

MONO LAKE

N E W S L E T T E R

Fall 2007



Shoreline Property Saved

Rush Creek's Renewed Channels

Cedar Hill Success

Fall Catalog

Sometimes “why not?” is a really good question to ask. This evening it was “why not get up at 2AM to watch the eclipse?”

Next thing I know I’m standing outside half awake and watching the shadow of the earth crossing the moon. It’s fun to so suddenly be acutely aware of something so big. I remember the first time it happened—watching a solar eclipse by looking at the changing shapes of light and shadow on the ground thrown by leaves on trees. We all know that in every moment of every day we stand on planet Earth as it spins, wobbles, and moves through the solar system and outer space, but really, we don’t think about it all that often. That’s what’s so cool about an eclipse—it’s a brief glimpse at the really big picture, a refreshing moment of perspective.

This week the Mono Lake Committee got some great news. Over 100 acres of property along the west shore were purchased by Mammoth Mountain as part of a larger land trade that will end up putting that property into the hands of the Forest Service. For the past few years the future of this land has been uncertain, with scary things like subdivisions and development proposals hanging in the realm of possibility. The news is a relief and cause for celebration. A lot of people have worked hard to make the land trade a reality, not the least of which are the Mono Lake Committee’s 15,000 members.

Standing there watching the eclipse, I realized that getting the news about the Mono Lake parcel felt similar to seeing the eclipse—that same instantaneous dose of perspective. People can make positive change—this is one of my favorite things about Mono Lake. It’s a place where we can think in timeframes longer than our lifetimes, where in the face of what seems impossible, we can band together, figure out what’s right for Mono Lake, and ask, “Why not?”

So, why not visit Mono Lake this fall?

—Arya Degenhardt, Communications Director



COVER PHOTO BY ELIN LJUNG

PHOTO COURTESY OF CHRIS MOOREHEAD

An unusual sight! A blonde black bear spotted running on the east shore of Mono Lake in late August. It’s been quite a year for bears in the Mono Basin. For stories about the bears and other notable wildlife sightings visit www.monolake.org/birds.

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 & 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 Boulevard
Playa Del Rey, California 90293

Staff

Executive Director..... Geoffrey McQuilkin
Eastern Sierra Policy Director..... Lisa Cutting
Education Director..... Bartshé Miller
Communications Director..... Arya Degenhardt
Office Director Erika Obiedzinski
Membership Coordinator Ellen King
Information Specialist..... Greg Reis
Policy Coordinator Emily Prud’homme
Sacramento Policy Associate Betsy Reifsnider
Outdoor Experiences Mgr. Santiago Escruceria
Los Angeles Education Coord.... Herley Jim Bowling
Communications Coordinator..... Elin Ljung
Retail Operations Manager Brett Pyle
Bookstore Manager Laura Walker
Bookkeeper Donnette Huselton
Retail Assistant Duncan King
Outdoor Education Instructors Betsy Forsyth,
Molly Hucklebridge
Canoe Tour Supervisor Gary Nelson
Canoe Coordinator JJ Jenkins
Mono Lake Intern..... Jessi DeLong

Board of Directors

Sally Gaines, Mammoth Lakes, Chair
Tom Soto, Santa Monica, Secretary
David Kanner, Redwood City, Treasurer
Martha Davis, Riverside
Andrea Lawrence, Mammoth Lakes
Richard Lehman, Fresno
Sheryl Taylor, Mammoth Lakes
Doug Virtue, San Pedro

Directors Emeriti

Helen Green • Ed Grosswiler
Grace de Laet • Genny Smith
Brent Coeur-Barron, Corporate Counsel

Founded by David Gaines in 1978

MONO LAKE
NEWSLETTER

Fall 2007 ~ Volume XXIX, Number 1

The *Mono Lake Newsletter* is a quarterly publication of the Mono Lake Committee. Written material contained in this newsletter may be quoted or reproduced for review, reporting, educational purposes, or related non-profit uses; a copy of the publication is requested. Reproduction or quotation for other purposes may be approved upon written request.
ISSN #0275-6633. Copyright © 2007 Mono Lake Committee.
Printed on 100% recycled paper.

Jim Canaday to receive Defender of the Trust Award

Years of commitment have improved Mono Lake immeasurably

by Geoffrey McQuilkin

This fall the Mono Lake Committee will present its Defender of the Trust Award to Jim Canaday for his dedication and vision in protecting the Public Trust at Mono Lake.

Canaday, recently retired from his position as Senior Environmental Scientist for the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board), has been a one-of-a-kind leader. In the early 1990s he made sure that thorough and detailed science was the centerpiece of the studies and documents prepared for the State Water Board's review of Los Angeles' water rights at Mono Lake. As the lead staff scientist he was instrumental in the State Water Board's order that has guided the lake's recovery and stream restoration for the past 13 years.

Subsequent to the 1994 decision Canaday has been the face of the State Water Board's continuing commitment to implementing the requirements of the order. As the State Water Board's Mono Lake point person he handled every request, complaint, and disagreement that arose—issues he usually approached by making everyone talk about them, in person, until progress was made.

Canaday's principle-based collaborative approach is respected by the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power

(DWP), the Mono Lake Committee, and all parties that have worked with him. A master of getting things done by the carrot-and-stick approach, he is always willing to talk about issues but he also knows the state's duties and consistently represents them—firmly and in detail if needed. He has guided DWP, the Committee, and others to an untold number of mutually agreeable solutions.

Canaday can proudly point to the fact that every Mono Lake issue of dispute that has arisen on his watch—and there have been plenty—has been successfully solved. No issue ever escalated to become a legal battle before the full State Water Board.

In short, Jim Canaday is a large part of why Mono Lake and its tributary streams are well on the road to recovery today.

A new type of Defender

The list of past Defender of the Trust Award recipients is a roster of key players in the fight to protect Mono Lake. Some represented Los Angeles, most represented Mono Lake; all played critical roles in changing the system to assure that the Public Trust values of Mono Lake—the waters, wildlife, and

Continued on page 25

Shoreline subdivision saga at an end Cunningham family sells majority of property to Mammoth Mountain

by Geoffrey McQuilkin

At press time the Mono Lake Committee received exciting news that the threat of a large, illegal subdivision along Mono Lake's western shore has ended. Mammoth Mountain Ski Area (MMSA) has purchased 90% of the Mono Lake parcel, previously owned by the Cunningham family. The land will become part of a proposed land trade with the US Forest Service, assuring that it will be protected in its natural state for future generations.

Mono Lake supporters and the Mono Lake Committee raised substantial legal and ecological concerns about the subdivision concept, making it clear that there would be tremendous public and legal opposition to the project and advocating a land trade as the solution to this issue. All Mono

Lake friends should take a moment to celebrate the success that we've won here. Standing united, we've once again proven that a group of dedicated people can change the future by speaking from our hearts on behalf of Mono Lake!

The transaction marks the end to a five-year saga in which a 30-unit resort home subdivision proposed by the owners threatened to damage the unique ecological resources of Mono Lake, forever change the rural feel of the west shore, and undermine the integrity of the Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area.

Details are still coming in, but it appears that the parcel now

Continued on page 6

Two Rush Creek channels flow again

Important restoration progress continues in the Mono Basin

by Lisa Cutting

After years of scientific evaluation, lengthy discussions, and persistent negotiations, two side channels on Rush Creek were reopened and are now, even in this low water year, carrying water. This past spring the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power (DWP) submitted the final completion plan for the outstanding reopenings of Channel 4bii and Channel 8 to the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board). Fairly quickly thereafter, DWP initiated the proposed work and within a few weeks the plan was completed and the once abandoned channels had water flowing in them once again.

Why are channel openings so important?

The Mono Lake Committee, DWP, and state-appointed stream scientists had been discussing how to proceed with the State Water Board's channel opening requirement for several years. After the State Water Board's Decision 1631 in 1994 (the legal mandate that established limits on the amount of water DWP could export from the Mono Basin), Orders 98-05 and 98-07 were issued. These orders established the specific restoration actions and monitoring that DWP must complete in order to meet its restoration obligations in the Mono Basin. Reopening some of the previously abandoned side channels on Rush Creek is an important component of the restoration orders.

Historically, the Rush Creek bottomlands included a

mosaic of multiple channels in a rich and lush wooded-wetland habitat. These side channels allowed water to spread across the floodplain, recharging the groundwater and providing water for vegetation growth across the valley floor. This type of bottomland system is particularly critical in the arid Great Basin landscape where cottonwood-willow riparian corridors provide important habitat in an otherwise dry environment. Side channels also provide important habitat for fish and waterfowl.

Rewatering the side channels is significant for other reasons as well. Orders 98-05 and 98-07 were crafted under the philosophy that restoring natural processes will allow the streams to heal themselves. The State Water Board-ordered spring peak restoration flows are a perfect example of this philosophy. Removing sediment plugs that block side channels will allow water to spread out and vegetation to begin to recolonize the banks of channels. Reopened channels also enable the stream's energy to do the work of moving sediment, scouring out pools, and creating backwater areas for waterfowl and fish.

How did the side channels get plugged?

After water diversions began in 1941, Rush Creek was dry or, at best, carrying very little water. Over time, the cottonwoods and willows anchoring the stream banks weakened and died. In the late 1960s the Mono Basin experienced extreme flood events, and the excess water that DWP could not export raged down the dry creek beds. This surge of water straightened the main channel, dislodged dead vegetation and moved rocks and boulders. Side channels that had been stable for hundreds of years became plugged with the debris and were cut off from receiving water from the main channel.

Despite the fact that the channels were plugged and inaccessible to stream flow, scientists were able to locate and map them using aerial photographs of pre-1941 conditions and checking their findings on the ground. The iron-stained cobble and worn channel rock verified where the pre-diversion side channels had existed. This evidence of past streamflow allowed the parties to proceed with formalizing the restoration plan.



Days after DWP opened dry channels on Rush Creek water makes its way toward Mono Lake.

Continued on page 5

Current side channel status

In 1998 the State Water Board adopted Restoration Orders 98-05 and 98-07, which ordered the implementation of the Mono Basin Stream and Stream Channel Restoration Plan as well as the Mono Basin Waterfowl Habitat Restoration Plan. These plans identified specific historic channels on Rush Creek that were feasible and desirable to open. The parties agreed that opening the identified side channels would be beneficial for waterfowl and the functionality of the stream system itself.

