



MONO LAKE

N E W S L E T T E R

FALL 2009

Sometimes it's really good to sit. With what feels like a million things to do and places to explore, it's easy to forget just how good it is to be still. An old friend came to town recently and a group of us got together for the afternoon. The list of possible things to do was endless, but we knew we had chosen well as we sank comfortably into the grass on the south shore of Mono Lake. With warm sun, blue sky, a Sierra wave cloud, and just enough breeze to keep the no-see-ums away we sat, talked, marveled, laughed, and sat some more. Bluebirds, Osprey, and a rustling in the grass beckoned, but we stayed put. In these kinds of moments you become distinctly aware of the difference between letting life pass you by and living it fully.

Down at the lake you can't help but notice the changes at the shoreline. It's been a big water year and it's fascinating to see how it translates out on the landscape. Renewed lagoons are filling up, once-beached mounds of tufa are submerged and bubbling ... these are the changes countless people have dreamed of for this lake. Sure, there's more to be done, but it's important to take time out and revel in the beauty of it too.

I am reminded of a quote written by Christopher Fry and spoken by Andrea Lawrence as she received the Committee's Defender of the Trust Award this summer: "What is deep as love is deep, I'll have deeply. What is good as love is good, I'll have well. Then if time and space have any purpose, I shall belong to it." I think those words describe the feeling perfectly.

Taking time to sit down at Mono Lake just may have been the best thing I've done in a long time. Don't you think it's time to visit Mono Lake? Pull up a seat.

—Arya Degenhardt, Communications Director



COVER PHOTO, FALL ALONG LEE VINING CREEK, ALASDAIR MCCONDOCHIE
AMCCONDOCHIE@YAHOO.COM & WWW.PBASE/AMCCOND.COM

BARTSHE MILLER

A rare and exciting sight! 109 White-faced Ibis spotted by Education Director Bartshé Miller along the shoreline foraging in new lagoons formed as the lake rises.

Mono Lake Committee Mission

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



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Founded by David Gaines in 1978

MONO LAKE
NEWSLETTER

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Protecting the lands of the Mono Basin

Development principles guide the Committee's approach to land development

by Clare Cragan



GEORGE MCKILKIN

The phrase “land development” evokes images of sprawling cities, urban growth, or perhaps the iconic bulldozer in a pasture. The sweeping high desert landscape of the Mono Basin does not immediately come to mind. In fact, it is a place where many visitors come to get away from the very picture painted by the word “development,” and where local residents have chosen to live for the same reason.

Developing trends

In the past few years the Mono Basin has felt increasing development pressures as local real estate prices have skyrocketed. With so much publicly owned land it's hard to believe such threats would exist—but remember the 3,700 acre Cedar Hill land parcel the *Wall Street Journal* reported as potentially “ideal for slicing up into golf courses and small housing communities?” Or how about the Cunningham property with proposed subdivisions just a stone's throw from Mono Lake? Thankfully, the Committee has been able to achieve positive outcomes for these two parcels, but there are others out there. Development issues will be in the top tier of challenges facing Mono Lake and the Mono Lake Committee in the years ahead.

Case by case response

The Mono Lake Committee realizes that the question of whether land development in general is “good” or “bad” isn't useful for creating sound policy in the Mono Basin. We can all think of perfectly acceptable land development projects: building a house on a residential lot in town, a local adding to their existing home, or Lee Vining finding a way to provide affordable housing. And we can all think of worrisome projects: remote subdivisions of wild land, large view-spoiling structures, and projects that break the laws which protect Mono Lake.

Specifics matter. In the Mono Basin, the Committee has the ability to review land development proposals on a case by case basis to evaluate their appropriateness and respond accordingly. The question then becomes: how do we review projects in a consistent way?

A principled approach

What the Committee has needed is a set of principles to guide our review and involvement with Mono Basin land development. Over the past year, Committee staff have worked on creating such a list.

We started with core Committee values: ***Mono Lake, its tributary streams, the lands of the Mono Basin, and the sense of inspiration they create within us.***

Committee staff analyzed and discussed both how development projects might run contrary to our values and how they might express them. We've now created a set of principles that reflect our values and guide our one-at-a-time review of development proposals in the Mono Basin. With these principles clearly stated, the Committee is even better prepared to consider future development proposals in a straightforward way, and to take action accordingly.

Appropriate Mono Basin development does not produce significant:

- negative ecological impacts on the lake and surrounding plant and wildlife habitats;
- loss of the sense of solitude, scenic views, and other qualities that make up today's unique and wild Mono Basin experience;
- negative impacts to water quantity or quality in the Mono Basin watershed;
- cumulative impacts through multiple or expanded development projects.

Appropriate Mono Basin development:

- allows the natural landscape to remain the dominant feature;
- fits with the existing Mono Basin character and sense of scale;
- complies with applicable development requirements for the location;
- is clustered around existing developed areas;
- seeks to minimize resource consumption. ❖

Committee's Co-Executive Directorship merges into one position

September has brought long-planned changes to the Executive Director leadership of the Mono Lake Committee. Co-Executive Directors Frances Spivy-Weber and Geoffrey McQuilkin have merged the two positions, with Geoff taking over as Executive Director and Fran becoming a senior advisor to the Committee in Los Angeles.

"We're very fortunate," said Board of Directors Chair Sally Gaines, "to have had Fran's leadership for nearly ten years, as well as Fran and Geoff's joint management of the Committee. We're going to miss Fran's daily presence but we're excited because we know Geoff will be successful in accomplishing our Mono Lake protection, restoration, and education goals."

From Fran ...

After almost ten years as (first) Executive Director and (for the past six years) Co-Executive Director for Policy of the Mono Lake Committee, I am leaving to focus most of my time on Southern California programs and projects that will increase water supply and improve water quality in the region. These are issues that the Mono Lake Committee has strongly supported since its founding, and I am honored to be able to carry on this mission.

When I became Executive Director of the Committee in January 1997, I joined the organization because it was different from any other environmental organization I knew. It had the Information Center & Bookstore that supported programs and provided environmental information to visitors; it was the Chamber of Commerce headquarters for Lee Vining; it had true partnerships with inner-city organizations in Los Angeles and a cutting-edge outdoor education program; and there was a unique commitment to finding solutions that would not transfer problems to other areas. The Committee knew how to sue and win, but also how to negotiate and win.

What am I most proud of? Without hesitation I can say: the Committee staff. As members of the Mono Lake Committee, you should know that you have the most outstanding, dedicated staff, completely prepared to defend Mono Lake and the Mono Basin and able to find creative solutions to any challenge. On this high note, it is my pleasure to turn the reins over to Geoff McQuilkin, who will now be the sole Executive Director of the Mono Lake Committee.



*Frances Spivy-Weber, former
Committee Co-Executive Director.*

Rest assured, I will always be close to Mono Lake. My husband Michael, and Martha Davis, and I have our property in Lee Vining, and I will continue to work with Geoff and staff on special projects. I will always enjoy hearing from the Committee's dedicated members. My phone number remains (310) 316-0041, and you can reach me at frances@monolake.org.

And from Geoff ...

Over the past ten years I've been tremendously fortunate to learn so much from Fran and her skillful, people-oriented approach to protecting Mono Lake. I am honored to now merge her duties into my own and take the lead as the Committee's Executive Director.

This is an exciting time for the Mono Lake Committee!

We are a successful organization of people who value Mono Lake, its unique ecosystem, and the inspiring landscape of the Mono Basin, and we have so much to do.

Big challenges face us: accomplishing the restoration of Mono Lake and its tributaries, assuring that excessive land development never takes away what we love about the Mono Basin, and tackling new issues that threaten the lake.

And we have great opportunities as well: to bring more youth to Mono Lake to learn about the source of their water and why it deserves to be protected; to foster a new generation of scientific inquiry that reveals more of Mono's mysteries and informs our management choices for future generations; to involve people in a hands-on way through volunteer projects; and to build a new relationship with Los Angeles based on the water linkage between urban residents and Mono Lake.

The Committee's staff and I are already deeply immersed in these issues and more. We've got a strong new strategic plan in place. We've got tremendous support from you, our 15,000 members. We have smart, dedicated staff. We have a track record of winning every issue we take on. And (fingers crossed), we may even have a new roof on the office soon!

My new duties will take me more frequently across the state to speak on Mono Lake's behalf to policy makers and leaders in Los Angeles, Sacramento, the Bay Area, and beyond. But I will happily continue to be based at Mono Lake, living in view of tufa towers with my wife Sarah and our young daughters Caelen and Ellery. Please feel free to contact me at (760) 647-6595 or geoff@monolake.org. ❖



PHOTOS BY ARYA DEGENHARDT

*Geoffrey McQuilkin, Mono Lake
Committee Executive Director.*

Mono Research Group reunites for 30-year reunion

1976 Ecological Study now available online

by Greg Reis

In 1976, a dozen undergraduate students used a National Science Foundation grant to conduct the first comprehensive ecological study of Mono Lake. In June 1977 the UC Davis Institute of Ecology published their report, “An Ecological Study of Mono Lake, California.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVID WINKLER

The Mono Research Group, 1976.

This pivotal report drew attention to the catastrophic ecological impacts of Mono Lake’s falling level, which was due to diversions of water from its tributary streams by the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power (DWP).

The student who edited the report, David Winkler, walked across the newly formed land bridge to Negit Island in November 1977, and felt compelled to do something before the next gull breeding season. He energized David Gaines, who wrote the introduction to the report, and Sally Judy, another UC Davis student who would eventually marry Gaines. Compelled by the evidence of Mono Lake’s eventual demise at the hands of excessive water diversions, these young scientists and friends formed the Mono Lake

Committee in the name of saving Mono Lake in 1978 with Gaines leading the organization through thick and thin. The rest is history—the study inspired the movement that led to the historic Mono Lake victory, and continues to be the inspiration for the ongoing work of the Mono Lake Committee today.

