

MONO LAKE

N E W S L E T T E R

Fall 2004

On the morning of the autumnal equinox Raymond Andrews, a member of the Kutzadika^a Paiute Tribe led a small group of folks down to the lakeshore for a traditional sunrise ceremony. We left behind our technologies, and removed socks and shoes. Venus hung brightly overhead, Lee Vining Creek rushed behind the drum beats, the lake was all shadows in different shades, and our feet were tender on the cold ground. As the sky began to break into color we prepared to walk into the water for a lake prayer. "Approach the lake without fear," and we stepped in. Feet were suddenly warmed, and the sun broke the eastern horizon changing the lake in an instant to vibrant blues—our hands held out to receive the light too. In above our ankles we offered water from glass jars back to the lake. Smiling faces returned to a circle of thanks, and fall had begun.

Aspen leaves decorate the cover of this issue of the Mono Lake Newsletter. Longtime member of the Mono Lake Committee Robert Potts took the photo, and his wife Betty donated the archives of his beautiful work when he passed away. Committee staff and friends have pulled together a neat bunch of articles to follow the photo that we think he would have enjoyed as much as we enjoy his artwork.

Along with the usual fun features there's an update on the Caltrans Highway Widening Project on page 5, good news on the Sierra Conservancy on 6, a new scientific research page on 10, a report on the watershed program for local students on 12 followed by a feature on the New Zealand Mud Snail on 13, magnetic microbes on 14, and the Fall Catalog starting on page 20.

And, if, after all of that, you're still craving more Mono Lake, I suggest making your way out to the Mono Basin for an early morning of greeting the sun down at the shoreline.

—Arya Degenhardt, Communications Director



COVER PHOTO BY ROBERT POTTS
MOUNTAIN BEAVER BY ARYA DEGENHARDT

Recently found lost (but happy!) in the Lee Vining Community Garden, this Mountain Beaver was released in Mono Basin habitat more suitable for such an elusive creature.

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 Office Information Center and Bookstore

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

info@monolake.org
www.monolake.org
www.monobasinresearch.org

Los Angeles Office

322 Culver Blvd.
Playa Del Rey, California 90293
Phone (310) 316-0041

Staff

Executive Director, Policy Frances Spivy-Weber
Executive Director, Operations ... Geoffrey McQuilkin
Eastern Sierra Policy Director Lisa Cutting
Eastern Sierra Policy Coordinator Jen Nissenbaum
Education Director Bartshé Miller
Assistant Education Director Santiago Escruceria
Communications Director Arya Degenhardt
Information Specialist Greg Reis
Office Manager Craig Pyle
Staff Assistant Douglas Dunaway
Retail Operations Manager Brett Pyle
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Membership Coordinator Erika Obedzinski
Controller Donnette Huselton
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Canoe Coordinator Ariel Rowan
Outdoor Experiences Coordinator Kristie Reddick
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Naturalist Interns Erin Brandt, Kim Rollins

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MONO LAKE
NEW S L E T T E R

Fall 2004 ~ Volume XXVI, Number 2

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Mill Creek Hydropower Decision Imminent

by Lisa Cutting

Some way, some how there will be a decision reached on the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's (FERC) Southern California Edison Lundy Hydropower relicensing and it could be soon. The FERC decision will directly affect Mill Creek because it will include provisions for rehabilitating the Mill Creek Return Ditch—the sole means for returning water back to Mill Creek after flowing through Southern California Edison's hydropower plant—and call for some amount of water to be released directly from Lundy Reservoir.

This past spring, FERC set a final settlement deadline of June of this year for the settlement parties to submit an agreement (see Summer 2004 *Newsletter*). That deadline has come and gone even though the parties—United States Forest Service, Southern California Edison, American Rivers, CalTrout, Bureau of Land Management, Mono County, California Department of Fish and Game, People for Mono Basin Preservation, and the Mono Lake Committee—worked feverishly to achieve a comprehensive solution.

What has emerged from over three years of collaborative



Lower Mill Creek downstream of diversion point, starved of necessary waterflow.

work is a Draft Settlement Agreement which is essentially a “bare bones” resolution that addresses the FERC relicensing issues only. This agreement will help move the process forward but simply defers the more contentious water rights questions to the future.

Confidentiality Agreement Lifted— Settlement Details Made Public For the First Time

The US Forest Service, on behalf of most of the parties (but not the Mono Lake Committee)—Southern California Edison (SCE), American Rivers, California Trout, Bureau of Land Management, and the California Department of Fish and Game—has recently released the Draft Settlement Agreement for the public to review in advance of the agencies submitting it to FERC. At this time, two public meetings are currently scheduled to help clarify the various components of the settlement. And all of the above-mentioned agencies are currently accepting public comment on the Draft Settlement Agreement (see www.monolake.org/millcreek for a copy of the Draft Settlement, agency contact information, and the most recent developments on this issue).

The document includes minimum flows for Mill Creek below Lundy Reservoir, the rehabilitation and maintenance of the Mill Creek Return Ditch, and the establishment of a water management planning process that will work with SCE to determine a yearly schedule for delivering water to water rights holders.

The Mono Lake Committee's Position

After three years of working towards a comprehensive settlement agreement—one that addressed the FERC relicensing issues and developed a watershed management plan for the entire North Mono Basin—the Committee is disappointed that the parties could not reach a comprehensive



Upper Mill Creek full and rushing upstream of diversion point.

Continued on page 4

settlement agreement. Despite that, the Mono Lake Committee views this Draft Settlement Agreement as a positive step forward in resolving the basic issues and providing the infrastructure for all the parties to work within. Even though the settlement is narrow in scope and deals solely with issues that SCE is directly responsible for under conditions of the license it is a positive step forward in returning water flows to Mill Creek.

What Happens Next?

The signatory parties are currently accepting comments on the Draft Settlement Agreement. Assuming that only minor adjustments and/or clarifications are made to the document, the signatory parties will submit the Settlement Agreement to FERC by mid-September. FERC is the final authority in the relicensing procedure and can either accept, reject, or modify the Draft Settlement Agreement.

What is significant is that a large, diverse group of agency and public organizations support the settlement. FERC typically prefers negotiated settlement processes that result in a collaborative outcome. Their assumption is that the parties on board with the content and settlements emerging from this type of process generally address a wide range of stake-holder interests.

Why is All of This so Important to Mill Creek?

Mill Creek is the third largest tributary stream in the Mono Basin behind Rush and Lee Vining creeks. Diversions for hydropower generation, irrigation, fish-rearing, and most significantly, an inadequate conveyance system for returning water to Mill Creek have prevented the creek from receiving appropriate stream flows. Trees, fish, and wildlife have all suffered. But restoring the diverse cottonwood-willow riparian habitat is still possible (see Spring 2004 *Newsletter*).

The Mono Lake Committee still firmly believes that there is a comprehensive solution that can be reached. This Draft Settlement is a good first step in reaching resolution of all the various issues that exist in the North Mono Basin. Most importantly, it will keep the parties talking and working together—a component just as valuable as the water itself. ❖

Lisa Cutting is the Committee's Eastern Sierra Policy Director. Many contentious issues and public meetings have driven her into the backcountry for a refresher on what her work is all about.

The Environmental Roundtable—a Gathering of East Side Environmental Groups

by Jen Nissenbaum

With all that is going on in the Mono Basin, it is difficult to stay abreast of the current regional issues facing the greater Eastern Sierra. That is one of the reasons the Committee has helped organize the Eastern Sierra Environmental Roundtable meetings—a gathering of advocacy-oriented non-profit organizations on the East Side. The roundtable discussions cover a wide range of topics and are shaping up to be a strong asset for the environmental community.

Since February there have been four meetings, with staff and active volunteers coming from Friends of the Inyo, Eastern Sierra Audubon, Eastern Sierra Land Trust, California Native Plant Society Bristlecone Chapter, Owens Valley Committee, Andrea Lawrence Institute for Mountains and Rivers, Sierra Club, California Trout, the Wilderness Society, June Lake Advocates, The Save Round Valley Alliance, and the Mono Lake Committee. While each non-profit works in different areas, and may even have different positions on issues, the organizations benefit from getting together and sharing information in this forum.

At each meeting there is an opportunity to discuss recent activities and hot issues which provide a good overview of current environmental challenges from Owens Lake to the Bridgeport Valley. In addition, there is a focal topic chosen for each meeting where extra time is devoted to presenting

information and discussion about that particular issue.

The focal topic at the July meeting was the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power's proposed easement. It was a timely opportunity to share information with the environmental community about the proposed easement (see page 7).

The Roundtable meetings are not just about Eastern Sierra environmental issues, they are also about peer learning—finding ways for non-profit organizations to benefit from one another's experiences. For instance, participants discuss topics ranging from insurance options to financial services, seeking to efficiently answer questions that many non-profits encounter.

The Committee has been pleased by the participation and positive feedback received from Roundtable participants thus far, and continues to look for ways for the environmental community to benefit as much as possible from each gathering.

The Committee's role organizing and facilitating the Environmental Roundtable meetings is being made possible by the Preserving Wild California program of the Resources Legacy Fund Foundation.

Jen Nissenbaum is the Committee's Policy Coordinator. She has been busy trying to get some late-season climbing in before the snow starts to fall.

Growing Opposition to Caltrans' Shoreline Project

by Jen Nissenbaum

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) position remains unchanged despite growing opposition to the Mono Lake Shoulder Widening Project (Project). Caltrans proposes to widen and straighten 3.1 miles of Highway 395 along the west shore of Mono Lake. The Project as currently proposed in the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) will result in significant impacts to wetland and riparian areas, water quality, wildlife habitat, and visual quality along the Scenic Highway corridor.

Community Members Support the "No Build" Alternative

The latest Project criticism is from the Lee Vining community—community members voted unanimously on a resolution supporting the "no build" alternative from the DEIR because, "only the 'no build' alternative ensures a safer speed of traffic in the Project area and preserves the unique setting of the Project area". The resolution will be presented to Caltrans and the Mono County Local Transportation Commission (LTC) at the joint public meeting in September.

Joint Public Meeting

The LTC—essentially the governing body for highway projects in Mono County—is holding a joint public meeting in September to discuss the Project. At that meeting, Caltrans plans to separate the comments on the various Project components (i.e. fill slopes, retaining walls, and shoulder width) from comments on the DEIR—only providing clarification to questions regarding the Project components at the meeting.

The Committee maintains that any Project is inextricably

linked to its DEIR (the document which describes all aspects of the project), and that separating the two is not only ineffective but impossible. Furthermore, the Committee is disappointed that Caltrans intends to provide no new information and no responses to public comments at the upcoming September meeting. It has been almost a year since Caltrans received over 1,300 letters of public comment from concerned Mono Lake supporters and public agencies, as well as a detailed and comprehensive document from the Mono Lake Committee identifying major deficiencies in the DEIR (see Winter 2004 *Newsletter*).

Committee Prepares for Litigation

Based on the numerous deficiencies identified within the DEIR, the Committee called on Caltrans to redraft and recirculate a new environmental document. While the release date for the Final EIR has been delayed nearly a year, to June 2005, Caltrans has no plans to conduct additional environmental studies nor to rewrite any portion of the environmental document. Based on this information, the Committee anticipates that the Final EIR will contain the same fundamental flaws as the DEIR.

If that is the case, the Committee will need to take legal action within 30 days of the release of the Final EIR (see Summer 2004 *Newsletter*). The Committee continues to look for alternative ways to reshape the Project to minimize environmental impacts and improve nonmotorized user safety, but is prepared to go to court to protect Mono Lake and the Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area. ❖



A view from the Caltrans Mono Lake Shoulder Widening Project.

GEORGE MOULIKIN

Sierra Nevada Conservancy—A Reality

by Frances Spivy-Weber

In September, Governor Schwarzenegger signed the Leslie/Laird Sierra Nevada Conservancy bill (AB2600) to create the Laird/Leslie Sierra Conservancy. Reversing the names on the bill and the Conservancy illustrates how cooperation and compromise between Assemblyman John Laird, a Democrat from Santa Cruz, and Assemblyman Tim Leslie, a Republican who represents much of the Sierra, were keys to success.