Order 98-05 identified nine remaining channels on Rush Creek to be opened by DWP. Only four of those had been fully opened prior to this spring, and none of them were in the naturally-multiple-channeled area in the bottomlands. Two channels were opened this past spring, and three bottomland channels still have not been opened. The analysis and research conducted indicate that opening the remaining channels would cause more harm than benefit to the system (Channel 11), would not be feasible or even possible given current conditions (Channel 14), or would not result in much benefit for the large amount of work required (Channel 1a).

The Committee and other parties agree that the existing physical constraints preclude any further channel opening work at this time. Having said that, DWP has agreed to continue to subscribe to an adaptive management philosophy and consider future side channel openings if changing conditions make them feasible and beneficial. Given the loss of these three channels from the restoration program, it was even more important that the two new channels were opened this year.

Why did it take so long?

Since 2000, stream scientist Bill Trush's recommendations to DWP had been to defer any work on opening the remaining side channels. There were various concerns, among them that opening the side channels would put the main channel in jeopardy because of unknown consequences with how the system would respond to physical manipulation. Would the stream "shift" its course and would the side channel capture all of the flow? How would the trout respond to changes in the flow amount? Would there be enough flow to "split" the water between the channels? Or would the changes in some way set back the restoration process?

Stream scientists Bill Trush and Chris Hunter each released their final channel opening recommendations in April 2006. Since then, the parties have had many long and difficult discussions on the correct course of action. The Committee recognized and agreed with the recommendation that some channels physically would not be able to be reopened. Given that only two out of five channels were recommended for rewatering, the Committee pushed for minimum year round flows (between one and five cubic feet per second) at base flow conditions. This would provide fall flows as envisioned in the waterfowl plan and was ultimately accepted by DWP.



ARVA DEGENHARDT

Standing at the entrance of Rush Creek's Channel 8, Committee staff Greg Reis, Geoff McQuilkin, and Lisa Cutting examine the angle of channel opening in relation to the main stem.

What can we expect to see in the future?

The first reopened side-channel in the Rush Creek bottomlands (Channel 10) first experienced flows in the fall of 1995. Watching and evaluating this channel over the years has shown an increase in groundwater recharge and revegetation. Cottonwoods, willows, and Jeffrey pines that were planted in the spring of 1996 are now 10–20 feet tall. The channel is establishing itself through natural processes as a result of the water's energy and now there are areas of demarcation within the channel—cobble, sand, riffles and runs, undercut banks—which are all signs of increasing stream functionality and the return of natural stream processes.

Moving forward, the expectation is that the two most recently opened channels will respond in a similar manner. In addition to adding overall channel length and width to the Rush Creek system, vegetation will increase and spread across the floodplain as groundwater is recharged. Waterfowl are expected to use the slow moving water and backwater areas. There will be greater habitat complexity, including a diversity of plant species, a variety of sediment sizes, and meandering stream channels.

Given that the stream's energy, which moves sediment and accumulates large woody debris, cannot be fully controlled, it's quite possible that in future years these channels could close off naturally. DWP has agreed to maintain the openings for five years. After that, all parties understand that the creek will naturally migrate in the floodplain, a process that indicates a functional and healthy bottomland stream system. ❖

Lisa Cutting is the Committee's Eastern Sierra Policy Director. Exploring creeks of all sizes has always been a favorite pastime. When she was a little girl, she even composed a song (only one line) ... "crick walkin' is my favorite thing to do" ... which she still finds herself singing at times.

Statewide water droplets

by Geoffrey McQuilkin

DWP's Nichols departs

In July, Los Angeles Department of Water & Power (DWP) Commissioner Mary Nichols was appointed by Governor Schwarzenegger to chair the California Air Resources Board. As a result she has resigned from the DWP Commission. Her leadership skills will be of great benefit in Sacramento, where her new duties include implementing California's landmark global warming legislation.

Nichols had been the Commission's point person on Eastern Sierra matters and the leader of conceptual discussions about how DWP land holdings in Mono County might receive a guarantee of remaining open space (see page 7 for more). Commission Chair David Nahai will now fill that role and continue these discussions, commenting: "We remain resolutely committed to the protection and preservation of DWP lands in Mono County, to the ongoing fulfillment of all environmental standards, and to the continuing improvement of our relationship with Mono County and its residents."

Recycled water legislation AB 1481 advances

Recycled water projects are critical tools for Los Angeles to control water use. Important legislation (AB 1481) authored by Assemblyman De La

Torre would standardize permitting requirements for use of recycled water for landscape irrigation.

Committee Executive Director Geoff McQuilkin testified in support of this legislation earlier this year and the bill is currently in the final stages of development in the State Senate. DWP officials hope to quickly increase use of recycled water—thus offsetting use of fresh Sierra water—if the new procedures take effect.

Water Board sees recycled water as critical

The State Water Resources Control Board will be promoting use of recycled water through a new policy due out this fall. The draft policy explains why recycled water use is in the best interest of the state and how Regional Water Boards can write permits to encourage use of recycled water while assuring the public that human health and the environment will be protected. At its center, the policy proposes the development of groundwater basin management plans to determine how increasing salts from all waters, not just recycled water, will be monitored and treated.

State Water Board members Gary Wolff and Frances Spivy-Weber have taken the lead in developing this policy. Spivy-Weber notes that the policy is particularly important in light of recent

dry conditions in the Sierra and the West, increasingly dire predictions of hydrologic uncertainty in the future due to climate change, and the rising cost of energy to deliver imported water to Southern California. Further details are available at www.waterboards.ca.gov.

Los Angeles tops four million

Los Angeles' population grew by more than 37,000 people last year, state demographers reported this past summer. That pushes the city population to just over four million people. Los Angeles is still the country's second-largest city (New York City is first).

How do all those Angelinos get their water? Mono Lake supporters well know that the Eastern Sierra provides a tremendous amount of water to the city of Los Angeles. But take heart: through cutting edge conservation and reclamation programs—many of them advocated and supported by the Mono Lake Committee—the city is using the same amount of water it did thirty years ago despite the population increase. ❖

Geoff McQuilkin is the Committee's Executive Director. He saw his youngest daughter Ellery off to her first day of preschool this fall.

Mono Lake parcel from page 3

owned by MMSA includes all property portions west of Highway 395, including the existing structures and virtually all of the proposed subdivision sites. Recognizing the critical importance of this property, MMSA paid a premium of a half million dollars—and spent untold hours in lengthy negotiations. The final sale price was \$4 million; a recently updated appraisal valued the land at \$3.5 million. All the development

rights associated with the property have transferred to MMSA.

This is the second time MMSA has taken ownership of the property. However this time there are no options or buyback clauses that would allow the Cunninghams to regain ownership in the future.

Mono Lake supporters familiar with this issue will note that 10% of the property remains under the ownership

of the Cunninghams. This sliver of land is located east of Highway 395, between the highway and the boundary of the Mono Lake Tufa State Reserve. The Cunninghams' goals for the land are unclear, but rumor has it that they may seek to pursue a shaky claim of ownership to State Reserve lands.

Policy notes

by Emily Prud'homme

Cedar Hill preserved

The 3,700-acre Cedar Hill parcel northeast of Mono Lake is now in public hands, thanks to successful transactions between the former property owner, the Wilderness Land Trust and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The parcel was on the market for several years, with potential subdivision and development proposals. In 2006, the property was sold to the Wilderness Land Trust, and in July 2007, the land was handed over to the BLM, to be preserved in its natural state for generations to come. To further ensure the property's protection, the mineral rights to this land are being held by the Eastern Sierra Land Trust. The Committee has kept a careful watch on this pristine area within the Mono Basin, and is pleased that the scenic qualities of Cedar Hill will be protected.

DWP land protection

The Committee is exploring ways to ensure that lands owned by Los Angeles Department of Water & Power (DWP) in the Mono Basin are protected from future inappropriate development. Committee attorneys are at work exploring possible options by which DWP could confer protections on their lands. There has been some recent shuffling of DWP personnel (see Statewide water page 6), but there

is still momentum to keep moving forward with this effort. The Committee is working hard to help balance the needs of "landlocked" communities (surrounded by publicly- and DWP-owned land) for potential growth, with the need to protect scenic lands around Mono Lake in their undeveloped state.

Avalanche control

This fall Caltrans will be installing an avalanche control system on the Warren Bench above Highway 395 along the western shore of Mono Lake. The Inyo National Forest has approved the placement of this system within the Scenic Area, and expects the system to be operational during the coming winter.

The system, called "Gazex," short for the French *gaz explosif*, includes installation of propane and oxygen tanks to fuel explosions at the end of pipes located strategically at the top of avalanche chutes. The remotely controlled system sets off smaller snow slides in order to preempt a large avalanche, such as the one that closed the highway for five days in January 2006. Caltrans currently operates a Gazex system in June Lake, and thus has experience with the technology.

Caltrans is funding this project partly with money that was not spent on the

proposed shoulder widening of Highway 395. The Committee recognizes the need for installing a reliable avalanche control system, and supports Caltrans in this effort. Because there is valid concern about potential impacts to bighorn sheep, whose range is in the vicinity of the project area, the Committee has requested that Caltrans monitor the sheep for any impacts this project may have on the Lee Vining herd.

CalTrout board visits the Mono Basin

The Committee hosted California Trout (CalTrout) in mid-July during their visit to the Mono Basin for a board of directors meeting. Committee staff helped lead tours of restoration sites on Rush Creek including the Mono Gate One Return Ditch aqueduct control structure. CalTrout has been engaged in Mono Basin issues since the 1980s, speaking up on behalf of the tributary streams which had healthy fisheries during the early part of the 20th century. During the visit the Committee had an opportunity to officially welcome Mark Drew, CalTrout's new Eastern Sierra Program Manager. ❖



A winter view from Cedar Hill looking out across Mono Lake to the Warren Bench, Lee Vining Canyon, and Mount Dana. Cedar Hill narrowly escaped development proposals and thankfully, the property has been traded to the Bureau of Land Management to remain in its natural state.

Volunteers monitor water quality in North Mono Basin streams

by Emily Prud'homme

Each spring in the Eastern Sierra, fresh water cascades down the steep mountain front as melting snow feeds the creeks, welcoming a new year for desert riparian ecosystems. Mono Lake's tributary streams have their headwaters in high alpine regions, in areas of designated Wilderness ... but is this water really as clean as it seems? A newly trained crew of volunteer water quality

Alliance and Friends of the Inyo to support a volunteer-based water quality monitoring program in the Eastern Sierra.