This past summer, thirty years after the study, David Winkler, now a professor of ornithology at Cornell University, organized a reunion of the original crew. All twelve participants were reunited on July 15, 2006, at the very same campsite they used in 1976. They held a potluck dinner at Mono Lake County Park with Committee staff, friends, and scientists currently working in the Mono Basin. They also recreated a group shot taken during their first summer, below.

It is particularly exciting that after 30 years there is still so much research going on in the Mono Basin that the Committee’s new Mono Basin Field Station is packed with student researchers furthering the legacy started by this original group. See page 8 for more on the Field Station.

See www.monobasinresearch.org/onlinereports/1976study/ for the original ecological study, photos, and a link to a recent *San Francisco Chronicle* feature on the research group. ❖



PHOTO BY GREG REIS

The Mono Research Group reunion 30 years later, left to right, top to bottom: S. Elliot Burch, Gayle L. Dana, Christine P. Weigen, H. Keith Otsuki, Connie Lovejoy, F. Brett Engstrom, Jeff Robins, Thomas Wainwright, Robert M. Loeffler, David W. Winkler, Jefferson B. Burch, David B. Herbst.

Committee prepares for clean air litigation

Goal: Protect Mono Lake's air quality health standards

by Geoffrey McQuilkin

As the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reviews voluminous public comments of concern about its proposal to eliminate air quality health standards in rural areas, the Mono Lake Committee is preparing to litigate on behalf of Mono Lake if necessary. The decision is in the hands of the EPA, with a final standards announcement expected in September.

At issue are the national health standards for clean air that apply to the massive dust storms that sweep off the exposed bed of Mono Lake. While the choking dust storms exceed current standards by 70 times and contain toxics like arsenic, the EPA has proposed to eliminate the standards entirely in rural areas across the country.

Many thanks go Mono Lake Committee members who submitted over 2,800 comment letters earlier this year expressing concern about the proposed rule and its disregard for Mono Lake and the impacts of dust storms on residents and visitors alike. The Committee submitted a detailed 22-page analysis, laying the groundwork for legal action if the EPA does not respond to the concerns raised. One example:

Congress specifically called for Mono Basin dust storms to be regulated, a fact the EPA proposal ignores.

The EPA's particulate standards will apply nationwide and cover several types of particulate pollution. As a result, if they are not substantially improved, the Committee expects to join with concerned national groups such as Earthjustice and the American Lung Association to pursue unified litigation on all aspects of particulate pollution regulation. The Committee would focus, of course, on the situation at Mono Lake and the related concerns at Owens Lake. Regional air quality regulators have similar concerns about the EPA proposal and expect to join in litigation as well.

There's still time for the EPA to come around to a fair approach to this issue. Whether it will or not remains to be seen, but if the final decision ignores the situation at Mono Lake, the first step will be to immediately file a court request for suspension of the new decision, and then the details will be sorted out in litigation that is likely to be lengthy.

The Mono Lake Website, www.monolake.org, will report breaking news on the protection of clean air at Mono Lake.❖

Committee supports Prop 84, opposes Prop 90

by Frances Spivy-Weber and Geoffrey McQuilkin

Yes on Proposition 84

On California's November 7 ballot, Proposition 84—the Clean Water, Parks & Coastal Protection bond measure, provides \$5.4 billion for all of California's major natural resource protection and water programs. The Mono Lake Committee has endorsed Proposition 84, and Frances Spivy-Weber is on the executive committee for the bond.

Here are some highlights: \$90 million for Sierra Nevada rivers and Lake Tahoe, \$180 million for small community grants to meet health requirements of the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act, \$1 billion for integrated regional water management grants, \$65 million for statewide water planning and design, including an evaluation of climate change impacts on flood and water systems, \$450 million for wildlife and forest conservation, \$500 million for parks and nature education centers, and \$580 million for sustainable communities, a portion of which is for planning and incentives for resource conservation.

For more details visit www.yeson84.com or contact Fran (frances@monolake.org) at (310) 316-0041.

No on Proposition 90

Hidden in the fine print of California's Proposition 90 are unrelated and far-reaching provisions that will undermine land use regulations such as zoning, thwart beneficial environmental laws, and cost taxpayers billions of dollars each year.

Prop 90 would energize sprawl and uncontrolled development around the state and the Mono Basin would not be left out. Sound government planning is a key part of preserving the open spaces and rural character of the Mono Basin, yet growth control measures, land use plans, and even zoning would all require huge payouts to land owners if Prop 90 passes.

For example, if a developer claims a property could hold more homes than Mono County rules allow to be built, the developer could sue and taxpayers would be on the hook for paying out the value of the property at the denser level, even though the community did not want such a development.

Beneficial environmental rules would be undermined as well. If agencies couldn't afford to pay for protections, they could be left with no choice but to allow harmful action.

More information can be found at www.noprop90.com.

Policy updates

by Clare Cragan and the policy team

Mill Creek awaits FERC ruling

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) is expected to release its long-awaited decision related to the new licensing terms of the Lundy hydropower plant by the end of this year.

At stake is the restoration of Mill Creek, Mono Lake's third largest tributary stream, which for decades has seen 70% of its flow diverted, far in excess of legal water rights. Acceptance of the settlement agreement would guarantee the repair of the "return ditch," the water conveyance facility needed to return water from the power plant back to Mill Creek. Repairing the return ditch will allow water to be returned to Mill Creek—water that is essential for the recovery of this cottonwood-willow riparian habitat (see Fall 2005 *Newsletter*).

FERC commissioners and staff continue to review the Settlement Agreement submitted in February 2005 by Southern California Edison, land management agencies, the Department of Fish & Game, California Trout, and the Mono Lake Committee; the Environmental Assessment (EA) released by FERC on May 19, 2006; and the various comments then solicited by FERC in response to the EA.

New trail to Mono Lake

The Forest Service continues to move forward with plans for a three-mile, round-trip trail from the Forest Service Visitor Center to Mono Lake's west shore. The Forest Service is currently drafting an Environmental Assessment of four potential trail designs which include variations such as trail contour and type of recreational use for portions of the trail. The Mono Lake Committee, Forest Service, California State Parks, Los Angeles Department of Water & Power, and Friends of the Inyo still hope to break ground this fall, but depending on available funds, work may not begin until spring 2007.



Strange signs surface at the "Cunningham property"

In one of the strangest stories of the summer, "For Sale" signs were posted on the "Cunningham property" in July, just yards from Mono Lake.

And yet the property—which is no longer owned by the Cunningham family—is not for sale. In fact, Peter Denniston, representative of current owner Mammoth Mountain Ski Area (MMSA), reiterated their plan to trade the property to the Forest Service for permanent protection.

Still, five signs were posted on the property by Paul Oster, the Cunninghams' realtor. He was immediately told to remove them, yet failed to respond. Two weeks later MMSA personnel pulled the signs down. Oster did not directly respond to a Committee inquiry about his attempt to sell someone else's property. He did suggest that the Cunningham family has a second opportunity to buy back the property (a first attempt was abandoned earlier this year). In contrast, MMSA says that by contract Cunningham had one—and only one—legal buy back option, that that option was used in the abandoned effort to repurchase the property, and that no further buy back rights exist.

This is further evidence of how far developers will go to pursue profit on Mono Basin lands—and how vigilant the Committee must be to assure reasonable, legal, well-planned land use around Mono Lake.

Inyo National Forest to have designated OHV route system by 2008

The Inyo National Forest (Inyo) and other California National Forests have made a commitment to have designated Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) route systems by 2008—two years ahead of the national requirement for all US National Forests. Currently, the Inyo is involved in step three of a five step route inventory process. The third step involves public input on how routes help access specific destinations, provide a unique OHV travel experience, and affect resources. The Forest Service has recently held workshops throughout the Inyo to explain the public comment process.

Within the two million acres of the Inyo are 3,618 miles of known routes, which is too much for the Forest Service to manage at current OHV recreation levels. The product at the end of the five step process will be a designated route map of roads maintained by the Forest Service; routes not listed on the map will then be considered illegal routes and will be closed.

This proactive approach seeks to balance recreational use with minimal natural resource damage, and the Forest Service hopes that with the designated route system they'll be more effective stewards of our public lands.

The Mono Lake Committee will be submitting recommendations for routes throughout the Mono Basin this September. For more information contact Clare Cragan (clare@monolake.org) at (760) 647-6595. ❖

Clare Cragan is the Committee's Eastern Sierra Policy Coordinator. She is also the Committee's unofficial ambassador for the Midwest ... making sure her cheese-curd loving friends and family visit Mono Lake!

A glimpse into the Mono Basin Field Station

by Elin Ljung

The summer field season has ended for researchers living in the Mono Lake Committee's Field Station in Lee Vining. As part of its mission to support scientific research in the Mono Basin, the Committee runs the Field Station to provide a place for visiting scientists to live and work.

On the last day of field work five biologists joined Chris McCreedy's efforts to locate an elusive Dusky Flycatcher nest on Rush Creek before returning to the Field Station to wrap up their own summer projects. The biologists usually work on individual studies, but this team effort exemplifies the camaraderie of the Field Station.

Program Director, arrives from her house across the street.

6:23—Chris arrives toting a CD of bird songs. PRBO interns Colin Woolley and Stella Moss grab breakfast in the Field Station kitchen.

6:37—As PRBO intern Wendy Willis makes it out of bed, Chris hooks up speakers to his CD player and broadcasts flycatcher songs across the room. He explains the differences between Dusky and Willow Flycatcher songs so the group can tell the two apart in the field.

