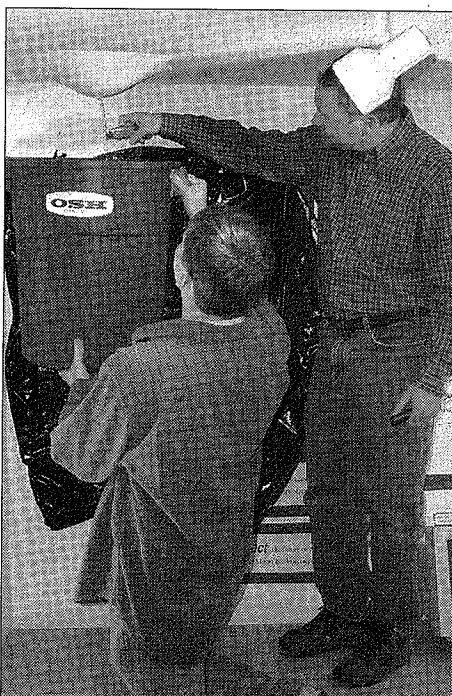



Photo by Arya Degenhardt

Co-Executive Director Geoff McQuilkin and Office Director Jeff Darlington taking care of a winter water leak in the store above the internet access desk.

property owners in suspected fault zones to conduct geological excavations on their property prior to construction. The office sits on the edge of the suspected Lee Vining fault zone, so before breaking ground on any remodel we need to prove that there isn't a fault running under the property. This is a wise precaution of course, but it will cost the Committee approximately \$10,000! This unexpected expense is the first obstacle to meeting the office needs. We're hoping to conduct the geological survey this spring, so any member donations for the survey would be most appreciated!

If the geological survey does not find a fault, we will proceed with getting an architect plan approved by the County this summer. If all goes well construction could begin next spring with minimal impact to operations.

Look for updates on the remodel project in future Newsletters, and thanks again for your support! 

Jeff Darlington is the Committee's Office Director. He and his wife Christiana have introduced the game of Mah Jong to the Mono-Basin gaming circle.

Staff updates and migrations

It's still a bit early to tell about spring migrations, but there are some exciting updates both in the offices and around the basin.

Geoff McQuilkin was accepted into the 2001 Water Education Foundation Water Leaders class. He is joining 14 other young leaders from agencies, organizations, businesses, and the legislature to learn more about statewide water issues and to share the lessons learned in protecting and

restoring Mono Lake.

Frances Spivy-Weber has been appointed to the State's Water Plan Advisory Committee. Her goal is to see the Plan redesigned to provide timely, high quality information to the public on an on-going basis. The Plan makes projections about statewide water demand and supply for 10-30 years, and therefore is extremely important in guiding local and state decision-

makers in choosing what kind of water projects will meet future needs.

And congratulations to former Public Education Coordinator **Stacey Simon** on her recent engagement to local resident **Jack Trefry**. The Mono Basin has always held a special place in Stacey's heart, so after finishing law school in Berkeley she moved back to be with Jack and work as Deputy County Counsel with the Mono County offices. Congratulations all around!

Member Corner: News from the membership desk

by Brett Pyle

In Memory

Elaine Cook of Aptos made a donation in memory of **Eleanor Hanson** who loved to get out on the open road and enjoy the out of doors. **Helen Johanson** of Laguna Hills made a donation in memory of **Adele Maloney**, a long time resident of Mono Lake's north shore. **Caroline Knox** of Vancouver, B.C. made a donation in memory of **Frances Smith**. **Georgia K. Lowe** of Bishop and **Deborah Preschutti** of Mammoth Lakes, **Pamela and Scott Coles** of Silverado Canyon, **Corazon DeCosta** of Malibu, **John and Grace Holmes** of Woodland Hills, **King and Peg Matthews** of Mammoth Lakes, and **Suzanne Stokes-Mennine** of Mammoth Lakes all made donations in loving memory of **Nancy Whitmore**. We also received donations in memory of **Robert Mathews** from **Leslie A. Kolsea** of Martinez, **E.E. Taylor** of Modesto, and **Carol Mathews** of Walnut Creek.

New Mono Lake checks!