The goal of the program is to monitor and track the effects of common land use practices in individual watersheds, and evaluate their impact on both water quality and habitat function.

Every three months, the citizen scientist volunteers head out to their field monitoring sites to measure standard water chemistry parameters and collect samples for laboratory analysis. Once a year, the monitoring teams perform a streamwalk analysis, looking closely at the section of riparian ecosystem upstream of the sampling site; taking an inventory of vegetation, geomorphology, and real and potential impacts to water quality. Data is collected using state-mandated protocols with approved measurement tools.

This fall the group will perform the first annual detailed collection of benthic macroinvertebrates (BMIs), the aquatic insects that spend at least part of their life cycle living in the water. Each species has a particular range of tolerance to changing water conditions. The variety and abundance of BMI species are analyzed by an entomologist, and this data gives a very good picture of overall water quality and stream ecosystem health. With this information in hand, it will be possible to make informed decisions if and when changes to the system are found as monitoring continues in the years to come.

The Committee is initiating this monitoring effort with three sites in the Mill and Wilson Creek watershed. These

Continued on page 10



EMILY PRUD'HOMME

Volunteers monitoring the water quality of Mill Creek.

monitors will be working to answer this question by gathering important data on local streams. Thanks to a grant from the State Water Resources Control Board, the Mono Lake Committee has entered a partnership with the Sierra Nevada

Invasive plant species programs update

Almost every week this past summer Mono Lake Interns Jessi DeLong and Sarah Jane Pepper were out in the Mono Basin pulling non-native, invasive plants. Much of the work has taken place at the Lundy Power Plant—where the tailrace is lined with bouncing bet (*Saponaria officinalis*)—with the aim of keeping the seeds from being distributed downstream along Mill and Wilson Creeks.

Along with this hands-in-the-dirt effort, the Committee has been holding regular strategy meetings with the Mono Basin partners in weed eradication. The effort to rid the town of Lee Vining of bouncing bet has begun, starting with the creation of an informative brochure to help Mono Basin residents understand the threat of invasive plants and suggest alternatives for their gardens. A demonstration garden in Lee Vining is also in the works, complete with interpretive panels explaining the project and the role communities can play in maintaining a healthy natural environment around them.



EMILY PRUD'HOMME

Mono Lake Intern Jessi DeLong with a full load of bouncing bet from the Lundy Power Plant tailrace.

The Chautauqua fledges and flies

by Lisa Cutting

Here at Mono Lake there are several sure signs that summer has officially begun—the opening of Tioga Pass, the arrival of the Committee’s seasonal staff, and of course the Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua.

The Chautauqua this past June was no exception to the standard of excellence that event organizers, presenters, volunteers, and participants have set for themselves since the very beginning. After six years, it feels as though the event has fully fledged and is now flying on the wings of so many dedicated people who continue their involvement each year. The dominant buzz (or trill!) this year included words like “wonderful community of people,” “the Chautauqua family,” and “the great feeling around town” that we all share for three days in June.

The Chautauqua is all of that and more. So many people have returned year after year, forming a solid foundation for the event. Add to that foundation new presenters, new participants, and even two new organizing partners—the Eastern Sierra Interpretive Association and the National Park Service—and the result is the perfect combination of the new and the familiar. The Chautauqua truly is a wonderful example of a group of people coming together to form a community within the diverse natural landscape of the Mono Basin—learning and sharing with each other and connecting to this special place.

Facilitating and inspiring that shared learning is a long list of dedicated and knowledgeable presenters and trip leaders. Many thanks to Don Banta, Ted Beedy, Carol Blaney, Roy Churchwell, Pete Devine, Jon Dunn, Lisa Fields, Kimball Garrett, Tom Hahn, Ann Howald, Sacha Heath, Debbie House, John Muir Laws, Burleigh Lockwood, David Lukas, Jeff Maurer, Chris McCreedy, Paul McFarland, Peter Metropulos, Lisa Murphey, Kristie Nelson, Melissa Pitkin, Bob Power, Mike Prather, Cathy Rose, Ane Carla Rovetta, Dave Shuford,

Don't miss the seventh annual
Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua

June 20-22, 2008

Registration begins April 15th

www.birdchautauqua.org

Rich Stallcup, Lee Stetson, Greg Stock, Sarah Stock, Erik Westerlund, and David Winkler.

Many thanks also goes to those who participated in the clean-up event Friday afternoon at Lundy Lake Reservoir—it was a great success! Chautauqua organizers decided to take advantage of the reservoir’s low water level and exposed shoreline to collect trash and fishing line from around the shore. Fishing line is particularly problematic for wildlife—birds collect the material to line their nests but it often strangles them or their chicks. Several truck loads of trash were collected and hauled away that afternoon. Everyone agreed it was a great way to kick off this year’s Chautauqua so look for a similar stewardship event next year!

Here’s what a few of our participants had to say....

“Each workshop and field trip added to my knowledge and understanding of the ecosystem and larger environment. This was not only a bird ‘check list’ event!”

“It was Jack Laws’ talk about the development of his book that really did it for me. That was my epiphany. I was enlisted to become a true nature steward. That talk was so captivating I began to really grasp what our world here in the Eastern Sierra is all about, and I have lived here for five years!”

“There is still so much to attend—it will take years to cover all that you already offer!”

“Best Chautauqua ever. And I’ve been to all six!” ❖



American Dipper chicks waiting to be fed at their nest on Lee Vining Creek.

The June Lake Rodeo Grounds proposal

Committee uses development principles to navigate proposed project in watershed

by Lisa Cutting

Ski industry corporation Intrawest is beginning to move forward with its proposed development plan in the community of June Lake, at the southern end of the Mono Basin watershed. The development project—known as the June Lake Rodeo Grounds—is proposed for a 90-acre parcel across from June Mountain Ski Resort. The plan has been in the works for several years, but this past June Intrawest submitted a document to Mono County titled “Rodeo Grounds Specific Plan,” which essentially serves as their formal proposal for the project.

The project as currently proposed would include 755 vacation units and 78 workforce housing units for a total of 833 units. Also included is 40,000 square feet of commercial retail space. Some of the structures exceed the Mono County General Plan height limit of 60 feet and the 35-foot height limitation designated by the June Lake Area Plan. Intrawest will need to submit a General Plan Amendment application to Mono County for the height variance issue.

As expected, there have been numerous concerns voiced by members of the June Lake community, Mono Basin residents, and visitors to the area. At the top of the list are fears that this development project does not fit with the current small-town character of June Lake or the unique, natural landscape. It appears that most people understand that some development will occur on the property, but the issue at hand is how much development is appropriate for this location. It will be important for the local community to address these questions.

The issue of water availability for the project is of

particular interest to the Committee—both water quantity and water quality. The proposed project is within the Mono Basin watershed and has the potential to affect Rush Creek. Committee staff and consultants have begun the process of reviewing the submitted water analysis studies. The preliminary water studies, including exploratory wells, have indicated that both water quantity and quality are good (except for arsenic levels that exceed state standards). The studies also show no connection between the deep groundwater and surface water of the June Lake system—meaning that groundwater extraction will not deplete surface water. The Committee will conduct additional research and confirm this information independently to ensure that the proposed project will not have a negative effect on the Mono Basin hydrologic system. The Committee also plans to formally submit comments once the Draft Environmental Impact Report is released to the public.

Mono Basin development issues are always challenging and answers are seldom as easy as “yes” or “no.” As has been the case with recent development in the Mono Basin, proposals are best evaluated on a case-by-case basis using a set of solid guiding development principles. The Committee recently articulated its values relating to land development issues, and is now using these principles to navigate through proposed development in the Mono Basin (see Fall 2006 *Newsletter*). As the June Lake Rodeo Grounds project moves forward the Committee will be involved as appropriate. ❖

Water monitoring from page 8

sites were chosen in part due to the pending Lundy hydropower plant relicensing by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). The provisions of the new license are expected to help maintain base flows and ensure that water not allocated to water rights holders in the North Basin is returned to Mill Creek. Gathering data now, before FERC relicenses the project, will provide a baseline to compare with future conditions.

Eastern Sierra watersheds are covered much of the year by a blanket of snow, and direct human use and land use impacts are generally confined to the warmer months. However, these many small impacts—termed non-point source pollution—can add up and manifest themselves in diminished water quality. Potential impacts in the Mill and Wilson Creek drainage include concentrated recreational use around Lundy Reservoir, camping and houses (with septic systems), fish rearing, irrigation, grazing, and hydropower generation.

Mill Creek is also the Mono Basin site of the Eastern Sierra Watershed Project (see Summer 2007 *Newsletter*), where elementary students have collected similar water quality data

for the past two years. While this data is not as scientifically rigorous as those taken by volunteers, it does help provide a short baseline history of water quality.

The success of this monitoring program hinges on the dedication of talented and motivated volunteers who come from varied backgrounds—National Park Service rangers, retired geologists, teachers, and a nurse. In short, they’re all people who enjoy Eastern Sierra streams for a wide range of reasons. Becoming citizen scientists helps people become stewards of the land and the waters, learning about and participating in work to help maintain healthy water quality and restore natural processes in Mono Basin creeks.

For information about volunteering for this and other Mono Basin projects, please contact Emily Prud’homme (*emily@monolake.org*) at (760) 647-6595. ❖

Emily Prud’homme is the Committee’s Policy Coordinator. She brought back astronomy talks at South Tufa this summer, putting her laser pointer to good use!

The Forgotten Season

Winter Photography in the Mono Basin



PHOTO COURTESY OF RICHARD KNEPP

January 18–20, 2008

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

Winter at Mono Lake: 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. These elements combine to provide a very different photographic opportunity.

This photography seminar will be based in Lee Vining and will explore locations along the lake to photograph the serenity and beauty that is the Mono Basin in winter.

There will also 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 whose autumn workshops have sold out for years running. He teaches photography and darkroom techniques, and directs and assists at workshops around

the Southwest. Rick is a veteran of Mono winters and his experience will allow participants to take advantage of many winter photographic opportunities.