7:15—Out at Rush Creek Chris leads everyone through the maze of willows and roses, dropping off birders at



Stella Moss, PRBO summer intern, makes coffee in the Field Station kitchen.



Biologists Quresh Latif, Chris McCreedy, and Colin Woolley discuss flycatcher songs over breakfast in the Field Station dining room.

6:10 am—The first alarm clock sounds in the Field Station, and Quresh Latif, Ph.D. candidate at UC Riverside, wakes up first. Believe it or not, this is a late morning for the researchers, who usually wake at 4:30 to get to their field sites by sunrise. Sacha Heath, PRBO Conservation Science's Eastern Sierra

various locations near where he suspects the Dusky Flycatchers may have built a nest. Sacha and Colin climb up and perch in trees, Wendy and Stella station themselves in grassy clearings, and Quresh keeps watch from higher up on the bank.

8:00—Chris checks in with each researcher—after 45 minutes, the group has seen Yellow Warblers, a flock of Killdeer, a Green-tailed Towhee chick, Willow and Gray Flycatchers, but no Dusky.

8:25—Chris ends the search, figuring if the Dusky Flycatchers were present someone would have seen or heard them by now. The five biologists emerge from the brush and head back to their cars.

9:07—Back in Lee Vining, Stella takes a phone call on the Field Station's back stairs while Wendy puts a load of small flannel bags used to transport birds at banding stations into the laundry.



Colin consults with PRBO's Eastern Sierra Program Director Sacha Heath in the Field Station office about several data points on his nest record sheets.

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Field Station researchers head down to the Rush Creek bottomlands to search for a Dusky Flycatcher nest.

10:18—Colin and Stella begin proofing data. They have already entered all their data into the computer; now they must read it back to each other to check for accuracy. Stella is particularly fast at this—in rapid code she reads back to Colin, “GTTO-oh-one-A artur-two 52-12-92-135 peemo 310-475-75-5 putter-two 38-all-the-way teeka-two 26-26-15-10...” Proofing data will take the pair an entire day!

11:52—Down the alleyway in the PRBO office, Sacha looks over the Field Station rental agreement for the summer. Sacha will work with the Mono Lake Committee to check the researchers out so that new tenants can use the facility this fall.



Sacha working away in the PRBO office just down the street from the Field Station.

12:45 pm—Lunchtime. Wendy and Colin collaborate on a fruit salad.

1:38—Colin consolidates his spot maps, on which he has indicated the location of nests and calling birds,

which can be used to determine the number of bird territories on his nest searching plots.

2:15—The Field Station quiets down for the afternoon while some biologists take naps, Quresh remains in the field, and Chris makes a call about repairing a critical piece of equipment: his digital camera.

3:37—Headphones on, Wendy focuses on entering her point count data. Point counts involve stopping for five minutes every 250 meters along a transect line to record all birds seen or heard. This survey

method provides a good indication of species in a particular area.

4:11—Sacha returns from the Post Office bearing a package for Wendy, which turns out to be a much-awaited book she’ll need for her field work this fall: *Birds of Costa Rica*!

5:42—Dinner preparations begin. Stella and Wendy take charge of food, while Colin and Quresh set up tables outside. On the menu tonight: grilled veggie kabobs, salmon burgers from the Mono Market, homemade guacamole, and German chocolate cake—Stella’s specialty!

7:55—Happily fed, the whole crew has the kitchen clean in no time.

8:12—The group winds down for the evening. Colin recruits people to watch some David Attenborough, Wendy descends back into *Birds of Costa Rica*, and Chris and Sacha return to their houses.

9:45—The Field Station occupants are nearly all asleep in preparation for another early day tomorrow!❖

Elin Ljung is the Committee’s Communications Coordinator. In researching this article she had just as much fun watching the birders as the birders had watching the birds!



PRBO summer interns Wendy Willis, Colin Woolley, and Stella Moss page through Wendy’s *Birds of Costa Rica* in the Field Station living room.

PHOTOS BY ELIN LJUNG

From cracking eggs to climbing peaks

The Outdoor Experiences program aims high and hits home

by Molly Hucklebridge

It didn't surprise me that a high school student who grew up in Los Angeles had never climbed a 12,000-foot peak. I was surprised, however, when a 12 year-old student in the Mono Lake Committee's Outdoor Experiences (OE) program claimed that he had never cracked an egg.

In the OE program, participants—predominantly high school students from inner city Los Angeles—come to the Mono Basin for five full days of hands-on education. Most students have never left the city routines of Southern California. Their outdoors is defined as a trip to the neighborhood park or the local basketball court. At Mono Lake students participate in hikes, canoe tours, trail restoration, watershed education, and nature activities.

But beyond the outdoor activities, there is also the OE program's experiential side. With today's schools pushing more academics and more testing, the OE program helps provide students with the opportunity to learn important lessons only found outside of the classroom environment.

Throughout their visit to the Mono Basin, students learn and practice everyday group-living skills. They stay at Cain Ranch, where they are expected to cook, clean, and work together as a team. Whether they are scrubbing the toilet (affectionately nicknamed “the throne”) or discovering how cutting onions can make you cry, many students find the value and fun in performing household chores.

Students also learn that consideration and conservation go hand in hand. Each person is limited to one three-minute shower per day. This activity not only ensures every participant a warm shower, but it also demonstrates how water used wisely can protect places like Mono Lake.



Learning life skills including cleaning and cooking is one component of the Outdoor Experiences program.



Outdoor Experiences participants also learn outdoor skills and life lessons through physical and mental challenges on the trail.

Outside Cain Ranch and in the Mono Basin, life skills are taught and found “on the trail.” During the all-day hike, students face and overcome physical challenges. Whether the group climbs a peak or scales a granite dome, the hike is a team effort and a sure confidence boost. Rather than considering their personal obstacles, participants encourage each other and complete the task as a team.

On the last night of their OE week, the students share accomplishments and reflections in a closing ceremony. They often mention that they enjoyed helping around the house and working with each other.

I remember one young woman saying she realized that she took her mother for granted. She was excited to help out more around the house and to tell her mom how much she appreciated her. Finding a balance between giving and taking was an important step for her to become a responsible adult.

In LA, most students spend their free time absorbed in homework, television, video games, and online. Hopefully, after their experiences in the Mono Basin they will remember to look outside this indoor bubble. Maybe they will take small

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South Tufa trail moves uphill

Mono Lake Tufa State Reserve staff instrumental in keeping trail open

by Greg Reis

Mono Lake's rapidly rising waters caused some last-minute trail changes at the South Tufa Area this past summer. Mono Lake rose over two feet between April 1 and August 1, 2006, inundating parts of the former trail through the South Tufa grove. At times the lake rose ¼ foot per week, setting a challenging pace for the trail movers.

Dave Marquart, Park Interpretive Specialist, and Jim Pence, Ranger with the Mono Lake Tufa State Reserve, rerouted portions of the trail four separate times. Each time, they uncovered the overgrown remnants of the trail used in 1999—the last time the lake was this high. Cutting greasewood, moving



The rerouted walking trail at South Tufa.

signs, and relocating pieces of boardwalk were all necessary to keep the loop trail open.

At times the State received assistance from the Forest Service, Mono Lake Committee, and volunteers, but many times Jim or Dave were out there alone keeping the trail open for visitors. This is another reminder of how essential the Mono Lake Tufa State Reserve and its excellent staff are for maintaining a high quality visitor experience in the Mono Basin.

Be sure to take a walk down at South Tufa during your next visit to the Mono Basin to try out the new trail and to see how far the lake has risen this year! ❖

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but significant steps such as helping to prepare more meals or taking shorter showers. Or perhaps these students will challenge their indoor lifestyle and surprise themselves with what they can accomplish. ❖

Molly Hucklebridge is one of two Outdoor Experiences Coordinators this summer and fall for the Mono Lake Committee's Outdoor Experiences program. In her spare time, she attempts to photograph every square inch of the Mono Basin with her new digital camera.

Outdoor Experiences wish list

The Outdoor Experiences program needs some help. Do you have any of these items to donate?

- Cast iron frying pans
- Warm clothes in young adult sizes
- Binoculars
- Books on nature and natural history

If you can donate any of the above—either in new or good used condition, please contact Santiago Escruceria (santiago@monolake.org) at (760) 647-6595. Many thanks to Stephanie Ann Blythe, Barb Cragan, Terry Farmer, Mary Hartman, Kathy Ritter, and Emilie Strauss for donating items on the wish list—we're putting them to good use!

Forest Service launches local lecture series

by Greg Reis

Every Saturday in July and August, the doors to the Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area Visitor Center were open late. The building was empty except for the auditorium, which was filled with people interested in learning about a variety of topics: climate change, volcanism, Mono Lake's wetlands, Mono Lake's tributaries, vertebrate surveys in Yosemite, birds of the High Sierra, mountain meadow bugs, the California water situation, and the status of water worldwide.

Lecturers shared expertise on these topics during one-hour presentations in the Forest Service's auditorium facility. The final Saturday was a showing of the film, "Running Dry," a documentary that makes an urgent and compelling call for water conservation.

The Mono Lake Committee appreciates the Forest Service's efforts at making this first annual lecture series a success. Having this series in the research-rich Mono Basin complements lectures already ongoing at the White Mountain Research Station, Parson's Lodge, and the Sierra Nevada Aquatic Research Laboratory. The lectures provide residents and visitors a look at research occurring in the area, and a better understanding of natural ecosystems.

