

Summer

2001

# MONO LAKE

## NEWSLETTER



A day at the Mono Lake Committee



# Mono Lake Newsletter

Summer 2001  
Volume 24, Number 2



MONO LAKE  
COMMITTEE

## Mono Lake Office Information Center and Bookstore

Highway 395 at Third Street  
Post Office Box 29  
Lee Vining, California 93541  
Phone (760) 647-6595

## Los Angeles Office

322 Culver Blvd.  
Playa Del Rey, California 90293  
Phone (818) 716-8488

## On the Internet

[info@monolake.org](mailto:info@monolake.org)  
[www.monolake.org](http://www.monolake.org)  
[www.monobasinresearch.org](http://www.monobasinresearch.org)

## Staff

Shelly Backlar ..... Development Director  
Kirsten Brady ..... Canoe Coordinator  
Ramona Robbins Clark ..... Retail Operations Manager  
Heather Cleary ..... Retail Assistant  
Lisa Cutting ..... Environmental Resource Coordinator  
Jeff Darlington ..... Office Director  
Arya Degenhardt ..... Communications Director  
Santiago Escruceria ..... Outdoor Experiences Coordinator  
Heidi Hopkins ..... Eastern Sierra Policy Director  
Donnette Huselton ..... Bookkeeper  
Geoffrey McQuilkin ..... Executive Director, Operations  
Bartshe Miller ..... Education Director  
Gary Nelson ..... Canoe Tour Supervisor  
Shannon Nelson ..... Events Coordinator  
Brett Pyle ..... Membership Coordinator  
Greg Reis ..... Information Specialist  
Craig Roecker ..... Regional Outreach Coordinator  
Carrie Simmons ..... Outdoor Experiences Coordinator  
Frances Spivy-Weber ..... Executive Director, Policy  
Laura Walker ..... Bookstore Manager  
Anna Scofield, Nick & Ryan Carle ..... Store Assistants  
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Jennifer Marshall, Erin Massarelli,  
Allison Taylor, Moss Templeton ..... Interns  
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One morning early this summer I was lucky enough to join the Point Reyes Bird Observatory bird banders conducting their research for the Eastern Sierra Riparian Songbird Conservation project out on Lee Vining Creek. Before the sun poked over the horizon they were

moving deftly and quietly amongst the aspens along the creek setting up mist nets, catching birds, and quickly and carefully taking data before setting them free. Their knowledge of the birds and their caring dedication was as wonderful to see as the birds themselves.

Summer is simply amazing around here and the stunning sunsets, flocks of birds, hillsides covered in flowers, the dark night sky, and the glassy lake let you know it. Equally amazing are the people that are drawn to the basin. You'll see our staff photo on page 22 is full of people, and in this issue we've tried to give you a behind the scenes picture of how we work together each day to accomplish the Committee's restoration, protection, and education goals.

While you're at it check out what's cooking on the policy front on pages 8-10. And if you're thinking about making a visit, check out the late summer and fall seminars on pages 19-21. And if you can't visit this year then make sure to look at the gift section on pages 14-15 or logon to the Members' Section at [www.monolake.org](http://www.monolake.org) and see the new things in store for you there.

As always, thank you for reading the Newsletter and for your dedicated support—we couldn't be here without you. Come in and say hello if you're in the area, and have a great summer!

—Arya Degenhardt



Photo by Arya Degenhardt

Heidi Kirk of PRBO with a Yellow Warbler.

## 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](http://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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## A day at the Mono Lake Committee

# Working on behalf of Mono Lake

*If you've visited the Committee in Lee Vining or staff in Los Angeles you may have wondered what goes on "behind the scenes" in the Committee's two California offices. What are the Committee's goals? How does the Committee pursue its protection, restoration, and education mission? What is a day like, working on behalf of Mono Lake?*

*Here are the activities of Wednesday, June 20, 2001. Not every detail could fit in this article, but the Committee is ever busy and the pages that follow reveal the Committee's goals, how we achieve our mission, and the diverse activities of the staff. Put it all together and you have what it takes to make sure that Mono Lake remains protected forever.*

**7:00** Down in Los Angeles, Frances Spivy-Weber, Executive Director of Policy, prepares for a day of water policy meetings. Fran makes sure that future urban water needs won't threaten Mono Lake, and her activities ensure strong political support among leaders and decision makers around the state. Before leaving she finalizes an article for this newsletter (see page 11) and drafts letters to Committee Defense Trust and Guardian members.

**7:10** Up in Lee Vining, Geoff McQuilkin, Executive Director of Operations, plans to meet with staff and reviews the office schedule. Geoff makes sure that the Mono Basin ecosystem has long-term protection by ensuring that the Committee has effective Mono Lake policy, environmental education, and public communication programs.

Lee Vining staff members arrive at the Committee building. The 13 year-round staff and the eight seasonal staff gather in the slideshow room for the weekly staff meeting.



**8:00** It's the first staff meeting with the full summer staff so Office Director Jeff Darlington begins the meeting with a round of introductions. Jeff is responsible for staff logistics, Committee facilities, and office operations ensuring that staff can work smoothly together towards program goals.

**8:05** Staff Reports, including: an event plan for Restoration Days, update on activities to eliminate highway widening threats to Mono Lake, report on creek restoration, and progress on establishing an Eastern Sierra Birding Trail.

**8:45** In LA, Fran rides the light rail system downtown to the Metropolitan Water District (MWD) headquarters.

**8:50** Staff meeting adjourns to the front of the Committee building to take the 2001 staff photo, an annual tradition since David and Sally Gaines founded the Committee nearly 25 years ago.



**9:00** Information Center and Bookstore opens in Lee Vining—providing Mono Lake information, educational exhibits, books, and gifts to travelers and Mono Lake Committee members.



**9:08** Information Specialist Greg Reis returns to his computer and transfers updated web pages to the Mono Lake website server. Greg tracks the scientific research and restoration data being gathered at the lake enabling us to speak authoritatively on protection and restoration issues. He combines this skill with computer expertise to manage the entire Mono Lake website, reaching a diverse group of over 900 visitors per day.

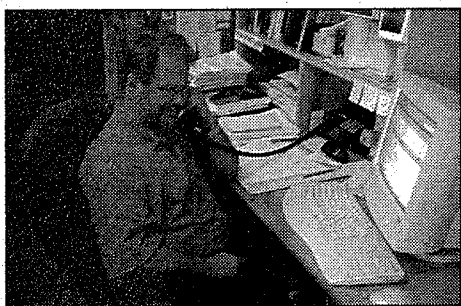
**9:10** In LA, Development Director Shelly Backlar calls Fran to discuss the High Sierra Fall Century cycling event. Shelly is responsible for building a financial base that supports the Committee's programs by developing foundation and corporate support and planning fundraising events.

**9:10** Weather report: Committee staff make the official daily Lee Vining station observation and report to the Weather Service. Additionally, automated weather sensors update the Mono Lake website every ten minutes.

**9:12** Craig Roecker, Mono County Outreach Coordinator, starts a round of phone calls to follow up on the relicted lands issue (see page 8). As

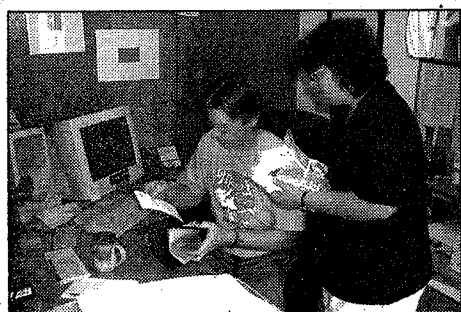


part of the policy team Craig is responsible for discussing policy positions with regional residents, officials, and communities in order to assure local support for Mono Lake's protection.



**9:14** Phones are ringing: the Committee has voice mail for messages, but staff members share the responsibility of personally answering calls.

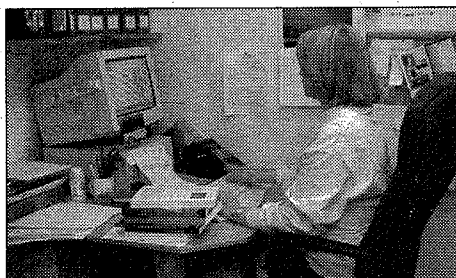
**9:15** Membership Coordinator Brett Pyle prepares for a trip to the bank. Brett is responsible for processing donations, and managing the Committee's database of 15,000+ members. Members are at the heart of the Mono Lake Committee, providing the public voice for protecting Mono Lake and the financial support to make it happen.



**9:30** After giving Brett material for the bank deposit, Bookkeeper Donnette Huselton moves on to accounts payable. Donnette is responsible for the Committee's bookkeeping and she produces the reports and analysis that keep the organization on budget and in the black.

**9:20** Bookstore Manager Laura Walker checks newly arrived sustainable-

living titles and places orders. Working part-time, Laura carefully picks books of regional and environmental interest to create a unique and up to date bookstore selection.



**9:31** Brett departs for the bank in Mammoth and takes the office cardboard and glass recycling as well.

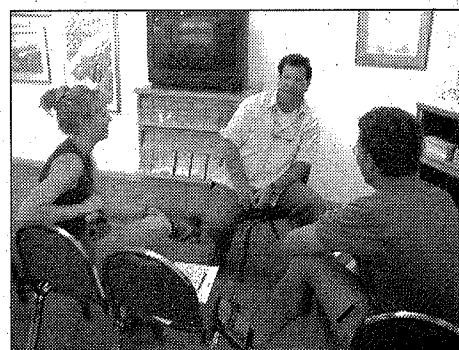
**9:32** Shannon Nelson, Events Coordinator, works on arrangements with sponsors for the High Sierra Fall Century. Shannon works part-time and is responsible for organizing the Century and the Committee's annual Free Drawing. These events recruit new members, raise funds, and connect people to Mono Lake through personal experiences.

**9:35** Education Director Bartshe Miller checks on Field Seminar sign-ups. Bartshe is responsible for the education programs including interpretive tours, field seminars, educational exhibits and materials, environmental education with school groups, and the Outdoor Experiences program. These programs connect people with the lake and create advocates for its protection.

**9:36** Visitors in the Information Center watch the recently updated Mono Lake Story slideshow. Starting Friday summer store hours run from 9AM to 10PM daily.

