



MONO LAKE

N E W S L E T T E R

Summer 2007

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One of my favorite things about summer is the California Gulls. I never thought I'd say that, given that I grew up in an urban area where gulls struck terror in the hearts of school children out on the playground at lunch. But really, they're one of the best parts of summer in the Mono Basin.

They arrive in March, signaling that summer is just around the corner. I've seen locals literally stop in their tracks upon hearing the first gull cry of the season. It's a bit odd, hearing a sound often associated with the beach out here at the base of these tall mountains on the edge of this expansive desert. But with 50,000 or so of them nesting out there on the islands, you get used to it.

I love to watch them as they cruise the thermals, hanging in the sky as if on a mobile—their wings extended and still. The blue of the sky and the crisp white of their wings is bright and beautiful as they circle calmly, almost joyfully above. They make you want to join them, or, the next best thing, find the nearest grassy patch of ground to lay down and simply look up at the sky.

Today, as we send this *Newsletter* off to press, the gulls are up there above town, just floating on air. So, we're finishing up this issue in hopes that it reaches you in time to inspire a visit. This issue is full of news, essays, science, stories about some of the many individuals who are working to keep this place special, and reports on the year-round work of the Mono Lake Committee on behalf of Mono Lake. We're here for the shrimp, flies, streams, tufa, water, all the things that make up this place we love, and of course, the gulls.

Well, I can see them circling now, which means it's time to find a nice grassy spot to lie down and watch the show.

—Arya Degenhardt, Communications Director



COVER PHOTO BY JOHN DITTEL, WWW.JOHN DITTEL.COM

ARYA DEGENHARDT

Water is reintroduced into formerly dry channels of Lower Rush Creek as Mono Lake Committee staff look on. Spreading water in the floodplain, long advocated by the Committee, is crucial to the restoration of the once-lush bottomlands near Mono Lake.

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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MONO LAKE
NEWSLETTER

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Future of shoreline Mono Lake parcel remains in question

Development threat continues

New hope in a new appraisal?

by Geoffrey McQuilkin

The saga of the 112-acre parcel of land on Mono Lake's west shore continues, with the threat of illegal development remaining high. Bill Cunningham, the developer and owner of the "Mono Lake parcel," has contacted Mono County planning officials in preparation for submitting a completed subdivision and development application. Not only is subdivision of the steep, scenic hillside a bad idea, but such an action would also be a direct violation of the federal law protecting Scenic Area lands surrounding Mono Lake.

The parcel is subject to development regulations established both by Mono County, through the local planning process, and the US Forest Service, which administers the Congressionally-enacted Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area. Federal regulations set caps on the development of property within the Scenic Area in order to preserve the scenic, rural nature of the Mono Basin. They also prohibit subdivision. In fact, the Forest Service has already denied the development proposal.

County regulations also set limits on development, but the local rules are not entirely aligned with the federal rules. Thus, the developer's strategy seems to be to seek county approval on the one hand and to ignore federal authority on the other. It's a risky approach, since properties in violation of the federal regulations can be condemned, but such enforcement is likely to require a lengthy, time-consuming process.

Another appraisal

There seem to be only two paths to resolving the issue. Litigation is one, and in that case it's quite likely that a strong response from the Mono Lake Committee will be necessary to stop this poorly-conceived proposal from permanently scarring Mono Lake. Committee attorneys have already begun combing through relevant federal, state, and local laws in preparation for such a conflict.

The other, more positive approach continues to be sale of

the parcel for permanent protection, a solution that has been unsuccessful for years due to the owner's complaints about how his land is valued. Still, the developer continues to express interest in a conservation sale. There are no current appraisals of the land's value, and a fresh appraisal has been initiated. Possibly, this new appraisal will value the property at a level that makes a deal workable. If so, it will be time to celebrate, but there's a long road to travel before we know the results.

Lose-lose for Mono County

Unfortunately for Mono County, a local subdivision and development application will force the County Planning Commission and Supervisors into the middle of this issue. The County has little ability to actually resolve the core dispute between the owner and the federal government over property valuation, and yet will face the expenditure of substantial time and resources on the project while knowing that, most likely, it is being used as leverage in a negotiating strategy.

The public policy question that the county will have to consider is this: does Mono County have an interest in bucking federal law and approving a subdivision and development that violates the integrity of the federal Scenic Area? As a historic supporter of the Scenic Area and Mono Lake, it's hard to see why the County would choose such a course, but standing firm with the Scenic Area may well result in the county being sued by the developer. On the other hand, if the county undercuts the Scenic Area by approving an incompatible project, the public

outrage and legal consequences will be tremendous.

On the whole, the issue of the Mono Lake parcel remains undecided, complex, and potentially explosive. Committee staff are working daily on the issue to both encourage winning solutions and also prepare for legal action if necessary. Stay tuned for the next installment of this drawn-out saga. ❖



A view toward the Mono Lake parcel on the west shore.

ARVA DEGENHARDT

The true depth of Mono Lake

A reflection on the 25th anniversary of the Mono Lake Tufa State Reserve

by Dave Marquart

Editor's note: The establishment of the Mono Lake Tufa State Reserve in 1982 was a major milestone in the history of protecting Mono Lake. Formed to protect Mono Lake's famous tufa towers, the State Reserve also offers visitors the boardwalk at County Park, interpretive tours, and a helpful and knowledgeable ranger presence in the Mono Basin. We asked Dave Marquart, who has been with the State Reserve since its inception, to write some thoughts in celebration of the Reserve's ongoing work for Mono Lake.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the creation of the Mono Lake Tufa State Reserve. The State Reserve consists of approximately 4,000 acres of the lake's 40-mile shoreline including landscapes ranging from alkali flats to meadows, wetlands, and renowned limestone tufa groves. It also includes the bed and waters of the lake itself—bringing the total number of acres in the Reserve to about 49,000. Some of these lands are frequented by large numbers of visitors, while other more remote portions of the Reserve are seldom walked upon.

The beauty and uniqueness of Mono Lake and the basin in which it lies inspired both California and the United States to take steps to preserve them. The Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area was created two years after the State Reserve's creation and includes approximately 76,700 acres of land

surrounding Mono Lake and the State Reserve.

The State Public Resources Code affirms that "State reserves consist of areas embracing outstanding natural or scenic characteristics of statewide significance." The California Legislature recognized the unique, fragile tufa formations that were being exposed as the lake was dropping due to diversions of its tributary streams by the City of Los Angeles and was inspired to create the Reserve. The Public Resources Code also entrusts the Reserve with the protection of "its native ecological associations, unique faunal or floral characteristics ... and scenic qualities."

You may think I intend this to be a piece detailing the successes of the first 25 years of the management of the State Reserve. But I wish to highlight only one of them—what I consider to be the most important one. It is that we've never lost sight of our goal of maintaining its natural beauty and wildness.

About 250,000 people visit the Mono Lake Tufa State Reserve every year. It can be challenging trying to balance the recreational needs of visitors with the mission of a State Reserve. Reading visitor comments left at several of the visitor registers around the lake (yes, we do read them!) there's a predominant theme that resonates with me. Here are a few of those comments that highlight that theme: "Extremely peaceful; tranquil; serene; great place to meditate; soul-soothing."

Why is it that so many of us feel so embraced by this place? What exactly is it that nature does for us?

I see Mono Lake as being a wise and powerful teacher for those who are willing to listen. For me, communing with Mono Lake and its silence can allow me to more clearly realize who I am as a human being, what is important to me, and where my place is in this world. Henry David Thoreau wrote, "A lake is the landscape's most beautiful and expressive feature. It is earth's eye; looking into which the beholder measures the depth of his own nature."

The Mono Basin has been a



PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVID J. GUBERNICK, RAINBOW SPIRIT NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY, WWW.RAINBOWSPIRIT.COM

A double rainbow over Mono Lake and the Mono Lake Tufa State Reserve.

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State Water Board tours Mono Lake

by Geoffrey McQuilkin

In late April, California State Water Resources Control Board members and staff traveled across the Sierra Nevada to check in on Mono Lake. For some of them, it was their first visit to the place where their predecessors had established the historic Decision 1631 back in 1994—the decision that essentially saved Mono Lake and its tributary streams by regulating water diversions to the City of Los Angeles. For others it was a return to a place they know and love.

All five Water Board members made the trip, and they were joined by key leadership staff from within the regulatory body for a total of 11 visitors to the Mono Basin. The remarkable attendance is a testament to the significance of the Mono Lake decision within the Water Board's own history, and to the decision's remarkable effectiveness in achieving results.

The tour began with an overview from Conway Summit, where Water Board personnel met up with local agency and organizational representatives from California State Parks, California Department of Fish & Game, the Lahontan Regional Water Board, Caltrans, the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power, and the Mammoth Water District. The Mono Lake Committee was represented by Executive Director Geoff McQuilkin,



PHOTOS BY GREENE RIES

The State Water Board and Senior Staff on their tour of the Mono Basin at Conway Summit.

Eastern Sierra Policy Director Lisa Cutting, and Information Specialist Greg Reis. The group continued its orientation on the natural and political history of Mono Lake by visiting County Park, the Mono Basin Scenic Area Visitor Center, Rush Creek, and South Tufa.

Board members shared their thoughts throughout the visit. "It is impressive to see the effects of the Board's 1994 decision on the lake, the environment, and also on the communities which are thriving nearby," said Water Board Chair Tam Doduc, "it's motivating and very meaningful."

"I'm pleased to see that after all the arguments are over and the dust is settled, everyone agrees that the Water Board ruling is a good thing," noted Board Vice Chair Gary Wolff.

The newest Board member, Frances Spivy-Weber, added "I'm thrilled that all the Board came to see the lake and the results of D1631, but also that senior staff

came too—this was a very high-powered Board presence."