Working Together

The flag of unity was carried by many others, too. Both Assemblymen had very able staff; the Governor made a Sierra Conservancy a goal for his first year; Resources Secretary Mike Chrisman and CalEPA Secretary Terry Tamminen and their staff invested untold hours working

with the legislature; Mono County Supervisors, businesses throughout the region, land trusts, and homeowners stepped up early to show support for a Conservancy. There was strong support throughout the state, and the environmental community in the Sierra was unified behind the leadership of the Sierra Fund, Sierra Nevada Alliance, Sierra Business Council, and the Mono Lake Committee.

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy has broad purposes—from increasing opportunities for tourism and conserving the region's historical and living resources to protecting and improving water and air quality. The Conservancy will not be able to own land, but it can provide funds to others for land purchases. See www.sierraconservancy.org for more details.

The Sierra Nevada Region is large, including much of the Sierra and Cascade

ranges up to the Oregon border; the Eastern Sierra to the crest of the White/Inyo ranges and to Highway 14 south of Olancha; the western Sierra to the lower level of the Blue Oak woodland. Mono Lake's sub-region (one of six) includes Alpine, Inyo, and Mono counties.

How Will it Work?

The Conservancy will be governed by thirteen voting members. After January 1, 2005, six elected officials and their non-voting alternates will be selected by the counties to represent each sub-region in two-year terms. Five members will come from the Administration—the Resources Secretary and Director of Finance and the Governor will appoint three public members who are not elected officials. Two additional public members will be appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly and the Senate Committee on Rules. Statewide representatives will serve for four years. ❖

Discussions About DWP Conservation Easement Resurface

By Kimberly Rollins

The Los Angeles City Council and Mayor James Hahn made news over the summer by discussing the possibility of a conservation easement that would protect the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power's (DWP) 360,000 acres in the Eastern Sierra from future development.

In 2001, the General Manager of DWP, David Freeman, proposed an easement that would prohibit development on DWP lands. It failed, however, due to opposition from local governments who felt excluded from the process as well as local stakeholders who thought the plan for an easement lacked clarity (see Spring 2001 *Newsletter*).

Hahn and the LA City Council made a similar proposition earlier this year. Once again there were mixed feelings about how an easement should be handled or if one is even necessary.

When Hahn visited the Owens Valley, he emphasized he was on a "listening tour" only, and that it would be a while before any decisions about an easement were made.

Andrea Lawrence, Board Member of the Mono Lake Committee and founder of the Andrea Lawrence Institute for Mountains and Rivers (ALIMAR), has been working with local stakeholders for years trying to reach an agreement on the best way to the protect the scenic Eastern Sierra.

Lawrence emphasized that she wants to keep the easement as simple as possible. One of the most concerned groups has been the ranchers who are concerned an easement would affect their right to lease DWP land for grazing. Lawrence said she did not want an easement to affect the ranchers' right to graze, she just wants to protect the Eastern Sierra from future development.

The Eastern Sierra Land Trust, based in Bishop, is also actively pursuing the concept and would like to be the holder of the easement.

After Hahn and the City Council met with intense opposition, Hahn has been reluctant to formalize an easement. He did, however, promise some level of protection from development in the Eastern Sierra.

The Mono Lake Committee is involved in discussions relating to this and other Eastern Sierra easements, and will post any significant updates online at www.monolake.org.

Anyone interested in helping can contact: Andrea Lawrence, ALIMAR, (760) 934-2877 andrea@alimar.org, www.alimar.org or the Eastern Sierra Land Trust at, (760) 873-4554 or online at www.easternsierralandtrust.org

Chautauqua Redux

by Bartshé Miller

What do you get when you mix scientists, birders, an artist or two, music, good food, and a whole bunch of birds? You get the 3rd Annual Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua. This past June people from around California and yonder traveled to Mono Lake for what may be described as an ornithological harmonic convergence. There was no meditation going on (unless you count birdwatching as such), and the planets did not align, but there was an extraordinary gathering of scientists, artists, birders, and the curious. If you even had a passing interest in birds, there was something for everyone, and everyone had fun.

Weekend Full of Activities

A reception and catered gourmet dinner at the Lee Vining Community Center on Friday afternoon kicked off the weekend's event. Folks had an opportunity to catch up with old

friends, make new acquaintances, browse at the vender tables, and get registered for the upcoming weekend. After dinner the crowd moved to the Scenic Area Visitor Center to hear Kenn Kaufman present thoughts and comments behind his book *Kingbird Highway*.

Mr. Kaufman told stories of hitchhiking across the country in pursuit of birds—swept up in the cultural mosaic of North America on his way from one birding spot to the next. He spoke of making meals out of coffee and getting by on cat food during the lean stretches, meeting remarkable human beings, and some not so; and the accidental stumbling upon of lasting friendships that happens through birds.

In addition to the Friday and Saturday evening presentations a large number of field trips were offered during the morning and evening hours. Some people chose to go out for a night of owl hooting, while others went to bed early and got up early to catch one of the two “Little” Big Days. In the spirit of a chautauqua, field trips focused on a wide range of interests: from Mono Lake ecology to wildflower identification, to butterflies, to the art of field sketching.



The Mono Basin's first documented Veery at the PRBO Conservation Science mist netting workshop on Rush Creek.

PHOTO COURTESY OF KELLY GRADY, 2004

A number of special events punctuated the weekend: the Friday night dinner at the Community Center, the 1st Annual Mono Lake Wine Flight at the Mono Inn, book signings, and the Sunday concert and picnic at the Mono Lake County Park. These events provided opportunity for both socializing and relaxing—a complimentary break to the scientific, artistic, and ornithological.

Extra Special Events

Some of the Chautauqua proceedings were a surprise. The weather put on a show in the late afternoon and evening. Towers of cumulus clouds piled up over Mono Lake spawning virga bands and dazzling sunsets as Common Nighthawks ‘bzzz’ed and boomed in fading, golden twilight.

Even the birds cooperated, as if they had sent special chautauqua ambassadors to add to the celebration. On Saturday morning a male Blackburnian Warbler and a Veery flew into the mist netting demonstration on Rush Creek. Staff biologists from PRBO Conser-

vation Science promptly recorded the birds as data and pixels. Those that came for the demonstration were treated to first-time Mono Basin sightings. During the weekend's field trips and workshops participants logged 133 species of birds—a little more than a third of the recorded species in the Mono Basin watershed.



Rich Stallcup leading a bird walk through the sagebrush.



Jack Laws leading a field sketching trip at the lake.

The fun continued right through Sunday afternoon with a concert and picnic. Carrie Newcomer worked her vocal and

Continued on page 8

acoustic magic as the crowd enjoyed Indian tacos and picnic lunches. Intermission included an unforgettable bird calling contest that brought out the most unusual, skilled, and humorous bird calls in the Eastern Sierra. Alan Blaver followed with a Paiute blessing and song.

Approximately 260 people registered for the 3rd Annual Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua—the highest attendance yet. Some of the more popular field trips and workshops filled during the first few days of registration. The town of Lee Vining was fully booked and so was the town of June Lake.

Many Thanks

The Third Annual Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua was a significant effort in time and resources for all the partners: Mono Lake Committee, Eastern Sierra Audubon, US Forest Service, Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area, PRBO Conservation Science, and California State Parks.

In 2004 we were very fortunate to work with an outstanding group that made the 3rd Annual what it was—a rousing success. Thanks go out to all the following, most of whom donated time and effort: Sue Abbott, Don Banta, Susan Colletta,



Male Blackburnian Warbler caught during the PRBO Conservation Science mist netting.

PHOTO COURTESY OF KELLY GRADY

Jon Dunn, Dr. Chris Elphick, Sacha Heath, Dr. Dave Herbst, Justin Hite, Debbie House, Ann Howald, Kenn Kaufman, Jack Laws, Burleigh Lockwood, David Lukas, Jeff Maurer, Chris McCreedy,

Paul McFarland, Peter Metropulos, Dr. Constance Millar, Kristine Nelson, Carrie Newcomer, Mike Prather, Brett Pyle, Ane Carle Rovetta, Dr. Margaret Rubega, Rich Stallcup, Chris Tonra, Erik Westerlund, Simone Whitecloud, Tim and Leslie Willoughby, David Wimpfheimer, and Dr. David Winkler. Also, big thanks to all the chautauqua volunteers who kept the chautauqua steaming through the weekend. Finally, special thanks to the motels that donated rooms to Chautauqua presenters during a busy weekend: Best Western Lakeview Lodge, El Mono Motel, Lee Vining Motel, and Murphy's Motel. ❖

Bartshé Miller is the Committee's Education Director. He has been battling sagebrush on many fronts this pollen season.

Wine Flight Takes Off

A brand new fundraiser was “hatched” during the 2004 Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua. Wine Flight, a wine tasting benefit for the Mono Basin Field Station took place at The Mono Inn overlooking Mono Lake.

The wine tasting took place in the late afternoon of Saturday, June 19th. Participating wineries included Barefoot Reserves, Barefoot California varietals, Barefoot Bubbliies, Muir-Hanna, Pedroncelli, DeLoach, Clos du Bois, and Ironstone.

Long time members Bill and Claudia Hanna were on-hand to pour their Napa County wines and meet folks. Bill is the great grandson of John Muir, so, needless to say, his family has strong ties to the Eastern Sierra. In fact, as an extension of the Wine Flight, Muir Hanna will donate \$5 from each \$25 bottle of their 2001 Estate Bottled Chardonnay to the Mono Lake Committee. To order call (707) 224-2114 or fax (707) 224-8668 and tell them you're a Mono Lake Committee Member!

The Wine Flight was also a celebration with Martha Davis, past Mono Lake Committee Executive Director, for her 50th birthday. Numerous family members and friends joined in the fun.

The chair of the event, Randy Arnold, was back in the Mono Basin after being the Birding Intern for the Mono Lake Committee in 2003. He is the National Sales Manager of the Barefoot Winery and he had taken a sabbatical in order to work for the Mono

Lake Committee for a summer. During his 14-year career at Barefoot, Randy has poured wine at over 700 benefits. The Barefoot winery has been supporting the Mono Lake Committee with donations of wine stretching back 12 years. Thank you, Randy, for having the idea for this event, and for your unending enthusiasm and energy for making it happen.

In conjunction with the wine tasting was a silent auction of wine and art items. The high bid was for an Ansel Adams signed lithograph which was donated by the Adams family. Chris Lizza, from the Mono Market, was the purchaser of this valuable and rare lithograph. The Wine Flight brought in \$6,000 which will be used to ready the Mono Basin Field Station to support scientific research.

When making plans for the 2005 Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua consider joining us on Saturday June 18th for lovely wine, great camaraderie, and the opportunity to purchase wine and lovely works of art—all to benefit a wonderful cause.



Randy Arnold pouring Barefoot at the First Annual Wine Flight.

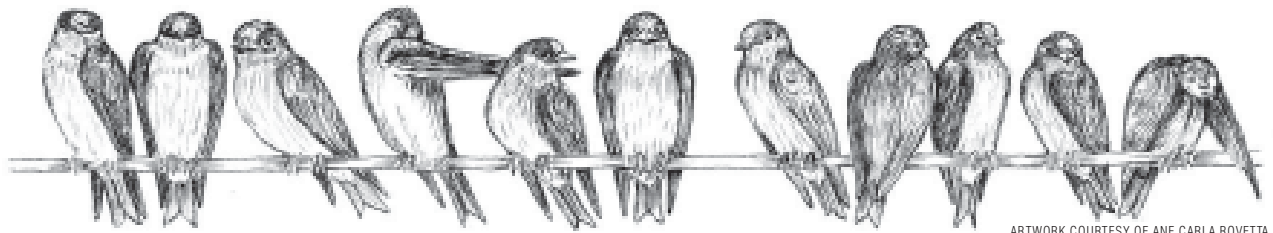


The 4th Annual
Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua
June 17-19, 2005

Online registration begins
April 15, 2005

www.birdchautauqua.org

see the Winter Newsletter for registration information and updates



ARTWORK COURTESY OF ANE CARLA ROVETTA



Kenn Kaufman on the spotting scope, leading a bird walk.



Ane Carla Rovetta at the bird call contest.



Watching a Red-tailed Hawk fledge on Lee Vining Creek.



Carrie Newcomer serenading Chautauqua participants at County Park.