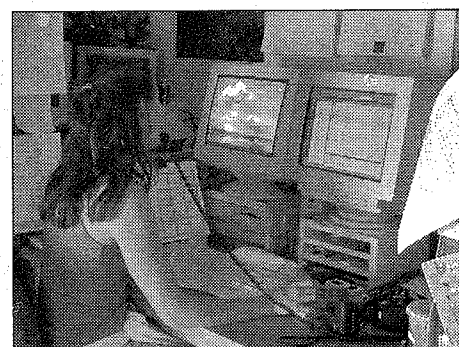
**9:39** Outdoor Experiences Coordinators Carrie Simmons and Santiago Escruceria meet with Bartshe to plan a five-day schedule of activities for the Mothers of East Los Angeles community group. Bringing community groups from Los Angeles to Mono

Lake, the Outdoor Experiences program combines watershed education and muscle-powered recreation to build understanding and appreciation for Mono Lake and the Los Angeles watershed.



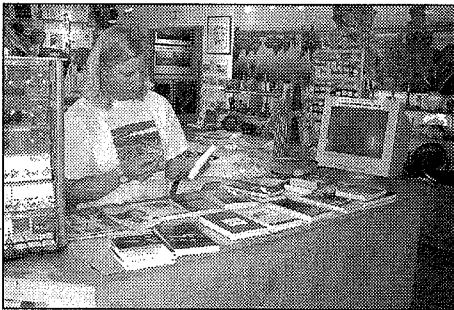
**9:42** Geoff reviews financial reports.

**9:48** Communications Director Arya Degenhardt contacts 2002 Mono Lake Calendar essayist Sandra Postel. Arya is responsible for producing the Committee's publications, including the quarterly newsletter, and assuring quality in all Committee materials. This ensures that members and people who care about Mono Lake can connect with the ongoing work of staff on the lake's behalf.



**9:50** Out in the Bookstore, Canoe Coordinator Kirsten Brady lends a hand in receiving over 500 new books. The Committee's weekend summer canoe tours educate visitors about the unique ecosystem and the legendary water history of Mono Lake.





**10:00** Greg and the summer interns head out for the day's intern training hike on the Warren Bench to discuss Eastern Sierra environmental issues. Seasonal staff play an important role at the Committee by working with the public and assisting staff during the busy summer months.

**10:00** In Los Angeles, the California Department of Water Resources meeting begins at MWD on the State Water Plan. Fran joins 39 other designated advisors to consider the need to modify state water plans for the possible impacts of climate change on water supplies and water quality.



**10:15** Geoff and Arya discuss the upcoming redesign of the newsletter and the switch to more environmentally responsible materials.

**10:18** Eastern Sierra Policy Director Heidi Hopkins discusses the status of the relicted lands controversy with Craig. As the leader of the Lee Vining policy team, Heidi is responsible for ensuring that the State Water Resources Control Board water rights and restoration orders are implemented, and she addresses regional policy issues that effect Mono Lake.

**10:20** Ramona Robbins Clark, Retail and Wholesale Operations Manager, arrives for her 11AM to 7PM shift. Ramona oversees the retail and wholesale operations and is responsible for generating revenue in the store while sharing the goals of the Mono Lake Committee with visiting travelers and members.

**10:30** Geoff, Jeff, and Donnette begin a meeting to discuss new accounting software and to go over several follow-up letters from the Committee's CPA (a routine financial review was completed in May).



**10:33** Lisa Cutting, Environmental Resource Coordinator, makes calls in advance of the next collaborative meeting on North Mono Basin water allocation. As part of the policy team Lisa is responsible for pursuing Committee policy objectives with government agencies in order to assure Mono Lake's ecologically valuable resources remain protected.

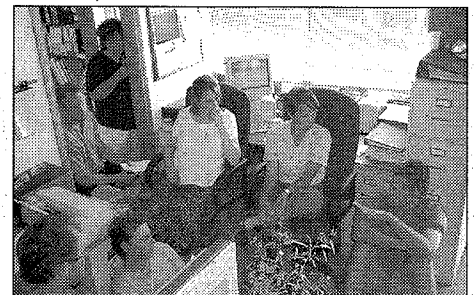
**10:34** Standing behind the front counter in the Information Center, Store Assistant Anna Scofield provides detailed information to visitors saying, "when you help people, the look in their eyes is worth the sore feet!"

**10:45** Photo session: Arya and Santiago photograph items for gift section of newsletter with Santiago modeling the new Obata T-shirt (see page 14).

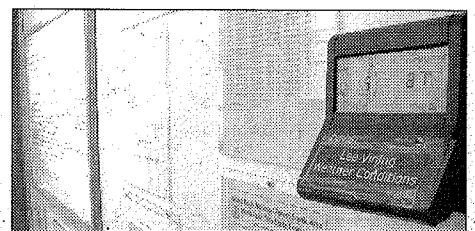
**11:02** Heidi reviews LA Department of Water and Power Aqueduct Reports for Lee Vining Creek flows relevant to a recent sediment problem and contacts consulting hydrologist Peter Vorster.



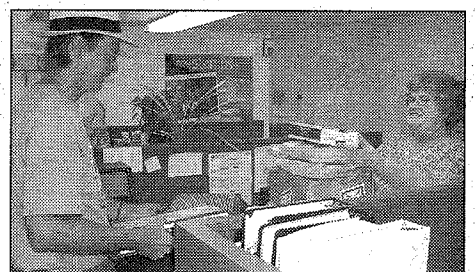
**11:30** Geoff starts the Program Managers meeting, which is for ongoing and long-term topics. Topics this week include: impacts of increasing recreation pressures such as boating, rules for tracking time and expenses, intern projects.



**11:45** Out in the store: the Naturalist Nook displays up-to-date info for visitors on all things natural in the Mono Basin



**12:20** Mail time! Brett takes the day's outgoing mail to Postmaster Joanne and retrieves a bag full of mail from the Committee's post office box.





**12:35** A few hungry staff walk down the street to the Mono Cone for lunch, a tasty and fun summer tradition.

**12:45** Jeff discusses bookstore aesthetics, addresses personnel concerns, and locates storage for a new canoe.

**1:05** Heidi sends out grant report letters on the Eastern Sierra Riparian Songbird Conservation project.

**1:15** The Lee Vining webcam, updating every five minutes, captures images of weather and colorful sunsets—even visiting dedicated webcam watchers—at [www.monolake.org](http://www.monolake.org).

**1:30** Lisa is on the phone making final arrangements for next week's Partners in Flight three-day bird conference being held in the Mono Basin.

**2:00** All six interns and Greg reach the top of Mt. Warren and sight endangered Bighorn Sheep—three ewes and two lambs!

**2:14** Geoff writes a letter to Avian Advocate Committee members.

**2:15** Heidi writes an update on the Rush Creek Return ditch for the Newsletter (see page 9).

**2:20** Organization is key: Jeff distributes the master schedule for the next week.

**2:25** Point Reyes Bird Observatory gull research team returns from 5 days at the gull rookery on Negit Island to check for messages. Biologist Justin Hite poses with a friend in the store.



**2:30** Grant reporting: Jeff and Donnette are reviewing timesheet data for a foundation grant report.

**2:35** Grant reporting II: Shannon

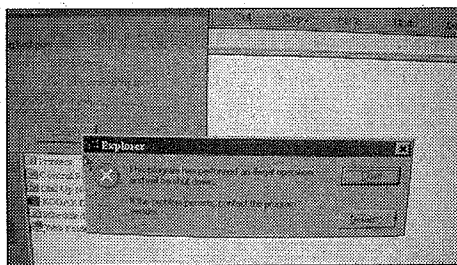
finishes incomplete timesheets.

**2:50** Shelly works on the promotion plan for Restoration Days.

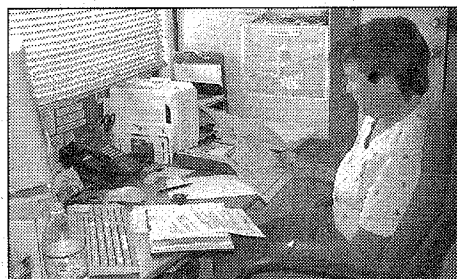
**3:10** Environmental education: Bartshe makes notes on the July school group schedule.

**3:30** Donnette files paid invoices, researches staff expense questions, and backs-up computer files.

**3:38** Newsletter layout: Arya coaxes her computer into downloading digital photos while running Photoshop.



**3:45** Lisa reviews new highway widening documents. Caltrans, so far, has failed to incorporate extensive environmental and community concerns into a new Mono Lake project alternative (see page 9).



**4:03** Working with members: Brett batches the day's donations together, updates mailing information, and answers member email.

**4:11** New ideas: Bartshe, Geoff, Jeff, and Arya get together to discuss future plans for the education program.

**4:23** Canoe staff break: Kirsten and Gary Nelson, Canoe Tour Supervisor, take a moment to tune paddles for the camera. Gary helped launch the Committee's educational canoe tours

over a decade ago and makes them memorable and fun every summer.



**4:40** Store shipments: Ramona receives and displays more of the day's incoming merchandise.

**6:00** South Tufa Tour time: the season's first tour is scheduled for Friday.

**6:30** Jeff notices a light on in attic and adds to California energy savings by turning it off!

**6:35** Fran arrives at a reception for the California Biodiversity Council and is joined by Board member Martha Davis.

**7:00** Information Center and Bookstore closes. Ramona records 302 visitors and wraps things up for the day.

**7:30** Craig arrives in Mammoth for an Eastern Sierra Conservancy meeting that runs to 10PM.

**7:45** Fran is *en route* to a Los Angeles and Orange County Sierra Club Executive Committee meeting to speak in opposition to a proposed resolution that would delay the start-up of the East Valley Water Recycling Plant, which is replacing water supplies from Mono Lake. The resolution is voted down.

**8:08** Sally Gaines and Geoff talk on the phone about her monthly letter to the Guardians of the Lake members and recent policy happenings.

*The day is complete at the Mono Lake Committee, but the work is far from over. It takes the ongoing presence of staff, members, and effective programs to be sure that Mono Lake remains protected.*



## From the field

notes from the *Riparian Songbird Conservation Project* by **Sacha Heath**

**O**n June 18 and June 25, 2001, a biologist with the Point Reyes Bird Observatory (PRBO)'s Eastern Sierra Riparian Songbird Conservation project located two Willow Flycatcher nests on lower Rush Creek.

These observations are exciting because there have been very few detections of possibly breeding Willow Flycatchers in the Rush Creek vicinity of the Mono Basin over the last 30 years, although in the early part of the 20th century they were considered common. Joseph Grinnell and Tracy Storer reported a Willow Flycatcher occurrence in the vicinity of Mono Lake in the 1920s.