Board member Charles Hoppin made note of the education program run by the Committee in partnership with Los Angeles, encouraging activities that connect urban residents with the sources of their water. Board member Art Baggett, who has a long history with Mono Lake, organized the trip, adding "The Board's Mono Lake action remains one of the most significant decisions in western water law. It is important that our Board continues to get out in the field to monitor the implementation of the order and to appreciate the restoration of this amazing ecosystem. It is also gratifying to see the strong partnerships that have formed in the Mono Basin between the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power, the Mono Lake Committee, the various state and federal agencies and others in the basin."

As the tour wrapped up at South Tufa, two Osprey soared overhead, a rare double sighting at the lakeshore and, it was suggested, a fitting tribute to the critical role of the State Water Board in Mono Lake's present and future health. ❖



At the County Park boardwalk overlooking Mono Lake Lisa Cutting, Eastern Sierra Policy Director, talks about the rising lake and how the protection of Mono Lake has become an economic asset to the community and local economy.

Native plant partnership for Lee Vining Creek

by Emily Prud'homme

The Bristlecone Chapter of the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) and the Mono Lake Committee are proposing a collaborative effort to help contain the spread of bouncing bet (*Saponaria officinalis*) in Lee Vining. This non-native flowering plant is a common weed found along roadsides and disturbed areas across the country, and it thrives here in the Eastern Sierra (see Spring 2006 *Newsletter*).

Although bouncing bet's bright green foliage and pale pink flowers are attractive, the resulting seeds are all too easily transported from gardens and planters in town to Lee Vining Creek. Lee Vining Creek is Mono Lake's second-largest tributary, and it is returning to the healthy riparian ecosystem it once was despite running dry for over 40 years. As water returned to the once-degraded creek bed, it became excellent habitat for invasive species. Although the native vegetation is successfully becoming reestablished as a result of restoration efforts, bouncing bet continues to grow and often out-competes the native plants.

The Committee has been participating in invasive species control and removal, partnering with the US Forest Service and California State Parks staff to help native species gain a foothold and thrive. Currently, most invasive plant control



Lee Vining Elementary School third and fourth graders walked from school down the Lee Vining Creek trail with Committee staff on an Earth Day field trip to remove bouncing bet and trash from the trail.

consists of hand-pulling the plant and removing as much of the root mass as possible. Volunteers and school groups are a great asset and provide many hands for this task. Plant-pulling events are both hard work and fun, and it is rewarding to see areas cleared that were once infested.

The CNPS-Committee partnership would involve replacing bouncing bet growing in town with native plants or other drought-resistant, non-invasive plants at no cost or effort to the property owner aside from taking care of the new plants once they become established. Native plants are already being grown by local volunteers who participated in a CNPS-sponsored class on native seed propagation and plant growth.

Removing the bouncing bet seed bank from the town of Lee Vining will help to eliminate one large source of the problem. The Committee, along with partners and volunteers, would then be free to aggressively pursue bouncing bet removal along Lee Vining Creek without the threat of new seeds invading the creek bed. This project will likely take several years before its effects are fully realized, but removing a major seed source of this persistent invasive is an important first step in helping to re-establish native plants on Lee Vining Creek. ❖

Emily Prud'homme is the Committee's Policy Coordinator. She has been eradicating bouncing bet in her own yard this spring in preparation for the town-wide removal effort.

The Lee Vining Creek Trail

In 1993 residents of Lee Vining created the Lee Vining Creek Trail, a pleasant trail below town along Lee Vining Creek that connects the town with the Forest Service Scenic Area Visitor Center. This 1.5-mile long trail demonstrates the town's commitment to and pride in this local resource, and is an inviting way for the public to see the benefits of stream restoration. Be sure to take a walk along the creek trail during your visit this summer!

Bequest from Betty White will benefit Mono Lake

by Geoffrey McQuilkin

The Mono Lake Committee recently received a generous bequest from longtime member Betty White. Betty was a nature photographer with a particular skill for photographing birds, a regular annual summertime visitor to Mono Lake, and a woman with a passion for life and a positive outlook for the future. She passed away in 2006. The Committee is honored that Betty chose this organization to be one of the beneficiaries of her estate.



Costa's Hummingbird, one of Betty's favorite subjects to photograph.

Betty was long involved in nature photography, ranking among the Photographic Society of America's top nature photographers for many years. She received many awards for her work, and began a practice of sharing her images of local birds with the Committee. Many bird photographs, particularly close-ups, that have been featured in the *Mono Lake Newsletter* and *Calendar* have been Betty's work.

In her later years, Betty spent a great deal of time each summer in the Mono Lake area, photographing and enjoying the season with her husband Bob Potts and, after his passing, her second husband Burdette White. It wasn't unusual to see them in their small camper, headed up Lundy Canyon, or parked at the Mono Cone, or stopping by the Committee to check up on the latest book selections. Betty even volunteered a fascinating presentation on the secrets of wildlife photography one evening in

the Committee's slide show room.

Many of us at the Committee office came to know Betty over the years and her enthusiasm for nature and life were universally noted. As a tribute to her ever-energetic spirit, Chuck Peck, a longtime friend of Betty's (and a fellow Committee member) recalls the story of her second marriage:

One thing all of her friends appreciated about Betty is that she was very direct. You always knew where she stood on anything you were talking about. That approach to life was taken perhaps to its highest level when a couple of years after Burdette White was widowed he got a call from Betty. Now, I believe this story is accurate because it was told to me by Burdette in Betty's presence and she did not contradict him.

Burdette said that in the call Betty reminded him that he and his wife and Bob and Betty had been friends for years and had traveled and photographed together all over the western United States. They shared an interest in nature and in photography and had many friends in common. She suggested, Burdette said, that at their age (late eighties) it was silly for him to live all by himself down in Southern California and for her to live all

by herself up in Coarsegold. They should get married and he should move up to her house in Coarsegold where it was only a short drive over the hill to Mono Lake in her camper where they could continue to camp and photograph each summer.

Apparently it all made sense to Burdette because they did get married and traveled to Mono Lake every summer where Burdette taught Betty how to use a video camera and together they produced several films on dragonflies and butterflies. Seeing them together during those years was like watching a couple of teenagers in love for the first time.

The Mono Lake Committee plans to use Betty's bequest to assure the long-term future of the Committee's work for Mono Lake by supporting important building and facility needs. The Committee welcomes others who wish to remember Mono Lake in their wills. Please contact Geoff McQuilkin at (760) 647-6595 for information or support for such planning.

We will miss Betty's summertime visits, but know that her memory will live on in the Committee's work on behalf of Mono Lake. Here's to you Betty—Long Live Mono Lake! ❖



Betty White with her husband Burdette.

Policy updates

by Lisa Cutting and Emily Prud'homme

Mono Inn real estate signs sprout again

The Mono Inn at Mono Lake and an adjacent ten acres remains on the real estate market this summer with a reduced asking price of just under \$5 million. Other than the reduction in price, not much has changed since the property first went up for sale.

As reported earlier this year (see *Winter 2007 Newsletter*), the Committee is concerned that potential buyers may not fully understand the development rules that apply to the property because of its location within the boundaries of the Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area. The Mono Basin Scenic Area Comprehensive Management Plan states that private property owners within the Scenic Area cannot build

more than double the square footage of the buildings that existed in 1984—the date when Congress created the Scenic Area. The current conceptual plans that accompany the Mono Inn property propose development at least three times above what is allowable under the management plan.

While the conceptual plans include many desirable “green” building features (solar power, water recycling, sustainable building materials, and natural vegetation), the Committee is watching for potential disregard of the management plan and the protections that it guarantees. Development within the Scenic Area must meet all applicable regulations, which in this case include both the Mono County General Plan and the Mono Basin Scenic Area Management Plan.

Funding for the Sierra Nevada Conservancy

In early April, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) hosted three Program & Grants Guidelines Workshops in the Eastern Sierra to help clarify the program priorities the SNC will be funding. Mono Lake Committee staff were in attendance at the Bishop meeting on April 4. Jim Branham, Executive Officer for the Conservancy, led the discussion and explained how the money will be allocated. Public questions and input were encouraged, and may influence the final guidelines, which will be released this summer. Also in attendance was Mono County Supervisor Byng Hunt, who will take Linda Arcularius' place on the Board representing the SNC's East Subregion

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Illegal OHV use on Mono's shore

On a weekend in late April, ironically close to Earth Day, Lee Vining resident and Friends of the Inyo Executive Director Paul McFarland found himself chasing down three motorized dirt bikes that were illegally riding on the Lee Vining Creek trail below town. To make matters worse, the off-highway vehicle enthusiasts continued on towards the shore of Mono Lake at Old Marina, laying down deep treads of damage on the fragile shoreline and even venturing into the shallow lakeshore waters before continuing up to the US Forest Service Visitor Center.

Paul was able to take some photos, documenting the egregious violation so that when California State Park Rangers arrived, he was able to conduct a citizen's arrest.

Mono Lake has many levels of protection including the Mono Lake Tufa State Reserve (which is part of the California State Park system) and the

National Forest Scenic Area. Off-highway vehicles are not allowed in any of these areas and in fact many roads adjacent to sensitive riparian areas have actually been closed by the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power as part of the State Water Board restoration order.

As government agency budgets continue to shrink and staff field presence is increasingly a rarity, nonprofit organizations become even more important. Friends of the Inyo is local conservation organization dedicated to protecting the Eastern Sierra's public lands and wildlife. Paul demonstrated first-hand what that means—being out on the land and then caring and knowing what to do when things go wrong.

Despite the audacious behavior that Paul witnessed, the violators were brought to justice. As he said later, “The moral of the story, as many have already come to learn is simply: don't mess with the Mono Basin. She's got friends.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF PAUL MCFARLAND

Dirt bike tracks near Old Marina.

Paul started out as an Intern Naturalist with the Mono Lake Committee in 2000, and is now Executive Director of Friends of the Inyo. Learn how you can protect wild peace and quiet at www.friendsoftheinyo.org.

Thank you, Paul, for your action on behalf of Mono Lake.

Bills promote efficient water use

by Geoffrey McQuilkin

Water conservation continues to offer California huge benefits. Water conservation and water recycling programs effectively create new supplies of water for urban areas, and those new supplies can be used to reduce the demand for imported water—as has happened with conservation programs in Los Angeles reducing the need for Mono Lake water.