ARYA DEGENHARDT

Scientific Research in the Mono Basin

News from the Mono Basin Field Station and Beyond

From as early as 1863, when the Brewer Party passed through the Mono Basin, to the 1976 Ecological Study that helped found the Mono Lake Committee, scientific research has provided deeper insights into the workings of the Mono Basin ecosystem. It is this foundation of research that can support informed decision making, and eventually, sound policy. In this and future issues of the *Newsletter*, the Scientific Research in the Mono Basin column will provide you with a smattering of current research projects in the area. We draw from the Mono Basin Clearinghouse (www.monobasinresearch.org) and from word around town. (After all, it's hard to miss the gaggles of researchers that descend on Lee Vining with binoculars, radio telemetry antennae, clipboards, and grungy Carharts in tow). As we approached researchers for current project descriptions, we were overwhelmed by what we came up with. Instead of listing all of them, we have chosen to highlight a few projects in each issue, grouping them within some of the Clearinghouse's main research categories. Additionally, each column will feature one longer project description, allowing the researchers to tell a little more of their story.

Geology

Project Title: Migration rates of dunes in the Mono Lake dune field.

By: Lori K. Fenton Post
Doctorate Research Associate
Arizona State University's
Department of Geological
Sciences.

Description: Spatial and temporal variations in the Mono Lake dune field indicate possible shifts in wind circulation patterns driven by climate fluctuations.

International

Project Title: Golondrinas de las Americas

By: Cornell University, PRBO Conservation Science, Mono County High School students.

Project Description: Sites along Lee Vining and Parker Creeks are being developed for nest-box studies of breeding Tree and Violet-green Swallows, as part of a pan-Hemispheric study of these and other cavity-nesting swallows. The study monitors basic breeding biology and reproductive success and conducts hypothesis-testing research in behavioral ecology and organismal biology.

Also in This Issue ...

- GLORIA Project on page 11
- Magnetic Bacteria on page 14

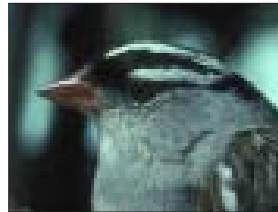
White-crowned Sparrow Studies

Tom Hahn, University of California Davis

Our work on Mountain White-crowned Sparrows (*Zonotrichia leucophrys oriantha*) at Tioga Pass extends a long-term field study begun in the 1960s by Martin L. Morton of Occidental College. Despite Morton's comprehensive ecophysiological and behavioral studies, there still remain many unexplored features of Mountain White-crowned Sparrow biology. My collaborator Creagh Breuner (University of Texas at Austin) and I are currently investigating how the white-crowns, just back from their wintering grounds in Mexico, cope with the May snowstorms that frequently occur along the Sierra crest.

May storms can be life threatening, increasing the costs of thermoregulation while concealing sources of food for ground feeding birds. However, the steepness of the eastern Sierra escarpment permits sparrows to escape bad weather in the high country via short flights downslope. Using radio telemetry, we have confirmed that the Tioga Pass white-crowns regularly and repeatedly move down to lower elevation refuges in Lee Vining Canyon and the Mono Basin during poor weather.

Individual sparrows vary dramatically in their propensity to engage in this facultative altitudinal migration behavior, with some departing for lower elevation at the first whiff of bad weather, and others successfully riding out the high country storms. We are particularly interested in the roles that body condition (especially fat stores that can temporarily sustain birds when food is inaccessible) and hormonal physiology (which orchestrates appropriate behavioral and physiological responses to environmental stressors) play in regulating the sparrows' facultative altitudinal migration behavior.



COURTESY OF TOM HAHN

Economics

Project title: Economic impacts of the 3rd Annual Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua: A survey and analysis of local businesses and participants.

By: River Gates and Lisa Cutting,
PRBO Conservation Science and
Mono Lake Committee

Description: Mono Basin businesses and Chautauqua participants will be surveyed to evaluate the economic benefits of the Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua.

Restoration

Project Title: Mono Lake Waterfowl Population Monitoring

By: Debbie House, Watershed Resources Specialist, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power

Project Description: Conducting long-term monitoring of waterfowl populations in order to determine the response of waterfowl populations to changes in the lake level of Mono Lake. This monitoring includes summer breeding surveys at Mono Lake, and fall aerial surveys of Mono Lake, Bridgeport Reservoir, and Crowley Reservoir. ❖

Compiled by Sacha Heath of PRBO Conservation Science and Arya Degenhardt. This fall you may find them flying eastward, or wearing shin guards, respectively.

Global Observations from Mono's Watershed

by Kimberly Rollins

In the very near future climate change data specifically from the Eastern Sierra and the Mono Basin will be available for scientists studying the impacts of climate change on mountain environments. By the end of August 2004 the Sierra Nevada and White Mountain target regions for the Global Observation Research Initiative in Alpine Environments, or GLORIA, were completed.

GLORIA is an international initiative headquartered in Vienna, Austria, to study the impacts of climate change specifically in alpine environments around the world. The idea for the program blossomed in 1996 and GLORIA projects have been established in mountain areas around the globe. Besides the two target regions in California, the only other area in North America is in Glacier National Park.

The project uses a “multi-summit approach”, which establishes a baseline for comparing differences in species and vegetation and to allow for comparison of potential loss or change of biodiversity due to climate change worldwide.

The Sierra Nevada target region includes three summits near Dunderberg Peak and one summit along the Sierra Crest north of Tioga Pass. The international protocol prescribes specific types of sites for selection of summits, which start at the tree line and move up to higher elevations. The teams working to install GLORIA, which included professionals and volunteers, installed temperature data loggers and used grids divided into 100 sections to meticulously analyze the biodiversity of each section. The projects also require thor-

ough photo documentation, and will be the baseline for continuous studies that will occur in five-year intervals. Other GLORIA summits in the White Mountain target area include White Mountain Peak, Mount Barcroft, McAfee RNA and Sagehen Summit.

The GLORIA sites were chosen to geographically complement several new high-elevation long-term climate monitoring sites. Last year, two web-accessible, realtime weather stations were established in the White Mountain target area at White Mountain (www.wrcc.dri.edu/weather/wmntn.html) and Barcroft Station (www.wrcc.dri.edu/weather/barc.html); this October installation of a similar web-accessible station will be completed on Mount Warren.

These stations measure air temperature, relative humidity, precipitation, solar radiation, barometric pressure, snow depth, average wind speeds, gust wind speeds, and wind direction.

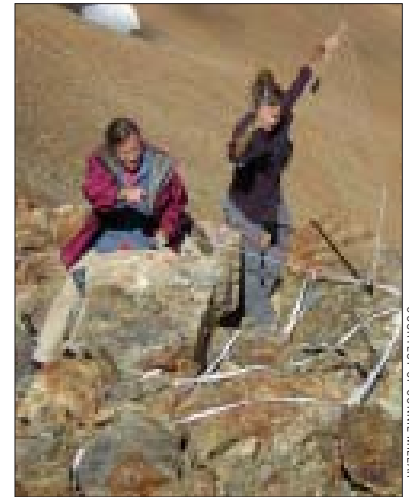
Erin Brandt who is an Intern Naturalist for the Mono Lake Committee and volunteered on the Dunderberg GLORIA installation said, “It’s great that we’ll be able to get such important data about climate change with such minimal impact. I’m glad I had the opportunity to help install the station—it was fun and I learned a lot.”

Connie Millar, USFS Research Scientist and GLORIA Project Leader, gave a presentation that included the GLORIA project at this year’s Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua. “We are very proud to have established these important global-monitoring sites in the Eastern Sierra and White Mountains,” said Millar.

The Sierra Nevada sites are extremely important for the GLORIA project, and the information gathered should also be useful for understanding how climate change is affecting the Mono Basin.

If you are interested in more information on the GLORIA project, see www.gloria.ac.at/res/gloria_home/ or contact Dr. Millar at cmillar@fs.fed.us. ❖

Kim Rollins is the Committee’s Naturalist Intern. She and fellow intern Alison Young are getting ready for an adventure in Baja this fall!



Dr. Ann Dennis, GLORIA Field Project Manager and Mono Lake Committee Intern Erin Brandt setting up for biodiversity measurements on Dunderberg Peak.

COURTESY OF CONNIE MILLAR



COURTESY OF CONNIE MILLAR

GLORIA stations focus on the top 10-meter elevation zones of select summits. Biodiversity is measured with non-permanent devices using non-manipulative survey techniques, which provide essential data for scientists studying global climate change.

Learning About Creeks Inside and Out

by Kimberly Rollins

The Mono Lake Committee, community members, and the Mono County Office of Education are working to establish an Eastern Sierra Watershed Program (ESWP) in Mono County to teach local sixth-graders about creeks.

The ESWP is designed to give kids hands-on experience, outside, in small groups, where they learn about water quality, stream flow, aquatic macroinvertebrates, riparian vegetation, and fish studies through experiments and demonstrations.

Since 2001, Inyo County has received funding so that all sixth through eighth grade students have been able to complete the full-day program with curriculum specifically designed for each grade.

Unfortunately, Mono County does not have funds to support such a program, but because of volunteers, including some Mono Lake Committee staff, about 75 Mono County sixth-graders completed the ESWP this year.

Trained volunteer docents from the community spent two full days with area sixth-graders: one day at Mammoth Creek with Mammoth Elementary School and one day at Mill Creek with Lee Vining Elementary School. Spending a day out on the creek with the Lee Vining kids was truly inspiring!

Out on the Creek

Upon arrival at the creek, students were divided into groups of around five and given a field notebook to record information, safety goggles, and gloves that they were required to wear during the experiments.

Each docent is trained to teach a specific section of the program, which is designed to be interactive and fun—the children are mobile and get first-hand experience conducting experiments.

During the water quality section, the sixth-graders took the air temperature and observed other weather conditions such as wind speed, wind direction, and sunlight. Next, they tested the pH of the creek and learned about the pH range that can sustain plant and animal life. The students then conducted chemistry experiments to test the turbidity, solids and salinity, hardness, dissolved oxygen, and nitrates in the water.

Although the docents were teaching complex ideas to the students, the kids were able to grasp the lessons through simple explanations and vivid demonstrations.

After their chemistry lesson, some of the kids got into the creek to learn about stream flow. The docent used a wooden box and gallon jugs to show the students how much one cubic

foot of water actually is: the measurement used to determine stream flow. After the kids discerned that one cubic foot is about eight gallons of water, they set up one-foot transects across a 12-foot wide cross-section of Mill Creek and using a

flow meter, measured the depth and flow at the midpoint of each transect.

The students then moved from measuring the flow of the stream to measuring the different types of aquatic macroinvertebrates in the stream. The field notebook contained diagrams of three different groups of macroinvertebrates with varying degrees of sensitivity to pollution. After collecting some specimens from the creek, the sixth-graders divided the different species into ice trays and tallied the numbers in their notebooks. After review-

ing the ratio of tolerant to sensitive macroinvertebrates, the students could properly assess the health of the stream.

Not only did the kids learn about what's going on in the stream, they also learned about the vegetation around the stream by setting up a green line transect to measure the percentage of different types of vegetation around the stream. First, the student with the most consistent stride was determined by walking both sides of a line. Whoever had the closest number of steps both times was declared the "pacer" and the length of their stride was measured. The vegetation was split into four categories; cottonwood, willow, forb, or bareground. As the pacer walked the length of the green line transect, another student recorded her number of steps. The other students walked ahead and each time they determined a change in vegetation, a student would stand there and call out the kind of vegetation when the pacer reached them. After the pacer walked the length of the green line transect, the students figured out the percentage of each plant community along the creek.

The final stage of the program is an electro-fishing study, which teaches students the different species that inhabit the stream and where the fish are most often found. A fishery biologist captures fish through electrofishing, then the students identify the fish, measure its length and weight, determine its age by a fish scale sample and discuss the relationship between a healthy stream and a healthy fishery.

Patricia Schlicting, Program Coordinator for Mono County Office of Education, said feedback from the program was positive and although the future of the ESWP in the Mono Basin is not yet determined, the Mono Lake Committee is dedicating time and resources in hopes that the program will continue to develop in 2005. ❖



Lee Vining students participating in the Watershed Project.

BARTSHE MILLER

Meet the New Zealand Mud Snail

Tiny Creature Threatens Stream Systems in the Eastern Sierra ... so far not in the Mono Basin

by Kimberly Rollins

The inconspicuous New Zealand Mud Snail is causing a lot of concern in California. Although the snail, *Potamopyrgus antipodarum*, is less than six millimeters in length, this tiny mollusk is already wreaking havoc in some parts of California and has the potential to be catastrophic to fisheries throughout the west.