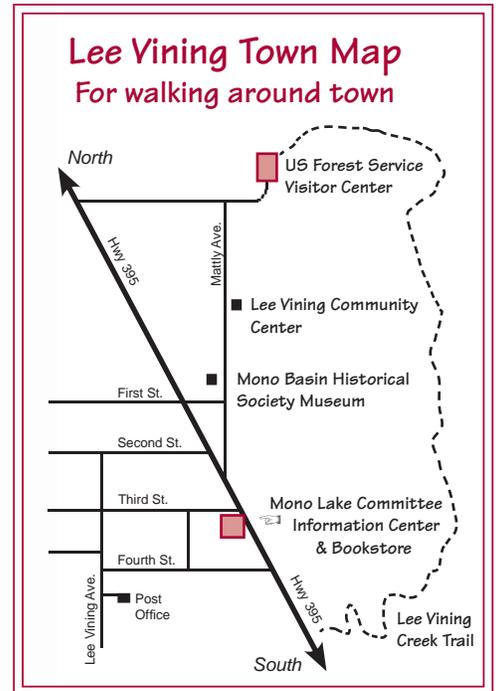
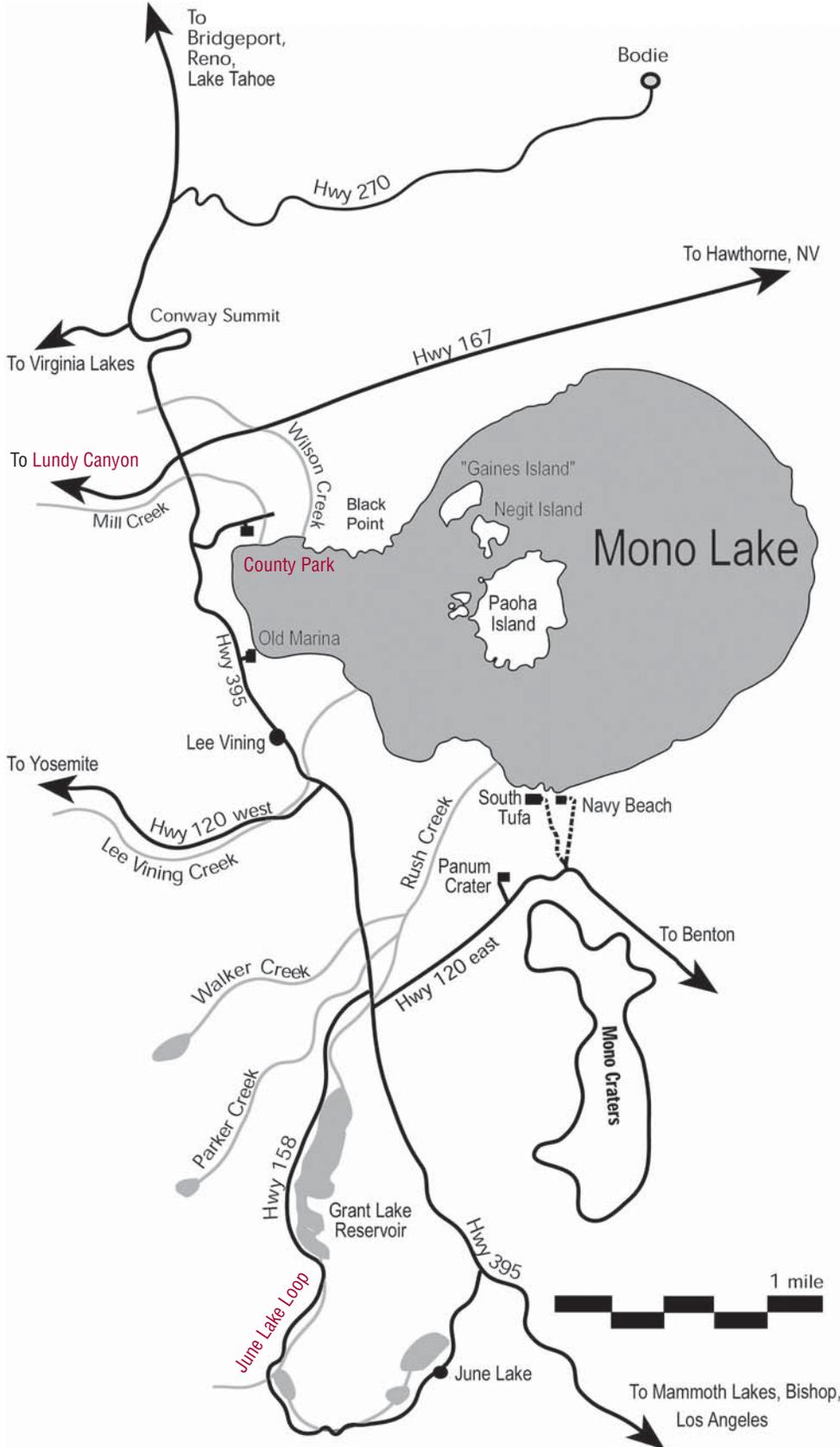
Since winter dining options in Lee Vining are limited, dinner Saturday night will be a special meal catered by Linda Dore, former chef at the Mono Inn and Nevado's in Mammoth Lakes, who now runs Linda Dore Food Service.

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. This seminar is limited to 15 participants.

For registration or more information on the fifth annual winter photography seminar, contact Elin Ljung (elin@monolake.org) at (760) 647-6595.

Mono Lake and Vicinity Map



How far is it?
Remember to check for road closures before you travel!
1-800-GAS-ROAD
Distance from Lee Vining to:

South Tufa	11mi	18km
Yosemite Park entrance	13	21
Tuolumne Meadows	21	34
Mammoth Lakes	27	44
Bodie	32	52
Bishop.....	66	106
Yosemite Valley.....	77	124
Lake Tahoe.....	110	177
Reno.....	140	225
Death Valley.....	177	285
San Francisco (via 120)	250	402
Los Angeles	303	488
Las Vegas	326	525

Autumn in the Mono Basin

Fall travel tips

Autumn is a wonderful time to visit the Mono Basin! While the weather and road conditions are often mild and safe, it is important to remember that conditions can change quickly. Rain, snow, and road closures are real possibilities for fall in the mountains, so be sure to plan accordingly. Since 1933 Tioga Pass has closed as early as September 4th and as late as January 1st. Helpful information on Mono Basin conditions can be found at www.monolake.org.

Fall colors

There's no telling when the fall colors will be at their best, but keep your eyes out for colorful groves as you drive along the Eastern Sierra highways and you'll be sure to find some. Check out the following locations for some of the best fall color in the Mono Basin. You can also stop by the Mono Lake Committee Information Center &

Bookstore and our knowledgeable staff can help with the most up-to-date regional fall color reports.

- **Lundy Canyon:** Take a stroll up the trail to see the big aspen groves, beaver ponds, and waterfalls. The canyon walls display a patchwork of fall colors as low shrubs and alpine plants turn orange, brown, red, and gold. From Lee Vining take Hwy 395 north for 7 miles, make a left at the turnoff for Hwy 167, and follow the road past Lundy Lake Reservoir to the trailhead parking.
- **June Lake Loop:** A drive around the June Lake Loop will treat you to views of steep canyon walls, golden aspen groves, and beautiful mountain lakes. The Loop is one of the best places to see fall color in the Mono Basin by car, or you can take one of the many trails away from the road to get into the fresh fall air and see more wildlife.
- **Mono Lake County Park** is a good spot to admire the golden fall color spilling from Sierra canyons. Follow the boardwalk down to the lakeshore to see tufa towers, migrating birds, and a view of Mono Lake.

Visitor centers

- **The Mono Lake Committee Information Center & Bookstore**, located in the center of Lee Vining, offers a free video, educational exhibits, and an art gallery. The bookstore offers an excellent selection of regional books, maps, T-shirts, local crafts, CDs, and specialty gifts. The Committee also houses the Lee Vining Chamber of Commerce with information on lodging, dining, and recreation opportunities as well as weather and road conditions. Open 9:00AM–5:00PM daily, or call (760) 647-6595 for more information.
- **The Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area Visitor Center**, located just north of town, features an excellent view of Mono Lake, interpretive displays, and natural history trails. A dramatic film on Mono Lake shows regularly in the theater. Open Thursdays–Mondays 9:00AM–4:30PM, closed Tuesdays and Wednesdays. The Visitor Center closes for the winter in mid-November; for more information, call (760) 647-3044. ❖

Travel Resources

- Mono Lake Committee Information Center
(760) 647-6595 www.monolake.org
- Lee Vining Chamber of Commerce
(760) 647-6629 www.leevining.com
- US Forest Service Scenic Area Visitor Center
(760) 647-3044 www.fs.fed.us/r5/inyo/about
- Mono Lake Tufa State Reserve
(760) 647-6331 www.cal-parks.ca.gov
- Bodie State Historic Park
(760) 647-6445 www.cal-parks.ca.gov
- Mammoth Lakes Visitor Center
(760) 924-5500 www.visitmammoth.com
- June Lake Chamber of Commerce
(760) 648-7584 www.junelakechamber.org
- Bridgeport Chamber of Commerce
(760) 932-7500 www.bridgeportcalifornia.com
- Devils Postpile (760) 934-2289 www.nps.gov/depo
- Inyo National Forest 24-hour Wilderness Permits/Info
(760) 873-2408 www.fs.fed.us/r5/inyo
- Yosemite National Park www.nps.gov/yose
Information by phone (209) 372-0200
Campground Reservations (800) 436-7275
Hotel and Motel Reservations (559) 252-4848
Wilderness Permit Reservations (209) 372-0740
- White Mountain Ranger District–Bishop (760) 873-2500
- Lone Pine Interagency Visitor Center (760) 876-6222
- Manzanar National Historic Site and Interpretive Center
(760) 878-2932
www.nps.gov/manz
- Death Valley Reservations (760) 786-2345
- Bridgeport Ranger Station–Toiyabe National Forest
(760) 932-7070
- California Road Conditions (800) 427-7623

Streamwatch

Dry year gems: waterfalls and roses

by Greg Reis

This past July, Lee Vining recorded ten days with temperatures in the 90s—a new record since 1990. Isolated thunderstorms dropped little rain here until the end of August (although there was flash flooding in Mammoth Lakes). This hot and dry weather provided little variation for the streams in this already dry year.