Thoughtful individual action—such as installing water-saving devices—is critical for conservation to succeed. But large-scale institutional implementation of conservation measures is also important, and sometimes laws are needed to make these projects happen. The Committee is supporting four important pieces of proposed legislation this year that will support the wise water use effort.

AB 1481 (De La Torre) would set uniform standards for using recycled water for landscape irrigation, creating a clear path for water recycling projects to follow. Water recycling creates an effective, drought-proof local supply of water that can replace, for example, the use of pristine Sierra snowmelt on golf courses and freeway plantings. In April the Committee

testified in support of this bill due to its importance for planned reclamation projects in Los Angeles.

AB 1406 (Huffman) would permit the use of recycled water in condominiums for non-drinking water uses, such as flushing toilets. This has already been successfully implemented in new apartment building construction.

AB 662 (Ruskin) would direct the California Energy Commission to develop water efficiency regulations for water-using appliances such as dishwashers and washing machines. Regulations will ensure that new appliances are not needlessly guzzling water.

AB 1560 (Huffman) would provide the California Energy Commission with authority to analyze water consumption as part of its current program of profiling and regulating efficient methods for new building construction.

AB 1420 (Laird) would require water agencies to conduct California's "best management practices" for water conservation to be eligible for state grant money.

Will these proposed bills become law? Watch for updates! ❖

Eastern Sierra Watershed Project reaches Walker watershed

by Elin Ljung

This spring, the air on three different Eastern Sierra creeks was filled with the calls of birds, the scent of blooming plants, and the voices of students calling out "tree!," "shrub!," and "herbaceous!" These students were studying their local creeks through the Mono County Eastern Sierra Watershed Program (ESWP), now in its third year.

With the help of a grant from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Mono Lake Committee was able to expand the ESWP to include a monitoring day on Bridgeport Creek with Bridgeport Elementary 6th grade students. ESWP days continued on Mammoth Creek with Mammoth Elementary students, and on Mill Creek with students from Lee Vining Elementary. The program now monitors streams in each of Mono County's three major watersheds: Upper Owens, Mono Basin, and Walker.

ESWP keeps students busy with fast-paced stations and hands-on investigation. They measure the health of their local creeks using a series of tests that indicate the water's

temperature, acidity, turbidity, and hardness, as well as the amount of dissolved oxygen, nitrates, and total dissolved solids. After determining the overall health of the creek, students learn about how macroinvertebrates, streamflow, and riparian vegetation can further indicate and influence a creek's health.

After recording data points in their notebooks, they return to their classrooms and upload that data to a permanent website. With two previous years of monitoring on Mill Creek and Mammoth Creek, the students are beginning to build a data

set that can be used to track the health of their creeks from year to year.

ESWP is made possible through a partnership between the Committee and the Mono County Office of Education, with additional funding from the EPA and support from Mono Lake Volunteers. If you would like to help with ESWP this fall, please contact Bartshé Miller (bartshe@monolake.org) at (760) 647-6595.



Investigation of in-stream macroinvertebrates is part of the ESWP.

Setting the bar for science

PRBO's Sacha Heath migrating on

by Lisa Cutting and Arya Degenhardt

The Mono Basin has a long and fascinating history of scientific investigation. From geologist Israel Russell in the 1880s to lunar studies by NASA in the 1980s with countless others in between, the Mono Basin has piqued the curiosity of many, and has become a hot spot for scientific research.

The Mono Lake Committee's grassroots beginning is steeped in the science and lore of the original Mono Basin Research Group (a contingent of adventurous undergraduate science students) and their ecological inventory of this mysterious landscape. As the story goes, after completing "The Ecological Study of the Mono Basin" and knowing what horrible fate the lake would suffer at the hands of excessive water diversions, members of the optimistic bunch banded together to found the Mono Lake Committee. They were science students, not non-profit experts, and they used what they knew to make historic changes for Mono Lake.

Thirty years later the legacy of scientific research at Mono Lake continues on, even growing in its strength and scope. The Mono Lake Committee maintains its commitment to science-based decision-making and depends on research to guide policy action.

During this time we've seen scientists come and go, many keeping connections for years beyond their fieldwork days. Sacha Heath, bird biologist for PRBO Conservation Science (PRBO) and long-time resident of the Mono Basin, is a stellar example of the new generation of scientists carrying on the spirit of the original Mono Basin Research Group. After ten years of research in the area she has decided to end her year-round position as Eastern Sierra Nevada Program Director and return to graduate school on the coast to pursue her doctoral degree. From Sacha: "For now, my path leads me away from the Mono Basin, but PRBO remains committed to continuing our long-term partnership with the Mono Lake Committee and others in the Eastern Sierra."

PRBO Conservation Science

PRBO has a long and diverse history of field research in the Eastern Sierra Nevada region, beginning with investigations of migrant passerines at Mono Lake in the early 1970s, and spanning multiple species and habitats to the present. Of special importance to Mono Lake are studies of California Gulls and the impacts that the changing lake level has on the nesting gull colony.

In 1998 Sacha extended that research and began the Eastern Sierra Nevada Program—expanding the scope of research to include a multitude of riparian songbird studies. The program



A day in the field—Sacha Heath out on Rush Creek.

has since grown to include investigations of birds in aspen, sagebrush, piñon woodland, and Jeffrey pine habitats. Sacha has not only carried on the tradition of scientific research, but has truly set a new precedent for using science to advise decision-making at the landscape level in the Eastern Sierra.

The Mono Lake Committee has directly benefited from Sacha's research and outreach efforts. With an office just around the corner, she has been available and willing to answer questions and explain complex ecological issues. Her willingness to attend numerous public meetings, host mist-netting demonstrations for the Mono Lake Committee's Outdoor Experiences groups from Los Angeles, and collaborate with other scientists to establish projects in the area have been invaluable.

We spoke with many of Sacha's colleagues—all of whom feel equally grateful for her ardent outreach efforts.

From Bureau of Land Management Wildlife Biologist Joy Fatooh: "Sacha and her crews have brought about an exponential increase in BLM's knowledge about birds on the public lands and how our management actions affect them; what's more, she has a particular dedication to making sure all possible landowners and stakeholders are involved, so the results are watershed-wide and landscape-wide. We've brought her in to design and implement studies to address the effects on birds of specific management actions. Between studies, she's generous with answers to our incidental questions—she has the answers we need and the diligently-gathered, expertly-analyzed data to support them."

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Scientific research in the Mono Basin

News from the Mono Basin Field Station and beyond

The Mono Basin Field Station, now in its third year of operation, is full to capacity with researchers doing a wide variety of interesting work. The example below is one of many studies currently in progress in the Mono Basin.

The Mono Lake Committee runs the Field Station in Lee Vining to support scientific research. For more

information about science in the Mono Basin visit www.monobasinresearch.org for a growing clearinghouse of scientific studies. If you are interested in learning more about the Mono Basin Field Station or in supporting the Committee's efforts to support research, contact Bartshé Miller (bartshe@monolake.org) at (760) 647-6595.

Greater Sage-Grouse dispersal in the Mono Basin

Lief Wiechman, University of Idaho

Greater Sage-Grouse are a species of great interest and concern throughout the west and particularly in Mono County. A recent study demonstrated that the Greater Sage-Grouse in Mono County have highly unique genetics, suggesting that the population of grouse in Mono County and across the border in Lyon County, Nevada, has been isolated from other Greater Sage-Grouse populations for thousands of years.

Although unique, the genetics of this population are quite diverse, suggesting that it has been well connected with genes flowing throughout the population. These unique genetics have formed the basis for two petitions to list the species as a threatened or endangered distinct population segment in recent years. Although both of these petitions have been denied, most scientists now consider sage-grouse in Mono County as a unique population segment of Greater Sage-Grouse.

The California Department of Fish & Game and the Bureau of Land Management are working with experts from the University of Idaho on a research project to better understand the connectivity of the grouse population in Mono County. The goals of this study are to determine demographic rates (survival, productivity), movement patterns, and habitat suitability for grouse in the county.

In addition, this study will examine dispersal of the grouse, including movement corridors, which may shed some light on grouse connectivity or lack thereof in the Mono Basin.

This spring, several hens were radio-marked in Long Valley, the Bodie Hills, and the Fales Hot Springs area. Movements will be monitored year-round to see if any interaction occurs between the sage-grouse located in these subpopulations.

Additionally, birds will be marked in the Parker Meadows area and in the Mono Basin, where they occur in very small numbers, to determine if they interact with grouse in the surrounding larger populations or if they have become isolated. Genetic samples are also being collected for all birds



Greater Sage-Grouse at a lek, or mating ground.

PHOTO COURTESY OF LIEF WIECHMAN

to better understand current gene flow in the area.

The University of Idaho research crew is currently monitoring 26 marked hens until we find them nesting (at press time there were seven incubating). At the onset of incubation, we calculate hatch dates and begin to monitor the productivity of the grouse (nest initiation, nest success, chick survival, and brood success). Once the broods begin to hatch we monitor them carefully throughout the summer until fall, when we will recapture chicks from our radio-marked hens/broods. Also in the fall, juvenile grouse randomly captured will be radio-marked and monitored to better understand movement corridors and dispersal.

The ultimate goal of this research is to identify areas in Mono County that are important for Greater Sage-Grouse and how those habitats should be connected to keep the population intact and healthy. ❖

Streamwatch

Excitement on Rush Creek despite a dry year

by Greg Reis

The runoff forecast for the 2007 Runoff Year is 52% of average. Stream flows will remain at minimum levels all year, with no higher spring flows released below the aqueduct except on Parker and Walker Creeks. While plans allow for diverting these creeks in dry years, due to antiquated diversion structures, the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power (DWP) is unable to divert these two creeks until the diversion facilities are upgraded.