Grinnell and Joseph Dixon's 1916-1934avian assessments included the detection and collection of males in mid-May and mid-June between Rush Creek's Silver and Grant Lakes and along Mono Lake's western and northern shores. In 1985, David Gaines and Ilene Mandelbaum



Photo by Will Richardson

*A Willow Flycatcher captured by PRBO in 2000.*

reported (personal communications in Jones and Stokes 1991) that "Willow Flycatchers may have been extirpated as a breeding species on Lower Rush Creek." Jones and Stokes' 1991 efforts for the Mono Basin Environmental Impact Report uncovered one singing male on upper Parker Creek, but it was not present in subsequent surveys on that creek, nor were Willow Flycatchers detected on any of the Rush Creek surveys. PRBO began point counting on lower and upper Rush

Creek in 1998 and 1999, though no Willow Flycatchers were detected in these years. In 2000 our efforts on Rush Creek were more intensive—a singing male was detected on point counts and nest searchers observed lone singing territorial males, but no females or nests were found.

The recent breeding confirmation of this State Endangered Species—in addition to the abundance of breeding Yellow Warblers, Song Sparrows, and a handful of Black-headed Grosbeaks and cavity nesters—may be an exciting testament to the recovery of lower Rush Creek as breeding songbird habitat! PRBO will be following these nests closely (in addition to those of other riparian songbird species breeding on Rush, Lee Vining, Mill and Wilson Creeks) to determine their success at producing young within these recovering riparian systems. *SH*

## Volunteers help rid Rush Creek of tamarisk

**O**n May 19, a crew of three Mono Lake Committee staff and ten local volunteers scoured the Rush Creek delta in a hunt for tamarisk seedlings. The good news is that the crew had to search hard to find seedlings—thanks to prior efforts to eliminate this invasive, non-native plant from Rush Creek. But there's still more tamarisk in the area. The Committee will host a second tamarisk-removal day on Sunday, Sept. 2, during Restoration Days.

The Mono Lake Committee thanks the volunteers for their help as well as the LA Department of Water and Power for donating a weed wrench for use in tamarisk-removal efforts in the Mono Basin. This handy tool was needed to uproot the largest of the tamarisk trees found on Rush Creek that day (see photo at right).

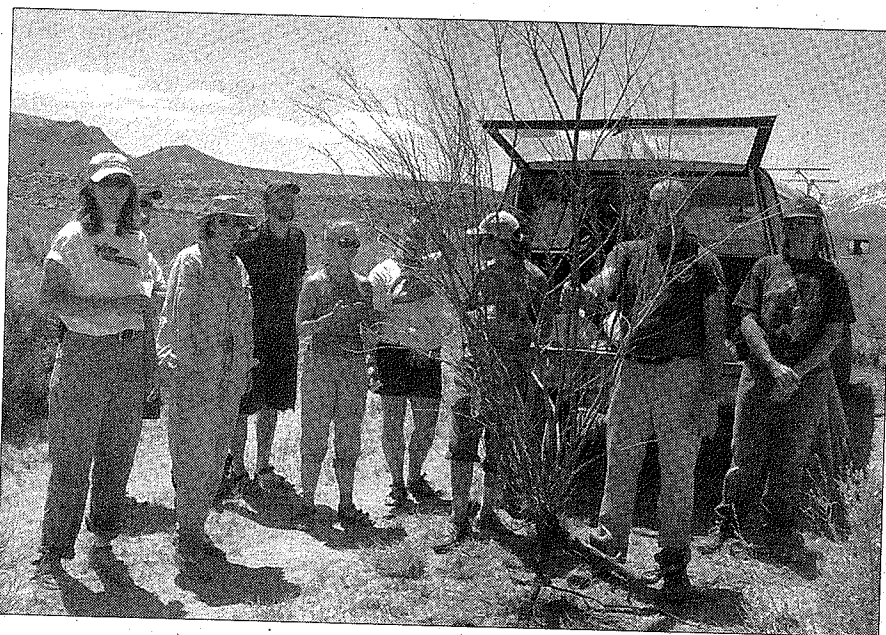


Photo by Heidi Hopkins



# Mono County Board acts to rescind R00-12

by Craig Roecker

**T**he Mono County Board of Supervisors took decisive action in May to rescind resolution R00-12 after more than a year on the books. In a 4-1 vote, the Board eliminated the former resolution that contained language clearly, though perhaps inadvertently, calling for the elimination of the land base of the Mono Lake Tufa State Reserve, a key environmental protection at Mono Lake.


Public concern over the impacts of R00-12—and over 2,300 letters from members of the Mono Lake Committee—raised awareness of the unintended consequences of the resolution. County Supervisors spent extensive time reviewing the concerns of all parties and then laid out a position that underscored

that the Board cannot determine ownership of exposed lakebed. The Committee applauds the Board for taking such reasoned and decisive action.

As previously reported, R00-12 was designed to encourage local property owners and the state to seek an administrative solution to a land use dispute on these lands (see Spring, Summer, and Fall 2000 *Newsletters*). That dispute is still unresolved. At the core of this controversy are the seemingly opposing desires of a few local property owners to expand their commercial ventures and of the State Reserve's mandate to protect the reserve in "a state of undisturbed integrity." The Committee is now focusing attention on the need to find a way to protect the lake, assure the integrity of the Reserve, and

work with property owners toward collaborative solutions.

At the May meeting, the usefulness of a specific management plan for the State Reserve was also discussed. The State Reserve operates under clear guidance from the legislature, stating that the purpose of a reserve is "to preserve its native ecological associations, unique faunal or floral characteristics, geological features, and scenic qualities in a condition of undisturbed integrity."

Although the legislature exempted the State Reserve from creating a more detailed management plan (due to the lack of permanent structures in the reserve), increasing recreation and commercial pressures at the lake suggest that such a plan could be important in the future. 

## Motor boating at Mono?

**A**fter decades of abuse, the second largest lake in California is recovering," reported KQED's California Report in June. "However," it continued, "a local business' proposal to bring back motorboats has some questioning whether the lake is healthy enough to support tourism again."

What proposal? To do what with motorboats? Is this really compatible with the values Mono Lake has been protected for?

These are all questions the Mono Lake Committee has been asking as various, yet-to-be-clarified proposals have been put forth this year for increased commercial activity at the lake. Proposals have varied from picnic tables and dance floors on state land, to 150-foot docks berthing 50 non-motorized boats, to a single tour boat with a mooring, to 10 motorized boats with various uses.

The Committee sees five critical concerns raised by these proposals, and


each will need to be addressed:

- 1) Significant ecological impacts of new activities on birds and the lake ecosystem
- 2) Cumulative impacts of multiple, small-size operations
- 3) Loss of solitude, scenic views, and other qualities that make up today's unique Mono Lake experience
- 4) Departure from the long-standing recreation policy of focusing visitor use at South Tufa and the USFS Visitor Center, leaving the rest of the basin open for individual exploration
- 5) Boating safety, given Mono's dangerous winds and record of fatalities

No clear proposal is on the table at this time. When such a proposal is made, it will be up to the State Reserve to consider issuing the necessary permits and be sure the California Environmental Quality Act is adequately followed. It is important that a period of public comment be included.

Some local residents fear that such

proposals could lead to more limitations on recreation, including the minimal boating that already occurs on the lake. The KQED report underscores the dilemma: present day boating is modest enough to require no special oversight and raise no special concerns, yet proposals to change the future by commercially capitalizing on boating necessarily bring with them increased oversight, regulation, and public review.

KQED did miss one point: Mono Lake sustains tourism quite well today, with 250,000 visitors annually, contributing \$4 million to the local economy. Current activities such as photography, hiking, and birding are highly popular and compatible with the ecological and scenic protections in place at Mono Lake. Motor boating, it's worth noting, is easily available on most other Mono County lakes. The question that really must be asked is: are these newly proposed activities appropriate and sustainable at Mono Lake? 



# Policy Notes

## Caltrans Mono Lake Widening Project update

In June, the Mono Lake Committee submitted 1,885 member letters as environmental scoping comments to Caltrans on the Mono Lake Highway Widening Project north of Lee Vining. These member letters were in addition to formal comments submitted to Caltrans from the Mono Lake Committee.

This proposed highway project would widen shoulders to eight feet, add scenic pull outs, and address rock fall problems. It continues to generate concern from both visitors and residents. At the time this newsletter went to press, a public open house was scheduled for the end of June. At this meeting Caltrans will present the most current project information. It is hoped that Caltrans will have incorporated all environmental public scoping comments into the range of project alternatives.

The Committee's formal scoping comments outlined impacts that should be addressed in the environmental review process. Specific impacts include damage to wetland and riparian areas; impaired wildlife movement, especially deer; loss of upland habitat associated with cut slopes; degradation of the critical visual resources of the Mono Basin; and various social and economic impacts including an increased speed limit.

Because this project is funded in part by federal dollars and is proposed to take place in a National Forest Scenic Area and California State Reserve, federal transportation regulations will come into play. This is good news in that the regulations call for significant increase in amount of planning that should occur in order to minimize impacts to this sensitive area.

In the meantime, the Committee continues to work with Caltrans, Mono County staff, and agency representatives

in pushing for a project that balances safety needs while maintaining the visual and ecological integrity of Mono Lake.

A special thanks to everyone who has taken the time to return appeal letters, emailed their thoughts, stopped by the store to chat, and attended Caltrans meetings. Your involvement continues to be critical to this issue.

## Rush Creek return ditch update

On May 1, at the annual spring meeting on restoration, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (DWP) announced that it had reached agreement with the California Department of Fish & Game (DFG) on how to increase the capacity of the Rush Creek return ditch. This was welcome news, if long overdue. For nearly two years, DWP and DFG have been in a stalemate over how to interpret and implement the State Water Board's order that the Rush Creek return ditch be upgraded without "long-term loss of habitat." Meanwhile, Rush Creek has been languishing without high spring flows.

The limited capacity of the return ditch, which is used by DWP to carry water around Grant Lake dam to maintain flows in Rush Creek, has been a frustrating stumbling block to providing restoration flows to Rush Creek as ordered by the State Water Board in 1994. In fact, in five of the last seven years since the 1994 Water Board decision, DWP has been unable to deliver required restoration flows to Rush Creek.

According to DWP and DFG, both parties had to compromise in order to reach agreement. DWP agreed to leave intact a portion of the ditch that DFG felt contained good fish habitat; DFG agreed to limit future assessment of habitat recovery to a few key parameters: extent of willows and instream vegetation, extent of boulders to provide roughness, and channel depth. DFG dropped its earlier requirement that extent of stream surface area be a parameter. Plans for the work should be submitted for approval to the State Water Board this summer, and work is expected to commence this fall.

Thanks go to Committee members who responded to the spring mailing on this issue. During the last two years, the Committee has played the role of "squeaky wheel," regularly calling both DWP and DFG to push them to settle their differences and raising the issue annually with the State Water Board. While a more forceful approach might have resulted in a ditch being in place sooner, it likely could have led to future disagreements between DWP and DFG over how to interpret restoration progress. Due to the extra effort this year, restoration can now move forward with the return ditch issue behind us. 🐾



Photo by Arya Degenhardt

Environmental Resource Coordinator Lisa Cutting handing over the box of 1,885 Caltrans highway widening comment letters to UPS.