There was a flurry of worry when DWP's real time data Website showed that Rush Creek above Grant Lake Reservoir was being almost completely shut off around midnight each night. DWP confirmed that the problem was that its gauging station had sustained lightning damage and the low nighttime flows reports were incorrect.

Despite low baseflows and the first summer since 1994 without Stream Restoration Flows, newly rewatered channels on Rush Creek are greening up (see page 4). Channel 4bii was opened enough to carry year-round flow for the first time this past year. According to Chris McCreedy of PRBO Conservation Science, the Wood's rose along this new channel is more vibrant than anywhere

else along the creek right now. That's good news for Willow Flycatchers, which, since their Mono Basin extirpation ended in 2002, only nest in rose along Rush Creek.

Rush Creek had very low flows upstream of Grant Lake Reservoir in July and August. Normally Rush Creek would be higher due to releases from Gem Lake Reservoir; however, with that reservoir empty for dam maintenance, Rush Creek's late summer flows were lower than usual. This has meant that Grant Lake Reservoir peaked higher than usual and is now dropping faster than expected. DWP predicts a level around 27,000 acre feet of storage next spring. If this winter is dry the reservoir could drop below optimum levels for marina operations next year.

Waterfalls on Lee Vining Creek



June 11, 2004: Rush Creek 4bii Channel—first year of summer-only flows.



August 3, 2007: A drier year than 2004, but more green. Rush Creek 4bii Channel after three years of summer-only flows and one year of mostly year-round flow.

PHOTOS BY GREG REIS

below Ellery Lake Reservoir have been running often this summer. Usually they are turned off, however due to power plant maintenance the creek between the dam and the powerhouse has been kept running. This is a rare treat, especially in a dry year. ❖

Lakewatch

Mono Lake drops a foot ... and could drop another

by Greg Reis

Mono Lake dropped 1.3 vertical feet between April 1 and September 1, bringing the elevation to 6383.5 feet above sea level. This is the same elevation it was in 1973, 1998, 2001, and in May 2006.

There is the potential for up to another foot drop in the water level by November. In early August the lake level gauge at the DWP dock was left high and dry. The new gauge at Old Marina is now the only active gauge; however,

as of late July DWP hadn't surveyed it yet, so all the readings are preliminary. Look for new signage interpreting lake levels and how to read the gauge as the State Reserve completes its Old Marina rehabilitation project this fall.

There is a slight chance of La Niña (cold conditions in the tropical Pacific Ocean) developing this fall. That would mean weaker than normal storms from the Gulf of Alaska and colder than normal air in the Western US. Right now, the outlook for the Mono Basin is above average temperatures and below average precipitation between now and November. A warm and dry fall would mean pleasant outdoor excursion weather after the summer crowds leave

and an early season for fall color.

The last week in August was a thunderstorm-filled week. An inch of rain fell in Lee Vining, with half an inch falling in half an hour. This made a dry month into a wet one, a dry summer into an average one, and it brings our precipitation total so far for the Water Year (October 1 to September 30) up to 50% of average. ❖

Greg Reis is the Committee's Information Specialist. He has been developing his native-plant green thumb and just recently transplanted his first Mono Basin native bitterbrush grown from seed in his yard!

6417'

Prediversion lake level, 1941

6391'

Target lake level

6383.5'

Current lake level

6372'

Historic low, 1982

Mono Basin Journal

A roundup of quiet happenings at Mono Lake

by Geoffrey McQuilkin



HTTP://RAPIDFIRE.SCI.GSFC.NASA.GOV/SUBSETS/?AERONET_FRESNO/

The Mono Basin awoke, one late summer morning, to sunlight of deep orange, the smell of forest fires, and smoke thick enough to obscure mountains a mere mile away. We've had our share of fires this summer, including a modest sized burn in one of my favorite Jeffrey pine groves, and the prospect of another had everyone asking: where's this smoke coming from?

Such a simple question is usually easily answered, but not this time. No one had seen a fire. The fire crews weren't reporting anything new. The sirens in town were quiet. Mysterious. No one knew the answer. This is the point where the Mono Basin, as always, catches you unaware and offers up a lesson. This time it was a reminder of perspective.

Well, if the smoke isn't from the nearby forests, maybe it's blowing in from Yosemite. No, not the answer. How about the west side of the Sierra, maybe a big fire in Sequoia National

Park combined with some wind blowing our way? Nope. Farther? Farther.

So you pull out the computer keyboard and start searching, for a far away fire that delivers this much smoke to Mono Lake must be large indeed. And, with a satellite's eye view, there was the answer: 200,000 acres of the Zaca Fire near Santa Barbara. Incredibly, the wind picked up the smoke and carried it across the Central Valley, where it bumped up against the Sierra. It pushed north until the geography relented and it could blow right up the San Joaquin river drainage, over the Mammoth gap in the Sierra crest, and directly into our laps, 250 miles away.

We're so used to looking more closely at things to find answers; the day's reminder was that sometimes you have to step much, much farther away to see the answers. In this case, the unsolvable local mystery required a fresh look down from outer space. ❖

Benchmarks



GREG REIS

August 2006: The peaks above Parker Lake still hold some snow in late summer. April snowpack was 132% of average for the year.



EJIN LUNG

August 2007: Almost no snow remains in the Parker Lake drainage. April snowpack was 43% of average this year.

Free Drawing to restore Mono Lake

Send in your tickets by November 27th!

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

Camping package from Wilson's Eastside Sports of Bishop: Osprey backpack, Sierra Designs tent, Western Mountaineering sleeping bag, Cascade Designs stuff sack, MSR stove, Wilson's camp chair, Vasque boots, and Black Diamond trekking poles and headlamp.



**Wilson's
Eastside
Sports**



Muir-Hanna
VINEYARDS

A winery tour and tasting at Muir-Hanna Vineyards.



**YOSEMITE
ASSOCIATION**

Yosemite Association seminar and one-year membership.



Two REI Jet Ultralight backpacks.



A stay at the Wawona Hotel in Yosemite, including dinner.

A Steepwater 164 snowboard from Wave Rave Snowboard Shop.

Sailing tour on San Francisco Bay with Captain Kirk Miller.

MAMMOTH

Mammoth Mountain adventure package, including lodging and equipment rental.

A framed photograph of Parker Lake by Tom O'Neill.



June Lake vacation at the Double Eagle Resort & Spa.



Lake Tahoe escape at Sorensen's Resort in Hope Valley.

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



**FRIENDS
OF THE
RIVER**

CALIFORNIA
ACADEMY OF SCIENCES



Golden Gate
HOTEL



expl  **oratorium**

A San Francisco getaway: a stay at the Golden Gate Hotel and passes to Bay Area museums.

Brunch or dinner at the St. Francis Yacht Club and a sailing trip to Angel Island for a gourmet picnic!

patagonia

Patagonia clothing: women's R2 Granular jacket, men's R2 jacket, men's A/C organic cotton shirt.

Courtesy of the Farallones Marine Sanctuary Association, a day-long whale-watching trip to the Farallon Islands.

Whedon Products, Inc.

A water-efficient SaverShower kit from Whedon Products.

Mammoth Prize Packages



A relaxing weekend in Mammoth Lakes, including lodging at the Cinnamon Bear Inn, a massage at InTouch



Fly fishing trip in the high Sierra: a ½ day fishing trip, lodging at Rainbow Tarns Bed & Breakfast,

RAINBOW TARNs



Giovanni's
Sherwin's

MicroSpa, dinner and a show at Sherwin's, meals at Base Camp Café and Giovanni's Pizza, and a gift certificate to Minaret Cinemas.



a massage at InTouch MicroSpa, and gift certificates to Base Camp Café and Minaret Cinemas!

INTOUCH
MASSAGE • MICRO SPA • BOUTIQUE



CLOUDWATCHING T-SHIRT

Ellery, Caelen, Sabine, and Casey are kickin' back in this 100% cotton, sky blue shirt that features a group of animal friends looking at animal shaped clouds as they relax in the mountains. This playful design includes a quote from John Muir which reads "The sun shines not on us but in us, the rivers flow not past, but through us . . .," and also says "Kick Back at Mono Lake" on the sleeve.
Youth Cloudwatching T-shirt, S-L: \$16.00



MLC LOGO T-SHIRT

This shirt was originally created to be our staff shirt but we got so many requests for it in the store that we made a non-staff version seen here on staffers Arya and Brett. It's a 100% cotton, garment washed, periwinkle blue shirt with our logo on the left chest and on the back of the shirt.
Adult MLC Logo T-shirt, S-XL: \$18.00, XXL: \$20.00

RETRO BASEBALL T-SHIRT

Canoe Coordinator JJ and Intern Karolyn caught the laughing bug as they modeled this classic design. Around in the early days of the Mono Lake Committee, it's now back by popular demand! The white/navy, ¾-sleeve, 100% cotton design is available in both adult and youth sizes.
Adult Retro Baseball T-shirt, S-XL: \$18.00, XXL: \$20.00
Youth Retro Baseball T-shirt, S-L: \$13.00



LOGO DRINKWARE

Proudly display the Mono Lake Committee logo as you sip your coffee, tea, or water! Don't miss the new version of the Klean Kanteen stainless steel water bottle; it's thinner in order to fit into your car's cup holder! We also have two double-walled stainless steel insulated mugs—an 18-ounce travel cup with a spill-proof sip top lid that works great in the car and a 12-ounce version with a screw-on lid and blue carabiner handle for camping. And the 12-ounce white ceramic mug has our logo in cobalt blue with a matching handle and rim.
Klean Kanteen, 27-ounce: \$19.95
Steel Travel Cup, 18-ounce: \$12.95
Steel Carabiner Mug, 12-ounce: \$12.95
Ceramic Logo Mug, 12-ounce: \$6.95



SEE ALL STYLES AND COLORS (AND PLACE ORDERS TOO!) ONLINE AT WWW.MONOLAKE.ORG/BOOKSTORE

Call (760) 647-6595 to order



JUNIPER RIDGE SOAPS, SACHETS, & TEAS

Juniper Ridge products are all about fresh-from-the-mountains scents because they are made with 100% wild herbs and plant trimmings with no added perfumes. All of the wild plant trimmings are sustainably harvested, and the company gives ten percent of their profits to groups that defend western wilderness. Juniper Ridge soaps are made with a mild all-vegetable oil base (olive oil for moisturizing, palm oil to make the bar firm, coconut oil for lather), shea butter, and jojoba.