Those facilities will be upgraded after 2009, following higher priority work on the Grant Lake Reservoir outlet to Rush Creek, or “Mono Gate One.” Mono Gate One work will begin with the construction of a bypass pipe in 2008 and a new gate in 2009. Right now the gate is unstable when at capacity. It also is difficult and time-consuming to operate, which sometimes causes unintended fluctuations in Rush Creek and the Upper Owens River. The reconstruction of the gate will result in a

facility able to reliably release normal- and dry-year flows at the “headwaters” of Lower Rush Creek (a new facility would be required to release wet-year flows from the reservoir when it is low).

Gem Lake Reservoir will be low this summer due to maintenance work on the 90-year-old Gem Lake Dam, which will result in the release of additional water earlier in the season. This, and lower downstream releases required in dry years will keep Grant Lake Reservoir high this summer.

This is the first time since the 1994 Water Board Decision that Lower Rush Creek will be flowing at just 31 cubic feet per second all season. There are questions about what that low flow will mean for water temperatures in Rush Creek. The habitat in the bottomlands has changed considerably since the last dry-year temperature studies in the early 1990s. The 2006 stream restoration flows created many new complex



Low spring flows on Rush Creek.

habitats involving deep pools, gravel bars, side channels, and large woody debris, and these areas may provide refuge for trout during times of high water temperatures.

Also this year, DWP is conducting waterfowl habitat surveys in the Rush Creek bottomlands for the first time. This coincides with the unplugging of channels identified for reopening in the Waterfowl Habitat Restoration Plan.

Despite the lack of high flows this year, it will be an important year for learning about Rush Creek. ❖

Lakewatch

Mono Lake is one of the most productive lakes on Earth!

by Greg Reis

2006 was one of the more productive years for Mono Lake, despite the lake stratifying early in the year into a condition called meromixis. Meromixis occurs when the water column fails to mix during the winter due to a less-saline upper layer floating on a saltier layer of water underneath.

It is initiated by wet-year inflows of fresh water and was previously recorded in 1983–1988 and 1995–2003.

During the first few years of meromixis, nutrients become trapped in the lower layer, depleting the upper layer and reducing algae growth. This temporary decrease in primary productivity has

minimal effect on the Mono Lake brine shrimp, unknown but likely minimal effect on the alkali flies, and little or no effect on long-term productivity.

In fact, Mono Lake is one of the most productive lakes in the world, and in some years might be *the* most productive lake in the world! In 1982, 1988, 2003, and 2005, researchers estimate primary production in the lake exceeded 1 kilogram (2.2 lbs) of carbon per square meter. This level of productivity (which is double the long-term average) is comparable to chaparral or coniferous forest. It is four times that of most eutrophic (rich in dissolved nutrients) lakes and 5–10 times the average productivity of the ocean.

Compared to more productive ecosystems, it is only 1/3 the productivity of a salt marsh or estuary, 1/5 that of a tropical forest, and 1/15 the productivity

of an intertidal kelp forest—the most productive ecosystem on earth.

The dry year could cause the lake to drop over a foot from its April 1 level of 6384.8 feet above sea level. 2007 will be a relatively low-productivity year for algae in Mono Lake, due to the onset of meromixis early last year. However, a dropping lake level will weaken meromixis and hasten the return of monomixis (mixing once a year), the normal mixing regime for the lake. This would also hasten the return of Mono Lake from one of the most productive lakes to a status of possibly the most productive lake in the world! ❖

Greg Reis is the Committee's Information Specialist. He is an expert at weaving his way through the willows at the Rush Creek bottomlands to find specific restoration sites.

6417'

Prediversion lake level, 1941

6391'

Target lake level

6384.8'

Current lake level

6372'

Historic low, 1982

Mono Basin Journal

A roundup of quiet happenings at Mono Lake

by Geoffrey McQuilkin



PHOTO COURTESY OF SARAH TAYLOR

Gazing down through Mono Lake's rich waters, I recently saw some familiar, well trodden ground. It was a spectacular, sunny spring day; a few small white clouds overhead, not much in the way of wind, California Gulls bobbing nearby searching for shrimp.

The lake water was still green-hued due to abundant algae, but tiny, recently hatched brine shrimp were everywhere doing their best to graze the minute plants, making the water clear enough to see all the way to the lake bottom, eight feet down. And while no footprints remained in the rippled sands below, I could clearly see that this was once the land across which I led visitors, seventeen years ago, when giving Mono Lake tours on the Committee's behalf.

I tried to point this unusual fact out to my daughters, who listened dubiously to my claim of having once walked routinely to a nearby tufa island. It's an unusual feeling, I found, to become a historical resource, to have seen the lake at

a level to which hopefully it will never return. And yet, what better feeling could there be: having witnessed the lake at the edge of collapse years ago, to now be reminded so graphically of its increasing health and vigor.

To punctuate the message of restored health, an Osprey flew low overhead, headed for the once dry and dusty creek in search of fish among the now-wet channels and recovering trees. And on the drive home, it seemed the Mono Basin was celebrating too. Desert peach, one of those widespread yet little-noticed shrubs of the region, was making a springtime statement, presenting bright sprays of pink flowers on branch after branch after branch, here in the corner of California where good things are happening. ❖

Geoff McQuilkin is the Committee's Executive Director. Thanks to frequent trips to Sacramento he is becoming an expert on viewing Mono Basin sunrises from Conway Summit.

Benchmarks



PHOTO COURTESY OF STEVE PATTERSON

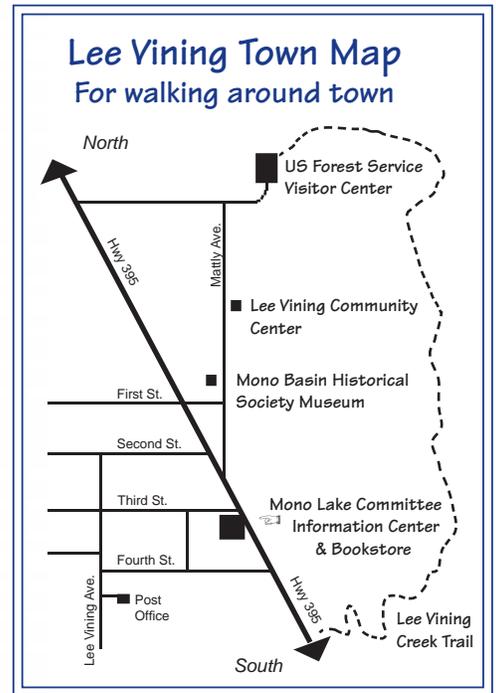
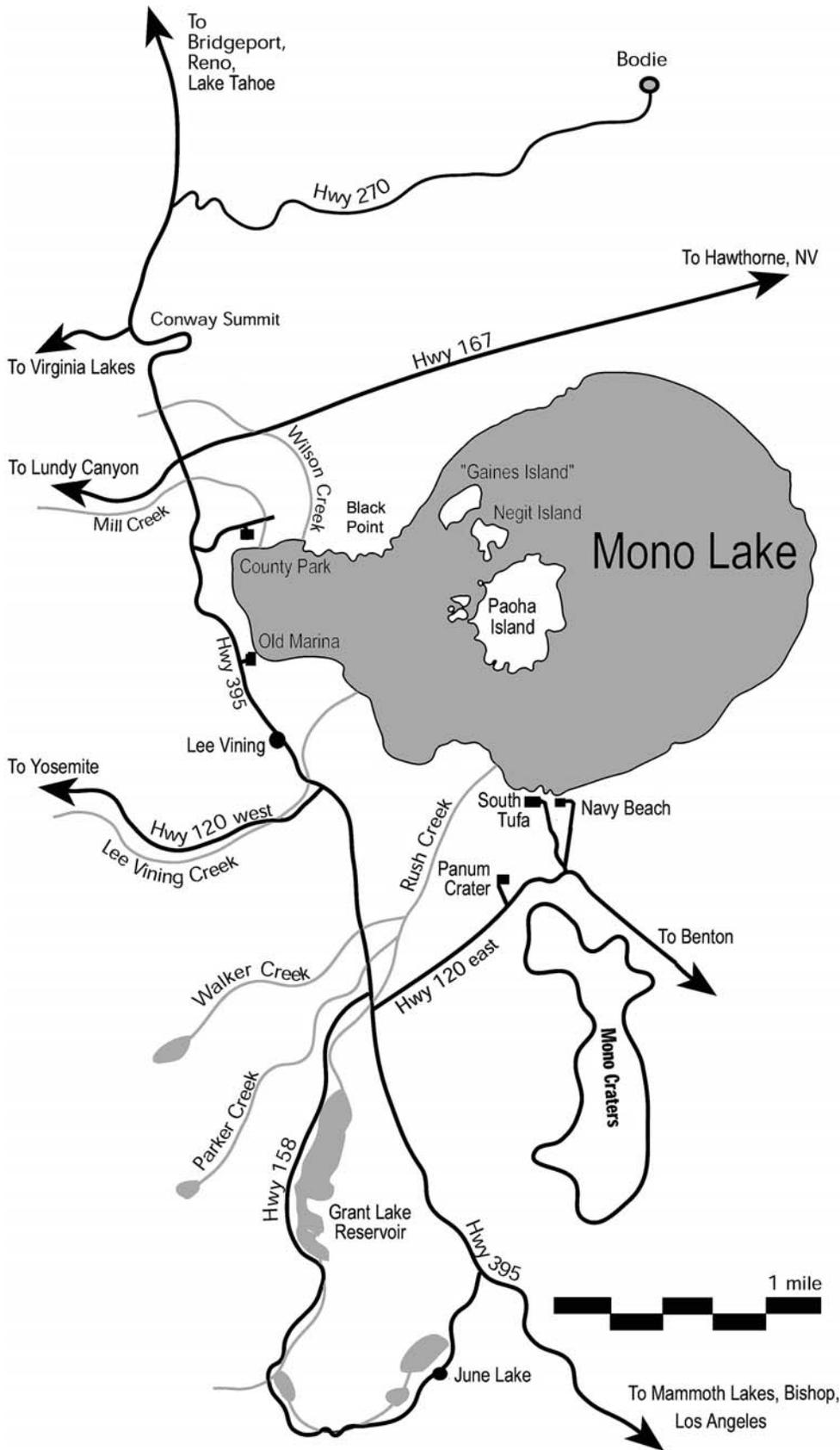
The White-crowned Sparrow research crew attempting to do spring surveys near Tioga Pass, May 19, 2006.