# Water Policy Notes

## California Water Plan—Update 2003

Every five years, the State of California updates its strategic plan for meeting California's future water needs. In the past the Mono Lake Committee and many others have criticized the Department of Water Resources for their seeming unwillingness to incorporate conservation and other water use efficiency measures into their assessments and projections. Under the Davis Administration, however, the plan development has changed significantly. The Plan's advisory committee includes Frances Spivy-Weber, Mono Lake Committee Executive Director for Policy, and Martha Davis, Mono Lake Committee Board Member. The advisory committee is moving steadily toward the goal of providing a true assessment of all of California's water assets and liabilities and offering regions and local planners a portfolio of options to use in local planning decisions. In June, the Advisory Committee considered the potential effect of climate change on California's water resources.

## CalFed Bay-Delta update

The California/Federal (CalFed) San Francisco Bay/Sacramento- San Joaquin Delta (Bay-Delta) estuary program became official in late August 2000. Since then, the CalFed Bay-Delta program staff have been struggling to find funding to carry out the ambitious program to protect and restore the Bay-Delta, while also providing a high quality water supply for over 22 million Californians statewide. In late May, two Federal bills were introduced for funding—HR 1985, Western Water Security Act, from Congressman Ken Calvert (R, CA), and S 976, The Enhancement of California Ecosystems and Water Act, authored by Senator Dianne Feinstein (D, CA). Congressman Calvert's bill substantially changes the CalFed program to emphasize benefits to some Central Valley water users. It also streamlines the project approval process, making it harder for Congress to amend the project proposals. Senator Feinstein's bill, too, goes beyond CalFed, but not as far. The Governor is

working with the California Legislature to keep the state's contribution to CalFed funding on track. To keep up with the fast-paced legislative actions affecting CalFed, check [www.monolake.org](http://www.monolake.org) or contact Fran ([frances@monolake.org](mailto:frances@monolake.org)) at (310) 316-0041.

## HR 1479 is back


Congressman Knollenberg (D, MI)'s bill to rescind Federal water efficiency standards for household plumbing was reintroduced in the new Congress as HR 1479. The main reason cited for the repeal is the perceived lack of effectiveness of water-efficient toilets. However, unlike the first generation of these toilets, contemporary models do work well. Equally important, these standards are saving water. For Californians, the water savings means critical energy savings as well. Toilets and showers represent over 40% of the water used in the average household. For information on who in California supports the bill, check [www.monolake.org](http://www.monolake.org) or contact Fran ([frances@monolake.org](mailto:frances@monolake.org)) at (310) 316-0041. 



Photo by Arya Degenhardt



# Naturalist notes

## A Mono Basin chronicle

**March:** Blue Grouse heard hooting in Lee Vining Canyon ... an American Tree Sparrow at DeChambeau ponds ... a Coopers Hawk seen above the Parker bench ... a Sharp-shinned Hawk spotted chasing robins ... flocks of Yellow-headed Blackbirds make an early and welcome appearance in their bright regalia ... a sunny early morning at County Park reveals Ruby Crowned Kinglets, Violet-green Swallows, an American Kestrel, Mountain Bluebird, Meadowlark, Great Horned Owl, and more ... the California Gulls are trickling in ... and a frighteningly early first mosquito sighting of the season here in town.

**April:** Committee staff caught racing around town after a Great-tailed Grackle on a windy afternoon ... 50 American Avocets in breeding plumage, a Black-necked Stilt, Cinnamon Teal, Mallards, Canada Geese, two American Kestrels hunting in the saltgrass, and at least 500 Least Sandpipers out by Black Point ... Eared Grebes riding the remarkably green waves on the lake ... 20 Turkey Vultures in one Jeffrey Pine all with their wings open and facing the lake ... and there's a Hairy Woodpecker that seems to have taken a liking to the telephone poles in town.

**May:** A visiting college group spots the Osprey who have returned to their nest in the tufa grove as well as a Golden Eagle above Panum crater ... researchers down on Mill Creek are visited by a Summer Tanager for a few days ... thunderstorms grace the basin with low dark clouds and flashes of lightning ... no-see-ums are out and about amongst the sagebrush and the blooming desert peach ... mule ears and arrow-leaved balsamroot paint the hills yellow ... lupine contributes purple to the array of colors ... controlled burns behind the Mono Craters make them look like they're erupting from in town ... a mellow Rubber Boa seen up Lee Vining Canyon ... Nighthawks with their distinctive flight patterns grace the sagebrush flats on the north shore ... multiple excited sightings of a female Rose-breasted Grosbeak range from Mono City to County Park and into Lee Vining ... a Yellow-throated Vireo was spotted on Lee Vining Creek ... arrow-leaved balsamroot on the Walker Creek moraine is notably abundant ... completely white lupine found at the base of Williams Butte ... lupine and Indian paintbrush forests decorate the Lee Vining Creek delta while Jeffrey Pine and Lodgepole saplings planted in recent years seem to be growing and surviving quite well.

**June:** Cooler temperatures bring spectacular lenticular cloud displays with sunsets highlighting the sierra wave ... wind along the lake kicks up so much pollen off of the pinyon and juniper trees that clouds of yellow dust swirl like dust storms ... a Bald Eagle discovered the gull colony, but was chased off by a flock of protective parents ... Wilson's Phalaropes swooping overhead on the south shore suggest that they're nesting ... a Wood Duck spotted at County Park ... flocks of 1000s of phalaropes on the lake ... swarms of Painted Lady butterflies around willows on the south shore ... American Avocets caught performing mating behavior near south shore lagoons ... some California Gulls reported to be eating cicadas, and their humming buzz is heard through the sagebrush ... windy days mean dust storms rise off of Paoha and the east shore ... a Hooded Warbler was spotted below the Lundy Lake spillway ... a Bay-breasted

Warbler and an Ovenbird were seen on upper Mill Creek ... and very hot days lead into thunderstorms that fill the skies with dark clouds, lightning bolts, and beautiful sunsets.



Artwork by Keith Hansen



# Things to do in the Mono Basin

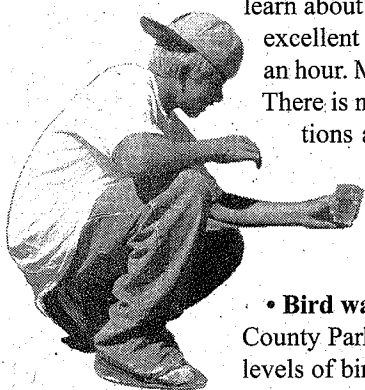
## Visitor Centers

- **The Mono Lake Committee Information Center and Bookstore**, located in the heart of Lee Vining, offers a free video, educational exhibits, a photography exhibit, and activity schedules. The bookstore offers an excellent selection of regional books, maps, T-shirts, posters, local crafts, and specialty gifts. The Committee also houses the Lee Vining Chamber of Commerce with information on lodging, dining, and recreation opportunities as well as weather and road conditions. Come on by and we'll help you make the most of your visit! The Mono Lake Committee is open from 9AM–10PM daily during the summer, or call (760) 647-6595 for more information.
- **The Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area Visitor Center**, located just north of town, features an excellent view of Mono Lake, interpretive displays, and natural history trails. A dramatic Mono Lake film shows regularly in their theater, and during the summer rangers give patio presentations daily. Contact the Visitor Center at (760) 873-2408 for hours of operation and special programs.
- **The Mono Basin Historical Society Museum**, located in Lee Vining at Guss Hess Park, houses a fascinating collection of materials from the Mono Basin's past. See Native American artifacts, gold mining implements, and even the legendary upside-down house! Contact the museum at (760) 647-6461 for hours of operation.

## Activities

Hiking, photography, swimming, canoeing, kayaking, bird-watching, biking, fishing, and exploring are all great activities in the Mono Basin. Not sure where to start? Just stop by the Mono Lake Committee and our knowledgeable staff can help!

- **South Tufa Tours** take place three times a day during the summer. Join a naturalist on a walking tour at the South Tufa area to learn about the ecology, geology, and natural and human history of the Mono Basin. The walking tours are excellent introduction to Mono Lake. The walk is approximately 1 mile long on easy terrain and lasts about an hour. Meet at the South Tufa parking lot at 10:00AM, 1:00PM, and 6:00PM daily during the summer months. There is no charge for the walk, but a \$3 per person fee is required to enter the South Tufa area. No reservations are necessary.