Juniper Ridge Soap, 3.5-ounce bar, please specify White Sage, Desert Piñon, Sierra Cedar, or Western Juniper: \$6.50

Juniper Ridge Sachet, 4-ounce bag, please specify Christmas Fir, Douglas Fir, Western Juniper, or White Sage: \$6.50

Juniper Ridge Wild Herb Tea, 20 tea bags per box, please specify Douglas Fir Tip Tea or White Sage & Wild Mint Tea: \$7.00

NAKED BEE PRODUCTS

This great 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.

Moisturizing Hand & Body Lotion, 2.25 fl. oz.: \$5.25

Gentle Cleansing Shampoo & Conditioner, 2.25 fl. oz.: \$5.25

Oatmeal & Honey Triple-Milled Soap, 2.75 oz.: \$3.25

Lip Balm, SPF 15: \$2.95

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



LONG LIVE MONO LAKE BAR SOAP

This wonderful soap is handcrafted from rainwater, vegetable oils, and essential and/or fragrance oils in the traditional cold process soap making method. The folks at The Soap Makery (formerly Real Soap) cure the bars for eight weeks and then hand cut and emboss each bar with the words "Long Live Mono Lake." Bars are available in five delicious scents. Also available is a special soap-filled luffa bar that gently exfoliates as it cleans.

Long Live Mono Lake Bar Soap, please specify Lavender Swirl, Sandalwood, Spring Spa, Sweetgrass, or White Sage: \$4.50

Soap-Filled Luffa Bar, please specify Lavender Swirl, Sandalwood, Spring Spa, Sweetgrass, or White Sage: \$6.00



Call (760) 647-6595 to order



MOUNTAIN
BLUEBIRD

HAND PAINTED CHRISTMAS ORNAMENTS
 Artist Wendy Rismeyer has created three unique Mono Lake scenes, each hand painted with oils on a glass Christmas ornament. Scenes depicted include a Mountain Bluebird with lupine, a Western Tanager on a pine bough, and California Gulls at South Tufa. These ornaments will remind you of Mono Lake each winter and are wonderful keepsakes for your family too.

*Hand Painted Ornament, please specify
 Bluebird, Tanager, or Gull: \$14.95*



WESTERN
TANAGER



CALIFORNIA
GULL



COTTONWOOD



OAK



ASPEN



MAPLE

NATURE'S LEAF ORNAMENTS
 These beautiful ornaments are handcrafted from real leaves that are carefully gathered for their most natural shape. Electroplating with 18-karat gold or rhodium silver produces a one-of-a-kind keepsake. Because they are made with real leaves, sizes and shapes vary. Available in Cottonwood, Oak, Aspen, and Maple.
Leaf Ornament, please specify leaf type and gold or silver finish: \$16.00



TOM KILLION HIGH SIERRA HOLIDAY CARD SET

Tom Killion's set of 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

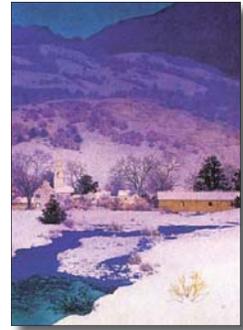
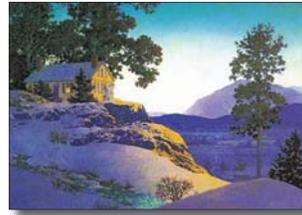
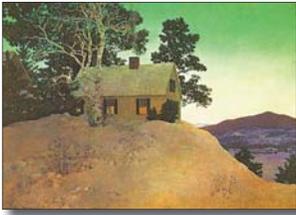
MONO CRATERS HOLIDAY CARD SET

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



MAXFIELD PARRISH HOLIDAY CARD SET

A popular artist of the 1920s, Maxfield Parrish painted romantic images in rich, luminous colors with incredible detail. These four lovely winter landscapes vividly capture the feeling of being in the mountains with a fresh blanket of snow all around. The set includes five cards each of four designs; the cards read "Season's Greetings" on the inside. Soy-based inks printed on recycled paper.

Maxfield Parrish Holiday Card Set, 20 cards with envelopes: \$15.00



SNOWLIGHT CARD SET

This beautiful woodblock print by artist Patti Jacquemain reminds us of standing by the shore of Mono Lake on a crisp winter day and watching the gently falling snow. The set is printed with soy-based inks on recycled paper.

Snowlight Card Set, 12 cards with envelopes: \$12.00

FIRECONES

FIRESTARTERS

Made from 100% natural pinecones dipped in scented candle-grade wax, use these pinecones to get a fire going with no messy residue and no nasty chemicals. The pinecones are a renewable resource and the sticks in the gift sets are collected from logging sites and lumber mills. Available in three styles:

ECO Round Basket, 6 FireCones (gold, forest green, red) with 1 pound of Fatwood Stix and natural cones in a 10-inch recycled paper basket: \$24.00

Willow Basket, 7 FireCones (olive, red, snow) with 5 birch logs and natural cones in a bubble-weave willow basket with rope trim and handle: \$36.00

Metal Planter, 8 FireCones (forest green, red, snow) with 4 birch logs and natural cones in a black square metal planter with satin bow: \$40.00

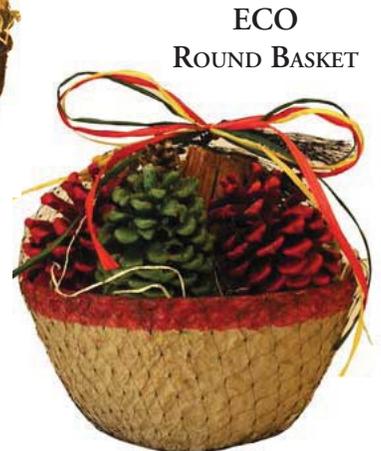
FireCone Refill Pack (not pictured)—8 FireCones in gold, forest green, and red: \$15.00



WILLOW BASKET



METAL PLANTER



ECO ROUND BASKET



HARDWOOD INLAY COASTERS

Bruce and Carla James of Round Mountain Woodworks cut and fit by hand the hardwood veneers used in these beautiful and functional coasters. The coasters feature six original mountain scenes and have a cork layer on the bottom of each to protect your furniture.

Coaster Set, 6 coasters with holder: \$42.00



Call (760) 647-6595 to order

❁ Fall Catalog ❁



BALD EAGLE



FOX



RACCOON



HUMMINGBIRD



PORCUPINE



FIELD MOUSE

FINGER PUPPETS
 These adorable little puppets are soft, fuzzy, and guaranteed to bring a smile to anyone's face, ages three on up! Most puppets are 4-7 inches in length. Available in Badger, Bald Eagle, Beaver, Black Bear, Chipmunk, Field Mouse, Fox, Hummingbird, Jackrabbit, Opossum, Porcupine, Raccoon, Skunk, and Squirrel.
Finger Puppet, please specify animal: \$6.00



SKUNK



SQUIRREL



BADGER



BEAVER



JACKRABBIT



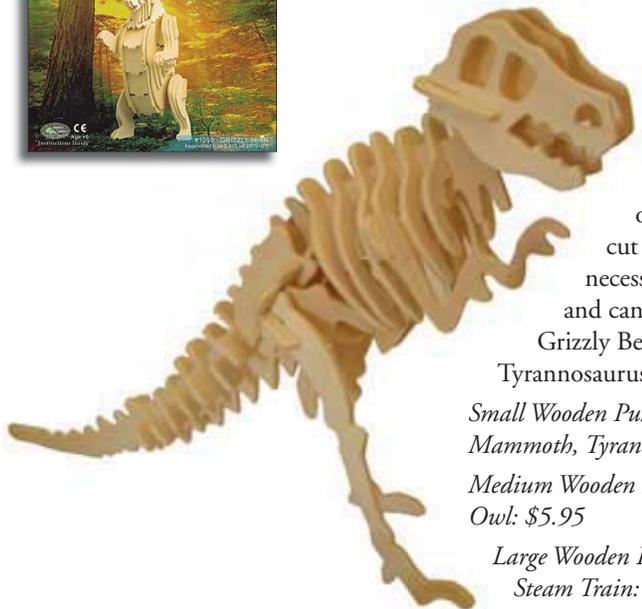
BLACK BEAR



CHIPMUNK



OPOSSUM



WOODEN PUZZLES

These woodcraft construction kits are fun to put together for kids and adults alike! The puzzles are made of 3-millimeter plywood and the pieces are individually slotted to interlock with one another to form a three-dimensional model. Everything is pre-cut and assembled by pushing the pieces together, no cutting or gluing necessary. The finished puzzles range in size from 7-10 inches long and can be displayed as-is or painted if desired. Available in Black Bear, Grizzly Bear, Coyote, Horse, Owl, Mammoth, Tyrannosaurus, and Steam Train. Ages 6 and up.

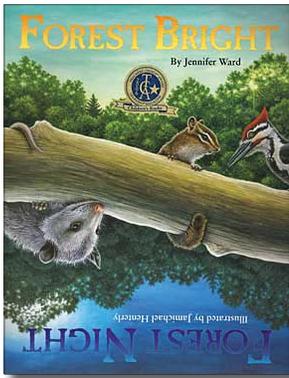
Small Wooden Puzzle, please specify Coyote, Horse, Mammoth, Tyrannosaurus: \$3.95

Medium Wooden Puzzle, please specify Grizzly Bear, Owl: \$5.95

Large Wooden Puzzle, please specify Black Bear, Steam Train: \$6.95



Call (760) 647-6595 to order



FOREST BRIGHT, FOREST NIGHT

BY JENNIFER WARD, ILLUSTRATED BY JAMICHAEL HENTERLY

Using a rhythmic text and a turn-it-over format, this book offers youngsters an unusual perspective on forest life. During daylight hours, they can observe deer splashing through a stream while an owl dozes in a nearby tree and snakes stare at sleeping foxes. After turning the book over to the forest night, readers see the deer bedded down while the owl searches for food and the foxes prowl as the snakes rest in a tangled bunch. The vivid artwork will hold children's interest as they search for all the hidden animals. Ages 3–8.