You can now order personal checks with a background picture of Mono Lake! These checks are available from Message!Products and also have the Mono Lake Committee logo printed on them. You can also order a "Long Live Mono Lake" hemp checkbook cover and return address labels with a Mono Lake theme. The Mono Lake Committee receives 10% of all proceeds from the sale of these products. For details, descriptions, and ordering information visit www.messageproducts.com. Next time you reorder checks take the opportunity to show how much you care about Mono Lake!

Thanks

Special thanks to **All Tech Computer Recyclers** in Hawthorne, California, who on two occasions since November have accepted our old, nonworking computers and parts in trade for newer working parts and needed items. Some items we have kept out of the Pumice Valley Landfill include monitors, keyboards, mice, computers, and hard drives. Some much-needed items we have received include hard drives, CD-ROMs, mice, keyboards, RAM chips, slide projectors, and a server.

If you would like to take advantage of the public service they offer and keep your old computer out of a landfill, contact **Mitchell Meyer**, Director of Systems Integration (alltechrecyclers@yahoo.com) at (310) 978-2790. We look forward to seeing Mitchell on his next fishing trip to the Mono Basin!

Wish List

We are currently seeking donations of equipment to support our Mono Lake canoe tour program, including:

1. Personal Flotation Devices a.k.a. lifejackets, specifically Type III vest-style jackets of any size.
2. Canoe paddles with T-grips, as opposed to kayak paddles with blades on both ends.
3. Buoyant cushions (Type IV) with straps, for passengers to sit on.

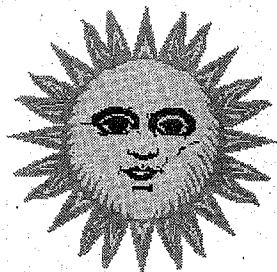
If you have any of the above equipment, or would like to donate specifically to the canoe program please contact Membership Coordinator Brett Pyle (brett@monolake.org) at (760) 647-6595.

Matched Gifts

Bank of America matched donations from **James Armstrong** of Pacifica and **Archibald Wilson** of San Francisco. **The Capital Group Companies, Inc.** matched 2 for 1 a very generous gift from **James Drasdo** of Flintridge. **Charles Scwhab Corporation** matched gifts by **Denis McGuirk** of Oakland, **Susan Mills** of Bakersfield, and matched 2 for 1 donations by **Carole Tunley** of Hayward and **Steven E. White** of Moss Beach. **Compaq Computer Corporation** matched a donation from **Park Chamberlain** of Cupertino. **FM Global Corporation** matched a gift from **David W. Erickson** of Fresno. The **William and Flora Hewlett Foundation** matched a gift from **Michael Fischer and Jane Rogers** of Mill Valley. **Mal Warwick and Associates** matched 2 for 1 a donation by **Alan Magree** of Long Beach. **Merrill Lynch** matched two gifts by **Richard D. MacDonald** of San Rafael. **Reuters** matched a donation from **Brenda L. Ross** of El Segundo. **The San Francisco Foundation** matched 2 for 1 gifts by **Jane Rogers** of Mill Valley and **Susan Kleinman** of San Francisco. **Sun Microsystems** matched gifts from **Michael K. Riley** of Campbell and **Glenn C. Skinner** of Palo Alto. **Universal Studios** matched a donation by **Nancy Waki** of Rosemead. **Anchor Brewing Company** matched 3 for 1 a donation by **Gordon MacDermott** of San Rafael. Thank you!

Brett Pyle is the Committee's Membership Coordinator. He recommends the music of Billie Holiday, Frank Sinatra, and Jimmy Buffett to soothe the soul, the books of Tom Robbins to enlarge the mind, and Pop-Tarts® and Fritos® as a vegetarian breakfast.

Summer Solstice Tour to Mono Lake and Yosemite



June 22-25

The Partners in Flight and California
Riparian Habitat Joint Venture annual

Bird Conference *at Mono Lake*



June 28-30

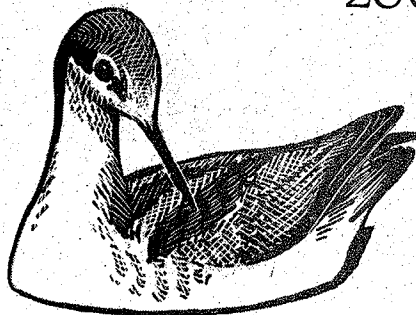


High Sierra *Fall Century*



September 15

Restoration Days 2001



August 31-September 2

call (760) 647-6595 or see www.monolake.org for event details



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