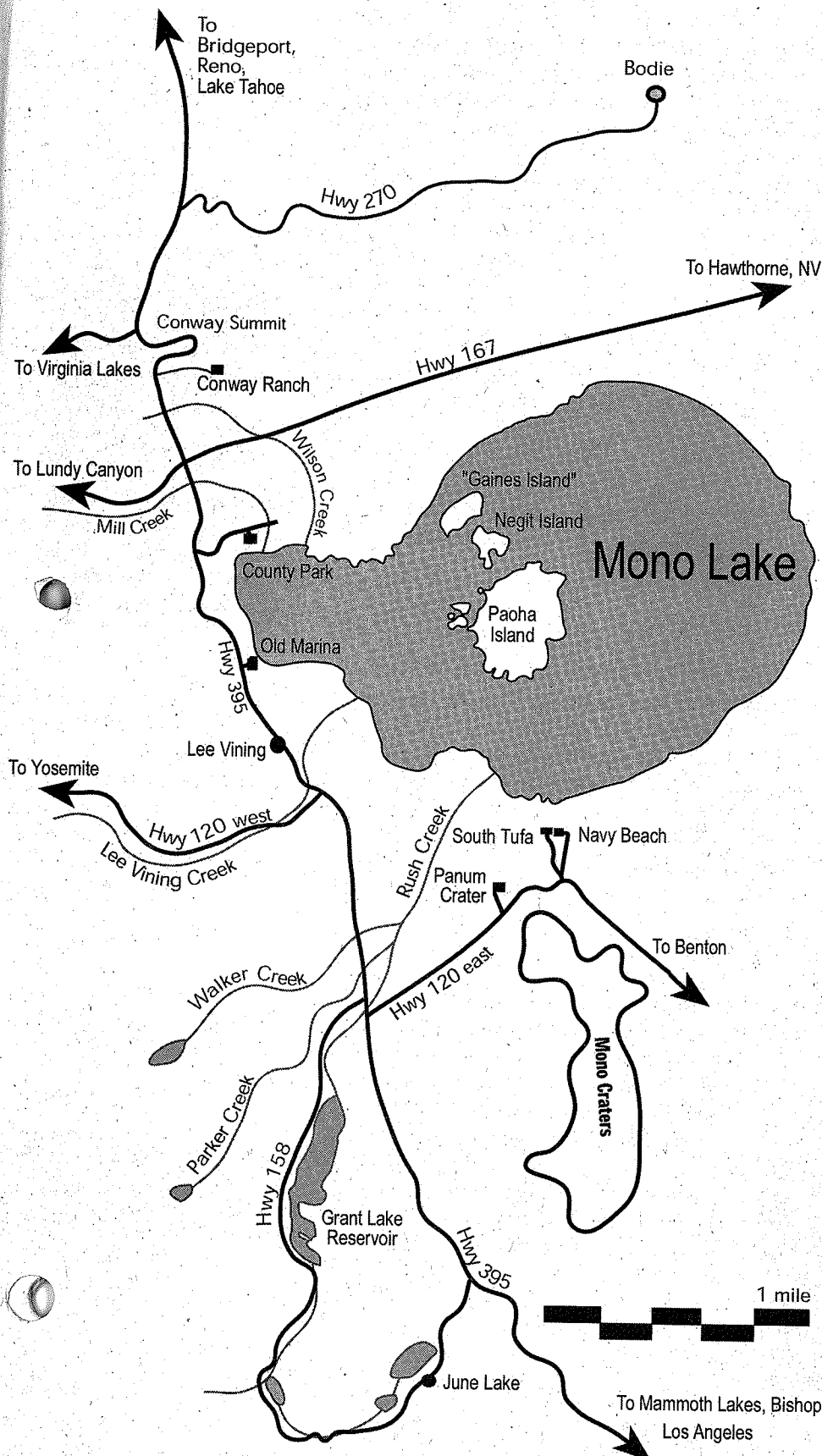
- **Canoe Tours** depart every Saturday and Sunday morning during the summer months at 8:00, 9:30, and 11:00AM, and last for about one hour. \$17 for adults, \$7 for children. Reservations are required; call (760) 647-6595.
- **Bird walks** take place Fridays and Sundays at 8:00AM throughout the summer. Meet at the Mono Lake County Park with binoculars, a bird book, hat, and sunscreen. Tours last 1½–2 hours and are open to all levels of birders. Committee staff can also suggest good birding areas around the basin so come in, check out our recent sightings board, and find out good spots to go during any season!

## Travel Resources

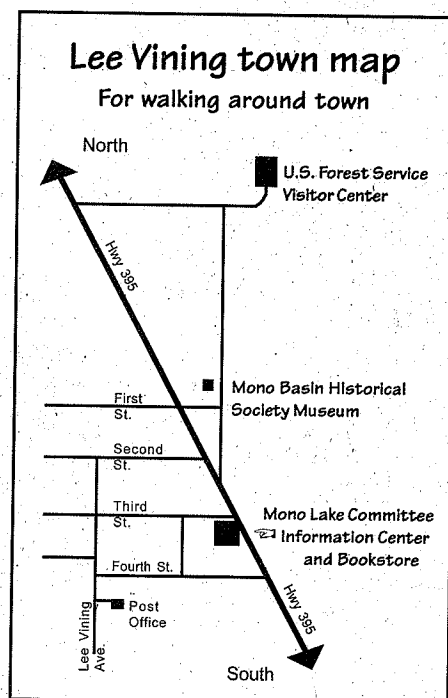
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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| • Mono Lake Committee Information Center<br>(760) 647-6595 <a href="http://www.monolake.org">www.monolake.org</a>                                     | • Yosemite National Park <a href="http://www.nps.gov/yose">www.nps.gov/yose</a><br>Information by phone (209) 372-0200 |
| • Lee Vining Chamber of Commerce<br>(760) 647-6629 <a href="http://www.leevining.com">www.leevining.com</a>                                           | Campground Reservations (800) 436-7275                                                                                 |
| • U.S. Forest Service Scenic Area Visitor Center<br>(760) 873-2408 <a href="http://www.r5.fs.fed.us/inyo/vvc/mono">www.r5.fs.fed.us/inyo/vvc/mono</a> | Hotel and Motel Reservations (559) 252-4848                                                                            |
| • Mono Lake Tufa State Reserve<br>(760) 647-6331 <a href="http://www.cal-parks.ca.gov">www.cal-parks.ca.gov</a>                                       | Wilderness Permit Reservations (209) 372-0740                                                                          |
| • Bodie State Historic Park (760) 647-6445                                                                                                            | • Devil's Postpile (760) 934-2289                                                                                      |
| • Mammoth Lakes Visitor Center (760) 924-5500                                                                                                         | • White Mountain Ranger District–Bishop (760) 873-2500                                                                 |
| • June Lake Chamber of Commerce (760) 648-7584                                                                                                        | • Lone Pine Interagency Visitor Center (760) 876-6222                                                                  |
| • Bridgeport Chamber of Commerce (760) 932-7500                                                                                                       | • Death Valley Reservations (760) 786-2345                                                                             |
| • Inyo National Forest Wilderness Permits<br>(760) 873-2408 <a href="http://www.r5.pswfs.gov/inyo/index.htm">www.r5.pswfs.gov/inyo/index.htm</a>      | • Bridgeport Ranger Station–Toiyabe National Forest<br>(760) 932-7070                                                  |
|                                                                                                                                                       | • California Road Conditions (800) 427-7623                                                                            |
|                                                                                                                                                       | • for more internet links in the Eastern Sierra see<br><a href="http://www.monolake.org">www.monolake.org</a>          |



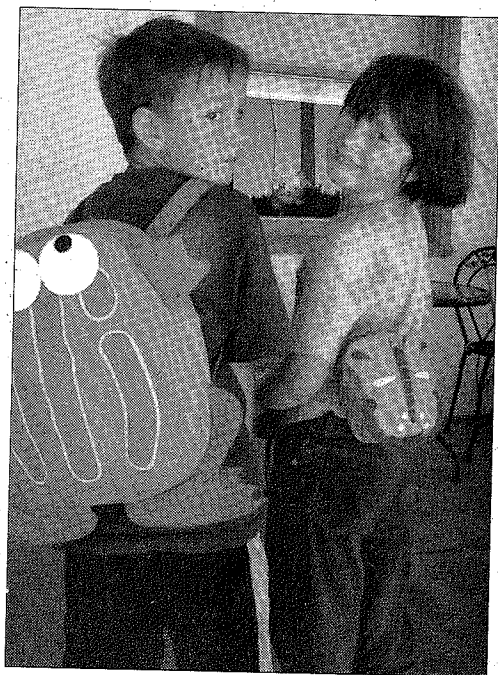
# Mono Lake and vicinity map



How far is it?		
Distance from Lee Vining to:		
South Tufa .....	11mi	18km
Yosemite Park entrance .....	13	21
Tuolumne Meadows .....	21	34
Mammoth Lakes .....	27	44
Bodie .....	32	52
Bishop .....	66	106
Yosemite Valley .....	77	124
Lake Tahoe .....	110	177
Reno .....	140	225
Death Valley .....	177	285
San Francisco (via 120) .....	250	402
Los Angeles .....	303	488
Las Vegas .....	340	547







## KIDS GEAR

Shane and Natasha took time out of their busy summer day to model these fun packs. The backpacks and waist packs are perfect for school and short day hikes. With one main compartment, waist cinch, and shoulder straps these colorful packs will put a smile on any kids face! Both backpacks and waist packs are available in frog, butterfly, bee, and turtle designs.

*Backpack, specify species, measures 14" x 12 1/2" with a roomy zippered compartment: \$19.95 (#3510)*

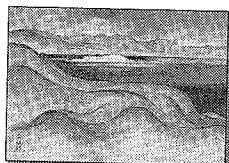
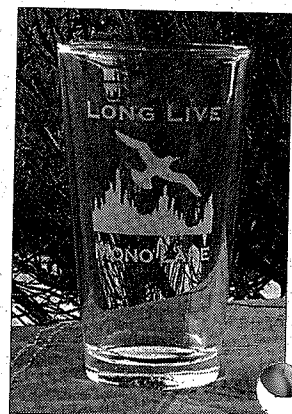
*Waist pack, specify species, measures 7" x 5 1/2" with a small zippered compartment: \$9.95 (#3701)*

## LONG LIVE MONO LAKE PINT GLASS

Toast to the rise of the lake with this 16-ounce pint glass. Satin etched with 'Long Live Mono

Lake' this pint glass is great for ice tea or your favorite beverage!

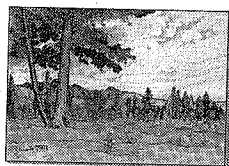
*Pint glass \$5.95 each, set of 4 for \$20.00 (#3925)*



Along Mono Lake, 1927



Before the Rain, 1930



Morning at Mono Lake, 1930



Lee Vining Creek Trail, 1927

## EIGHT NOTECARD SET BY CHIURA OBATA

A collection of four images from original artwork. In 1927 Chiura Obata spent most of the summer in the High Sierra and at Mono Lake, documenting his trip with a series of watercolors and woodblock prints. His work gained him worldwide recognition as an exhibitor, instructor, and lecturer. Now you can enjoy the art of Obata through these notecard reproductions. Each card has an inspiring quote on its reverse. Cards measure 5"x7" and are printed on heavy-stock recycled paper with vegetable based inks.

*Obata notecard set, 8 cards with envelopes: \$14.95 (#3442)*

## ORGANIC COTTON OBATA T-SHIRT

Outdoor Experiences Coordinator Santiago Escruceria points towards Lee Vining creek trail in our newest Obata T-shirt. The Lee Vining Creek Trail design (see detail above) is printed on a 5.8 ounce organic cotton shirt by Patagonia. Inks are water based for comfort and breathability. Sizes run generous, and shirts wash and wear like they've been ironed! Patagonia is a longtime supporter of the Committee.