Chautauqua Snapshots

by Bartshé Miller

Birders, music fans, and minds with eclectic interests convened at the Fifth Annual Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua this past June. This year's Chautauqua included a presentation by Scott Stine on the "blinding allure of lore" surrounding Joseph Rutherford Walker's crossing of the Sierra Nevada, along with Stine's theory of the Walker Brigade's actual route.

There were lots of field trips to magnificent locales with exciting birds—from Rattlesnake Gulch to the Jeffrey pine forest. During Chautauqua field trips butterflies, birds, and Mono Basin natural history were the main attractions. Storytelling, a little "owling," and some artistic explorations helped us to rest our eyes and identification jitters in the

evenings. A little bluegrass music from a big bluegrass band called the Biscuit Burners brought the Chautauqua to its conclusion, including, of course, the traditional bird calling contest between sets. How do you gauge the success of the Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua? If you can lure a trout fisherman from the crowd for a hoot, then you're doing something right.

Did you miss this year's Chautauqua? Don't worry, it will be back in 2007 along with many of your favorite Chautauqua leaders. Mark your calendars now for June 15–17, 2007. Practice your bird calls, bring your binoculars, and prepare for something that's not your ordinary bird festival! ❖

Do birders get sore necks? Ben Winger's Lee Vining Creek Bird Walk participants make use of the cervical vertebrae to track down a Warbling Vireo.



Butterflies beware! Rena McCullough's Butterfly Walk participants were equipped with binoculars and field guides.



An early morning field trip visits the shore of Mono Lake. Participants attended field trips from shoreline to alpine environments.



Jack Laws with his Field Sketching Birds workshop at the Mono Lake County Park boardwalk.



Birders go band watching. The Biscuit Burners conclude the Chautauqua with some spirited bluegrass. Where else can you watch Western Swallowtails drift by and hear people and Yellow Warblers sing together?



Do you have some great photos of birds from the Chautauqua? We would like to consider using them for future Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua press. Contact birding@monolake.org.

PHOTOS BY ARMA DEGENHARDT, ELIN LUNG, AND BARTSHE MILLER

Andrea Lawrence receives 2006 Defender of the Trust Award

by Frances Spivy-Weber

Last June the Mono Lake Committee Board of Directors gave their highest honor, the Defender of the Trust Award, to Andrea Lawrence, founder of the Andrea Lawrence Institute for Mountains and Rivers (ALIMAR). Doug Virtue, Committee Board member, spoke eloquently about Andrea's inspiring life and vision for the Sierra before a gathering of over fifty members, friends, and staff enjoying

the Committee's Wine Flight fund-raiser at the annual Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua.

The Defender of the Trust Award is given annually to a person or persons who have made extraordinary contributions to champion Mono Lake, and there are few who equal Andrea in meeting these criteria. At the beginning of the Committee's history in 1978, Andrea loaned David and Sally Gaines her Friends of Mammoth mailing list, which was an important start for building the local Mono Lake Committee membership. Andrea watched out for all things environmental during her sixteen years on the Mono County Board of Supervisors, but she always exerted special energy when it came to defending Mono Lake. Since 1999 Andrea has served on the Mono Lake Committee Board of Directors, where she is a constant source of wise counsel on large policy issues and local political strategies.

Past Defender of the Trust Recipients include former Los Angeles Mayor Richard Riordan (2005), Dennis Tito (2004), Sally Gaines (2003), Rick Lehman and Phil Isenberg (2002), Stan Eller and California Trout (2001), Congressman George Miller (2000), Zev Yaroslavsky (1999), Ruth Galanter (1998), Martha Davis (1997), Bruce Dodge and Jan Stevens (1995), George Peyton (1994), and Harold Gilliam (1993). ♦



Andrea Lawrence, left, on a wildflower walk with her good friend and field trip leader, Cathy Rose, right, during the Chautauqua.

Black Point Cinder Mine under scrutiny by Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service

by Lisa Cutting

At a local public meeting last July, Molly Brown, Deputy District Ranger for the Inyo National Forest, shared with the group recent developments affecting the Black Point Cinder Mine operation in the Mono Basin.

On May 19 of this year, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) issued the Black Point Cinder Mine owners a letter notifying them that their mining claims were null and void. The Forest Service then notified the owners that because their claims were invalid, they were no longer authorized to operate on National Forest land and that all operations had to stop immediately. The owners disagreed with both the determination and the order to cease and desist, appealing the BLM decision and requesting a stay through the Interior Board of Land Appeals

(IBLA) in the Department of the Interior. The Committee recently discovered that the IBLA granted the owners a stay, allowing the mining operation to continue during the appeal process.

The Black Point Cinder Mine has been operating for decades—why is this investigation happening now? Brown explained that in 1984 when the Mono Basin Scenic Area was designated by Congress, the administration of approximately 24,000 acres in the Mono Basin, including Black Point, was transferred from the BLM to the Forest Service. It was only recently through a routine inventorying procedure that the Forest Service discovered there was no BLM authorization on file for the mining operation. The Forest Service requires an operating plan, a bond, and

environmental analysis documents to be on file because of the disturbance caused to National Forest land through mining or mineral extraction activities. The fact that these documents are not currently on file is inconsistent with laws, rules, and regulations that govern mining and mineral extraction on National Forest lands.

The cinders extracted from the Black Point Cinder Mine are important locally because Caltrans spreads them on the highway during the winter to provide better traction and safer road conditions. Mono County and Caltrans are following the situation closely.

For more information and updates on this issue contact Forest Service Deputy District Ranger Molly Brown at (760) 647-3033.

Streamwatch

165% of average runoff ... so far!

by Greg Reis

2006 is the fourth “Wet” or “Extreme-Wet” year since the 1994 Water Board Decision 1631. A “Wet” year is defined as 136.5%–160% of average runoff and an “Extreme-Wet” year is defined as over 160%. We have had no dry years yet. Interestingly, the dozen years since 1994 have been the fourth wettest 12-year period on record in terms of total runoff volume. All three wetter periods included the incredibly wet 1978–1984 period.

This year the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power forecasted 147% of average runoff (a “Wet” year); however, so far the April through July runoff has been 165% of average (an “Extreme-Wet” year). This compares to last year’s 158% of average for the same period, indicating that runoff for the entire year

is likely to be higher than last year—although the end of March 2007 total could still be below the 160% break in year-types.

All of the streams, with the exception of Parker Creek, peaked at higher flows than last year. So far, Parker Creek and Rush Creek total runoff is less than last year due to less snowpack in those drainages.

Below their dams Rush and Lee Vining Creeks both peaked at 473 cubic feet per second (cfs) in June. These peaks are higher than any flows delivered below the dams since 1998 on Rush Creek and 1997 on Lee Vining Creek. Significant channel scour and large woody debris movement occurred all along the lower reaches of the streams, significantly advancing the habitat restoration. ❖



GREG REIS

Lee Vining Creek on June 6, the day before the 473 cfs peak—a flow exceeded only twice in the last two decades. Cobble-sized rocks could be heard moving down the bed of the stream.

Lakewatch

Mono Lake rises two feet in four months!

by Greg Reis

Between April 1 and August 1, 2006, Mono Lake rose from 6383 feet above sea level to 6385.1 feet. This high point equals the high point reached in 1999, which was the highest level since 1972. This also puts the level back on the “average rise per year” line to reach 6391 feet by the year 2014.

Visitors and staff alike are very excited to see the lake this high again. Water has reached the end of the Mono Lake County Park boardwalk, it has dramatically changed the landscape of the South Tufa Area (see page 11), and it has created rias (flooded canyons) at the mouths of the creeks. The lake could drop as much as a foot to its annual low

point in the fall before beginning to rise again in winter.

Many *Newsletter* readers have noticed that we changed the elevation on the “Target lake level” bar at the left side of this column. It used to be 6392 feet, but now reads 6391 feet. The reason for this change is that as we get closer to the target, it really matters what the target level is—it isn’t just a round number off in the distance anymore.

6392 feet above sea level is the expected long-term average post-transition lake level calculated by the hydrologic models. We have often referred to that level as the target since the 1994 decision by the State Water Board.

But 6392 feet is just a calculation based on the standard modeling assumption that the future climate will be the same as the past—an assumption that is not likely to occur, but since there are no agreed-upon future climate

projections, one that is routinely accepted. If the future climate results in less inflow or greater evaporation than the climate of the 1940–1989 base climate period used by the models, then the average lake level will be lower. On the other hand, wetter conditions would result in a higher lake level.

During the transition period, the reality is that 6391 feet is the target. When the lake reaches 6391 feet, the rules for water export change—after that they are designed to keep the lake at a model-calculated average of 6392 feet. So the use of 6391 feet as a target reflects the legal significance of that number, and the resulting management changes that will be brought about by the lake reaching it. Don’t worry—no one is trying to lower the target lake level by a foot! ❖

Greg Reis is the Committee’s Information Specialist. He’s making a pilgrimage to the headwaters of the Mississippi River this fall.

6417'

Prediversion lake level, 1941

6391'

Target lake level

6385'

Current lake level

6372'

Historic low, 1982

Mono Basin Journal

A Roundup of Quiet Happenings at Mono Lake

by Geoffrey McQuilkin



GEORGE MCQUILKIN

Sixteen years ago, under clear late evening skies, I walked down the wooden planks of the State Reserve boardwalk. The walkway ended at a mudflat; farther out lapped the waves of Mono Lake.

Back then the lake was in trouble. Excessive water diversions were drawing it down, the Committee was fighting for a solution before ecological collapse set in, and I was a summer intern for the Committee, wondering if all the work on Mono's behalf would add up to significant protection.

This summer I've walked the same boardwalk many times. Red-winged Blackbirds call from tufa tower perches. Phalaropes spin energetic circles at the edge of the lake, searching for food. And the lake stretches off toward the Mono Craters, shimmering and sparkling in the sun.