The New Zealand Mud Snail is classified as a grazer and prefers diatoms and plant and animal detritus, which is a similar diet to native macroinvertebrate larvae, such as caddisflies and mayflies. Since caddisflies and mayflies are the main food source for trout, and the mud snail has no known predators in the United States, the snail can sometimes out compete other macroinvertebrates, leaving the fish with a reduced food supply.

Successful Snails

In New Zealand, where the mud snail is native, there are 14 trematode parasites and at least three native fish species that frequently feed on the snails, which keeps their population under control. Although some fish attempt to eat them in the United States, the hardy snail simply shuts its operculum and passes through the fish unharmed.

Another characteristic that makes the mud snail a very successful invasive species is that they are parthenogenetic, meaning most of the snails are females that can reproduce without fertilization. This means that just one snail getting into a stream can start an entire population in a previously uninhabited stream, and so far they have been successful in spreading.

Although these snails themselves are relatively fast movers (capable of about one meter per hour) they rely on hitchhiking to get around, and their main vehicle is humans. They attach to



New Zealand Mud Snails, seen here with a dime, are quite small, and can easily hitchhike to new waters on waders or shoes without being noticed.

anything: shoes, waders, boats, and any other solid object that's been in a snail-inhabited stream. The only way to stop them is by fastidious vigilance over all possessions that have been in the water.

How to Stop the Spread of the Snails

Although there are many recommended methods, the only definite ways to eradicate the snails are by freezing any gear at least six to eight hours (overnight is suggested), or research has shown that bleach treatments are also effective in killing the snails.

The New Zealand Mud Snail is very adaptable and can tolerate a wide range of habitats including reservoirs, lakes, rivers and estuaries.

According to Dave Herbst, UC Research Scientist of the Sierra Nevada Aquatic Research Laboratory, the snails do best in disturbed areas with poor water quality.

"I believe that they may be limited under more stable, less disturbed habitat conditions because here the native invertebrates are diverse and specialized in their resources use (both food and space) and may hold their own against the snail invasion," said Herbst. "This suggests that habitat quality improve-

ments, restoration, may be the best approach for long-term control of the mud snail."

Although the mud snail has not yet been detected in the Mono Basin, the Mono Lake Committee is very concerned with the potential impact it would have if it did get into Mono Basin streams. The snail was discovered in 1999 in the Upper Owens River, which is just one watershed to the south. We strongly encourage everyone to take all preventative measures and inform others on how to prevent the New Zealand Mud Snail from spreading.

For more information on the New Zealand Mud Snail online visit:

California Department of Fish and Game: http://www.dfg.ca.gov/fishing/html/Administration/MudSnail/Mudsnail_0.htm.

And New Zealand Mud Snail Research and Management: <http://www2.montana.edu/nzms/>. ♦

Known Locations of the New Zealand Mudsnail in California

- Bartlett Springs, on Owens Dry Lake, Inyo County
- Hot Creek, Mono County
- Upper Owens River, Mono County
- Lower Owens River, Inyo County
- Layton Springs (NE inflow to Crowley Reservoir), Mono County
- Putah Creek, Yolo County
- Lower Calaveras River and Mormon Slough, San Joaquin County
- Lower Mokelumne River, Sacramento and San Joaquin Counties
- Lower Napa River, Napa County

Magnetic Microbes in Mono Lake

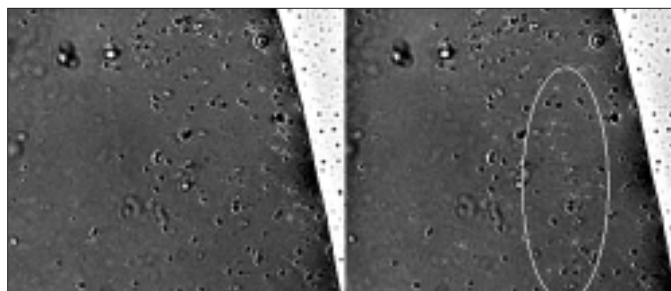
By Cody Nash

Editor's Note: Down at the lake one day, staff member Bartshé Miller ran into Cody Nash. When Cody mentioned that he was studying magnetic bacteria we just had to ask him to write an article so we could learn more!

My experience with Mono Lake began in 2002, when I led a small group of Caltech undergraduate geology students on an expedition to collect magnetic bacteria. We were on a hunt—collecting gallons of water and mud in jars and core tubes collected from the shore all the way to the deepest parts of the lake.

What is it about Mono Lake and magnetic bacteria that brought us there in the first place? Magnetic bacteria are fascinating life forms, creatures only a few thousandths of a millimeter long that synthesize inside themselves near-perfect crystals of magnetic minerals—most commonly the iron oxide magnetite. These crystals are already being used in biotechnology and nanotechnology applications today. Someday, they may lead to novel cancer treatments and data storage devices. The crystals are also preserved in rock record and are distinct enough from magnetic minerals not of biological origin that they can be identified as fossils—magnetofossils! Magnetofossils have been identified in rocks over 500 million years old, and may exist in rocks much older.

In fact, the oldest reported magnetofossils occur in a meteorite from Mars. These putative fossils are highly controversial; if they are real, they may represent the first evidence of extraterrestrial life. The possibility that magnetic bacteria lived on early Mars is what led me to Mono Lake. Mounting evidence suggests that lakes of liquid water existed on Mars early in its history, when the planet was likely warmer and wetter. As Mars transformed into the cold and dry world we see today, liquid water would have



This image shows a before (left), where all of the magnetic bacteria are collected at the edge of a drop (the dark area). On the right is the same drop, a few seconds after reversing the field direction. There is a wave of magnetic bacteria swimming away from the drop that are highlighted by the white circle.

pooled in restricted basins. The lakes thus formed would have become more saline and alkaline as the water evaporated or froze and sublimated away. Mono Lake, which is at least 760,000 years old, is one of the oldest evaporitic basins on Earth, and provides an analogous environment to early Mars.

After our first expedition to Mono Lake, we returned to the laboratory and used various methods to extract magnetic bacteria from our samples. Using the tools of modern biology, particularly the polymerase chain reaction, we amplified from the DNA of the bacteria one of the genes most commonly used to identify organisms, the small subunit ribosomal RNA gene. The identity of the magnetic organisms we found in Mono Lake placed them in groups of bacteria in which they had never been observed before. One of the groups, the Archaea, is so distantly related to all of the other known magnetic bacteria that we were very surprised to see them. Strictly speaking, the Archaea are not bacteria at all, but a distinct domain of life, just like the eukaryotic domain to which plants, animals, and fungi belong. It was as if we had discovered mushrooms with wings!

In 2003, I again led a group of undergraduates to Mono. The students got real-life field research experience when the sampling device, a gravity corer, refused to work. We returned home with samples only from the shore and depths to which we could snorkel. We attempted to cultivate the magnetic bacteria in dozens of conditions. While our cultivation experiments did not succeed and our samples ultimately perished, using a microscope, we managed to record on video some small-spiral shaped magnetic bacteria from just under the surface of the sediment.

This year I am returning to Mono Lake as a NASA Planetary Biology Intern, collaborating with researchers at the University of Southern California. Our aim is to rigorously identify and isolate the magnetic bacteria of Mono Lake. It is very exciting, and I look forward to finding out exactly who these magnetos (as we like to call them) are. ❖

Cody Nash is a graduate student at the California Institute of Technology undertaking a Planetary Biology Internship through the University of Southern California.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CODY NASH

One technique for selecting magnetic bacteria from a sample is the racetrack, shown here. Samples taken from the sediment cores (top right) are placed in the center tube of the racetracks (bottom left). Sterile cotton plugs separate the sample in the main tube from filtered sample water in the smaller horizontal tubes. Magnets create a field across the racetrack such that magnetic bacteria will swim through the plugs into the smaller tubes at a much faster rate than non-magnetic bacteria, hence the term racetrack.

Los Angeles Upgrades Lee Vining Creek Diversion Dam

by Kimberly Rollins

The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (DWP) is upgrading its water diversion facility and the Lee Vining Creek Diversion Pond, off Highway 120 West, will occasionally be lowered several feet from early August through early November as a result, according to Mark Hanna, Mono Basin Restoration Manager for DWP.

The diversion facility, including the pond, was built around 1940. According to the 1994 State Water Board Order, DWP is to maintain a flow of 54 cubic feet per second (cfs) in Lee Vining Creek below the dam during normal summer months: one cfs equals about 7.4 gallons.

The diversion structure is designed to maintain the pond, which allows a set amount of water into the Lee Vining conduit of the LA Aqueduct. Whatever is left goes down Lee Vining Creek.

The pond also collects sediment, which occasionally has to be dredged.

Two things are going to change with the new diversion plan: a gate will be installed in the dam that can be lowered



The Lee Vining diversion facility and pond, partially drained, August 2004.

to drain the pond during high flows, when most sediment would be trapped for sediment bypass. Lee Vining Creek is currently deprived of sand and gravel below the dam and this project will allow the sediment to flow downstream as it naturally would.

The project is also going to change the priority of the set flow from the conduit

to the creek. Instead of setting the flow on the conduit and making the creek fluctuate, DWP will set the flow on the creek and the conduit flow will fluctuate.

Geoff McQuilkin, Co-Executive Director of the Committee, said that the improvements are important for the stream and the aqueduct. "In the past, DWP has been at risk of violating the water board's minimum flow requirements when the weather and creek flows change suddenly. That has been due to the design of the facility, and the new upgrades will solve the problem."

Currently, someone must manually check the flows to the creek each day during peak flows. DWP will now be able to set the flow and operate it from a remote location.

"The first temporary lowering of the pool will be mid-August through September," said Hanna. "After this main episode, the pool may be periodically lowered until project completion."

Hanna said there could be "slight disruptions" to flows on Lee Vining Creek, but the "disruptions should have minimal impact." ♦



The pond on Lee Vining Creek as seen from the diversion facility, August 2004.

Streamwatch

Peak Flows, Bottomland Channels, and Willow Flycatchers

by Greg Reis

As reported in the Summer 2004 *Newsletter*, Rush Creek was given a 380 cubic feet per second (cfs) peak flow this year. While DWP engineers focused their attention on the Mono Gate One Return Ditch (see photo page 17), the testing of which was the purpose of the flow, scientists and others involved in the stream restoration were looking at the flow's effects on the natural stream between the ditch and Mono Lake.

Two days after June's Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua and ten days after the peak, when the flow was down to 100 cfs, the Mono Lake Committee took some scientists on a tour of some channels in the Rush Creek bottomlands. These channels were ordered for rewatering by the State Water Resources Control Board, however some parties are considering petitioning the Water Board for a change in the order and this year's high flows provided more

information for that debate.

While there, we encountered a jeep, then a pair of sandals, and then Chris McCreedy himself, who is studying Willow Flycatchers with PRBO Conservation Science. He gave us an impromptu talk on the Willow Flycatchers and tagged along on the rest of our tour, sharing his observations of where the water was during the peak flow. While the peak flow did flood many areas and may cause a response in riparian vegetation, a major reason for rewatering some channels is to create ponded waterfowl habitat, which will not occur in the fall migration season unless construction is undertaken.

Some areas don't look so good at all, such as the Channel 8 area, which water seeped into for the first time (following construction) this year. The Mono Lake Committee is monitoring newly installed piezometers in this area, where many

cottonwoods are dying back and have a similar look as trees in the Mill Creek bottomlands.

There wasn't time to visit the Channel 13 Complex, which dried out this year as a result of incision taking place in Channel 10. Chris McCreedy did take me to this area earlier in the spring, since it has the densest Willow Flycatcher nesting territories, and the cottonwoods and rose were dying back and had smaller leaves. The lack of cover increased predation of Yellow Warblers, however the Willow Flycatchers seemed to do okay this summer.

Lee Vining Creek doesn't seem to have these dying-back areas, and as Rush Creek begins getting peak restoration flows in the next few years, we will see if these areas disappear on Rush Creek as well. ❖

Greg Reis is the Committee's Information Specialist. He just planted 34 species of native plants in his yard.

Lakewatch

Thousands of Species Live in Mono Lake; Lake Level Continues to Fall

by Greg Reis

When people ask about what lives in Mono Lake, they are usually thinking of multicellular organisms: Brine Shrimp, Alkali Flies, Rotifers, and a nematode.