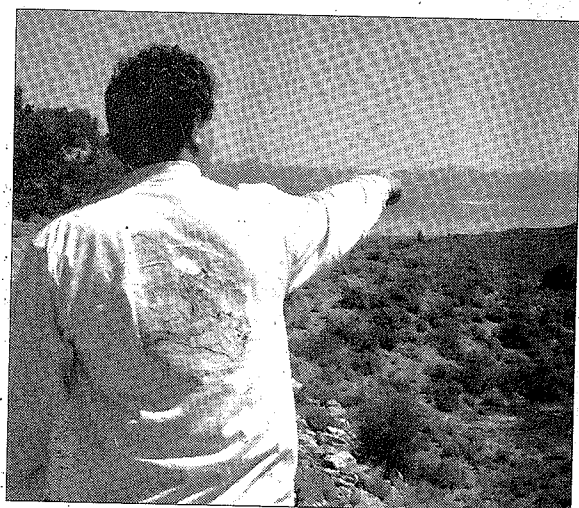
*Lee Vining Creek Trail long sleeve t-shirt, full back design on a natural organic cotton shirt, with Mono Lake written on the left chest: \$21.00 S (#3927) M (#3932) L (#3933) XL (#3934)*

*Also available:*

*Before the Rain, short sleeve, full front design on white: \$19.00 S (3452) M (3453) L (3454) XL (3455)*

*Morning at Mono Lake, short sleeve, full front design on natural: \$19.00 S (3448) M (3449) L (3450) XL (3451)*

100% Organic cotton



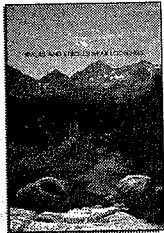
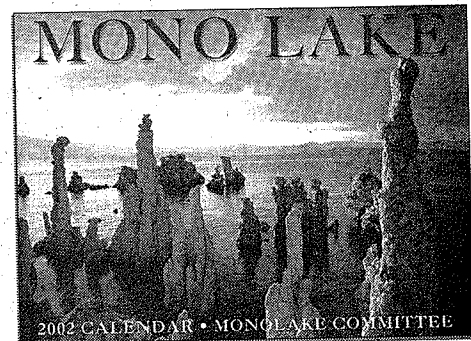
CALL (760) 647-6595 BETWEEN 9-5 DAILY TO ORDER.



# From the Mono Lake Committee Bookstore

## THE 2002 MONO LAKE CALENDAR

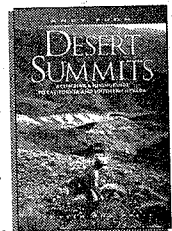
The 2002 Mono Lake Calendar is full of striking color images of Mono Lake and the Mono Basin. From volcanoes to tufa towers and snow capped peaks to rushing creeks, this 12-month calendar captures the magic of this vast and ancient inland sea. Each monthly image is accompanied by inset images of native birds, wildflowers, insects, and panoramic views. The 2002 Calendar also includes a beautiful and inspiring essay by author Sandra Postel. Get ready to plan next year's vacation to Mono Lake! 2002 calendar, measures 13 1/4" x 9 1/4" and opens to 13 1/4" x 18 1/2": \$10.95 (#2146)



## HOT SHOWERS, SOFT BEDS, AND DAY HIKES IN THE SIERRA

In this book Kathy Morey covers every town, village, and resort from the north end of lake Tahoe to south of Mt. Whitney—describing the accommodations and how to reserve them. Complete with maps and photographs, this book outlines 120 great day hikes in the Sierra and outlines distance, elevation, trailhead information, and highlights. Soft Cover, Wilderness Press, 360 pages, measures 6" x 9": \$16.95 (#644)

**DESERT SUMMITS: A CLIMBING AND HIKING GUIDE TO CALIFORNIA AND SOUTHERN NEVADA**  
This book by Andy Zdon is a guide to more than 300 remote and diverse mountains in California and southern Nevada. From steep scree slopes and mine trails to Joshua tree covered mesas, this book provides the information needed to explore and enjoy these beautiful, rugged landscapes. Illustrated with 18 maps and 130 photographs. Soft cover, Spotted Dog Press, 416 pages, measures 6" x 9": \$19.95 (#1758)



## EXPLORING THE HIGHEST SIERRA

This beautiful book by James G. Moore details the geology, natural history and the early explorations of the highest part of California's Sierra Nevada range—the southern portion. This new release includes 15 color maps, photographs, geologic guides, road and trail information, as well as many early etchings. Soft Cover, Stanford University Press, 427 pages, measures 8 1/2" x 11": \$22.95 (#5029)

## CADILLAC DESERT VIDEO SET ~ WITH BONUS MOVIE!

This four-part video series is based on Marc Reisner's book *Cadillac Desert* and Sandra Postel's book *Last Oasis*. The series is a wonderful way to learn about the real-life extremes of triumph, disaster, heroism, and intrigue that dominate the epic struggle for water in the modern American West. The video set also comes with the widescreen edition of the movie *Chinatown*, which is a fictional version of the events portrayed in *Mulholland's Dream*.

Set of five VHS videos: \$99.95 (#1337)

Also available in single video format: *Mulholland's Dream*: 85 minutes: \$27.95 (#838)



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

## Mono Lake Committee Mail Order Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime phone \_\_\_\_\_

### SHIPPING/HANDLING

Up to \$25 . \$5.00  
\$26 - \$50 \$7.00  
\$51 - \$150 \$9.00  
Over \$150 Free!

International rates determined by weight & method

☐ Check (to Mono Lake Committee)

☐ MasterCard ☐ Visa ☐ Discover

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Qty	Item #	Item	Size	Color	Price	Total

Shipping/handling: use rates at left

Subtotal

CA residents—add 7% sales tax to subtotal

Total

California law requires us to charge sales tax on shipping/handling for California deliveries

Phone: (760) 647-6595

Fax: (760) 647-6377

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





Lakewatch

# Mono Lake increases in productivity

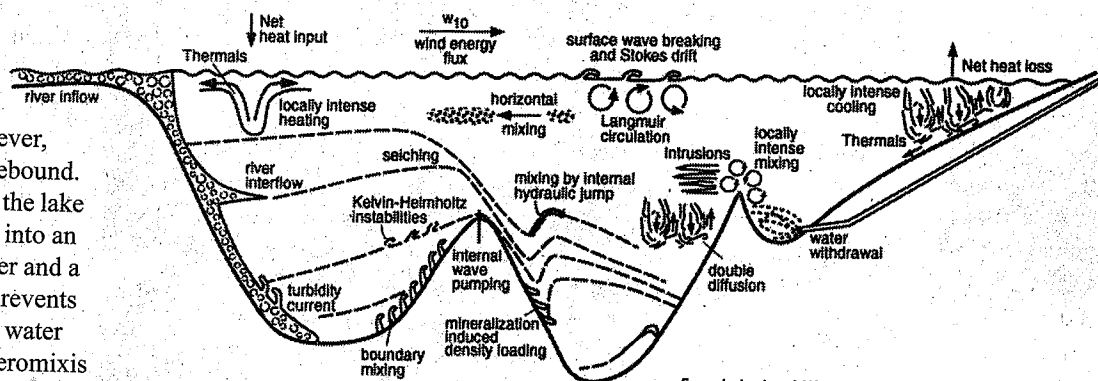
by Greg Reis

The onset of meromixis in 1995 temporarily reduced Mono Lake's productivity. Since then, however, there has been a remarkable rebound.

Meromixis is a condition in the lake characterized by stratification into an upper, less-saline layer of water and a lower, more-saline layer that prevents normal autumnal mixing of the water column. During the onset of meromixis nutrients get trapped in the lower water layer, which tends to reduce the productivity of the lake. Meromixis occurred at Mono Lake from 1983-1988 and 1995-present due to large inflows of fresh water.

During these periods of meromixis primary productivity, brine shrimp productivity, and California Gull productivity were low. This raised concerns, since meromixis was initially predicted to last for 17 to 73 years depending on the climate and runoff sequence. However, ongoing analysis of the current episode indicates meromixis will end sooner, possibly in 1 to 10 years depending on runoff conditions, and the effects on productivity are now minimal.

As the surface elevation of the lake dropped over the last two years, evaporation concentrated the upper water salinity, meromixis weakened, and productivity increased. Winter deepening of the mixed



Types of mixing processes in Mono Lake.

From Imboden & Wuest in *Physics and Chemistry of Lakes*

layer in 1998-99 and 1999-2000 entrained significant amounts of nutrients into the upper mixed layer and primary productivity in 2000 was back at 1994 levels.

Even as meromixis continues, the impacts on productivity and gulls will probably be minimal as the portion of the lake that is effectively meromictic has decreased markedly during the last two years. At present the lower, more saline water layer only covers  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the lake bottom and contains only 15% of the lake's volume. Also, this bottom layer has accumulated ammonium in very high concentrations and the little vertical mixing that does occur supplies a significant amount of nutrients to phytoplankton (microscopic free-floating algae) above.

Several factors account for the decrease in the predicted duration of meromixis. Isotopic collected by UC Santa Barbara researcher Jordan Clark indicates significant freshwater inputs from submarine springs near Paoha Island, accounting for 25% of the freshening of the lower layer. The springs and other inputs are diluting the deep water in the lake, thus lessening the overall degree of salinity stratification.

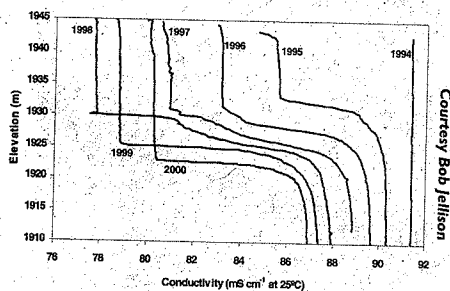
Several years ago Dr. Robert Jellison, a UC Santa Barbara researcher who has studied the mixing and plankton dynam-

ics of Mono Lake for almost 20 years, and his colleagues utilized a state-of-the-art dynamic mixing model (DYRESM) modified for Mono Lake and historical climate and runoff data to estimate the potential duration of the current episode of meromixis. Recent analysis indicates that DYRESM is underestimating the deep mixing processes in the lake.

Last, meteorological data from Paoha Island indicate 1999 and 2000 were hotter, drier, and windier than previous years and thus evaporation was enhanced. Jellison and Dr. Dean Blinn (Univ. Arizona) have found evidence from the diatom record in Mono Lake's sediment of two additional periods of meromixis in the past 170 years. This means meromixis is a naturally occurring phenomenon in Mono Lake; however, the occurrence of two long periods of meromixis in the last two decades is unusual for Mono Lake and is due in part to its much-reduced size. Future refinements of the lake-mixing model will help forecast meromixis behavior when the lake reaches its management level.

Thanks to Dr. Jellison for providing information for this article.

Greg Reis is the Committee's Information Specialist. This year he will be riding in the High Sierra Fall Century!



December chemical stratification at Mono Lake since 1994. Note the salinity gradient decrease over the last three years.



# **Mono Basin Journal**

**A roundup of less political events at Mono Lake**

by Geoffrey McQuilkin

**I**ldflowers have been making spectacular appearances across the moraines, along the lakeshore, and amongst the boulders and trees of the mountain canyons. Below Copper Mountain and at the base of Bloody Canyon, swaths of gold were visible from miles away as thousands of arrow-leaved balsamroot plants quietly spread their petals to the sun. The blossoms dried and faded among blue spikes of lupine, all joined by spiny hopsage thick with seeds, which took over the job of capturing the afternoon sun and glowing as if illuminated from within.