ARVA DEGENHART

Mono Lake Committee staffers Elin, Emily, Ellen, and Santiago near Tioga Pass, May 9, 2007.

Mono Lake and Vicinity Map



How far is it?
Distance from Lee Vining to:

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

Things to do in the Mono Basin

Activities

There is a lot to do in the Mono Basin! Stop by the Mono Lake Committee Information Center & Bookstore when you're in town and our knowledgeable staff can help.

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

- **Canoe tours** depart Saturday and Sunday mornings in summer at 8:00, 9:30, and 11:00AM, and last for about one hour. \$24 for adults, \$12 for children. Reservations are required; call (760) 647-6595.

- **Bird walks** take place Fridays and Sundays at 8:00AM throughout the summer. Meet at the Mono Lake County Park with binoculars and a bird book (not required). Tours last 1½–2 hours and are open to all levels of birders. Committee staff can also suggest good birding areas around the Basin.

Visitor Centers

- **The Mono Lake Committee Information Center & Bookstore**, located in the heart of Lee Vining, offers a free video, educational exhibits, a fine art exhibit, and activity schedules. The bookstore offers an excellent selection of regional books, maps, T-shirts, local crafts, and specialty gifts. The Committee also houses the Lee Vining Chamber of Commerce with information on lodging, dining, and recreation opportunities as well as weather and road conditions. The Mono Lake Committee is open from 8:00AM–9:00PM daily during the summer, or call (760) 647-6595 for more information.

- **The Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area Visitor Center**, located just north of town, features an excellent view of Mono Lake, interpretive displays, and natural history trails. A dramatic film on Mono Lake shows regularly in the theater, and during the summer rangers give patio presentations daily. Open Sundays–Thursdays from 8:00AM to 5:00PM, and Fridays–Saturdays from 8:00AM to 7:00PM; contact the Visitor Center at (760) 647-3044 for more information.

- **The Mono Basin Historical Society Museum**, located in Lee Vining at Gus Hess Park, houses a fascinating collection of materials from the Mono Basin's past. See Native American artifacts, gold mining implements, and even the legendary upside-down house! Open Thursdays–Mondays from 10:00AM to 5:00PM and Sundays 12:00 to 5:00PM. There is a \$1 charge but children under the age of 13 are free. Contact the museum at (760) 647-6461 for more information. ❖

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/dep

- 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 (760) 878-2932
www.nps.gov/manz
- Manzanar 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

The Mono Lake story

Nestled at the edge of the arid Great Basin and the snowy Sierra Nevada mountains, Mono Lake is an ancient saline lake that covers over 70 square miles and supports a unique and productive ecosystem. The lake has no fish; instead it is home to trillions of brine shrimp and alkali flies. Freshwater streams feed Mono Lake, supporting lush riparian forests of cottonwood and willow along their banks. Along the lakeshore, scenic limestone formations known as tufa towers rise from the water's surface. Millions of migratory birds visit the lake each year.

A story of hope

In 1941, the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power (DWP) began excessive water diversions from Mono Basin streams. Mono Lake dropped 45 vertical feet, lost half its volume, and doubled in salinity.

The Mono Lake Committee was founded by David and Sally Gaines in 1978 in response to the threat of inevitable collapse of the Mono Basin ecosystem. The early Committee bought an old dance hall in Lee Vining to use as headquarters (which still houses the Information Center today), and went to work spreading the word about Mono Lake. The Committee took the City of Los Angeles to court in 1979, arguing that DWP had violated the public trust, which states: "The public trust ... is an affirmation of the duty of the state to protect the people's common heritage of streams, lakes, marshlands and tidelands...." – Supreme Court of California, 1983

During the winter of 1988, David Gaines was killed in a car accident in a snowstorm. He never got to see the lake he

loved begin to rise, but his energy and inspiration still carry on through the work of Committee staff.

Mono Lake's recovery depends upon water conservation in Los Angeles, and the Committee has created solutions to the demand for water by implementing conservation programs in Los Angeles that have saved more than enough water to share with Mono Lake. Over the last 15 years, LA has become one of the most water-conscious cities in the United States, and the Committee works statewide to promote wise water use for people and the environment.

In 1994, after over a decade of litigation, the California Water Resources Control Board ordered DWP to raise Mono Lake to a healthy level of 6392 feet above sea level—twenty feet above Mono Lake's historic low. DWP has reduced its Mono Basin water exports by over 80%, and Mono Lake is on the rise! This is truly an environmental victory. See below for more on what the Committee is doing today.

15,000 friends

Mono Lake has a great success story, and you can be a part of it. Add your voice to the 15,000 friends who are committed to the protection and restoration of Mono Lake. Your support as a Committee member will be put to hard work for Mono Lake!

Check out Mono Lake on the web at www.monolake.org for action alerts, letter-writing campaigns, webcam images of the area, and fun activities happening year-round. By staying connected to Mono Lake, you ensure its protection for generations to come. ❖

What is the Committee doing today?

Protecting Mono Lake. The Committee serves as a voice for Mono Lake in the face of land development threats and recreation pressures. Working with agencies like DWP, California State Parks, and the US Forest Service, the Committee is successfully balancing the water needs of both humans and natural ecosystems.

Restoring Mono Lake. Restoration work at Mono Lake focuses on re-

establishing natural processes along damaged streams. As water flows down the creeks and into the lake, vegetation and wildlife return and the lake rises, helping to bring back a healthy ecosystem.

Educating the next generation. Each year the Committee partners with Los Angeles community and school groups, bringing inner-city youth to the Mono Basin to learn about the source

of their water. For kids who may have never left LA, these are life-changing trips filled with hiking, canoeing, helping with restoration work, and learning to be at home outdoors.

Find news, updates, and lots of great information at www.monolake.org.



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

TIE DYE T-SHIRTS

Intern Jessi and Outdoor Education Instructor Betsy peace-out in these vibrant shirts! A vivid spiral pattern is highlighted with an embroidered "Long Live Mono Lake" across the chest in a fun and colorful font. It's definitely the wildest shirt we've ever sold! Available in adult and youth sizes.
Adult Tie Dye T-Shirt Sizes Small-XX-Large: \$16.00
Youth Tie Dye T-Shirt Sizes X-Small-Large: \$15.00



MONO LAKE COMMITTEE LOGO BASEBALL CAP

Ellery and Geoff are having fun in our classic logo cap. In a 100% cotton stone-washed twill, it has a broken-in feel right off the rack. Comes with an adjustable strap so one size fits all! Available in khaki with your choice of a blue or green bill.

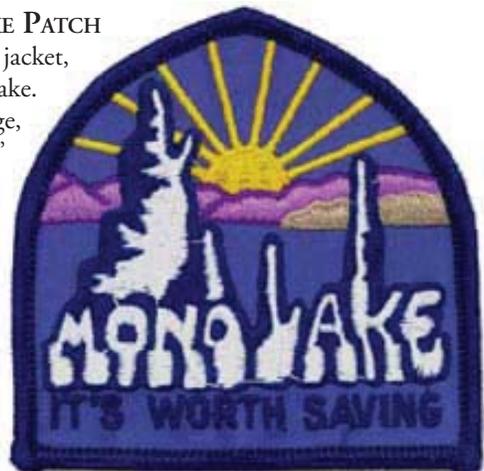


Baseball Cap, one size fits all, specify blue or green bill: \$17.00

MONO LAKE PATCH

We brought back this classic design that will brighten up any vest, jacket, or backpack and let everyone know that your heart is at Mono Lake. The patch shows a golden sun rising over the tufa with the message, "Mono Lake It's Worth Saving."

Embroidered cloth patch, 3"x 3": \$3.95



MONO LAKE COMMITTEE LOGO MUG

A classic design that is simple and elegant. This 12-ounce white mug has the Mono Lake Committee logo in cobalt blue with matching handle and rim. Mugs and inks are lead and cadmium free. Logo is printed on one side of mug.
12 oz. Logo Mug: \$6.95

stepping stone for hundreds of seasonal state, federal, and Mono Lake Committee employees over the past three decades. I've encouraged a few of them to make time for the lake, to find a secluded place around the shore somewhere to sit and just be with nature. I also request that they leave all possible distractions behind including friends, MP3 players, books, (yes, even their bird books and field guides). This is not an easy assignment for many. Being alone with no distractions risks making us restless and uncomfortable, and for some, bored. But that glimpse of who we are when we are without any props or distractions can be illuminating. Some have reported back that their experience has brought improved clarity and direction to their lives. "Never does nature say one thing and wisdom another," wrote the 1st-2nd century Roman poet, Juvenal.

During stressful times we humans seek refuge in nature. Studies show that communing with nature does, in fact, reduce stress. Research has also shown that people who are able to be around nature or even view images of nature following a stressful event can recover more quickly from that event than others. That would explain the surge in the number of visitors to state parks immediately following the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001. Several visitors to the lake that fall spoke to me of how much more important Mono Lake was to them at that particular time. A visit to Mono Lake following 9/11 may have reassured many that there are forces at work in the world that are much larger than the violence humans inflict upon each other.

Considering visitors often conduct their vacations the way they do their lives—hurriedly—even a brief visit to Mono Lake can do wonders for the soul. And the visitor registers show that many of you visit repeatedly. "We keep coming back; we love this place—we come here often; after all those years—still awesome" is another sampling of comments. A visit with Mono Lake, however brief, can also help us renew our relationship to the earth and recharge the spirit.

Having talked to thousands of visitors over the years I've learned that many of you who have desk jobs are able to do what you do because you know there are places like Mono Lake in existence. For some of you Mono Lake is California's Alaska—if you can't get here often, just knowing it exists and is being protected, and will be there when you need it is sometimes "soul-soothing" enough, at least temporarily.