However, Mono Lake contains more viruses than possibly any other lake, and thousands of species of prokaryotic organisms such as bacteria: the hosts for most of those harmless viruses. Of the more complex single-celled organisms with organelles, the eukaryotes, there are maybe 100 species of protozoans and algae—far fewer than in freshwater lakes. The first protozoan found in Mono Lake

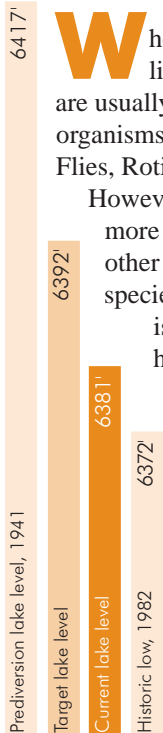
was in the genus *Frontonia*, found by David Mason in the 1960s. Virtually no research occurred on these organisms until last year, when Lloyd Davidson from Loyola and Northwestern Universities began looking for them with help from Bob Jellison and a grant from the Mono Lake Microbial Observatory. His most intriguing discovery has been millions of heliozoans in February of 2004, which may have a significant role in the food chain.

In the macro world, fascinating things can be seen as well. Due to a warm spring, there was a drastic shrimp die-off and diatom bloom at the end of August. This was caused in part by a large and crowded first generation producing a small live second generation. Luckily for the Eared Grebes, just arriving now, shrimp numbers rebounded somewhat in September—their

algae-grazing making the water a little less murky.

The lake is now at 6381 feet above sea level. The last time it was this low was March 1997. This is a four foot drop from July 1999, when it was the highest it has reached in 30 years. The hydrologic model predicts it will drop about half a foot by December and return to near this elevation by next April, resulting in a net .4 foot drop for the runoff year. In recent years the model has underpredicted the fluctuations of the lake, so it is likely that the lake will fall even lower.

If next year is dry, it is likely that Mono Lake will fall below 6380 feet above sea level. This would reduce the amount of water DWP is allowed to export from the Mono Basin from 16,000 acre-feet to 4,500 acre-feet per year. ❖



Mono Basin Journal

A Roundup of Quiet Happenings at Mono Lake

by Geoffrey McQuilkin



GEOFF MCQUILKIN

The summer was a season of fire and water. Not the regular wildfire of the mountains and forests, although our area has seen its share of smoke, flame, and harried Forest Service crews racing down the highway. No, the big fire this year was simulated, not real. But it appeared to be the ultimate in Mono Basin fire—a fresh lava flow dripping off the Mono Craters. It all started with a small spot fire (of the real, smoke and flame kind) started by a lightening strike on the west flank of the craters. Being remote and relatively small, the fire was allowed to burn, and it slowly gained elevation, moving up the loose grey pumice slope.

That upward creep created a nighttime drama. It all depended on your angle of view, of course, but northern observers looking down at the craters could see the distinct, dark outline of the craters against a starry sky, and a flowing swath of orange light descending from the top, wavering in the cool night air. It looked just like a lava flow that might glow through the night some unknown number of years hence when the next volcanic event spices up the regular routines of the Mono Basin.

The summer has water stories as well. There's the August rainy season, which has been a rather amplified version of average years. Monsoon moisture, afternoon thundershowers, nighttime lightening; sure, it's wonderful, but it's also expected. But day on day of rain that starts early, spreads wide across the Mono Basin, and falls hard with fingertip size drops that splat with authority? That is weather to remember.

And then there was the release, finally, of large flows of water into lower Rush Creek. Scientists fanned out across the bottomlands and engineers patrolled DWP facilities as everyone sought to learn from the planned 380 cubic feet per second release, the highest since 1998. The work of the water was impressive, shaping and rebuilding the creek. But perhaps more impressive still was to walk the bottomlands a few days later, with the creek back in its banks. For across the green meadows were sinuous bands of folded-down grass, enduring markers of the now-receded water, grass rivers created by the natural work of a creek that's growing in health thanks to the efforts of so many Mono Lake supporters.



GEOFF MCQUILKIN

From Behind the Binoculars

Field Notes from the Birding Intern

by Alison Young



Here at Mono Lake, the summer has been full of exciting bird sightings. From the edge of the lake to high in the Eastern Sierra above us, the Mono Basin has an amazing diversity of avian wildlife.

June ...

County Park was a busy bird locale ... the bright yellows of Western Tanagers, Yellow Warblers, and Bullock's Orioles flitting between the branches of the trees ... the raucous chorus of Hairy Woodpeckers, Red-breasted Sapsuckers, Northern Flickers, and Downy Woodpeckers ... Black-headed Grosbeaks and Spotted Towhees foraging under the bushes ... Killdeer, Wilson's Snipes, American Avocets, Yellow-headed Blackbirds at the shore ... and Cinnamon Teals, Mallards, Gadwalls, and Canada Geese with goslings dotting the surface of Mono Lake.

At other areas around the lake ... Sage Thrashers, Say's Phoebes, and Osprey perched on top of the towers at South Tufa ... one Long-billed Curlew feeding among hundreds of California Gulls at the Rush Creek delta ... a pair of Northern Harriers hunting at Sammann Spring ... Calliope, Costa's and Rufous Hummingbirds making an appearance ... a Green Heron camouflaging into the reeds at Dechambeau ponds.

Higher elevations in the Mono Basin brought Green-Tailed Towhees emerging from below the brush to sing on the hills above Lee Vining ... a Green-Winged Teal, Olive-sided Flycatcher, and Spotted Sandpiper enjoying the beaver ponds in Lundy Canyon ... Mountain Bluebirds sitting on the roofs in Bodie ... and a Warbling Vireo, Brown Creeper and Yellow-rumped Warbler up Parker Canyon.

July ...

was a great month to see birds of prey in the Mono Basin. Kestrels feeding small critters to their begging young ... a Prairie Falcon in the canyon of Wilson Creek ... scouting the territory at County Park was a juvenile Cooper's Hawk and a juvenile Red-shouldered Hawk (which caught and ate a snake while hunting from a tufa tower by the boardwalk) ... a Red-tailed Hawk having an unexpected meal of a Cooper's Hawk near Devil's Punchbowl ... Sharp-shinned, Cooper's, and Red-tailed Hawks at Glass Creek Meadow ... and a Great Horned Owl silently flying in the night at County Park.

Other birds graced the shores of Mono Lake as well ... Lazuli Buntings with their startling flash of blue ... a small flock of Hermit Thrushes quickly passing through at County Park ... Bushtits noisily chattering in the brush ... Black-crowned Night Herons stalking among the reeds ... Caspian Terns and Rock Wrens finding space between the nesting gulls on the islands ... Gray-crowned Rosy Finches adding color to the higher elevations ... Semipalmated Plovers, Marsh Wrens, Virginia Rails with their young, and flocks of 10,000 Wilson's Phalaropes in the marsh at County Park.



August ...

the Mono Basin was a favorite quick stopover for many migrating birds ... Wilson's and MacGillivray's Warblers singing in the trees ... Forster's Terns resting off-shore at South Tufa ... a Cassin's Vireo ... Long-billed Dowitchers, Willets, Greater Yellowlegs and Marbled Godwits probing the mud for a meal between newly-arrived Red-necked Phalaropes on the shore, occasionally scared into flight by a Peregrine Falcon ... Northern Shovelers feeding "bottoms-up" in the lake ... one White Pelican stopping in for a visit.



DRAWINGS BY ALISON YOUNG

Longer-residing birds entertained as well ... a fledgling Hairy Woodpecker following its parent loudly begging for food ... Gray Flycatchers bobbing their tails ... a Red-tailed Hawk screaming after a Golden Eagle above Lee Vining Canyon ... Western Wood Pewees seen and heard with greater frequency from their fly-catching perches ... the California Gulls born this year have learned to fly, and are all over the lake.... ❖

Alison Young is the Committee's Birding Intern. Along with her great knowledge of birds she also brought with her to the Mono Basin an amazing recipe for vegan peanut butter chocolate chip cookies.

The Forgotten Season

Winter Photography in the Mono Basin



PHOTO COURTESY OF RICHARD KNEPP

January 14–16, 2005

\$195 per person/ \$175 for Mono Lake Committee members

There is a visual quiet that compliments the silence marking this season in a most remarkable place. A lifting morning poconip fog, tufa towers jacketed in snow and reflected in the mirror of the lake's surface, ice sculpting crystalline filigree along creek and lake banks. Come share in the wonder that provides a very different photographic opportunity.

This photography field seminar will be based in Lee Vining and will explore various locations along the lake, photographing the serenity and beauty that is the Mono Basin in winter.

Though primarily a field seminar, there will be discussions covering composition and methods of proper exposure under the diverse variety of lighting conditions encountered during winter in the Eastern Sierra, the Zone System for color and black and white, visualization, filtration, and developing a personal vision. This field seminar is for the enthusiastic color and/or black and white photographer with a working knowledge of his or her camera.

Instructor Rick Knepp is a former Mono Lake Committee staff

member and long-time photographer whose autumn workshops have sold out for years running. Rick has studied with master printers John Sexton and Jim Stimson, teaches photography and darkroom techniques, and directs and assists at workshops around the Pacific Southwest. Rick is a veteran of Mono winters and his experience will allow you to take advantage of the many winter photographic opportunities.

Come prepared for the cold winter landscapes. This seminar will take place regardless of weather or road conditions. Be prepared for the possibility of driving in snow, or the additional drive time that may be required when Sierra passes are either closed for the winter or closed temporarily due to snow.

Cost is for tuition only. Participants must arrange their own accommodation. There will be no refunds due to weather. Seminar limited to 15 participants.

For registration or more information on the fourth annual winter photography seminar, contact Education Director Bartshé Miller (bartshe@monolake.org) at (760) 647-6595.



THE FALL CATALOG

from the Mono Lake Committee Bookstore



“IT’S FOR THE BIRDS” EMBROIDERED SWEATSHIRT
 This beautiful design was painted just for the Mono Lake Committee by local watercolorist Nancy Overholtz. Her beautiful American Avocet adorns the chest pocket of these 100% cotton pigment-dyed sweatshirts worn by Birding Intern Alison Young and Retail Manager Brett Pyle. Available in two styles: a boxy cut version in Sand with hemmed sleeves and an open bottom with side vents, and a crewneck style in Denim Blue with a narrow rib-knit collar, cuffs, and bottom band.



Chest pocket design

*Adult “It’s For the Birds” Embroidered Sweatshirt, in Blue or Sand, S–XL: \$44.00
 XXL: \$48.00*

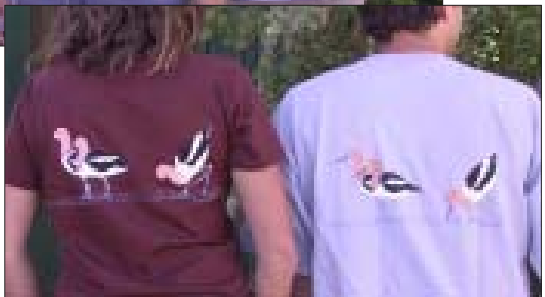
“IT’S FOR THE BIRDS” T-SHIRT

Nancy Overholtz’s gorgeous American Avocets have been silk-screened onto 100% organic cotton Patagonia shirts in two styles. Naturalist Intern Kim Rollins models the fitted women’s cut in maroon-brown and Information Specialist Greg Reis is sporting the unisex crew neck in light grey.



Chest pocket design

*It’s For The Birds T-shirt, Brown women’s cut or grey crewneck, Adult S–XL: \$18.00
 XXL(Grey Only): \$20.00*



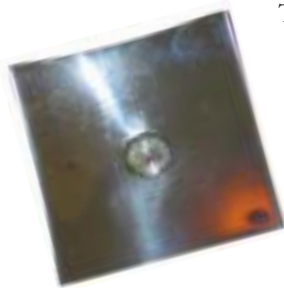
“MONO LAKE IS FOR LOVERS” RINGER T

Add a little 70s style to your wardrobe—Interns and platonic friends Ryan Carle and Erin Brandt have! Designed by Ryan while working on the front counter this summer, this simple retro style shirt harks back to the simple tone-on-tone designs of the 70s, but with a unique Mono Lake flare! Two brine shrimp entwine to make a heart with the words: Mono Lake Is For Lovers. The shirt is made in the USA with sweatshop-free labor and is very soft. Brown ink on tan heather shirt with brown collar.