Sixteen years later and the lake is ten feet higher: a change so large you can see it from the highway at 60 miles per hour—if you remember the lake of previous years. Salty

water cover shoreline grasses and laps at the footings of the boardwalk's end. And so it is: small changes, accumulated over days, weeks, months, and years, create changes on the landscape scale. Streams meander, Mono Lake rises and falls.

No surprise there, but Mono Lake reminds us about the human dimension of change that we so easily forget. The daily efforts of many people dedicated to Mono Lake's protection, over time, are accumulating to create protection on the landscape scale. Dedication works. You don't notice that every day, and yet when you stop to look, years later, it turns out that we can live in this world without destroying it. Mono Lake reminds us: When we value something, when we care, we can do the right thing. ❖

Geoff McQuilkin is the Committee's Executive Director. He recently returned from his annual father-daughter Vernal Falls trail hike in Yosemite with Caelen and Ellery, who, at 18 months, insisted on climbing the stair section by herself!

Benchmarks



GREG REIS

Looking out across Mono Lake to Black Point from the David Gaines memorial boardwalk. May 23, 2006, lake level: 6383.5 feet.



ARNA DEGENHARDT

The same view, August 23, 2006 with almost two more vertical feet of water in three months! Lake level: 6385.1 feet.



IT'S WORTH SAVING T-SHIRT

This classic design has been a favorite since the early days of the Mono Lake Committee. Now Caelen, Vireo, and Guy can wear three different styles customized for girls, adults, and boys! The adult version is on a spruce green 100% cotton pre-shrunk pigment-dyed shirt. The girl's version comes in 100% cotton light sage with white piping around the neck and subtle yellow stitching around the sleeve and waist. The boy's version is a 90% cotton, 10% polyester heather-grey shirt with navy neck and sleeve accents.

Adult It's Worth Saving T-shirt, spruce green S-XL: \$18.00 XXL: \$21.00

Girl's It's Worth Saving T-shirt, sage green XS-L: \$12.00

Boy's It's Worth Saving T-shirt, heather grey S-L: \$12.00

ALL SALES
BENEFIT
MONO LAKE!

WOMEN'S MONO LAKE ICON T-SHIRTS

A subtle embroidered mountain and lake icon adorns this fresh new shirt worn by Canoe Coordinator JJ and Naturalist Intern Elicia. In comfortable, preshrunk 100% cotton, this light sage green shirt has a soft feel to match the soft color. You can almost smell the sagebrush!

Mono Lake Icon T-shirt, women's, sage green S-XL: \$18.00

XXL: \$21.00



MONO LAKE COMMITTEE LOGO MUG

A new design that is simple and elegant. This 12-ounce white mug has the Mono Lake Committee logo in cobalt blue with a matching handle and rim. Mugs and inks are lead and cadmium free.

Mono Lake Committee Logo Mug, 12-ounce: \$6.95



SKYLINE MUG

We took our classic Sierra Skyline design and placed it on new 12-ounce matte-finish mugs. The white design is on your choice of a periwinkle blue, tan, or sage green mug. Mugs and inks are lead and cadmium free.

Skyline Mug, 12-ounce, please specify periwinkle blue, tan, or sage green: \$6.95

Call (760) 647-6595 to order

HAND PAINTED GOURD NECKLACES AND EARRINGS

Local artist Cindy Kinerson has been making beautiful pine needle baskets and decorated gourds for our store for two years. This year she introduced a line of hand painted gourd necklaces and earrings that we can barely keep in stock! We offer this special selection of six styles of these necklaces with matching earrings. The necklace chains and earring findings are all 14K gold filled. These are wonderful handcrafted keepsakes to remind you of the beautiful flowers of the Mono Basin and the High Sierra. Individual necklaces will have slight variations from pictured examples. Items are shown actual size. Supplies are limited.

Gourd necklace, please specify wildflowers, butterflies, leaf, dragonfly, ladybug, tree, or grasses: \$22.00

Gourd earrings, please specify wildflowers, butterflies, leaf, dragonfly, ladybug, tree, or grasses: \$36.00



WILDFLOWERS



BUTTERFLIES



DRAGONFLY



LEAF



LADYBUG



TREE



GRASSES



NAKED BEE PRODUCTS

This wonderful line of products features the motto, "All of the good stuff, none of the bad stuff." Paraben-free. No propylene glycol. No drying alcohol. No laurel sulfate. No dyes or pigments. No mineral oil. No EDTA. Phalate-free fragrance. No animal testing. Just great personal care products with a wonderful orange-blossom honey scent. They're so popular we brought them back for the Fall Catalog!

Oatmeal and Honey Triple-Milled Soap, 2.75 oz.: \$2.75

Moisturizing Hand & Body Lotion, 2.25 fl. oz.: \$4.75

Gentle Cleansing Shampoo & Conditioner, 2.25 fl. oz.: \$4.75

Lip Balm, SPF 15: \$2.75

Travel Kit Gift Set, includes one of each of the above plus a travel candle tin, all in a clear travel pouch: \$19.95

Call (760) 647-6595 to order

HAND PAINTED CHRISTMAS ORNAMENTS

Artist Wendy Rismeyer has created three beautiful Mono Lake scenes, each hand painted with oils on a glass Christmas ornament. Scenes depicted include a Mountain Chickadee on a pine bough, a Phalarope at South Tufa, and Mt. Gibbs with a meadow of arrowleaf balsamroot blooming in the foreground. These ornaments are wonderful keepsakes.

Hand painted ornament, please specify Chickadee, Phalarope, or Mt. Gibbs: \$14.95 each



WENDY MORGAN HOLIDAY CARD SETS

Four charming designs from one of our favorite artists. The first design has a Cardinal with snow-covered berries, the second shows a Hummingbird perched on an ornament, the third features a Loon with some festive holly, and the fourth has a group of Chickadees on a decorated branch. Message inside reads, "May you have a Happy Holiday and a Joyous New Year."

Morgan Holiday Card Set, 10 cards w/envelopes, please specify Cardinal, Hummingbird, Loon, or Chickadees: \$11.95



TOM KILLION HIGH SIERRA HOLIDAY CARD SET

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

Tom Killion High Sierra Holiday Card Set, 10 cards with envelopes: \$12.95



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."

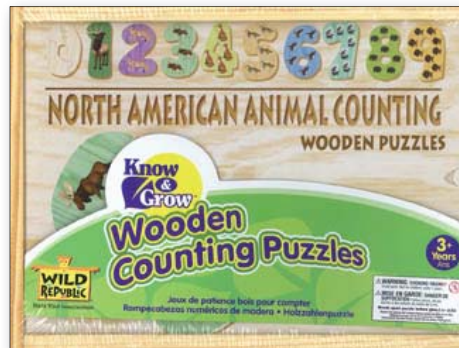
Mono Craters Holiday Card Set, 8 cards with envelopes: \$11.95

Call (760) 647-6595 to order



WOODEN ANIMAL PUZZLES & GAMES

These new puzzles are great gifts for youngsters. Featuring North American animals, they are fun and durable. The jigsaw puzzles measure 8 ½ x 8 ½ inches, have 20 pieces each, and come in their own storage tray. The 6-in-1 block puzzle contains nine cubes that can be assembled to make pictures of six different animals. The counting animals puzzle features the numbers 0-9 assembled out of color coded jigsaw pieces. The dominoes feature six North American animals in place of the traditional spots. Recommended for ages 3 and up.
Wooden Jigsaw Puzzle, please specify Bear, Bald Eagle, Mountain Lion, Bison, or Moose: \$4.50 each
Wooden 6-in-1 Block Puzzle: \$8.95
Wooden Animal Counting Puzzle: \$12.95
Wooden Animal Dominoes: \$8.95



BACKPACK BEARS

These adorable play sets feature small stuffed animal bears complete with backpacks and camping gear! The Backpack Bear contains Papa Bear with backpack, sleeping bag, and tent. The Baby-Pack Bear features Mama Bear with Baby Bear and a backpack that carries Baby Bear and sleeping bags and sleeping pads for both. Mama and Papa Bear are approximately 7 ½ inches tall, Baby Bear is 3 ½ inches tall. Get both for a whole camping family set! Ages 4 and up.

Backpack Bear: \$21.00

Baby-Pack Bear: \$21.00

VINTAGE GAME TINS

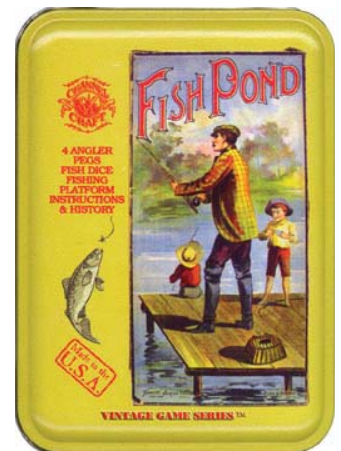
These reproductions of vintage games from the late 1800s come packaged in small tins that make them easy to play at home or on the road. In "The Great Railroad Game" players take turns moving their train along the tracks, collecting and delivering commodities. In "The Woods are Full of Them" players roll the die to travel along the trail and avoid bears. In

"Fish Pond" players take turns rolling the die to move along the stream and lake, catching fish along the way using different lures. Tins measure 3 ½ x 5 inches each. Ages 6 and up.

The Great Railroad Game, Vintage Game Tin: \$9.95

The Woods are Full of Them, Vintage Game Tin: \$9.95

Fish Pond, Vintage Game Tin: \$9.95



Call (760) 647-6595 to order



WE'RE GOING ON A BEAR HUNT

BY MICHAEL ROSEN, ILLUSTRATED BY HELEN OXENBURY

A father and his four children—a toddler, a preschool boy, and two older girls—go on the traditional bear hunt based on the old camp chant. This fun book has repetitive phrasing, fun noises, and an exciting storyline that make it perfect for reading aloud and family participation. Set contains softcover book and 6-inch-tall bear doll. Ages 4–9.