"No words can describe" writes another Mono Lake visitor. "Yes, the earth speaks, but only to those who can hear with their hearts. It speaks in a thousand, thousand small ways, but like our lovers and families and friends, it often sends its messages without words," writes Steve Van Matre, author of *Earth Magic*. Some who try to interpret nature only with their minds may never feel that deep connection with the earth that some of us feel.

For some, nature can speak to us in a group, but others may need the stillness and solitude to receive her messages. "... breathe deep of that yet sweet and lucid air, sit quietly for a while and contemplate the precious stillness, that lovely, mysterious and awesome space" wrote wilderness advocate and environmental writer Edward Abbey. For some of us solitude is the only way to introspection and a connection with that mysterious part of us that patiently waits to be discovered.

Those of us who work for land-managing agencies in the Mono Basin have an awesome and important job to protect the sense of wildness that provides opportunities for solitude and reflection. Lest we ever lose sight of that mission we simply need to read another comment in the visitor register like this one: "This place just makes me feel good." ❖

Dave Marquart has worked for the Mono Lake Tufa State Reserve for 25 years, most recently as Park Interpretive Specialist. He teaches birding by ear and connecting with nature workshops for the Sierra State Parks Foundation. He lives in the Mono Basin with his wife Connie. If you've made a meaningful connection with Mono Lake and wish to share it with him, he can be reached at connectingwithnature@yahoo.com.



The County Park boardwalk, part of the Mono Lake Tufa State Reserve.

SANTIAGO ESCOBEDERA

Science and education

Beginning in 1998, Sacha and her summer crews have worked across numerous watersheds throughout the Eastern Sierra monitoring riparian songbird habitat, collecting data, and synthesizing that data in order to inform future agency management and restoration efforts. All of this work has been done collaboratively with public land managers, conservation groups, and other researchers and educators. In fact, education has been a large component of the program—including both school children and the public.

From Dr. Connie Millar, Research Geneticist, US Forest Service, who observed Sacha working mist-netting stations: “Seeing her working with the public, her words were tender but clear—explaining details of each bird’s life history, its ecologic role and significance. Such a gift of knowledge and curiosity is without measure.”

Filling a need

In 2002 Sacha established a more permanent presence for PRBO by securing and operating an Eastern Sierra Field Office in Lee Vining. This year-round office further enabled PRBO to strengthen their working relationships with partnering conservation organizations and agency staff.

From Dr. Mark Hanna of the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power: “I believe Sacha has a unique ability to clearly place the current phase of restoration in context with the whole, showing how although the intensive monitoring has only been occurring since the late 1990s, restoration began when the first flows were released in the mid-1980s. She, along with her co-researchers, expanded the view of restoration from the ground to the air.”

As restoration at Mono Lake continued through the years, Sacha became interested in the restoration activities of the tributary streams and specifically how songbirds were responding to the recovery of those systems. Her monitoring program has included exploring long-term, community level bird population patterns and the relationship between these and Mono’s restoring streamside habitats. Sacha’s scientific contributions to the restoration program and the conservation issues of the Mono Basin have been a critical tool in guiding policy decisions and actions related to a wide variety of issues.

From Dr. David Winkler, Cornell University Professor and Faculty Curator of Birds: “In the minds of many of us, the Mono Basin has the potential of being a place where humans can interact with and learn from an unspoiled ecosystem while they act as its stewards. Sacha Heath embodied this dream. She always bases her research on questions of the strongest conservation concern, and she is tireless in her efforts to interpret her research and that of others to have the greatest impact on stewarding the avian habitats of the Eastern Sierra.”

The Mono Basin Field Station

It is a known and documented fact that the state and federal agencies in and around the Mono Basin have experienced

severe budget cutbacks in recent years. Among many other things, these cutbacks translate into diminished scientific-expert staff positions that have traditionally provided the data needed for land-management decisions.

In response, non-profit organizations have taken on some of these responsibilities. PRBO’s mission reads: “PRBO Conservation Science is dedicated to conserving birds, other wildlife and ecosystems through innovative scientific research and outreach.” From Ellie Cohen, PRBO Executive Director: “After a few years at the Palomarin Field Station Sacha started up field research programs on the east side of the Sierra, which have blossomed into numerous and invaluable conservation partnerships.” PRBO’s partnership with the Mono Lake Committee has been critical in establishing the Mono Basin Field Station in order to support research efforts in the area.

The legacy continues

Sacha has laid a solid groundwork for her peers to build upon. She will be returning this summer to smooth the transition as PRBO continues to maintain the seasonal research program and its office in Lee Vining.

From Sacha: “I have gained incalculable insights from the Mono Basin and all of its inhabitants. Due to the hard work of the Mono Lake Committee and the scientists before me, this special place will be there for my return well into the future. I like to think of being able to revisit our study sites years from now to ask even more questions: Has the bird community continued to change or benefit from restoration? Can we tie these changes to management actions guided by our past data? The work I have been a part of would not have been possible without the truly synergistic nature of PRBO’s relationship with the Basin’s land managers, educators, conservationists, and scientists. The climate of collaboration is such that there is an ongoing dialogue among us about how science can inform management decisions. And finally, the lone cowgirl story is a myth: I’ve been truly honored to have been able to work with so many talented and dedicated PRBO biologists and volunteers. If all goes well, you’ll continue to see their spring migration into the Basin for a long time.”

We wish Sacha the best of luck in her next pursuits, knowing that she will return often to her Mono Basin home.

From Dr. Connie Millar: “Beyond her tireless efforts in field science and her rigorous standards for analysis, Sacha brought enormous science-based wisdom to natural resource management issues in the greater Mono Basin. She has been able to view the big picture of science, policy, and society effectively—to reckon the needs of diverse communities without compromise. Sacha’s clarity of vision and adherence to the highest standards of ethics and science have been baselines for many of us, and we will struggle to maintain these levels in her absence.”

We will honor Sacha’s dedication to this place by doing just that, and hope that the scientists who follow in her footsteps will continue to do the same. ❖

2007 Field Seminars



TUJA & WIND BARLEY, RICHARD KNEPP, FIELD SEMINAR INSTRUCTOR

Wildflower Macrophotography in the Mono Basin

July 13–15

David Gubernick

\$250 per person / \$225 for members

Limited to 8 participants

Learn to take creative and beautiful close-up images, further develop your artistic vision, and enhance your photographic skills in the warm and supportive learning environment of this workshop for beginning to advanced amateur photographers. The workshop will be conducted in the Mono Basin and upper reaches of the Sierra and includes classroom instruction, demonstrations, and individual coaching in the field that will help you take your photography to the next level. Evenings will be spent discussing and providing feedback on participants' fieldwork as well as prior work (please bring 10–15 examples). Both film and digital cameras are welcome. David Gubernick, Ph.D., is an internationally and nationally

published and award-winning nature photographer and workshop leader. He provides fine art prints and stock images for the advertising, corporate, editorial, and home décor markets. His first photography book, *Wildflowers of Monterey County*, was published in 2002 and has been a best-seller, garnering rave reviews. He is currently working on several other photography books, including one on the wildflowers of the Mono Basin.

Midsummer Birds at Mono Lake

July 13–15

David Lukas

\$140 per person / \$125 for members

It's surprising how many birds can be found in the Mono Basin during the heat of summer. Not only are desert birds conspicuously feeding fledglings or nesting a second time, but high numbers of Wilson's and Red-necked Phalaropes are also flocking to the shores of Mono Lake. And as a special treat, the birds and wildflowers of the high country are accessible

**Mono Lake Committee Field Seminars are filling quickly—
register now online at www.monolake.org/seminars!**

www.monolake.org/seminars or (760) 647-6595 to register

and in full swing. It's a great time to visit the Mono Basin! In this field seminar we will explore far and wide, ranging from lake shore to mountain pass, concentrating on the identification and ecology of birds we encounter along the way. Expect to mix short leisurely walks with periods of observation and natural history discussion—taking time to learn about birds by watching them closely. David Lukas has led over one hundred birdwatching and natural history programs for the Nature Conservancy, Yosemite Association, Audubon Society, Elderhostel, and other groups. He is the author of *Watchable Birds of the Great Basin*, *Wild Birds of California*, and the recently revised *Sierra Nevada Natural History*. He is hard at work on an upcoming field guide to birds of the Sierra Nevada.

Moths & Butterflies of the Mono Basin

July 20–22

Paul McFarland & Bartshé Miller

\$130 per person / \$115 for members

Join local naturalists Paul McFarland and Bartshé Miller for an exploration of butterflies and moths in the Mono Basin. This seminar will focus on using Jeffrey Glassberg's field guide *Butterflies through Binoculars* to learn the basics of "butterflying." Identifying host plants, understanding the life cycle of butterflies, migration, habitat preferences, and their relationship to the entire ecosystem will all be covered. The group will also spend a night with moths, venturing out to observe a world of *Lepidopterae* not found in daylight. In recent years, participants have identified over 50 species of butterflies, moths, and dragonflies from the shore of Mono Lake to the headwaters of Lee Vining Creek near Yosemite

National Park. Paul McFarland lives in Lee Vining, is the Executive Director of Friends of the Inyo, and has spent the last several summers chasing down anything with wings near Mono Lake. Bartshé Miller is the Mono Lake Committee's Education Director. He has been raising a few moths at home, and has taken to bright lights on moonless summer nights.

Identifying High Country Wildflowers

July 27–29

Mark Bagley

\$140 per person / \$125 for members

At the headwaters of Lee Vining Creek a rich summer display of wildflowers, shrubs, and trees thrive along cascading creeks, jewel-like lakes, green meadows, and rocky granite slopes. There, amid the towering peaks of the Sierra at the source of Mono Lake's water, learn how to identify this great diversity of plants using Norman Weeden's *A Sierra Nevada Flora*. This is the most complete small field guide to Sierra plants and provides identification keys and plant descriptions that minimize the use of special terminology and are suitable for use by beginners. This weekend's seminar will include a hands-on session to introduce the basics of plant identification, and time in the field on a couple of easily paced short walks (generally less than a mile) at high elevations (generally above 9,000 feet above sea level) with much more time stopping and keying out plants than walking. Mark Bagley is a consulting botanist in the Eastern Sierra and Mojave Desert who has been leading field seminars in the Mono Basin since 1988. He is well known among past seminar participants for his easy-going pace and engaging teaching style in the field.