Rich red paintbrush captured attention at Old Marina, while yellow-tinged purple mimulus snuck into the dry and dusty spaces between sagebrush, bitterbrush, and desert peach shrouded in pink blossoms of its own. Apple trees wore bright white veils of flowers and, for once, late season snows and frosts held off, leaving each tree full of fruit and dreams of many an apple pie drifting through town at night.

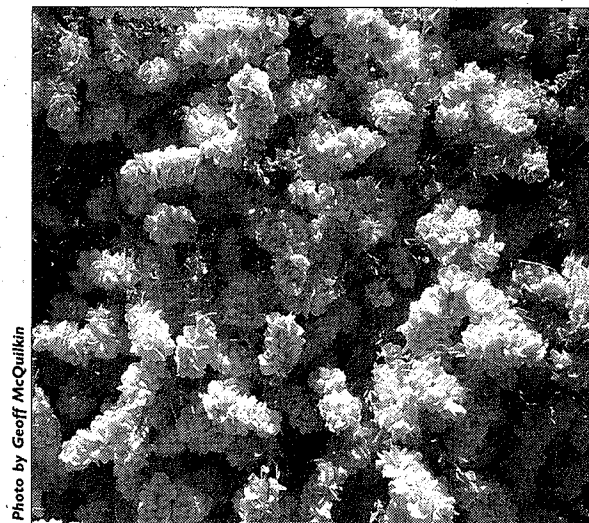



Photo by Geoff McQuilkin

As the days lengthened, the lake waters slowly warmed, launching the year's brine shrimp hatch. But before those trillions of tiny crustaceans appeared, this year's rich algae crop gave the lake a blue-green hue notably more striking than average. The color unavoidably drew one's attention out across the lake's surface, probing the depth of the somewhat tropical looking waters. One night such gazing led to a further sight: evening lightning on the eastern horizon, flashing from the season's first thunderstorms, striking distant peaks still harboring shaded patches of snow.

And so begins another Mono Lake summer with flowers aplenty, birds back along the creeks, and flaming-red wave cloud sunsets stretching out overhead. Briny Mono Lake laps at the sandy shore, alkali flies flee from hungry gulls, brine shrimp twist and tumble in the temperature currents of the day, and Mono Lake lies quiet, glowing with life here in the high, dry expanses, shaded by the towering Sierra, a home for us all. 

## **Benchmarks**



Photos by Arya Degenhardt

1998: Greg Reis measuring a young cottonwood on Rush Creek.



1999: Greg back out on Rush Creek it took some figuring to find the right cottonwood.



2001: Now a considerably leafier cottonwood, we'll be lucky to see Greg next year!



# Join us for Restoration Days!

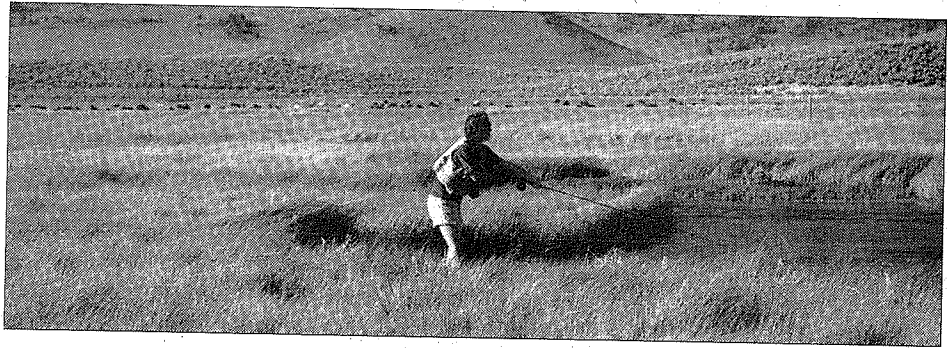
August 31 - September 2, 2001

**R**estoration Days is an annual event put on by the Mono Lake Committee during Labor Day Weekend. Join us for three days of workshops, canoe tours, bird walks, creek walks, Mono Lake traditions, story-telling, and most importantly, restoration work!

Restoration Days will begin with a Garden Reception Friday night, complete with food, beverages, slide shows, book-signings and an Open House. This will kick off Restoration Days and our weekend-long sidewalk sale!

Saturday's activities begin with a walk down Rush Creek led by fish and stream scientists, fly fishing guides, and Committee staff. Join the Committee and CalTrout to discuss the recovery of Mono Basin streams, talk about fish populations, and receive free fly-casting instruction and Mono Basin fishing tips. Later, the California Native Plant Society and the Committee will provide a hands-on workshop on native plants in the Mono Basin.

On Saturday afternoon, Lucy Parker will offer a traditional Paiute lake blessing




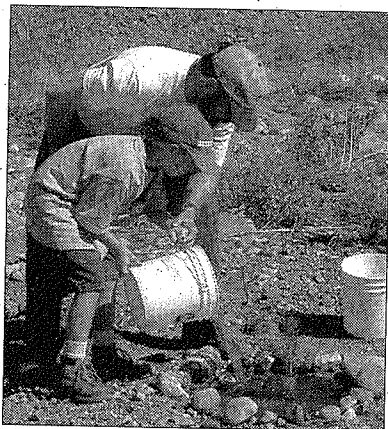
*This year, Restoration Days will feature a stream walk with fish experts at Rush Creek. On Saturday, fly fishing guides, stream scientists, and Committee staff will explain the relationship between healthy streams and good fishing, while providing casting instruction and Mono Basin fishing tips.*

at Old Marina, followed by the annual Rehydration Ceremony. Immediately following at County Park will be the Fall Party—an all-night event featuring a BBQ, live music, story-telling and s'mores by the campfire—and a special opportunity to camp overnight at the lakeshore!

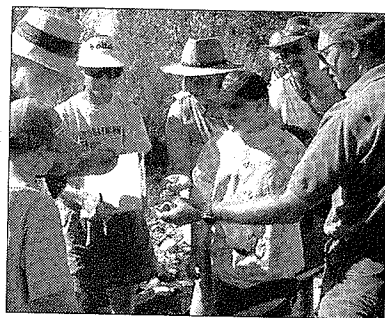
Sunday will begin with a bird walk, followed by restoration work. This year the restoration focus will be on watering trees and removing non-native tamarisk

from Rush Creek. The important restoration you can help us with during Restoration Days symbolizes the work we do all year long—the work to restore as best as possible the natural environment that existed prior to water diversions.

Come join us in celebrating and restoring the Mono Lake ecosystem! For more details, call (760) 647-6595 or look on the web at [www.monolake.org/events/restdays](http://www.monolake.org/events/restdays). 



*On Saturday, attend the hands-on workshop on native plants of the Mono Basin. On Sunday, volunteers will help water pine tree saplings and remove non-native plants from Rush Creek. These efforts help shore up stream banks and bring back healthy riparian habitat around Mono Lake.*



*On Saturday, stream scientists will talk about the ongoing recovery of aquatic life in Mono Basin streams. Diverse invertebrate stream life is a key to healthy stream ecosystems, providing food for fish and birds alike.*

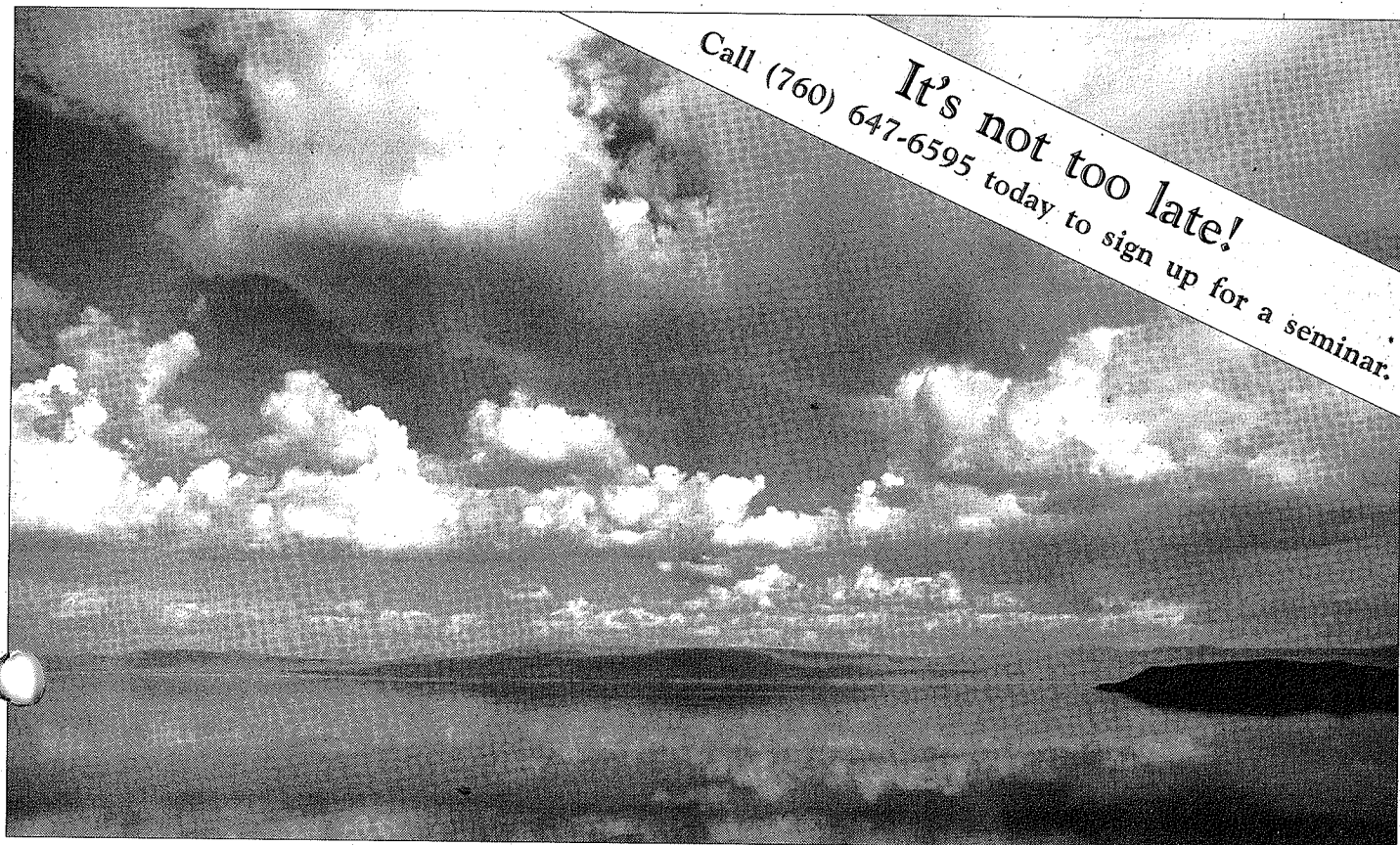
*Restoration Days is a great activity for kids of all ages. Enjoy bird watching, slide presentations,*

*camping, story-telling ... and swimming in Mono Lake! Don't miss our Fall Party on Saturday night, complete with a BBQ and live music!*





# Field Seminars 2001



*It's not too late!  
Call (760) 647-6595 today to sign up for a seminar.*

*Photo by Dave Calleri*

## 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 strong 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 who have a fully-adjustable camera (35mm to view camera) and a basic understanding of its operation.