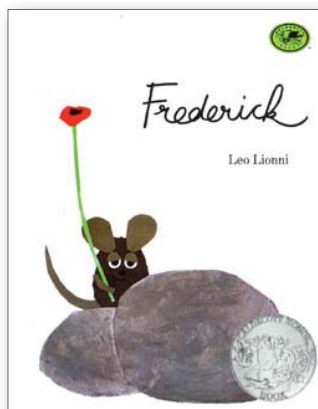
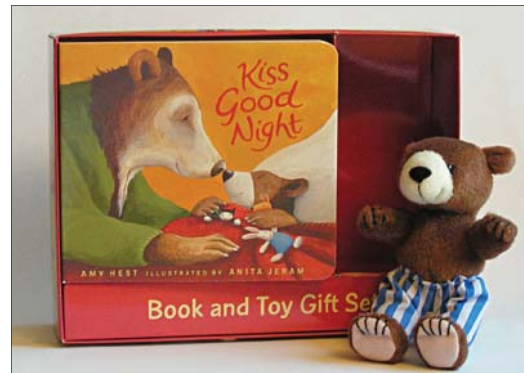
We're Going on a Bear Hunt, Candlewick Press, 40 pages, 5"x 6": \$9.99

KISS GOOD NIGHT

BY AMY HEST, ILLUSTRATED BY ANITA JERAM

On a dark and stormy night, Mrs. Bear is putting Sam to bed. "Ready now, Sam?" she asks. "I'm waiting," says Sam. What could he be waiting for? Set contains board book and 5-inch-tall Sam the bear doll. Ages 2–6.

Kiss Good Night, board book, Candlewick Press, 30 pages, 5"x 5¾": \$12.99



FREDERICK

BY LEO LIONNI

In a community focused on efficiency, Frederick concerns himself with the art and poetry he sees in the world around him. When gloomy winter comes it is Frederick's words and poetry which sustain his family when the food runs short. A story about the glory of the human spirit and the importance of dreams and creativity. Ages 2–5.

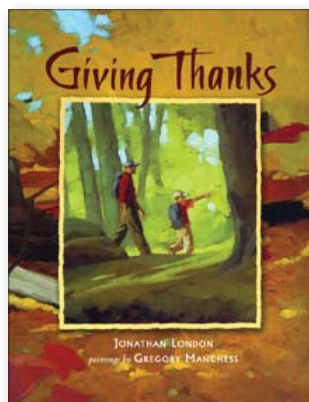
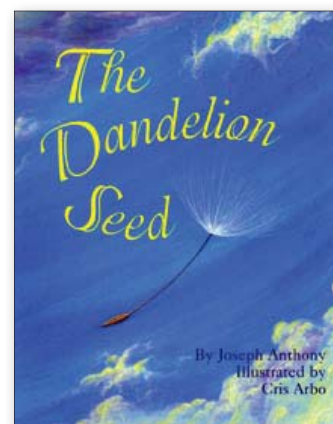
Frederick, softcover, Dragonfly Books, 32 pages, 9"x 7": \$5.99

THE DANDELION SEED

BY JOSEPH ANTHONY, ILLUSTRATED BY CRIS ARBO

Beautiful illustrations and a simple text trace the life cycle of a dandelion seed as it drifts and eventually grows into a dandelion. This book is also about trust, letting go, and the cycle of life. Ages 4–8.

The Dandelion Seed, softcover, Dawn Publications, 32 pages, 11"x 8¾": \$7.95



GIVING THANKS

BY JONATHAN LONDON, ILLUSTRATED BY GREGORY MANCHESS

As a father and son take a hike through the countryside on a sunny fall day, the young narrator explains, "Dad believes that the things of nature are a gift. And that in return, we must give something back. We must give thanks." The man expresses his gratitude for various animals, insects, and trees, as well as for Grandfather Sun and Grandmother Moon. This book is a gentle reminder to cherish what nature bestows so freely. Ages 4–8.

Giving Thanks, softcover, Candlewick Press, 32 pages, 11¼"x 9¾": \$6.99

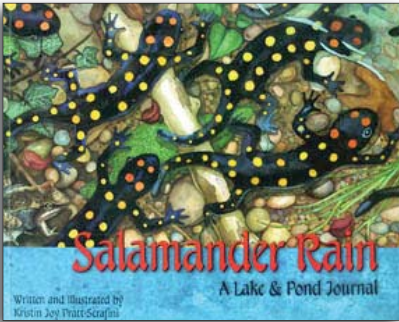
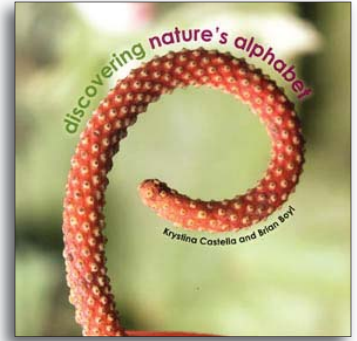
Call (760) 647-6595 to order

DISCOVERING NATURE'S ALPHABET

BY KRYSTINA CASTELLA AND BRIAN BOYL

The authors have assembled a portfolio of photographs of natural objects that form individual letters of the alphabet. From beaches to deserts, they discovered letters large and small in vines and flowers, tree trunks and seedpods. The minimal text urges readers to undertake explorations to find their own hidden patterns. Ages 4–8.

Discovering Nature's Alphabet, hardcover, Heydey Books, 64 pages, 8¼"x 8¼": \$15.95



SALAMANDER RAIN: A LAKE AND POND JOURNAL

BY KRISTIN JOY PRATT-SERAFINI

Pratt-Serafini's latest book is a fascinating account of how keen observations of nature can lead to a deeper appreciation. This book is vividly illustrated and describes a journal-making process that is valuable to any teacher or child. The colorful journal-style format encourages your child to start a nature journal of his or her own! Ages 5–9.

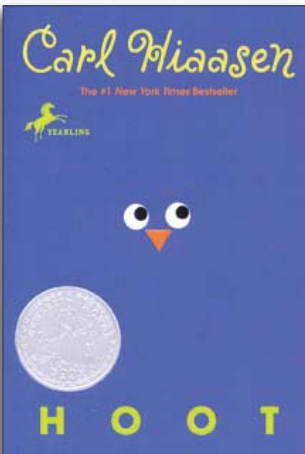
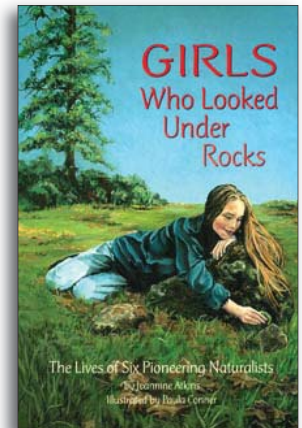
Salamander Rain, softcover, Dawn Publications, 32 pages, 8¾"x 10½": \$7.95

GIRLS WHO LOOKED UNDER ROCKS: THE LIVES OF SIX PIONEERING NATURALISTS

BY JEANNINE ATKINS, ILLUSTRATED BY PAULA CONNER

Six women whose interest in nature began as young girls are profiled in short biographies that are interesting and easy to read. The biographies are accompanied by charcoal drawings of each subject engaged in her area of interest as either a young girl or woman or both. The women profiled are: Maria Sibylla Merian (1647–1717), Anna Botsford Comstock (1854–1930), Frances Hamerstrom (1907–1998), Rachel Carson (1907–1964), Miriam Rothschild (1908–), and Jane Goodall (1934–). Ages 7–12.

Girls Who Looked Under Rocks, softcover, Dawn Publications, 63 pages, 9"x 6": \$8.95



HOOT

BY CARL HIAASEN

With a Florida setting and pro-environment message, Hiaasen returns to familiar turf for this novel for young readers. *Hoot* plunges readers into the middle of an ecological mystery, made up of endangered miniature owls, the Mother Paula's All-American Pancake House scheduled to be built over their burrows, and the owls' unlikely allies—three middle school kids determined to beat the messed-up adult system. *Hoot* offers fun reading with quirky characters. Ages 10–15.

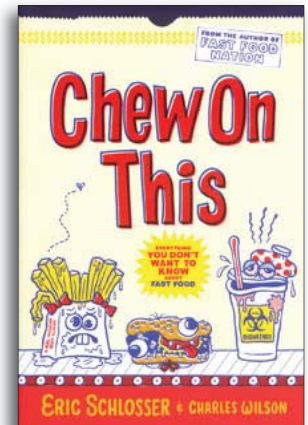
Hoot, softcover, Yearling Books, 292 pages, 7½"x 5": \$6.50

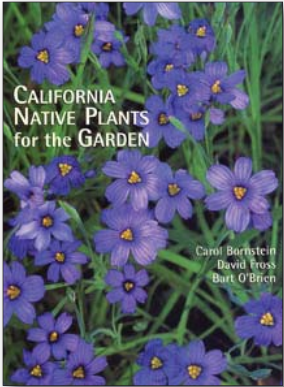
CHEW ON THIS: EVERYTHING YOU DON'T WANT TO KNOW ABOUT FAST FOOD

BY ERIC SCHLOSSER AND CHARLES WILSON

An adaptation of Schlosser's *Fast Food Nation*, *Chew on This* covers the history of the fast-food industry and delves into the agribusiness and animal husbandry methods that support it. The text is geared towards kids and written in a lively, lay-out-the-facts manner. Occasional photographs add bits of visual interest, but the emphasis here is on the truth about soda pop and obesity, fries and lies. Ages 10–15.