Mono Lake is for Lovers Ringer T, tan heather, S–XL: \$16.00

Call (760) 647-6595 to order

❧ The Fall Catalog ❧



SQUARE TAPER CANDLES

These dripless square tapers are part candle, part incense. Scented candles stand 14" tall, with a 14-hour burn time and will fit in standard round candle holders. Available in the following scents(colors): White Ginger(ivory), Spicy Bergamot(orange), Green Tea(yellow), Citrus twist(turquoise), Lemongrass(light green), Vanilla Blossom(red), Lavender Mist(violet), and Jasmine Tea(light blue).
Square Tapers, please specify scent: \$6.50 each

ALUMINUM CANDLE HOLDER

The ultimate taper deserves an elegant treatment at its base. These beautiful handmade holders are made from recycled cast aluminum and will also hold round tapers. Available in two sizes: Small 3" square, large 4 1/4" square.
Small Aluminum Candle Holder: \$11.00 each
Large Aluminum Candle Holder: \$13.00 each



PHOTO MOBILES

Create your own mobile with up to 20 photos from a memorable vacation, a family reunion, or any special event. Clip holders allow for a variety of photo sizes.
Photo Mobile: \$12.00



REAL SOAP: LONG LIVE MONO LAKE BARS

Handcrafted from rainwater, vegetable oils, and essential and/or fragrance oils in the traditional cold process soapmaking method. The soaps are cured at least 8 weeks and then hand cut and embossed with the words "Long Live Mono Lake". Bath bars available in Lavender Swirl, Clean Citrus(Lemongrass), Rainbow (Citrus/Lavender/Eucalyptus), Jasmine, Sandalwood, Green Tea, and Fruit & Flowers. Gardener's bars with exfoliating oatmeal available in White Sage, Sweetgrass, and Unscented.

Real Soap, please specify Lavender, Clean Citrus, Rainbow, Jasmine, Sandalwood, Green Tea, Fruit & Flowers: \$4.50 each

Real Soap Gardner's bar, please specify White Sage, Sweetgrass, or Unscented: \$4.50 each



KEEPSAKE CEDAR GIFT CHEST WITH REAL SOAP

The originals of these keepsake chests date back to 1925 and were given to graduating students and brides. The manufacturers of our chests still use the original machinery to produce the lovely velour-lined, locking cedar boxes. The chest comes with your choice of any three bars of Real Soap (above). A unique gift that holds a lifetime of memories.
Keepsake Chest with 3 Bars of Real Soap, please specify soap fragrances: \$46.00

Call (760) 647-6595 to order

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Phalaropes



Eared Grebe



*Lee Vining Creek
& Lupine*

HAND-PAINTED CHRISTMAS ORNAMENTS

Artist Wendy Rismeyer has created three beautiful Mono Lake scenes, each handpainted in oils on a glass Christmas ornament. Two scenes depict the Mono Lake shoreline with either Phalaropes or Grebes, the third shows Lee Vining Creek with an early summer bloom of Lupine. These ornaments will be wonderful keepsakes to keep in your family for years.

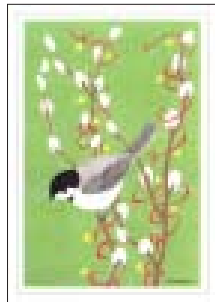
Hand-Painted Ornament, please specify Phalarope, Grebe, or Lupine: \$14.95 each



MONO CRATERS HOLIDAY CARD SET

Stephen Ingram's lovely photo of the snow-covered Mono Craters reflected in Mono Lake graces the front of this holiday card. Enjoy the holidays and wish for a big snowpack! Message inside reads: "Best wishes for a joyous holiday season".

Mono Craters Card Set, 8 cards w/ envelopes: \$11.95



WENDY MORGAN HOLIDAY CARD SETS

Chose from four charming designs by one of our favorite artists. The first design shows a Chickadee perched on a decorated pussy willow branch, the second shows a family of bears carrying festive holly, the third is a clever raven gathering treasures for his own tree, and the fourth has two chipmunks decorating their tree. Message inside reads: "May you have a Happy Holiday and a Joyous New Year".

Morgan Holiday Card Set, 10 cards w/envelopes, please specify Chickadee, Bears, Raven, or Chipmunks: \$11.95



Half Dome



Kearsarge Pinnacles



Horse Creek Trail



East Pinnacles Creek



Tuolumne Meadows

TOM KILLION HIGH SIERRA HOLIDAY CARD SET

A set of ten of Tom Killion's beautiful and popular High Sierra color woodcut prints. The set includes ten cards, two each of Half Dome, Kearsarge Pinnacles, Horse Creek Trail, East Pinnacles Creek, and Tuolumne Meadows. Message inside reads: "Peace on Earth".

Killion Holiday Set, 10 cards with envelopes: \$12.95

Call (760) 647-6595 to order

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SIENNA SKY EARRINGS

Sienna Sky makes fun, casual jewelry that is comfortable to wear and handcrafted to last. Each piece is carefully designed by artist Barbara MacCambridge to capture her love of animals and nature. All selections feature sterling silver ear-wires and are shown actual size.

Bird Earrings: Bluebird, Goldfinch, Tanager, Robin, Blue Jay, Red-Winged Blackbird, Meadowlark, Red-headed Woodpecker, Chickadee, Cardinal, Loon: \$11.50 each

Polished Silver Earrings: Pine Cone, Aspen Leaf: \$10.00 each



Bluebird



Goldfinch



Tanager



Robin



Blue Jay



Red-Winged Blackbird



Meadowlark



Red-headed Woodpecker



Chickadee



Loon



Cardinal



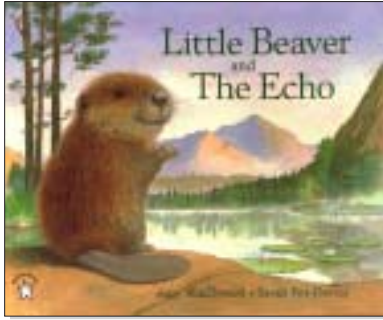
Pine Cone



Aspen Leaf

Call (760) 647-6595 to order

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LITTLE BEAVER AND THE ECHO

By Amy MacDonald, Illustrated by Sarah Fox-Davies

"I'm lonely," Little Beaver cries, "I need a friend." When a voice answers from across the pond, "I'm lonely. I need a friend," Little Beaver sets off to find this kindred spirit. Along the way, he's joined by a duck, an otter, and a turtle, who each claim, "I do need a friend, but it wasn't me who was crying." At the end of their journey the creatures meet a wise old beaver, who explains the mystery voice of the echo to them. Ages 3–8.

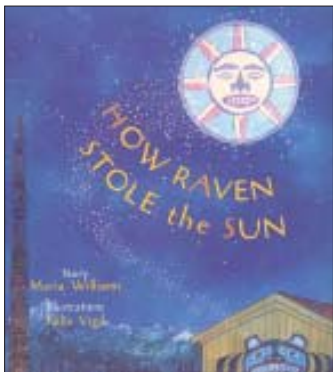
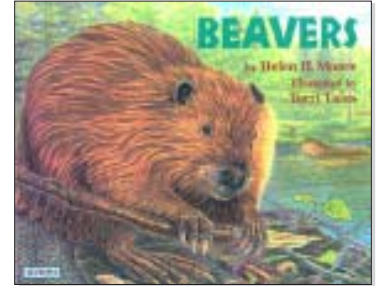
Little Beaver and the Echo, softcover, Putnam Publishing Group, 32 pages, 10"x 8½": \$6.99

BEAVERS

By Helen H. Moore, Illustrated by Terri Talas

How do beavers build dams? How long can they swim underwater without coming up for air? How do they say hello to each other? Do they ever take vacation? Readers find out the answers to these and other questions about beavers in this stunningly illustrated nonfiction book. Ages 4–8.

Beavers, softcover, Mondo Publishing, 32 pages, 10"x 8": \$4.95



HOW RAVEN STOLE THE SUN

Story by Maria Williams, illustrated by Felix Vigil

A long time ago, Raven was pure white, like fresh snow in winter. This was so long ago that the only light came from campfires, because a greedy chief kept the stars, moon, and sun locked up in elaborately carved boxes. Determined to free them, the shape-shifting Raven resourcefully transformed himself into the chief's baby grandson and cleverly tricked him into opening the boxes and releasing the starlight, moonlight, and finally, sunlight. When the furious chief locks him in the house, Raven is forced to escape through the small smokehole at the top—and that's why ravens are now black as smoke. Ages 4–8.

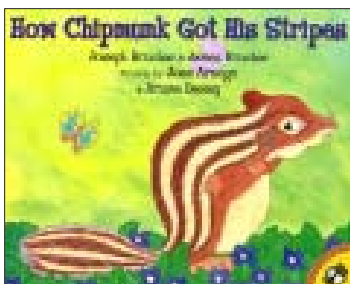
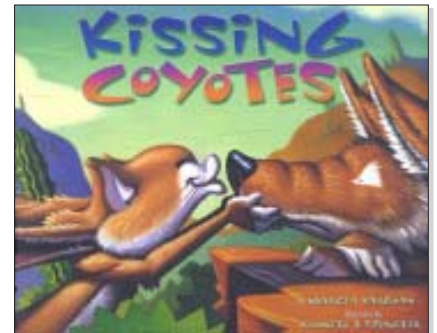
How Raven Stole The Sun, hardcover, Abbeville Press, 29 pages, 9½"x 9½": \$14.95

KISSING COYOTES

Written by Marcia Vaughan, Illustrated by Kenneth J. Spengler

Jack Rabbit makes idle boasts to his friends until they get fed up and call on him to make good on his bragging. Jack must kiss some coyotes and an hilarious chase ensues. How Jack makes good on all of his claims results in a funny, adventurous folktale. The colorful art makes the crazy characters come alive in a story that will make kids laugh out loud. Ages 3–8.

Kissing Coyotes, hardcover, Rising Moon Books, 32 pages, 10¾" x 9¼": \$15.95



HOW CHIPMUNK GOT HIS STRIPES

By Joseph and James Bruchac, Illustrated by Jose Aruego and Ariane Dewey

Bear struts through the forest, bragging: "I am Bear. I am the biggest of all the animals. I can do anything!" Squirrel challenges him: "Can you tell the sun not to rise tomorrow morning?" Bear accepts the challenge. When the sun predictably rises in the morning, Bear is disgruntled and angry, and squirrel continues to tease. When Bear threatens to eat him Squirrel dashes for his burrow. He escapes, but not before Bear has raked his back with his sharp claws, leaving Squirrel with long, pale stripes on his back. He is now Chipmunk, the Striped One. Ages 4–8.

How Chipmunk Got His Stripes, softcover, Puffin Books, 32 pages, 10"x 8": \$6.99

Call (760) 647-6595 to order

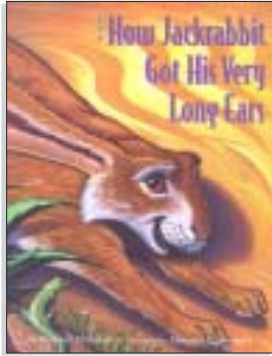
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FIRE RACE: A KARUK COYOTE TALE

Retold by Jonathan London, Illustrated by Sylvia Long

In this retelling of a Karuk folk tale, Coyote, with the help of other animal friends, brings fire to the animal people. We learn how yellow jackets got their black striping and why fire comes from wood. Ages 4-8.

Fire Race, softcover, Chronicle Books, 40 pages, 9¾"x 8¾": \$6.95

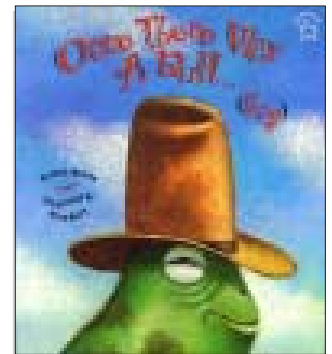


HOW JACKRABBIT GOT HIS VERY LONG EARS

Heather Irbinskas, Illustrated by Kenneth J. Spengler

When the Great Spirit creates the desert and the creatures who will live there, he designates the jackrabbit to guide the animals to their new homes and explain their special adaptations to their environment. The flighty rabbit doesn't listen well, though, and gets in trouble when he starts fabricating answers. The Great Spirit realizes what's happening and gives Jackrabbit a new adaptation of his own: big ears to help him listen better to what he's told. Full of energy and strong on characterization. Ages 5-8.