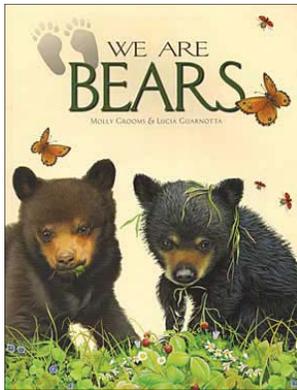
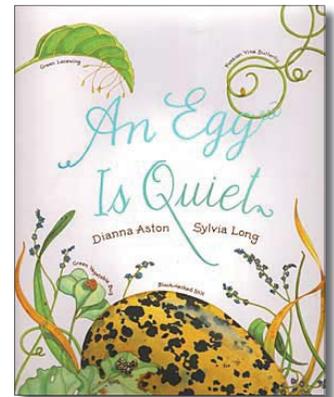
Forest Bright, Forest Night, softcover, Dawn Publications, 32 pages, 9"x 11": \$8.95

AN EGG IS QUIET

BY DIANNA HUTTS ASTON, ILLUSTRATED BY SYLVIA LONG

Aston's simple, readable text celebrates the marvelous diversity of bird and fish eggs, commenting on size, shape, coloration, and where they might be found. The text, scrolled out in elegant brown ink, works on two levels. Larger print makes simple observations that, read together, sound almost like poetry: "An egg is quiet ... An egg is colorful. An egg is shapely." On each spread, words in smaller print match up with illustrations to offer more facts about bird and fish eggs across the animal spectrum. Ages 4–8.

An Egg Is Quiet, hardcover, Chronicle Books, 36 pages, 11"x 9": \$16.95



WE ARE BEARS

BY MOLLY GROOMS, ILLUSTRATED BY LUCIA GUARNOTTA

This exquisitely illustrated book chronicles a day in the life of a mother bear and her two cubs as the cubs emerge from their den for the very first time. The mother teaches them how to search for food and escape a hive of bees, emphasizing the lessons with simple summaries: "We are climbers," "we are searchers," "we are swimmers." Ages 4–8.

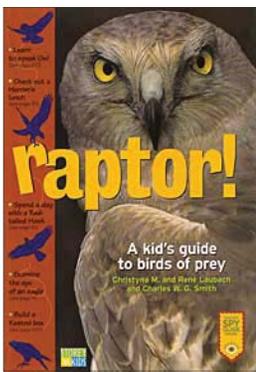
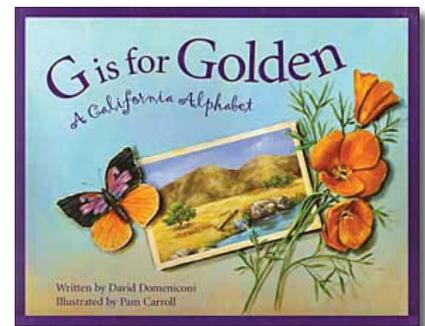
We Are Bears, softcover, NorthWord Press, 32 pages, 8½"x 11": \$7.95

G IS FOR GOLDEN

BY DAVID DOMENICONI, ILLUSTRATED BY PAM CARROLL

This illustrated alphabet book introduces children to the wonders of the Golden State. Each page offers young children a quick rhyme about a unique facet of the state, while a longer explanatory passage will engage older readers looking for interesting facts about the natural history and people that have made this state a wonder. Ages 4–8.

G Is For Golden, hardcover, Sleeping Bear Press, 40 pages, 11½"x 9": \$17.95



RAPTOR! A KID'S GUIDE TO BIRDS OF PREY

BY CHRISTYNA AND RENÉ LAUBACH AND CHARLES W. G. SMITH

This large-format book provides an overview of North American raptors, describing their characteristics and behavior and introducing individual species within family groups: vultures, hawks, falcons, barn owls, and true owls. A typical page includes common and scientific names of the bird, a paragraph of information that differentiates it from other birds, two photos, a flight silhouette, a range map, and notations of its size, call, habitat, migration pattern, and favorite foods. Well-designed projects from dissecting an owl pellet to making a nest box are followed by a glossary. Ages 9–12.

Raptor!, softcover, Storey Publishing, 118 pages, 7½"x 11": \$14.95

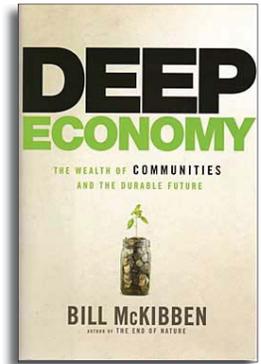
Call (760) 647-6595 to order

DEEP ECONOMY

BY BILL MCKIBBEN

Challenging the prevailing wisdom that the goal of economies should be unlimited growth, McKibben argues that the world doesn't have enough natural resources to sustain endless economic expansion. Rather than promoting accelerated cycles of perpetual growth, we should concentrate on creating localized economies: community-scale power systems instead of huge centralized power plants; co-housing communities instead of sprawling suburbs. A compelling read for our time.

Deep Economy, hardcover, Times Books, 272 pages, 9½"x 6½": \$25.00

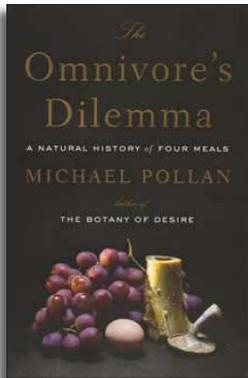


THE OMNIVORE'S DILEMMA: A NATURAL HISTORY OF FOUR MEALS

BY MICHAEL POLLAN

Now out in paperback! Pollan traces four meals back to their origins. He starts with a McDonald's lunch, and traces the meal to a cornfield in Iowa. Corn feeds the steer that turns into burgers, becomes the oil that cooks the fries and the syrup that sweetens the shakes and the sodas, and makes up 13 of the 38 ingredients in Chicken McNuggets. Later, Pollan prepares a dinner with items from Whole Foods, investigating the flaws in the world of "big organic;" cooks a meal with ingredients from a small, utopian Virginia farm; and assembles a feast from food for which he has foraged and hunted. His approach is honest, his cause is just, his thinking is clear, and his writing is compelling.

The Omnivore's Dilemma, softcover, Penguin Books, 466 pages, 8½"x 5½": \$16.00



GREEN CLEAN

BY LINDA MASON HUNTER AND MIKKI HALPIN

Keep your home clean and healthy—in ways that are good for the environment too! Green Clean is the definitive, step-by-step guide to cleaning better while using non-toxic, eco-friendly products. Green Clean breaks environmentally conscious cleaning into simple principles and easily mastered techniques. Also included are recipes for safe, simple, and economic cleaning solutions and the lowdown on the best products on the market today.

Green Clean, softcover, Melcher Media, 184 pages, 7½"x 5½": \$17.95

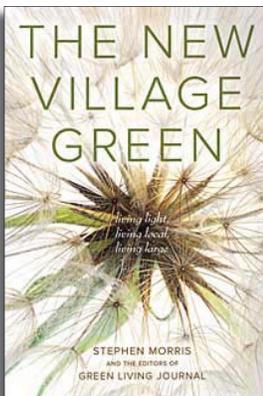


NEW VILLAGE GREEN: LIVING LIGHT, LIVING LOCAL, LIVING LARGE

EDITED BY STEPHEN MORRIS

This remarkable book gathers wisdom and insight from a compelling and thought-provoking virtual community. Each contributor brings a unique perspective that mingles reverence for the environment with provocative thoughts for the future. Topics range from spirituality to solar panels and are juxtaposed with opinions from many different people, including writer Bill McKibben and scientist James Lovelock as well as Gandhi and Buddha. This book will touch the heart of anyone who lives with conscience and hope.

New Village Green, softcover, New Society Publishers, 288 pages, 8¾"x 6": \$17.95

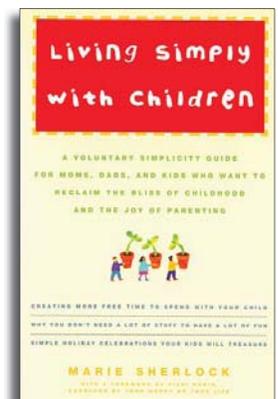


LIVING SIMPLY WITH CHILDREN

BY MARIE SHERLOCK

What if you could find a way to spend more time with your children, replace unnecessary activities with meaningful ones, and teach your children an invaluable life lesson in the process? This book offers a realistic blueprint for zeroing in on the pleasures of family life. It includes sections on realistic ways to reclaim your children from corporate America, helping kids deal with peer pressure, and raising kids who care about people and the planet. This inspiring guide will show you how to raise children according to your own values and not those of the consumer culture.

Living Simply With Children, softcover, Three Rivers Press, 287 pages, 8"x 5": \$13.95



Call (760) 647-6595 to order

wonders of the lake—are protected.

Canaday stands out from this group because he, a state employee, is “the system.” Quite simply, Jim is deserving of the award because his work represents everything the state is constitutionally charged to do to protect the Public Trust for us, the people of California.

It wouldn’t be oversimplifying too much to say that the fight to save Mono Lake happened because the state forgot its Public Trust duty early in the last century, awarding excessively large water rights in the Mono Basin as a result. Canaday is living proof that it need not happen again: his work shows that the state can protect the Public Trust day in and day out—and do it well.

An extraordinary commitment to the Sierra

How exactly did Canaday become so involved with Mono Lake?

Canaday is a native Californian with a lifelong attachment to the mountains. “I grew up in the Sierra,” he says, “we had a family cabin at Huntington Lake. I spent the summers there, got to know the packers, and got to explore the Central Sierra.” He had a seasonal job with the Department of Fish & Game, spent some time working with Boy Scouts of America, and then became the first nature director at a science-based conservation camp started by Olympic decathlon medalist Bob Mathias. His knowledge of the Sierra went with him all the way to the State Water Board office in Sacramento. And he didn’t let it get lost; Canaday has taught college courses on the Sierra and its natural resources for 28 years and may well be the only college professor teaching a class solely on John Muir.

When the Mono Lake water rights case came up for staff assignment in 1988, Canaday remembers the already overloaded staff running for the doors. He raised his hand and volunteered to take the project on. Why? Because it was the right thing to do, Canaday recalls. “The Mono Lake issue needed to be looked at,” he says, “the Supreme Court had erased any doubts about that.”

Plus Canaday knew something about Mono Lake. “My grandfather used to cross the Sierra in a Ford Model T and stay in June Lake for part of the summer,” he remembers. “I figured knowing something about the area couldn’t hurt. I was right, but I had no idea how much more I would learn.”