Los Angeles Aqueduct Tour

August 4

Greg Reis

\$90 per person / \$80 for members

The Mono Basin extension of the Los Angeles Aqueduct began exporting water 350 miles south to the City of LA in 1941. Join Mono Lake Committee Information Specialist Greg Reis for an investigation of the north end of the aqueduct system. We'll visit all the major aqueduct facilities in the Mono Basin, and learn about the aqueduct's effects on Mono Lake, its tributary streams, the Upper Owens River, and land management in the area. We'll also discuss the history of water diversions, the effort to save Mono Lake, and where habitat restoration is headed in the future. Greg is the perfect guide for unraveling the Mono Basin's complex and fascinating plumbing—he has a dozen years of experience in Mono Basin hydrology and restoration and keeps close track of Mono Basin water management.

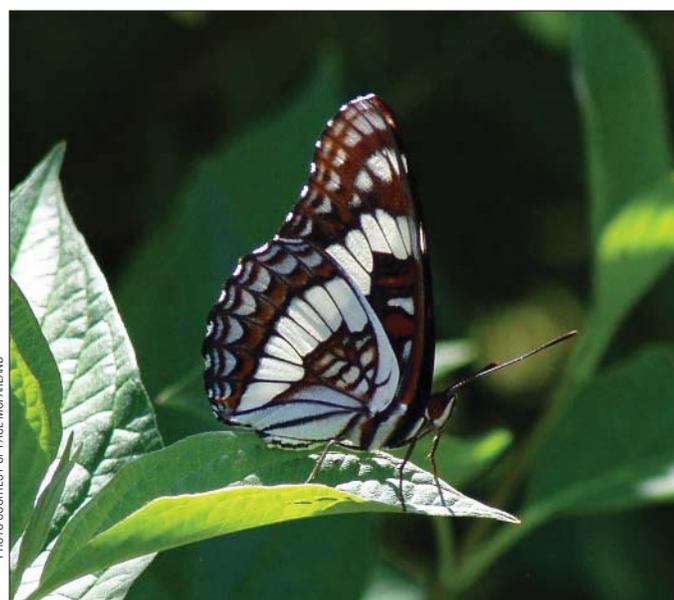


PHOTO COURTESY OF PAUL MCFARLAND

Weidemeyer's Admiral (*Limenitis weidemeyeri*).

Introduction to High Country Plants & Habitats

August 10–12

Ann Howald

\$140 per person / \$125 for members

This class will explore the mosaic of habitats that make up the Eastern Sierra high country—lush flower-filled meadows fed by meandering streams, sagebrush-covered slopes, forests of hemlock, lodgepole and whitebark pine, subalpine lakes bordered by willows, and flowery rock gardens. The class will focus on sight identification of common trees, shrubs, and wildflowers, but won't neglect any birds, bugs, or critters that come to check the group out. With any luck, you'll be zoomed by hummingbirds defending their patches of paintbrush and columbine, and see noisy Clark's Nutcrackers collecting and storing whitebark pine seed. This weekend's seminar will include an introduction to the basics of plant identification, a slideshow preview of some of the habitats and plants to be seen during the field trips, and walks around the 10,000-foot elevation level with a modest pace over moderate terrain. Ann Howald is a consulting botanist who has taught plant classes in the Eastern Sierra for many years.

Tule Seedbeater Basketry

August 17–19

Lucy Parker & Julia Parker

\$185 per person / \$170 for members

\$80 materials fee

Primitive group campsite included (please, no pets)

During this three-day seminar participants will prepare materials and create a small Paiute basket, similar to a traditional work basket used for gathering pine nuts, berries, and other foods. This seminar is designed for weavers of all levels, beginning through advanced. You are encouraged (but not required) to camp with the group, and evenings will be spent around the campfire with traditional songs and stories. Lucy Parker is a descendent of the Yosemite Miwok, Mono Lake Kutzadika^a, and Kayasha Pomo peoples. She learned traditional handiwork from her mother Julia, a master basket weaver, and will pass on some of her knowledge in this special three-day/two-night camping seminar. Julia Parker has dedicated her life to learning and teaching basketry as well as continuing the traditions of her people. She is one of the famous basket weavers of California, and the only weaver still practicing who was taught by women who wove in the early 20th century.

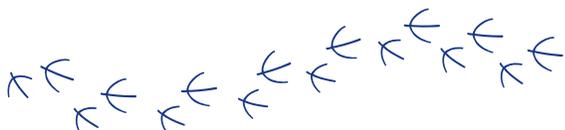


PHOTO COURTESY OF TOM CAVANO

A participant weaving in the Paiute Basketry seminar.

Fall Bird Migration

August 18–19

Dave Shuford

\$140 per person / \$125 for members

The east slope of the Sierra Nevada is a major migration route for birds traveling from northern nesting areas to warm southern habitats. As a result, early autumn is the time of year to see the greatest diversity of land birds, shorebirds, and water birds in the Mono Basin and on Crowley Lake reservoir. Dave Shuford has been a staff biologist at PRBO Conservation Science for 20 years. He has conducted numerous surveys and research projects in the Mono Basin and beyond and is well acquainted with where to find birds in the Eastern Sierra. This is one of our most popular field seminars, so register early!

Birding the Mono Basin: Season's Change

August 24–26

David Wimpfheimer

\$140 per person / \$125 for members

Late summer is a great time to see and enjoy birds in the Mono Basin. Most of the breeding birds are still present in diverse habitats near the lake and up to the higher meadows and forests; their numbers are also swelled by thousands of phalaropes and other shorebirds visiting Mono Lake. In sagebrush meadows and riparian and montane forests we will focus on the identification, behavior and ecology of corvids, flycatchers, vireos, warblers, and other passerines. This weekend's seminar will begin Friday evening with a slideshow preview of what we will see during the field trips. David Wimpfheimer has been educating and interpreting for over twenty years, for groups such as Point Reyes Field Seminars, San Francisco Bay Whale Watching, Elderhostel, and various

Audubon chapters. His seasoned focus and knowledge make for an enjoyable and educational outing!

Living on the Edge: Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep in the Mono Basin

September 8–9

John Wehausen

\$150 per person / \$130 for members

The US Fish & Wildlife Service listed the Sierra bighorn sheep as Federally Endangered in 1999. This field seminar will involve discussions of the fascinating biology of these animals, their relationship with other mammals (including mountain lions and humans), and the conservation of Sierra bighorn in the field. Past participants saw bighorn five out of the last six years—there is a very good chance of seeing Sierra bighorn sheep in the wild during this seminar, but no guarantee. John Wehausen is a research scientist at the White Mountain Research Station in Bishop who has been investigating various aspects of the Sierra bighorn and working for their conservation since 1974. In the late 1970s he initiated the restoration program that brought bighorn back to the Mono Basin. Some of the proceeds from this seminar will benefit the Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep Foundation. *Please be aware that this seminar involves very strenuous hiking at the 10,000-foot elevation and above.*

Visions of the Past: Bodie, Masonic, & Aurora

September 15–16

Terri Geissinger

\$130 per person / \$115 for members

This guided tour is for folks who love history, enjoy the outdoors, and don't mind miles of dirt roads. In the beautiful Bodie Hills, all within 20 miles, lie three ghost towns. Their stories are filled with pioneer families, prospectors, muleskinners, heroes, and gunslingers. As you tour the town and the cemetery of Bodie, once the second-largest city in California, you will hear the fascinating stories of those who lived here and the ones who never left. Today Bodie is the largest unrestored ghost town in the west with over 170 buildings remaining. Next visit the rock cabins and foundations of Masonic, where nearly 500 people resided in a beautiful canyon, mining gold with great hope and eventually producing \$600,000. The last stop is Aurora, once a bustling town of 8,000 souls in the 1860s, which now rests forever in peace amongst the sagebrush and pinyon pine. Your guide Terri Geissinger is a Bodie State Historic Park Historian, Interpreter, and Guide. She is active in the Mono Basin Historical Society, and has a special talent for making history come alive.

Fly Fishing in the Mono Basin

September 22–23

Peter Pumphrey & Roberta Lagomarsini

\$130 per person / \$115 for members

Learn the basics of fly fishing in the Mono Basin's beautiful landscape! This introductory seminar will begin by covering the basics: the equipment involved, the varieties of flies and their uses, and basic casting technique. The class will then move to one of the Basin's many streams to consider trout habitat and habits, characteristics of a healthy stream environment, reading the water, fly presentation, and catch and release. On Sunday the class will move to another streamside location to work on refining the techniques from the day before. There will be time spent at high altitude (over 9,000 feet above sea level), and most of the two days will be spent on foot. Equipment is available for those who are not already engaged in the sport. Peter Pumphrey and Roberta Lagomarsini are guides licensed by the State of California and have been teaching basic fly fishing for over ten years. They will de-mystify fly fishing and provide a relaxed atmosphere in which to begin what can become a lifelong adventure in the outdoors.



Juvenile Sage Thrasher (*Oreoscoptes montanus*).

PHOTO COURTESY OF CHRIS MCCREERY

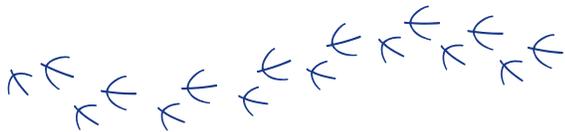
Mono-Bodie Fall Photography

October 5-7

Richard Knepp

\$275 per person / \$255 for members

Autumn in the Mono Basin is one of the greatest photographic experiences in the country. Spectacular foliage and skies combine with exceptional light, presenting ample subject matter for photographers in both color and black and white. And, for the fourth year, the class will spend Saturday at Bodie, inside some of the buildings—a very special treat! Join accomplished photographer Richard Knepp to explore varied shoreline locations at sunrise and sunset, fall color in nearby canyons, and the old ghost town of Bodie, where Rick will be joined by Bodie expert, photographer, and good friend Jill Lachman. Subjects for discussion include composition, exposure techniques, filtration, basic theory of the Zone System, and developing a personal vision. Photographers of all levels are welcome; a fully adjustable camera of any size or format is suggested. This photographic seminar is offered for the 13th year in a row, with the Bodie twist continued for 2007!