How Jackrabbit Got His Very Long Ears, hardcover, Rising Moon Books, 32 pages, 11¼"x 8 ¾": \$15.95



ONCE THERE WAS A BULL (FROG)

By Rick Walton, Illustrations by Greg Hally

When a bullfrog sets out to find his lost hop in the Old West, nothing is what it appears to be. With the flip of a page, a toad becomes a toadstool, a dog becomes a doghouse, a cow becomes a cowboy and a stage becomes a stagecoach in this rollicking story that's a true page-turner—in every sense of the word! Ages 3-8.

Once There was A Bull (frog), softcover, Putnam Publishing Group, 432 pages, 9"x 8": \$6.99

HAND PUPPETS

These beautiful plush hand puppets will keep the young ones occupied for hours. They have a life-like appearance and are built to take a lot of punishment. These puppets make a great gift when combined with one of our kid's book selections! Ages 3 and up. The book titles listed feature the animal as a main character.

Coyote Puppet, 15" tall: \$32.00 (Fire Race: A Karuk Coyote Tale)

Chipmunk Puppet, 10" tall: \$18.00 (How Chipmunk Got His Stripes)

Beaver Puppet, 12" tall: \$24.00 (Little Beaver and the Echo, Beavers)

Raven Puppet, 13" tall: \$20.00 (How Raven Stole The Sun)

Frog Puppet, 12" long: \$15.00 (Once There Was A Bull(frog))

Jackrabbit Puppet, 18" tall: \$30.00 (Kissing Coyotes, and How Jackrabbit Got His Very Long Ears)



Coyote



Chipmunk



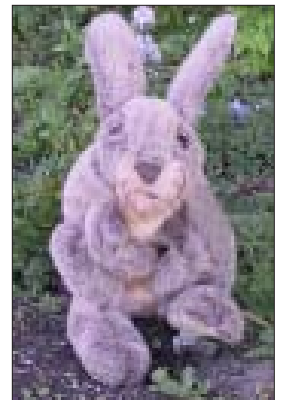
Beaver



Raven



Frog



Jackrabbit

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CALIFORNIA NATURAL HISTORY GUIDES

SIERRA NEVADA NATURAL HISTORY

By Tracy I. Storer, Rober L. Usinger, and David Lukas

First published 40 years ago, this book has become an enduring natural history classic, used by thousands to learn more about virtually every aspect of this mountain range. Comprehensive yet concise and portable, the book describes hundreds of species: trees and shrubs, flowering plants and ferns, fungi and lichens, insects and fish, amphibians and reptiles, and birds and mammals. Now completely updated and revised with the help of Committee friend and seminar leader David Lukas, it describes more than 750 of the species most likely to be encountered with more than 500 new color photographs and 218 detailed black-and-white drawings.

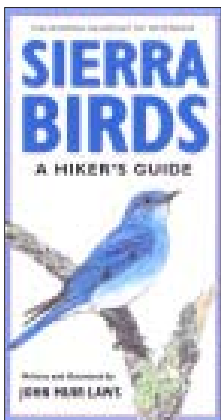
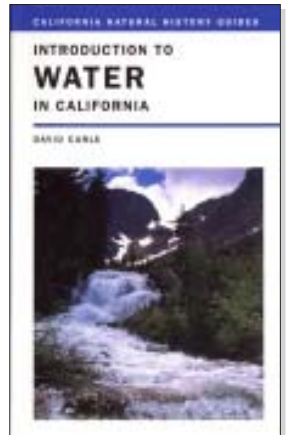
Sierra Nevada Natural History, UC Press, softcover, 560 pages, 5¼" x 8": \$24.95

CALIFORNIA NATURAL HISTORY GUIDES INTRODUCTION TO WATER IN CALIFORNIA

By David Carle

This book tells the story of California's most precious resource, tracing the journey of water in the state from the atmosphere to the snowpack to our faucets and foods. Features 137 color photographs, 27 color maps, and a table "Where Does Your Water Come From?" for 315 California cities and towns. Written by Mono Basin resident, retired Tufa State Reserve Ranger, and author David Carle, this book provides up-to-date information on water quality in California, including discussions of Giardia, groundwater contamination, fluoride, and the bottled-water phenomenon.

Introduction To Water In California, UC Press, soft cover, 261 pages, 4¾" x 7½": \$16.95



SIERRA BIRDS: A HIKER'S GUIDE

By John Muir Laws

Novice birders often distinguish birds by color and size. This guide is a unique book that assumes no prior birding knowledge on the part of the reader and is organized for quick and easy reference. More than 200 species are represented, arranged by color and size, and annotated with distinctive features and behaviors. Beautifully illustrated by Committee friend Jack Laws, this guide is a convenient size for hikers and backpackers.

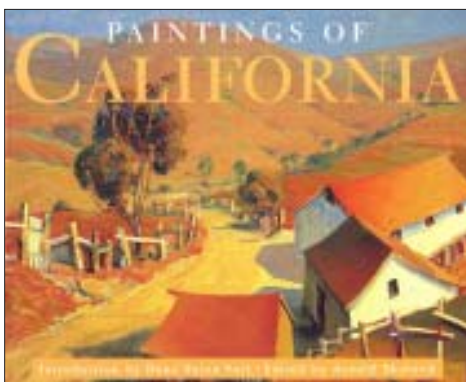
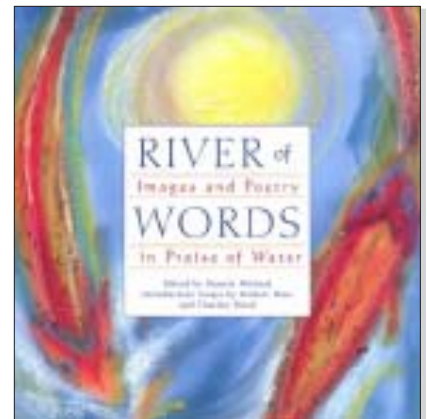
Sierra Birds, softcover, Heyday Books, 64 pages, measures 4½" x 8¾": \$9.95

RIVER OF WORDS:

IMAGES AND POETRY IN PRAISE OF WATER

This book is a collection of art and poetry created by children under the auspices of The River of Words project, founded in 1996 to encourage children to explore and savor the watersheds where they live. With selections by children from places as diverse as Azerbaijan and the US, China and Ivory Coast, Thailand and the Ukraine, it is colorful and passionate evidence of fertile minds creating fertile visions of the world. From the hearts and minds of children come expressions of pure joy and exultation, as well as sorrow and longing—all inspired by water.

River of Words, softcover, Heyday Books, 96 pages, measures 8" x 8": \$12.95



PAINTINGS OF CALIFORNIA

Edited by Arnold Skolnick

For many years California was the edge of the American world, and perhaps because of this, it, more than any other state, has inspired an art reflective of the frontier and the American dream. Beautifully illustrated with over seventy landscapes, seascapes, and cityscapes, *Paintings of California* explores some of the finest results of this inspiration, including works by Albert Bierstadt, Childe Hassam, Granville Redmond, Millard Sheets, Elmer Bischoff, Wayne Thiebaud, and many more.

Paintings Of California, UC Press, soft cover, 128 pages, 9" x 7¼": \$19.95

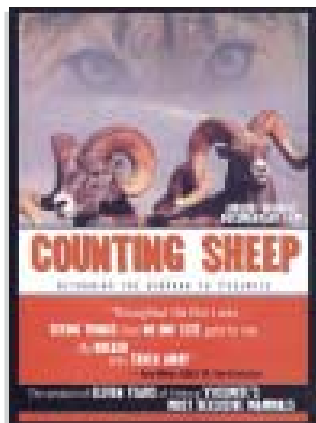
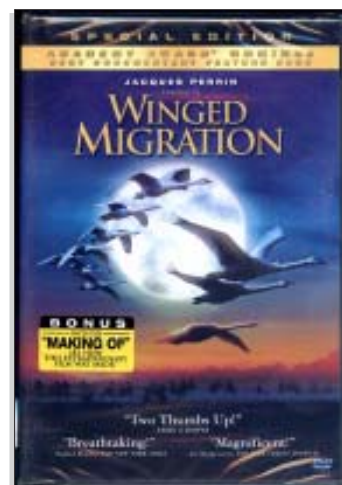
Call (760) 647-6595 to order

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WINGED MIGRATION DVD

This Academy Award nominated documentary allows you to witness the migrations of a variety of bird species through 40 countries and all seven continents. The cinematographers used planes, gliders, helicopters, and balloons to fly alongside, above, and below their subjects. A breathtaking and exhilarating film.

Winged Migration DVD, 89 minutes: \$26.95



COUNTING SHEEP:

RETURNING THE BIGHORN TO YOSEMITE DVD

High in the Yosemite wilderness the last few native bighorn sheep fight for survival. This is the dramatic story of an oboe-playing mountain man turned scientist and a mountain lion tracker, who are trying to save the sheep from the lions and extinction.

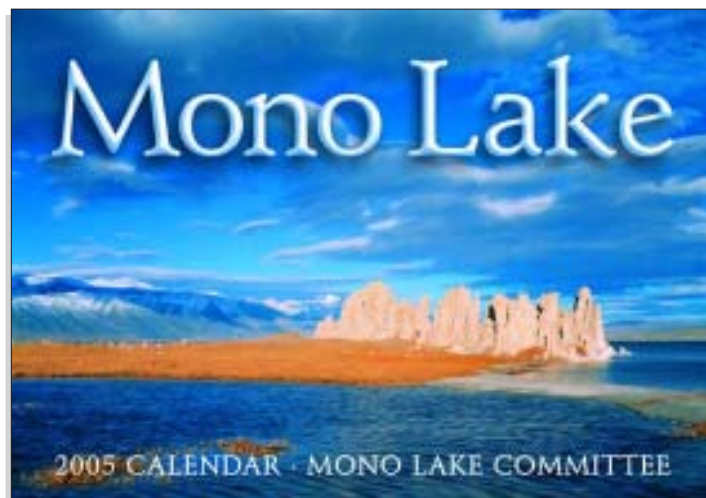
Counting Sheep DVD, 60 minutes: \$24.95

2005 MONO LAKE CALENDAR

The 2005 Mono Lake Calendar is full of beautiful images of Mono Lake and the Mono Basin. From awesome storms to mountain streams to views from high above, this 12-month calendar captures many unique views. Each month also features insets of local flora and fauna. Can't get enough of

Mono Lake? This is a great way to catch a glimpse of the Mono Basin through the months and seasons of the year right in your home or office! Printed in the USA on recycled paper.

2005 Mono Lake Calendar, measures 13¼" x 9¼": \$10.95



Order by phone: (760) 647-6595, fax: (760) 647-6377, or email: bookstore@monolake.org

MONO LAKE COMMITTEE MAIL ORDER FORM

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Daytime phone _____

☐ Check (to Mono Lake Committee) ☐ MasterCard ☐ Visa ☐ Discover

Card Number _____ Expiration Date _____

Signature _____

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

Quan	Item	Size	Color	Price	Total
Shipping & Handling: use rates at left					
Subtotal					
CA residents—add 7.25% sales tax to subtotal					
Total					

California law requires us to charge sales tax on sales and shipping and handling for deliveries in California.

International Shipping Rates by weight.

Phone: (760) 647-6595

Fax: (760) 647-6377

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

Volunteers Help Visitors Enjoy Mono Lake

The new Mono Basin Volunteer Program is a joint agency initiative benefitting the Forest Service, California State Parks and the Mono Lake Committee. 2004 was the first year for the program, and was a great success!

There were four volunteer opportunities this summer: roving at South Tufa, staffing a bird watching station at the State Reserve Boardwalk, and answering questions at the Forest Service Visitor Center and Mono Lake Committee front desks. Six participants attended seven extra hours of interpretive training and have been presenting formal interpretive tours at South Tufa.

Volunteer training included six half-day sessions focusing on getting familiarized with visitor areas around the Mono Basin. Participants agreed to donate at least eight hours each month from June to September. This year there were 11 volunteers.

The joint program has been extremely beneficial, and the program is stronger because all the major visitor service groups in the area are involved and volunteers can arrange work opportunities to suit their own interests.