## 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.

*Call (760) 647-6595 to register*



# Field Seminars 2001

## Pomo Tule Work Basketry

Lucy Parker, August 24-26

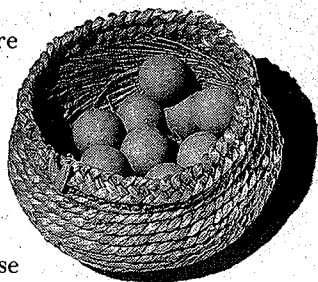
\$135 per person/ \$115 for members (primitive group campsite included)

\$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 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 twine tule basket by Susana Groves

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.

5 (b)

## Fall Bird Migration

Dave Shuford, September 8-9

\$95 per person/ \$80 for members

The eastern 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!

## 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 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



## Drawing Mono

Moirá Donohoe, September 22-23

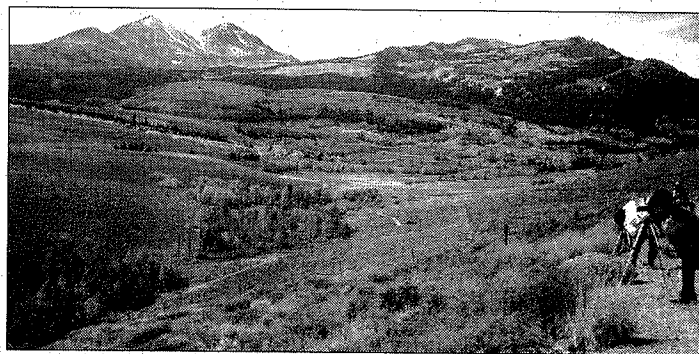
\$95 per person/ \$80 for members

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 in the field



# Field Seminars 2001

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.

## 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](http://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



# Staff Migrations



Left to right top row: Greg Reis, Bartshe Miller, Erin Massarelli, Allison Taylor, Moss Templeton, Anna Scofield, Arya Degenhardt, Carrie Simmons, Shannon Nelson. Second row: Geoffrey McQuilkin, Heather Barr, Donnette Huselton, Lori Bowermaster, Santiago Escruceria, Kirsten Brady. Third row: Heidi Hopkins, Jennifer Marshall, Heather Cleary, Lisa Cutting, Craig Roecker. Bottom row: Brett Pyle, Jeff Darlington. Busy working: Ramona Robbins-Clark, Gary Nelson, Frances Spivy-Weber, and Shelly Backlar.

**T**he hustle and bustle of summer is well underway with the store in full swing, walking and canoe tours out at the lake daily, and progress on many exciting projects and events. Summer wouldn't happen without the dedicated work of the seasonal staff, and their enthusiasm is extraordinary.

There are six interns this summer helping out on the front counter, with naturalist walks, canoe tours, and various other projects around the office.

**Jennifer Marshall** is a graduate of New York State University at Cortland, with a degree in Recreation and Environmental/Outdoor Education. She'll be helping out the policy team this summer.

**Moss Templeton** came all the way out from Cornell University in New York where he is studying Ecology and Evolutionary Biology. His bird tours are not to be missed!

**Erin Massarelli** is an Environmental Studies major at Rollins College

in Florida. Erin will be helping out with communications and photography projects, Restoration Days planning, and restoration monitoring.

**Lori Bowermaster** is a student at UC Davis where she is double-majoring in Wildlife and Fish Conservation Biology and Sociology. Lori will be researching the Mono Basin aquatic invertebrates and Great Basin lakes.

**Allison Taylor** is a Junior at California State University at Humboldt, where she is majoring in Natural Resources Interpretation. She'll be working on communications projects, restoration monitoring, and the Committee's herbarium

**Heather Barr** is a graduate from Whitman College in Washington where she studied Chemistry and Environmental Studies. She'll be helping out with the Committee's herbarium, restoration monitoring, and the Photopoint project.

With open arms we welcome back

Retail Assistant **Heather Cleary** for her second summer with the Committee. She's already got the flowers around the building looking beautiful.

We are lucky to have number one canoe babe **Kirsten Brady** return for her second summer as Canoe Coordinator. Her interpretive skills as well as her love for paddling are simply contagious.


Add Outdoor Experiences Coordinator **Santiago Escruceria** to the list of folks who can't get enough of the Mono Basin. Back for the third year in a row, his experience with the Outdoor Experiences program is invaluable and his sense of humor is always welcome in the office.

Also working with the Outdoor Experiences program is **Carrie Simmons**, who brings with her a full bag of education experience. Even though it is her first visit to Mono Lake, she is already leading night hikes through the Jeffrey pine forest like a pro.

And what better help could we have than three locals who grew up in the area helping us out on the counter? Returning for her third year in a row is **Anna Scofield**, whose knowledge of the area and patience with visitors is invaluable. And **Nick and Ryan Carle** will be lending a hand around the office and working part time in the store, too. We're lucky to have these two brothers of the Moonlight Halloween South Tufa walk fame working with us this summer. And on that note, congratulations to **Vireo Gaines, Nick Carle, and Jason Huselton** on their graduation from Mammoth High!

Volunteering for the month of July we welcome **Mike Lieberman** who will help with the library and website as well.

And last but certainly not least, congratulations to Membership Coordinator **Brett Pyle** and Events Coordinator **Shannon Nelson** on their marriage. We wish you two a life full of happiness, love, and Mono Lake!

It is shaping up to be a great summer, so if you're in the area stop by and find out what folks are working on! 



# Member Corner: News from the membership desk

by Brett Pyle

## In Memory

**T**he Chateau Lafayette Resident's Association of Lafayette made a donation in memory of **Charlotte Cooper**. **Eleanor Luce** of Berkeley made a donation in memory of **Foresta Gooch**, a neighbor and dear friend. **Hank Warzybok** of Lakewood made a donation in memory of his mother **Frances Warzybok**. **Lynda Dawber** of Mammoth Lakes, **Jim and Martha Gilbreath** of Mammoth Lakes, and **Melinda and Jerry Verdier** of Crowley Lake made donations in loving memory of **Nancy Whitmore**. A donation was made in the name of **Dorothy Mitchell** from **Mary Anne York** of Los Altos. A donation was made by **Arthur Langton** of Canoga Park in memory of the life and accomplishments of **Dorothy Rollins**. Dorothy was dedicated to conservation, the environment, and the birds in the San Fernando Valley.

## Bequests

**W**hen you make a gift to the Mono Lake Committee as a part of your estate planning you are helping to ensure the long-term protection and restoration of Mono Lake and the Mono Basin ecosystem. What a wonderful way to be remembered!

If you would like to include the Mono Lake Committee in your will, designate the Mono Lake Committee as a beneficiary at the following address: Highway 395 at 3rd Street, Lee Vining, CA 93541 (mailing address: P.O. Box 29, Lee Vining, CA 93541). For more information contact Membership Coordinator Brett Pyle ([brett@monolake.org](mailto:brett@monolake.org)) at the above address or at (760) 647-6595.

## Thanks

**A** special thanks to local folks and businesses for donating flowers to help keep the front of the Bookstore and Information Center looking nice. Both **Jenny at The Flower Barn** and **Howard at Pleasant Gardens Nursery** generously donated flats of flowers.

Thank you to Louise Fernquest's 7th grade class at the Keys School in Palo Alto for donating the profits from their fundraising efforts for the restoration of the Mono Basin. It is always great to have your group up to visit and learn about Mono Lake and we look forward to seeing you again soon!

## Members online

**H**ave you checked the Members' Section of the Mono Lake website recently? Grab your Newsletter and go to [www.monolake.org/\\_members/index.html](http://www.monolake.org/_members/index.html) and sign in with your member number to see what we've been working on.

Complete with more webcam images, an expanded weather section, photos of the week, a discussion forum, and the most current edition of the Newsletter, the section is full of fun information for members.

And while you're there, make sure



to check your Member-since date so we know how long you've been a member of the Mono Lake Committee!

## Matched Gifts

**B**ank of America matched donations from **George Cooper** of San Francisco, and **Arthur W. Feidler III** of Kentfield, **James E. Goggin** of Twain Harte, **Pat Matl** of Concord, and **Joyce L. Robinson** of Petaluma. **Enron Corporation** matched a donation from **Donald Vanderweit** of Los Angeles. **The Prudential Foundation** matched a generous gift by **Robert Likins** of Short Hills, NJ. **Sun Microsystems Foundation** matched a gift from **David Arana** of Fremont. **Washington Mutual Foundation** matched a generous donation from **Valerie White** of Santa Clarita.

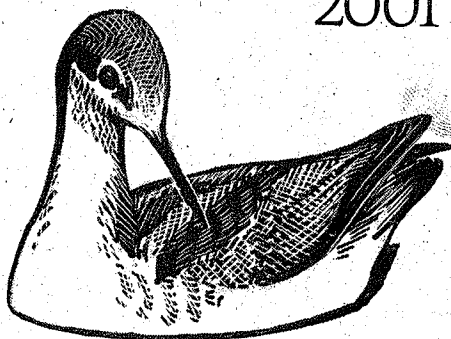
Thanks to all of you who take the time to send in the matching gift forms. We are on our way to making 2001 one of the most successful matching gift years ever!



*Brett Pyle is the Committee's Membership Coordinator. He and his new wife Shannon Nelson will be spending a relaxing summer together. Congratulations Brett and Shannon!*



# Restoration Days 2001



August 31–September 2

- the fly fishing workshop
- native plant workshop
- open house
- tamarisk removal
- restoration science workshop
- Annual Meeting
- Fall Party
- Paiute lake blessing
- Rehydration Ceremony
- bird walks
- tree watering
- sidewalk sale
- and much more!

## High Sierra Fall Century September 15

[www.fallcentury.org](http://www.fallcentury.org)



100 miles of beautiful scenery

6 SAG stops

1 stop sign

Not a single stoplight

call (760) 647-6595 or see [www.monolake.org](http://www.monolake.org) for event details



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**COMMITTEE**

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