Chew On This, hardcover, Houghton Mifflin, 304 pages, 8½"x 5¾": \$16.00





CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANTS FOR THE GARDEN

BY CAROL BORNSTEIN, DAVID FROSS, AND BART O'BRIEN

Well-researched and extensively illustrated, this is an authoritative reference on California gardening, with detailed advice on landscape design, installation, watering, pruning, and pest control. A great reference for adding native plants to your yard or garden.

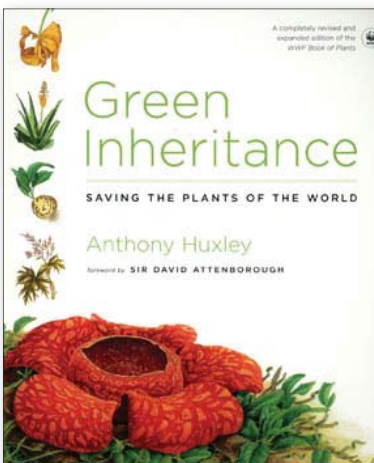
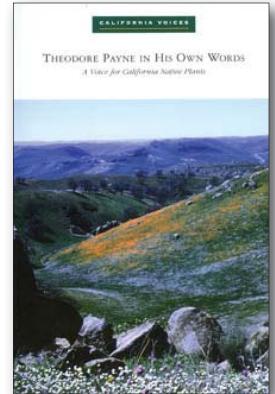
California Native Plants for the Garden, softcover, Cachuma Press, 270 pages, 10"x 7½": \$27.95

THEODORE PAYNE IN HIS OWN WORDS: A VOICE FOR CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANTS

BY THEODORE PAYNE

Theodore Payne arrived in Southern California in 1893 and began a seed and nursery business. Determined to see that California's rich native flora be saved, his vision became the spark for preservation and use of native plants. These memoirs reveal his ingenuity and wit, trace a life of botanical adventure, and give an enthralling view of Southern California lands and people from the 1890s to the 1940s.

Theodore Payne in His Own Words, softcover, Many Moons Press, 224 pages, 6"x 9": \$16.95



GREEN INHERITANCE: SAVING THE PLANTS OF THE WORLD

BY ANTHONY HUXLEY

The author profiles dozens of plants whose discovery and development significantly changed human life—essential staple crops that feed the world, exotic herbs and spices, crops for industrial uses, medicinal plants, ornamentals, and curiosities. The elegance and descriptive power of the text combines with compelling visuals to show the interconnectedness of deserts, oceans, and polar ice caps. Readers will come away with an enhanced view of the natural world and heightened interest in assessing the current movement toward genetic engineering.

Green Inheritance, softcover, UC Press, 192 pages, 10½"x 9": \$29.95

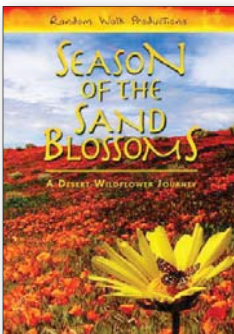
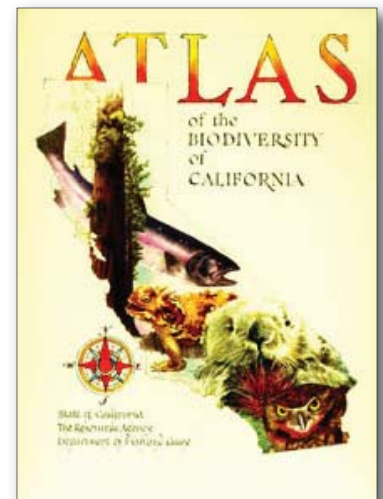
ATLAS OF THE BIODIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

BY THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH & GAME

This beautiful volume shows the rich diversity of habitats and wildlife in the Golden State.

Detailed maps, photographs, and text show how biodiversity is measured and surveys the various habitats and critical species throughout the state. Additional sections focus on pressures on biodiversity and ways to sustain it. A great resource for anyone wanting to learn more about the rich natural resources of California.

Atlas of the Biodiversity of California, softcover, California Department of Fish & Game, 104 pages, 12"x 10": \$21.95



SEASON OF THE SAND BLOSSOMS: A DESERT WILDFLOWER JOURNEY

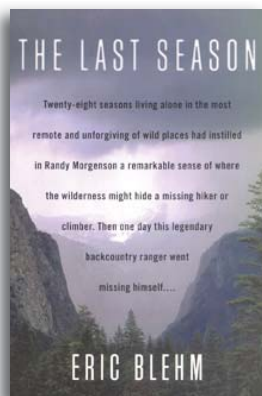
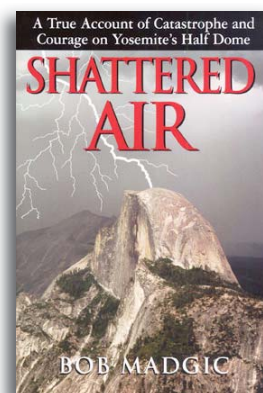
This spectacular film set to music with sweeping views and delicate close-ups puts viewers at eye level with the flowers, butterflies, birds and wildlife that thrive during the desert's brief, abundant spring. Also included is a second version of the film that identifies the flowers and animals shown. Mono Lake as well as many other California locations are featured.

Season of the Sand Blossoms, DVD, Random Walk Productions, 42 minutes: \$14.99

Call (760) 647-6595 to order

Bob Madgic, a writer on the outdoors and a Half Dome climbing veteran himself, delivers a well-written and thoroughly investigated account of an ill-fated climb up Yosemite's famed Half Dome by five experienced hikers in 1985. He provides in-depth profiles of each hiker and their shared enthusiasm for risk taking as a way of conquering "personal fear," but his real subject is less the hikers and more the "raw, fearsome power" of lightning.

Shattered Air, hardcover, Burford Books, 256 pages, 9"x 6 1/4": \$24.95



THE LAST SEASON

BY ERIC BLEHM

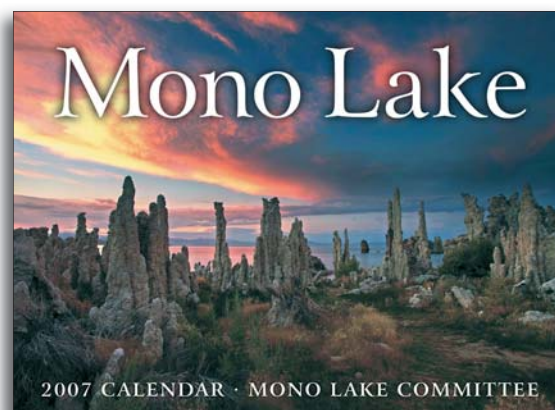
In 1996, after nearly 30 seasons as a park ranger in the Sierra Nevada, Randy Morgenson set off on a routine patrol and never came back. Blehm weaves the events of the ensuing search with descriptions of ranger life, tales of past incidents in the area, and Morgenson's increasingly fraught personal history. This engrossing book captures the culture, values, accomplishments, and limitations of living a backcountry life.

The Last Season, hardcover, HarperCollins, 352 pages, 9 1/4"x 6 1/4": \$24.95

2007 MONO LAKE CALENDAR

The 2007 Mono Lake Calendar is full of beautiful images of Mono Lake and the Mono Basin. From recovering streams to breathtaking sunrises and flocks of birds, this 12-month calendar captures many unique views. Each month also features inset photos of local flora and fauna. Can't get to Mono Lake as often as you would like? 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! Makes a great gift too. Printed in the USA on recycled paper.

2007 Mono Lake Calendar, 13 1/4"x 9 1/4": \$11.95



Our sincerest apology goes out to photographer **Alasdair McCondochie**, who successfully submitted a beautiful photograph for the 2007 Mono Lake Calendar only to have his November inset incorrectly credited to another photographer. We take great care in our work on the calendar in hopes that it raises awareness about Mono Lake while showcasing some spectacular photographers, and apologize for this mistake. For more of Alasdair's work visit www.pbase/amcond.com or email amcondochie@yahoo.com.

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

MONO LAKE COMMITTEE MAIL ORDER FORM

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

The Forgotten Season

Winter Photography in the Mono Basin



PHOTO COURTESY OF RICHARD KNEPP

January 12-14, 2007

\$220 per person/ \$200 for Mono Lake Committee members

There is a visual quiet that complements 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 to photograph 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 many winter photographic opportunities.

Come prepared for cold winter weather. 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.

Free Drawing to restore Mono Lake

Send in your tickets by November 27th!

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



Deluxe ski package from Footloose Sports of Mammoth Lakes includes Nordica ski boots, Scott goggles, gloves, and poles, and a Boeri helmet.

Camping equipment from Wilson's Eastside Sports of Bishop: North Face tent, Gregory backpack, and



more from Mountain Hardwear, Cascade Designs, Black Diamond, MSR, Montrail, and Sierra Designs.



2006-2007 season pass.

Whitewater rafting trip for two on the South Fork of the American River from Friends of the River.



Framed original photograph by Steven Rosen.

Yosemite Association seminar and one-year membership.



RAINBOW TARNs BED & BREAKFAST



At Crowley Lake

Fly fishing vacation with the Trout Fly of Mammoth Lakes, Rainbow Tarns B&B, Minaret Cinemas, and Great Basin Bakery.



Personalized tour and wine tasting in Sonoma with Randy Arnold of Barefoot Cellars Winery.



Tahoe Getaway at Sorensen's Resort.

\$50 gift certificates from The Toggery in Bishop.

Two REI Vista backpacks.



Lake Tahoe Escape at Zephyr Cove Resort.