As this *Newsletter* goes to press the program is running smoothly and enhancing visitor services around Mono Lake every day. Next time you are in the Basin, look for the friendly and knowledgeable people in the khaki vests with the California Gull on the back!

The success of the new Mono Basin Volunteer Program is

due in large part to Volunteer Coordinator, and retired State Reserve Ranger, Janet Carle. Without her expertise, knowledge, and dedication the program could not have succeeded. Thank you Janet!

Special thanks also to the Preserving Wild California program of the Resources Legacy Fund Foundation, which provided the grant that made the program possible.

If you are interested in the volunteer class for 2005, please contact Fran (frances@monolake.org) at (310) 316-0041. ❖



ARVA DEGENHARDT

The volunteers of 2004 and representatives from participating agencies, back row left to right: Fran Spivy-Weber, Dave Marquart, Tim Bue, Patrick Koske-McBride, Hank Garretson, Geoff McQuilkin. Front row: Maggie Witt, Katie Mulder, Jo Bacon, Margo Dawley, Jean Dillingham, Rhonda Starr, Phyllis Benham, Janet Carle. Volunteers are all in vests.

Mono Basin Scenic Area Celebrates its 20th Anniversary

by Frances Spivy-Weber

The Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area celebrated its 20th birthday in Lee Vining on July 10th with fifty people, many of whom were instrumental in getting the Federal legislation written, adopted, and implemented locally. Jeff Bailey, Inyo National Forest Supervisor, and Frances Spivy-Weber, Mono Lake Committee Co-Executive Director, welcomed everyone. A distinguished panel (see photo) entertained everyone with tales of what really happened.

Richard Lehman, sponsor of the legislation, and his key staffer, Mary Lou Cooper, told the story of how as a freshman Congressman, Lehman arrived in Washington not knowing that he should take a long time to get something done. On his first day, he ordered the preparation of legislation to protect Mono Lake. Don Banta and Andrea Lawrence recalled some heated exchanges at the local hearing, to which Mary Lou remarked, "The hearing started about lunch time, and I soon realized I was lunch!"

Dale Crane, who actually wrote the bill designating the Scenic Area, wisely included guidelines for future development. This meant Nancy Upham, the first Scenic Area staff person, had the often-tense assignment of visiting each private property to measure, sometimes with just a tape measure, the footprint of existing structures, which under the Scenic Area guidelines were not to be expanded more than 100 percent.

In closing, Bailey praised the Visitor Center, as a focal point for public education about Mono Lake. Mono Lake Committee Co-Executive Director Geoff McQuilkin cautioned that Federal funding cuts and the threat of development in violation of Scenic Area guidelines top of the list of future challenges.

After a celebration dinner at the Mono Inn, the party moved to Mono Lake, where Water Board Chairman, Art Baggett, his son, Fritz, and Ryan Carle played guitar, fiddle, and mandolin. There was singing and dancing—rejoicing in another magical moment at Mono Lake.

Scenic Area 20th Anniversary panel from left to right: Frances Spivy-Weber, Jeff Bailey, Mary Lou Cooper, Congressman Rick Lehman, Nancy Upham, Geoff McQuilkin, and Martha Davis.

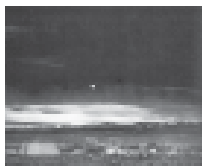


ELIN LIVING

Free Drawing to Protect Mono Lake

Send in Your Tickets Today!

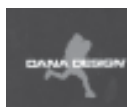
The Free Drawing is an annual Mono Lake Committee fundraiser. Send in your tickets today (find them in the center of this *Newsletter*) and get a chance to win one of these amazing prizes donated by generous supporters of the Mono Lake Committee.



Signed Ansel Adams lithograph courtesy of the Mono Inn Restaurant and the Ansel Adams Gallery in Yosemite, Bebble Beach, and Lee Vining.



**Wilson's
Eastside
Sports**



Deluxe Camping Package from Wilson's Eastside Sports of Bishop includes items such as trekking poles, a backpack, stove, tent, thermarest, and sleeping bag, from companies like Leki, MSR, Western Mountaineering, Dana Designs, and Cascade Designs!



Mammoth Vacation 3-night stay at the Cinnamon Bear Inn with gift certificates for Mammoth Lakes Ice Creamery, Nicely's Restaurant, and dinner at The Mono Inn.



Weekend for Two at Rainbow Tarns near Crowley Lake with gift certificates for the Base Camp Café, Mono Market, the Chart House Restaurant, and Mammoth Lakes Ice Creamery.



2-Night Getaway at the Double Eagle Resort & Spa Rest, relax, rejuvenate, and revitalize with a 2-day mid-week stay.



Salomon S810 Scream 8 Pilot Hot Skis with S810 Ti Bindings from Footloose Sports of Mammoth Lakes.

Framed Original Mono Lake Watercolor by Bridgeport artist Nicola Voorhees.



Trefry Pottery by popular Mono Basin artist Jack Trefry this 18" pottery serving bowl is both beautiful and functional.



Patagonia Women's El Cap and Men's Synchilla Snap-T Jackets 4 separate jackets awarded.



Split Loom Beaded Necklace from artist Anne Bredon.

Stained Glass Dragonfly by local artists Douglas and Cindy Dunaway.



Yosemite Association Seminar choose one from many different topics.



Mono Lake: Explorations and Reflections coffee table book by Jim Stimson, 3 prizes awarded.



Mono Lake Committee Gift Packs Everything you need to show your support of Mono Lake, 3 prizes awarded.

Staff Migrations

by Geoff McQuilkin

Is it already migration time again? Time sure flies when you're having fun—you can just ask our seasonal staff!

As this *Newsletter* goes to press we bid farewell to six wonderful seasonal staff.

Anna Scofield has re-worked the engine on her truck and is headed back to San Luis Obispo for her second year at Cal Poly. Anna, a volunteer on the Lee Vining Fire Department, the friendly face behind the counter of one of the local coffee shops, and all around kind person, has worked for six years as the Retail Assistant on the front counter at the Mono Lake Committee. Over the years her helpful advice and patience have benefitted literally thousands of visitors to the Mono Basin. Thank you Anna, for everything you've done; we wish you the best, and hope to see you soon.

Retail Assistant **Heidi Hall** was a great help on the front counter this summer as well. Her local knowledge and calm manner were a gift to many visitors. Heidi lives locally, so we hope to see you around town, or, more likely, out and about in the canyons this fall.

Canoe Coordinator **Cliff Rocha** is migrating to the coast over the Sierra. We wish you the best at UC Berkeley, and make sure to say hello to the California Gulls over there from all of us.

Naturalist Intern **Elin Ljung** is headed east for her senior year at St. Olaf College in Minnesota. We hope Elin will follow in her family's footsteps and migrate back to Mono every year.

Naturalist Intern **Reagan Heater** is heading a few watersheds north west to Sierra College for his sophomore year. And naturalist intern **Ryan Carle** has headed back to UC Santa Cruz for his sophomore year. Best of luck to both of you in school this year and we hope to see you around town when you come home to visit!

We honestly couldn't make it through the summer without the seasonal staff, and the Mono Lake Committee, as well as visitors to the Mono Basin, are lucky to have such wonderful people lend a helping hand in the office and out and about in the Mono Basin. We wish you all the best, and be sure to keep in touch!

And special thanks to volunteer **John Everett**, a graduate student in the Bren School of Environmental Management at UC Santa Barbara. John developed a much needed GIS database including information about vegetation, wildlife, roads, topography, and property ownership in the Mono Basin. We're very impressed with his self-taught GIS skills, and are thankful for all of his hard work.

This year, along with the traditional staff photo, Membership Coordinator Erika Obedzinski had the good idea to have a staff-with-their-pets photo. It's hard enough to get the staff all together for a photo, and even more difficult to get the pets to all smile for the camera, so we've given it a shot! ❖



2004 Staff by row, left to right: Reagan Heater, Bartshe Miller, Craig Pyle, Geoff McQuilkin, Donnette Huselton. Greg Reis, Cliff Rocha. Ariel Rowan, Lisa Cutting, Erika Obedzinski, Jen Nissenbaum, Brett Pyle, Arya Degenhardt, Erin Brandt, Kim Rollins, Alison Young, Ryan Carle, Elin Ljung. Too busy working: Santiago Escruceria, John Everett, Heidi Hall, Gary Nelson, Kristie Reddick, Anna Scofield, Frances Spivy-Weber, and Laura Walker.



Staff and their pets from top left: Lisa with Abbey, Miller with Jen, Arya with Dublin, Greg with Luna, Donnette with Kona. Too busy chewing sticks or catching mice: Geoff's Shakespearean dog and cat Viola and Sebastian, Laura's perpetual puppies Zeek and Chloe, Brett's hounds Noah and Sadie, and Bartshe's family dogs Tenaya and Dozer.



From the Mailbag

News from Members and Friends

by Erika Obedzinski

It's that time of year again—when you can feel summer and autumn mingling in the air knowing that soon summer will fade into fall. The changes in the light show as the seasons shift and the sun falls lower in the sky, going behind the mountains to the west of Lee Vining much sooner in the evening. Interns are packing up to go back to school, the aspen trees on the June Lake loop are starting to turn from green to yellow, and the school yard is busy again as I go by it on my daily walk to pick up the mail in Box 29 at the Post Office in Lee Vining.

It feels like a good time of year to say thank you. Thank you to all of you who have made donations throughout the year and over many years, offering the support necessary for the Mono Lake Committee to continue its efforts at keeping Mono Lake healthy and beautiful for people and other living things alike to live in and enjoy. As Elin Ljung, one of our interns this summer put it, "Your support helps to keep the water flowing down the creeks and into the lake." I hope you have all had a wonderful summer season and are enjoying the days of autumn.

In Honor

Bill & Rose Marie Brennan, of Lancaster, gave a gift in honor of **Hank & Rhonda Starr-Garretson**. Gifts in honor of **Martha Davis' 50th Birthday** were received from **Alison Davis**, of Palo Alto, and **Dick & Ginny Davis**, of San Rafael.

In Memory

Mr. & Mrs. Fred Burkart, Jr. of Walnut Creek made a memorial contribution in honor of **Roland Kuechle**, **Cathy McKenzie** gave a donation in memory of **Beryl McKenzie** of Pacific Palisades, and **Lorraine Priceman** of

Woodland Hills gave a contribution in memory of **George Priceman**.

The Committee honors the passing of **Gerda S. Mathan**, accomplished teacher and photographer. Her photographs include those in the book *Storm Over Mono*, by John Hart.

Donate with Muir-Hanna Wine

Muir Hanna Vineyards of Napa is offering a special way for Members to support the Committee while enjoying their 2001 Estate Bottled Chardonnay. \$5 from each \$25 bottle of wine goes to the Committee! Call (707) 224-2114 or fax (707) 224-8668 for details.

Matching Gifts

Matching gifts are a wonderful way to make your donation to the Mono Lake Committee go even further. Many employers offer a dollar for dollar matching gifts program and some even offer a 2:1 or 3:1 match. Thank you to all of our members who have participated in their employers' matching gifts program. We very much appreciate these additional donations, and the extra step involved on your part to make it happen. If you haven't looked into it already, ask your employer about their matching gifts program today! ❖

Guardians of the Lake!

The easiest way to support the Committee just got easier!

Many members choose to support the Mono Lake Committee through our monthly giving program called Guardians of the Lake. Guardians of the Lake have always had the option of making their monthly payment by check or credit card. We now have a system available for handling Electronic Funds Transfer of a monthly payment directly from your checking account. This saves you the hassle of writing a check each month and saves the Committee additional fees charged by credit card companies. How much to give per month is up to you.

Benefits of being a Guardian of the Lake include a monthly note from Sally Gaines, keeping you up to date on the happenings at the lake. (Though if you'd prefer not to receive this short monthly letter, you can just let us know.) Members of this program also receive fewer fundraising mailings from the Committee, as we know we can already count on your support for Mono Lake! Members tell us that spreading their gift over the year means they can plan their annual support in advance and do even more for the Committee.

So whether you're a current Guardian sending a check each month, or a member who would like to enroll in Guardians of the Lake, let us know if you'd like to set up a monthly donation to the Committee by Electronic Funds Transfer. Contact Erika (erika@monolake.org) at the membership desk (760) 647-6595.

Calling all Birders!



For the 2004
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Contact Bartshé Miller
(bartshe@monolake.org) at
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Mark Your Calendar Now!
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