Canaday’s Mono Lake work is the topic here. But it would be a mistake to overlook his success in his “regular” job representing the State Water Board—and by extension California and all its citizens—in hydropower relicensing procedures up and down the Sierra. Canaday joined the State Water Board staff in an era of frenzied applications for new

hydropower projects—some good, and some not so good. Then came decades of relicensing of established projects: Big Creek, Pit 1, and the Feather River. Previously the State Water Board had seldom taken a position in hydropower relicensing, though it had authority to do so. But it was the time to consider things that hadn’t been considered before: water quality, flows for fish, river recreation values, social impacts,



GEORGEY MACQUILKIN

Jim Canaday, second from left, considers testimony during a 1993 State Water Board Mono Lake hearing held at the Mono Basin Scenic Area Visitor Center.

and public lands access. In each of these relicensings Canaday played a major role and today the State Water Board is a key player in every hydropower relicensing. With his hydropower work he has created a legacy of protected rivers, restored fisheries, and enhanced recreational values in the Sierra.

Canaday knows each of the rivers he has worked on—and each tributary, and each obscure tributary of a tributary—like friends. Each one matters. “Well, the Santa Ana was bone dry before relicensing, now it has flow and fish,” he mentions, but then it’s off to Big Creek. “We convinced Southern California Edison that it’d be to their benefit to look at the whole watershed and put all their hydro licenses in sync,” he says, “it also benefited the watershed wilderness areas; hikers won’t be seeing the San Joaquin as a trickle amidst a bed of rocks anymore.” Then it’s off to the Tahoe Basin where Echo Creek, dry for over 50 years, now carries water again.

“Of course,” he adds after a pause, “there’s Mono Lake. That’s a whole different category. The state hadn’t done it right at Mono Lake, and we fixed that. I couldn’t be prouder of a Board decision.”

Canaday can tell you in a sentence what has motivated all his work in these many lengthy and complicated forums. It’s why he now joins the Defender of the Trust award roster.

“My goal for the water resources and people of the state,” he says, “is for them to be better off today than they were yesterday.”❖

Staff migrations

by Erika Obedzinski

We got a lot done this summer due to a wonderful bunch of seasonal staff. They reached out to thousands of visitors, helping to spread information and enthusiasm about Mono Lake, the challenges it faces, and the ways people can help. Though we'll miss them around the office, we know they'll be doing great things in the many places they fly off to. Here's a summary of some of the behind-the-scenes projects they completed this summer in addition to staffing the Information Center & Bookstore, answering phones, and leading canoe and walking tours down at the lake.

Mono Lake Intern **Lisa Curtis** dove into a research project focusing on climate change in the Mono Basin, which culminated in two presentations to the public. Her project provides a good basis of information for Committee staff to use in the future in addressing climate change issues. Lisa has returned to Whitman College to begin her sophomore year and we hope she'll be back soon!



2007 Mono Lake Committee staff from left to right and top to bottom. Standing: Greg Reis Information Specialist, Santiago Escruceria Outdoor Experiences Manager, Geoff McQuilkin Executive Director, Emily Prud'homme Policy Coordinator, Erika Obedzinski Office Director. Top stair: Betsy Forsyth Outdoor Education Instructor, Lisa Cutting Eastern Sierra Policy Director, Elin Ljung Communications Coordinator, Karolyn Wyneken Intern, Jessi DeLong Intern. Middle stair: Bartshé Miller Education Director, Sarah Jane Pepper Intern, Molly Hucklebridge Outdoor Education Instructor. Bottom stair: Arya Degenhardt Communications Director, Ellen King Membership Coordinator, JJ Jenkins Canoe Coordinator, Lisa Curtis Intern, Michael Lester Birding Intern. Out and about in the Mono Basin: Laura Walker Bookstore Manager, Duncan King Retail Assistant, and Hannah Gehrman Retail Assistant.

We were lucky to have local resident **Hannah Gehrman** working part-time on the front counter this summer as a Retail Assistant. Hannah begins her senior year of high school this fall and we wish her the best! Go Lady Tigers volleyball team!

If you stopped in the Bookstore this summer chances are you met Retail Assistant **Lara Hamburger**. Lara's level head, sense of humor, and love for the area helped keep things running smoothly on the front counter. Lara returns to Macalester College this fall, but we know she's hooked on Mono Lake and won't be away for too long!

High school senior **Nick Holt** of San Diego generously volunteered his time for six weeks this summer and we are ever grateful for his 230+ hours of donated time! Nick jumped right in and helped at the counter and on tours, created a more user friendly interface for our research library, and moved our online store to our new website provider. Nick was voted most likely to become a full-time Mono Lake Intern some future summer!

Michael Lester was an excellent member of the seasonal staff team as the Birding Intern. Michael spent time on the islands helping with California Gull research, led weekly bird walks at County Park, wrote up natural history handouts for the website and bookstore, and helped with Willow Flycatcher research on Rush Creek. Michael is migrating back to University of Vermont for his sophomore year, but we know he'll soon be back to visit Mono's birds.

Always ready to lend a hand, Mono Lake Intern **Sarah Jane Pepper** did extra canoe and South Tufa tours, read piezometers on Lee Vining and Rush Creeks, continued monitoring of Mill Creek, and put together hundreds of new member packets and other member mailings, all with a smile. Sarah Jane returns to Indiana University for her senior year—we wish her the best and hope to see her back here soon!

Mono Lake Intern **Karolyn Wyneken**'s home grown passion for Mono Lake was nothing less than contagious. Karolyn is back at Humboldt University this fall for her junior year, but during her summer here, she wrote up a pamphlet on Mono Lake that visitors will soon be able to enjoy in many languages. She also put together the staff door in the bookstore—be sure to check it out next time you're in town! Since Mono Lake is her first love and second home we know she'll be back often.

And last but definitely not least, a big thank you goes to all the **Mono Lake Volunteers** who answered questions and pointed out birds at South Tufa and County Park, pulled invasive plants, watered Jeffrey Pine seedlings, stuffed bulk mailings, helped staff the front counter, tended the Committee garden, and gave in many other ways that all helped take care of Mono Lake this summer!❖

Erika Obedzinski is the Committee's Office Director. She recently hiked from Tenaya Lake to Clouds' Rest in Yosemite—a hike that has been on her list for a while now!



From the mailbag

News from members and friends

by Ellen King

My first full-time summer in the Mono Basin is drawing to a close. Somehow, despite numerous visits to this area over the past twenty years, I had managed to miss both the Bird Chautauqua and the phalaropes. Not this year! The Chautauqua brought together enthusiastic teachers and students, some first-time participants like me, and many others happily greeting friends from previous events, for a fun and informative early summer weekend complete with good food and good music.

The highlight of my summer had to be the phalaropes. They were amazing. I didn't expect to see them as I walked down the boardwalk at County Park. I didn't even know they had arrived. I joined a family with young children at the end of the path. Suddenly a swooping wave of white wings appeared over the lake, followed by another and another. "Mira! Mira!" exclaimed the children who moments before had been fidgeting with boredom. They stood, transfixed, watching the beautiful birds. We all did.

Thank you to all of you who sent in contributions in memory or in honor 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.

In memory

Laurence & Dorothy Brown of Oroville sent a gift in memory of **Don Shelburne**. **John Callen** of Santa Margarita made a donation in memory of **Thomas N. Callen**. **Mary Elliott James** of San Simeon gave a contribution in memory of **Bryce Tingle**. **Barry Pearl** of San Francisco gave a gift in memory of **Martha Pearl**. **Debi Smith** of Wellington, Nevada made contributions in memory of **Craig Smith**, "a huge supporter of wildlife, the outdoors and our Mother Earth."

In honor

Gemma Caswell of Modesto made a donation in honor of **Edith Wheeler**. **Terence & Donna Katsuranis** of Brookfield, Connecticut gave a gift in honor of **Dr. Paul Tomascak**, geology professor at SUNY Oswego (New York). **Mrs. Margret Lohfeld** of Los Angeles made a contribution in honor of her beloved brother **Martin Engel**.

Former Mono Lake Committee staff member from Granville, Ohio, **Kristen Drake Patterson** and her husband **Dan** gave a contribution in celebration of their

newborn son, **Owen**. Congratulations **Kristen** and **Dan**!

Bill Thomas of San Diego gave a gift in honor of **Kai Thomas**, his first grandchild. Bill hopes that Mono Lake will be full again (as he experienced it over 65 years ago) when she grows up.

Special thanks

William Van Der Ven, author and canoe tour guide, donated an almost new Wenonah Encounter, a 17-foot solo canoe, plus assorted paddling gear. Staff members have enjoyed taking it out for excursions on the lake. Thank you, **William**!

Ferd Freeman, owner of **Sierra Sew & Vac** in Bishop, generously donated his services to banish winter grit and summer gravel from our well-used, and now well-serviced, vacuum cleaner. Thanks for helping the office stay clean, **Mr. Freeman**!

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 two- or three-to-one matches. Thank you to all of the members who have participated in a matching gift program. We very much appreciate these additional donations, and the extra effort 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!

Secure Mono Lake's future

Remember the Mono Lake Committee in your will or living trust, or name the Committee as a beneficiary of your IRA, qualified retirement plan, or life insurance policy. Your thoughtful gift will help us protect and restore Mono Lake, educate youth and young adults about water and the environment, and move the state toward a strong ethic of conservation and water use efficiency. For more information, contact Geoff McQuilkin (geoff@monolake.org) at (760) 647-6595.

Keeping records straight

Is your name spelled wrong on the back of your *Newsletter*? Are we sending your mail to the wrong address? Our members are very important to us—please help us keep things straight! Call (760) 647-6595 and ask for Membership Coordinator Ellen King or email ellen@monolake.org—I'm happy to help! ♦

Ellen King is the Committee's Membership Coordinator. She is so excited about the phalaropes we can't wait for her to see Mono Lake when it's covered in over a million Eared Grebes!



Send in your tickets ...



The **2007 Free Drawing** is here!

Enter for a chance to win a fabulous prize from one of our 25 generous sponsors!



Wilson's Eastside Sports



Tickets must be received by November 27, 2007 to eligible.



Need a water bottle or coffee cup?

How about a t-shirt or a new book?



Find all that and more at the Committee's online store ...



Visit www.monolake.org!



MONO LAKE COMMITTEE

Highway 395 at Third Street
Post Office Box 29
Lee Vining, CA 93541

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Mono Lake Committee