2006-2007 season pass to the Cross Country Ski Center.



June Lake vacation at the Double Eagle Resort & Spa.



Snowboard from Wave Rave Snowboard Shop of Mammoth Lakes.

Patagonia Micro-D jacket & Puffball vest.



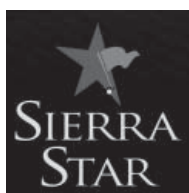
Friends of the Inyo package: two FOI organic cotton T-shirts, conifer field guide, *Lost Cement Mine* by Genny Smith, and a one-year membership.

Gourmet tea basket from Edisto Gallery & Tea Room of Mammoth Lakes.

Mono Lake: Explorations and Reflections by Jim Stimson.

Mono Lake Committee gift packs.

Two Mammoth vacation packages include items like golfing at Sierra Star Golf Club, a stay at the Cinnamon Bear Inn, a massage at InTouch MicroSpa, dinner and a show at Sherwin's, Giovanni's gourmet pizza, Minaret Cinemas vouchers, and breakfast at Base Camp Café.



Staff migrations

by Geoffrey McQuilkin

While seasonal staff migrate during the year, two Mono Lake friends deserve recognition for the long-term work they are doing on Mono Lake's behalf.

Herley Jim Bowling leads education programs about Mono Lake and water with schools and community groups in Los Angeles. He also helps groups prepare for adventures to Mono Lake through the Outdoor Experiences program. Herley Jim has been doing this for years with great success as the Committee's Los Angeles Education Coordinator—thank you Herley Jim!

Betsy Reifsnider was the Committee's Associate Director in the 1990s, moved on to run Friends of the River for many years, and is now doing independent policy work in Sacramento. Mono Lake has always been close to her heart and we're happy to welcome her back as our Sacramento Policy Associate. Betsy will be providing an on-the-ground presence in Sacramento, making sure Mono Lake is never far from the minds of policy makers.



The 2006 summer staff from top to bottom, left to right: Arya Degenhardt, Bartshé Miller, Geoff McQuilkin, Lisa Cutting, Megan Stoddard, Brett Pyle, Greg Reis, Alayne Meeks, Erika Obedzinski, Emi Kiyan, Clare Cragan, Elin Ljung, JJ Jenkins, Molly Hucklebridge, Elicia Whittlesey, Ryan Carle, Jessi Barber, Rachel Neff, Becca Hammargren, and Kirsten Watson. Herley Jim Bowling, Santiago Escruceria, Donnette Huseilton, and Laura Walker not pictured.

We bid farewell to Canoe Coordinator **JJ Jenkins** who is on her way to New Orleans. Naturalist Intern **Jessi Barber** is headed back to Oberlin College for her second year. Lee Vining local **Ryan Carle** is going back to finish up his final year at UC Santa Cruz. **Emi Kiyan** is heading back to UC Santa Barbara to finish up her Masters in Environmental Science and Management. **Rachel Neff** is heading off to a school internship at Lake Tahoe. **Elicia Whittlesey** is returning to Pomona College for her senior year. The Committee staff and members sincerely thank you all and wish you the best of luck.

We're also proud to announce that **Frances Spivy-Weber** is the recipient of the **Sierra Nevada Alliance's 2006 Tissiack Award**. This award goes to "a Sierra leader who is most impressive in their actions and inspires admiration by other Sierra conservationists.

Who persevered and succeeded in many campaigns and efforts—and wears the bloom of youth with their passion and commitment to the Sierra."❖

Interns hard at work for Mono Lake

by Erika Obedzinski

Along with providing visitor information on the busy front counter, leading naturalist walks and canoe tours, and supporting the Committee's core policy and education work in the busy season, Interns complete focused, individual projects. Following is a list of highlights from the summer 2006 Naturalist Intern projects.

Jessi Barber spent a lot of time out in the field monitoring Mill Creek. Mill Creek represents the most significant restoration opportunity in the Mono Basin today, and getting baseline data by measuring streamflows is a key step in this ongoing work.

Ryan Carle made good use of his knowledge of native plants and was inspired by invasive plant removal along the creeks. He worked to remove large areas of plants that out-compete the native flora essential to riparian restoration.

Becca Hammargren provided support for the Membership program. She opened and processed donations, put together new member packets and thank you letters, and helped keep things running smoothly at the Membership desk. Luckily

Becca will be staying on this fall to continue helping out!

Emi Kiyan used her knowledge of GIS mapping to compile detailed maps outlining invasive species in critical restoration areas around the Mono Basin. She acquired and worked with many map layers to create an accurate map that will be useful for invasive plant removal in the future.

Rachel Neff used her graphics background to work with staff on the revision of the education wall in the Information Center & Bookstore, as well as to create a logo and flash movie for the Eastern Sierra Watershed Program.

Elicia Whittlesey conducted a survey of Lee Vining businesses after the Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua to get a sense of the event's impacts on the local economy. She also helped Friends of the Inyo map Off-Highway Vehicle roads in the Inyo National Forest.

If you or anyone you know would be interested in being a summer intern at the Mono Lake Committee, please contact Erika Obedzinski (erika@monolake.org) at (760) 647-6595.



From the mailbag

News from members and friends

In memory

Thank you to all of you who send contributions in memory of your friends and loved ones—we appreciate these gifts that help us carry on the work that will keep Mono Lake a special place for many generations.

Robert & Zenia Hauck of Lebanon, OR, **Bryan Kilfoil** of San Francisco, **Taylor & Georgina Kilfoil** of San Carlos, **Anne Locke** of Santa Clara, and **Margo & Dayton Thorne** of Gardnerville, NV gave gifts in memory of Committee member **Rodney Caldwell**. **David, Angela, & Bridget Fellers** gave a gift in memory of **Edith Folz** of La Canada. **Bruce & Jacquelin Parker** of Fairfield gave a gift in memory of **Dola**

Faye Parker, who was a much-loved resident of Lee Vining. Donations in memory of **Robert Singleton**, long-time visitor to Mono Lake, were received from **Marlene Rossland** of Scottsdale, AZ and **Colleen Mae** of Williston, ND.

The following people gave gifts in memory of **Vern Keller** who will be missed by his family, neighbors and friends: **Marlene & Dudley Cate** of Reno, NV, the **Guyton Family** of Reno, NV, **Lois B. Jones** of Quincy, **Brynne B. Marsh** of Reno, NV, **Janet, Dave, & Kish Miller** of Ellicott City, MD, **Bill & Lurayne Van Tassel** of Reno, NV. A gift in

memory of **Vern & Norma Keller** was given by **Marcia, David, & Joanna Binney** of Seattle, WA.

Special thanks

Thank you to **John Whittlesey** of Canyon Creek Nursery in Oroville (Intern Elicia's dad!) for donating native plants for the garden and the new canoe planter around the Information Center & Bookstore!

George & Nancy Appel donated and planted flowers for the garden and carefully tended them to help them all thrive.

We've been enjoying the plants all summer—thank you! ♦

Thank you volunteers!

by Erika Obedzinski

We appreciate all the hard work that our many volunteers contribute on behalf of Mono Lake—we couldn't do it without you! Thank you to all of the volunteers who have donated time to projects such as helping at the Committee's front counter, leading South Tufa tours, pulling invasive weeds, cleaning up trash along our adopted section of Highway 395, and planting and watering Jeffrey pine seedlings along the creeks.

We'd especially like to recognize some volunteers who quietly and steadily go above and beyond for Mono Lake. **Russell Bell** keeps a close eye on our web server to make sure all is running smoothly. **Judy Erb** spent many dedicated hours this summer helping at the membership desk. **Nancy States** spent a month roving at South Tufa, sharing her knowledge and enthusiasm about birds and Mono Lake with visitors. Former Committee birding intern and Mono Lake supporter extraordinaire, **Randy Arnold** of Barefoot Cellars Winery, is the inspiration and

continued organizer of the Wine Flight fundraising event. **George & Nancy Appel** returned for a second summer to help tend the gardens around the Committee office and Information Center & Bookstore and to help out in general wherever they could. **Jean Dillingham, John Walter, & Wilma Wheeler** helped kids learn about creeks through the Eastern Sierra Watershed Program. **Stan & Sharon Bluhm** have filled in leading South Tufa tours. And last but certainly not least, thank you to **Janet Carle** for coordinating the volunteers with such dedication and enthusiasm. Thank you to all of you!

Thank you to all of the Mono Lake volunteers who went through Janet Carle's volunteer training program: **George Appel, Jo Bacon, Phyllis Benham, Sharon Bluhm, Stan Bluhm, Pat De Sota, Jean Dillingham, Judy Erb, Hank Garretson, Edyth Irvine, Leslie Klusmire, Linda LaPierre, Deb Main, Katie Mulder, Mary K. Prentice,**

Rhonda Starr, Sherry Taylor, Alison Woodworth, Jim Williams.

Be a Mono Lake volunteer

If you are interested in meeting visitors from all over the world and sharing your knowledge of the Eastern Sierra by volunteering on behalf of Mono Lake, let us know!

Volunteers may staff information desks, rove and answer questions at the lake, or guide formal tours for groups. Free training will be held in the Mono Basin next spring—dates have yet to be scheduled. Most volunteers attend six half-day training sessions and are asked to donate eight hours per month from June through September. Participants must be at least 18 years old, be able to walk short distances, and stand for two hours at a time.

Please contact Janet Carle at (760) 647-6431 or Erika Obedzinski (erika@monolake.org) at (760) 647-6595 for more information.

Eastern Sierra Watershed Program

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Help Lee Vining and Mammoth kids learn about their creeks in a hands-on way.



Contact
Bartshé Miller at
(760) 647-6595.



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