Capturing Autumn on Canvas: Fall Painting in the Mono Basin

October 13-14

John Hewitt

\$150 per person / \$135 for members

The golden aspens, drying grasses, and bright blue skies of fall in the Mono Basin provide a myriad of opportunities for artists to capture the season on canvas. This weekend seminar will explore some of the best fall color locations around Mono Lake, and is designed for beginning through advanced painters who work with watercolors, oils, pastels, or acrylics. The class will spend Saturday painting in the field at locations like Lee Vining Canyon, Lundy Canyon, and County Park, with instructor John Hewitt offering technique tips and critiques of each individual's work. The group will share their work in the evening and regroup on Sunday morning for more fieldwork. John is a nationally-acclaimed watercolorist and former Lee Vining resident who has taught classes and workshops for over 20 years in locations as far afield as the Italian Alps. John is a signature member of many watercolor societies, but he welcomes any medium in his classes. This seminar is the Mono Lake Committee's newest offering, so register early to ensure your spot!

Field Seminar Registration Information

Register online at www.monolake.org/seminars or call the Mono Lake Committee at (760) 647-6595 and ask for the seminar desk to register. More extensive seminar descriptions are available upon request or online at www.monolake.org/seminars.

We accept VISA, MasterCard, or Discover only. Sorry, we cannot accept registration by mail or email. Seminars are limited to fifteen people except where noted. If a seminar receives less than six participants the seminar will be cancelled two weeks in advance, and full refunds will be issued. If you cancel three weeks prior to the seminar start date, we will refund your payment (less a \$15 processing fee). No refunds can be credited after that date, but tuition can be applied to another class in 2007.

Participants must sign a liability release form. All seminars operate under permit from the Inyo National Forest.

The Committee works with instructors and field leaders who have received high ratings from past seminar participants. We emphasize a spirit of learning and camaraderie in a magnificent outdoor setting for a reasonable cost. Proceeds from the Mono Lake Committee Field Seminars benefit research and education in the Mono Basin.

Mono Lake Committee Field Seminars are open to everyone, but Mono Lake Committee members get advance notice and class discounts. If you are not a current member of the Mono Lake Committee, you may receive the discount by joining when you register.

Staff migrations

by Erika Obedzinski

The warm weather is here! With Tioga Pass open the Mono Lake Committee is gearing up for summer and we've hired a great flock of Mono Lake seasonal staff to flock to the Mono Basin.

We are fortunate to have two returning staff members to help run our Outdoor Experiences program. **Betsy Forsyth** worked with the OE program during the summers of 2000 and 2002 and is glad to be back in the place that feels like home. We're delighted too!

We are also lucky to have **Molly Hucklebridge** return for her second season on the Outdoor Experiences team. Molly was an OE Instructor last summer and most recently worked for South Yuba River Citizens League. Welcome back, Molly!

We also welcome back **JJ Jenkins**, who returns for another season as the Committee's Canoe Coordinator. JJ spent the winter season in New Orleans making jewelry and furniture. We're glad she'll be paddling Mono again this year!

Our Mono Lake Committee Intern crew includes **Lisa Curtis**, who joins us from Whitman College where she currently studies Politics and Environmental Studies.

We're also excited to have **Jessi DeLong** return as an intern. Jessi was an intern in 2003 and is looking forward to dipping her toes back into Mono Lake and sharing her love of this place with others.

We're glad to welcome **Michael Lester** to Mono Lake as our Birding Intern. Michael is studying to receive his BS in Wildlife & Fisheries Biology from the University of Vermont.

Sarah Jane Pepper is another Mono Lake Committee Intern—Sarah Jane learned about Mono Lake while on a field-based geology course with Indiana University where she's majoring in outdoor Recreation & Resource Management.

Intern **Karolyn Wyneken** has a long history with Mono Lake where she grew up part-time. She is currently studying at Humboldt State University where her interests include Theater and Environmental Interpretation.

We welcome Retail Assistant **Lara Hamburger** to the store team. Lara also visited Mono Lake on a geology course through Indiana University last year, and she is currently a student at Macalester College studying Environmental Science and Anthropology.

We're thrilled that Retail Assistant **Alayne Meeks** has returned for another season on the front counter. We are thankful that she found someone to once again take over the reins of her honey business (www.meekshoney.com) so she could spend another summer at Mono Lake!

And last but certainly not least, we welcome all of our **Mono Lake Volunteers!** See page 27 for more on the Volunteer Program. ❖

Policy updates from page 8

for a two-year term.

Last fall, the citizens of California approved Proposition 84, which will provide the first round of funding for SNC projects. \$54 million is slated to fund projects across the 25 million-acre Sierra region over the next three years. Projects must fall under one or (preferably) more of the following program areas: Tourism & Recreation, Physical, Cultural, Archaeological, Historical, and Living Resources, Working Landscapes, Natural Disaster Risks, Water & Air Quality, Regional Economy, and Public Lands.

Because the current SNC funding all comes from Prop 84, all projects must have a primary focus on water resources, since the money was appropriated for "protection and restoration of rivers, lakes and streams, their watersheds, and associated land, water and other natural resources."

The Committee is collaborating with several partner organizations in the Eastern Sierra to jointly work on projects that meet both the goals of the respective groups and the SNC project guidelines. The Committee is planning to submit projects that will further the work of protecting and restoring valuable water resources of the Mono Basin and educating the public about water resources. For more information about the SNC, please visit www.sierranevadaconservancy.ca.gov.

Inyo National Forest shuffles staff

The Inyo National Forest has selected Mike Schlafmann as the new Deputy District Ranger for the Mammoth and Mono Lake Ranger District. This position is stationed out of the Lee Vining Ranger Station and has direct oversight for the Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area and surrounding US Forest Service lands and resources.

Mike has been with the Forest Service for 16 years and has lived in the Eastern Sierra for six years. His background with the Forest Service includes experience in archaeology, forest planning, recreation planning, ecosystem management, and most recently Mike was the Winter Sports Specialist in Mammoth Lakes. Mike is an avid backcountry skier, climber, and enjoys fly fishing.

Other staff changes affecting the Inyo National Forest went into effect at the end of April. Mary Beth Hennessy has moved from the position of Wilderness Planner on the Inyo National Forest to Resource Officer for the Inyo. Jeff Marsolais has relocated from the Eldorado National Forest and is now the Recreation Officer on the Inyo National Forest.

The Committee is relieved and excited that these positions now have permanent assignments and we look forward to working with the Forest Service on a variety of projects and issues. ❖



From the mailbag

News from members and friends

by Ellen King

As I write this, I'm completing my third month as Membership Coordinator. Summer has come to the Mono Basin, bringing California Gulls, desert peach flowers and a steady stream of visitors to the Information Center & Bookstore. During the short time I've been here, I've heard from, spoken with, and met dozens of members. I've been impressed by your love of Mono Lake and the Mono Basin, and your generous support of the Committee. Long Live Mono Lake!

Thank you to all of you who sent 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

John Callen of Santa Margarita made a donation in memory of **Thomas N. Callen**. **Nita Sims** of West Fork, Arkansas sent a contribution in honor of **Arjun Khanna**, "an amazing generous man." **Donald Shelburne** of Paradise made a donation in memory of **Glenn & Scott Shelburne**. **Betty Platero** of California City gave a gift in memory of **Ted & Ethel Shonfeld**. Contributions in honor of **Arthur L. Walker, M.D.** were received from **Martin Mieger & Lexa Most** of San Jose, from **Richard Sogg** of Los Gatos "in memory of my friend and fellow hiker/mountain climber," and from **Richard J. Turner & Diana G.**

Turner of Santa Cruz, who wrote "Art gloried in the beauty of Mono Lake."

In honor

Mrs. Margret Lohfeld of Los Angeles sent a donation in honor of her beloved brother **Martin Engel**.

Thank you

In conjunction with Earth Day on Sunday, April 22, **InTouch MicroSpa** of Mammoth Lakes hosted "Appointments for the Earth," a fundraiser for Eastern Sierra non-profit organizations including the Mono Lake Committee. InTouch donated 100% of the proceeds from their appointments to a non-profit chosen by their customers. Many thanks to InTouch owners **Carrie & Dan Meyers** for their generosity!

Volunteers

The Committee's Volunteer Program and pool of dedicated, knowledgeable, and enthusiastic volunteers is growing! We couldn't get through the busy summer season without volunteers helping to fill in the gaps on the front counter, on canoe or South Tufa tours, tree planting, and many other activities. It's a great way to support our favorite lake!

The hearty volunteer award goes to **Duncan King**, who helped with the Mono Lake Committee's section of highway cleanup on a very cold and windy April day.

Thank you to all the volunteers who helped with the Eastern Sierra



PHOTOS BY ELLIEN LIVING

Volunteer Jean Dillingham and Outdoor Education Instructor Betsy Forsyth investigating Mill Creek as a part of the Eastern Sierra Watershed Project.

Watershed Project—your help is essential to keep this great program alive! See page 9 for more on the ESWP.

If you are interested in being a Mono Lake Volunteer, please contact Erika Obedzinski (erika@monolake.org) at (760) 647-6595. ❖

Ellen King is the Committee's Membership Coordinator. She has been thoroughly enjoying living in one of her favorite places on earth. She and her husband Duncan love the fact that a trip to Death Valley is an easy weekend adventure!



Duncan King braving the cold to keep the Mono Basin litter-free.

canoe MONO LAKE

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