

MONO LAKE

N E W S L E T T E R

Fall 2014



Recently my friend John Anderson came by for a visit and said a surprising thing: “The lake is so high!” This was the only time I heard *that* this year. As a member of the 1979 California Gull research crew when the lake level was 6373.4 feet above sea level, his comment makes more sense, and was a good reminder to keep things in perspective here at 6379.3.

In the past three years we have had to remind ourselves that under California State Water Resources Control Board Order 1631, Mono Lake is being managed to rise over time. Among the many wisdoms in D1631 is the graduated lake level and diversion schedule that was developed specifically for that purpose. On page 14 is Greg Reis’ expert analysis of the current lake level in relation to that schedule, and probability of 4,500 versus 16,000 acre-feet of diversion that gets determined on April 1, 2015.

Are you thinking about the landbridge? I am. At lake level 6377 the landbridge between Negit Island and the mainland gets exposed. As I write, the submerged flats sit under just 2.3 feet of water. If coyotes really wanted to get out to Negit right now, they probably could.

What are we going to do? Well, Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti just issued an executive directive for LA to reduce its fresh water use 20% by 2017. This is absolutely the time to be putting forward-thinking programs like this in place, and it is exciting to see LA pushing the forefront of water conservation action.

But then, it’s time to wash the dishes. And I’m still thinking about the landbridge. What is a person to do? Keep perspective, keep an eye on that landbridge, pray for snow, and ... use water like you’re camping.

—Arya Degenhardt, Communications Director



COVER PHOTO COURTESY OF RICK KATTELMANN

PHOTO COURTESY OF THOMAS PIEKUNKA

Thomas Piekunka captured the total lunar eclipse on October 8. Tom does not use artificial lighting when he does nighttime photography at Mono Lake—a practice that we applaud for its sensitivity to wildlife and people. You can find another one of Tom’s photographs in the 2015 Mono Lake Calendar, where we, regretfully, misspelled his name. You can find more at 500px.com/piekunka or contact him at piekunka@sbcglobal.net.

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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The Mono Lake decision at 20

Permanent vigilance to protect and restore Mono Lake and streams

by Geoffrey McQuilkin

We are now officially 20 years—and a few weeks—out from the landmark California State Water Resources Control Board Decision 1631 to protect Mono Lake. The anniversary has been celebrated, behind-the-scenes tales have been told, and those of us lucky enough spend time at Mono Lake this season have given celebratory cheers to the brine shrimp and California Gulls.

While the three-year drought has dropped the lake level more than we'd like, overall the trend is toward a higher, ecologically sound Mono Lake, fed by healing tributary streams. Had the State Water Board not taken action—had the Mono Lake Committee never been formed—Mono Lake would currently be 20 feet lower, four times as salty as the ocean, and in the throes of ecological collapse (see Summer 2014 *Mono Lake Newsletter* for details). To have avoided that grim fate, alone, is worth celebrating!

Anniversaries are a time to celebrate the past and, necessarily, to look to what lies ahead. The State Water Board decision itself—the rules that condition the export of water to Los Angeles by requiring lake protection and stream restoration—has deservedly been the focus of this anniversary. And yet



ELIN LUNG

The past 20 years show that working together, all of us who value Mono Lake and its streams and surrounding lands can change the world for the better, right here in the Mono Basin.

more than one momentous event took place in Sacramento on September 28, 1994; in fact, three landmarks were forged, and each provides perspective on the future of Mono Lake. First, of course, is the decision itself. Second is the fact that the parties agreed not to appeal the decision, and third is the way the decision was crafted to allow for ongoing future revision based on the best available science.

A water decision without an appeal

Back in 1994, just an hour or so before the State Water Board members voted on the Mono Lake decision, a press conference was held in the State Capitol. In attendance were all the

parties to the long-running Mono Lake hearings, litigation, and proceedings: the Mono Lake Committee, the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power (DWP), the California Department of Fish & Game, the National Audubon Society, California Trout, and more.

The message of the press conference was simple: having reviewed the advance draft of the decision, the parties had agreed they would accept and abide by the State Water Board's ruling. There would be no further litigation. No appeals. No administrative remedies. No new court dates.

Water battles, as a general rule, continue approximately forever in

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The year before Decision 1631 was issued, in January 1993, Mono Lake stood at 6373.5 feet above sea level, just 1.5 feet above its lowest point.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF JAM B. MOORE

With protection from the State Water Board and a series of big winters, Mono Lake had risen nearly 11 feet to 6384.3' by January 1999.

EUN LIJUNG



As set forth by the State Water Board, Mono Basin stream restoration is a combination of scientific monitoring, analysis of the data, and continuing adaptive management.

California. So to have the parties agree to end the fighting phase and move forward into implementation was a remarkable achievement.

It was the culmination of years of work in Los Angeles to craft water conservation solutions to offset the water needed for Mono Lake protection, to share real facts with city leaders, and to build community relationships with the real residents of Los Angeles who, it turned out, weren't fond of what was happening to Mono Lake either. This was the effort of many years and many actions, from outdoor education to securing state water recycling funding. The no-appeal agreement wasn't a sure thing until the last minute.

"I didn't know until the afternoon before the decision that we finally had a deal," remembers Martha

Davis, the Executive Director of the Committee at the time. "The head of the Water & Power Commission called me and said they had met and decided to put an end to the dispute, and that he and the General Manager and a City Councilmember would be on the plane to Sacramento the next morning. We hung up the phone, and I started reworking the entire press conference plan."

Twenty years out, that agreement still stands strong. Not because it was imposed on Los Angeles, but because it makes sense for Los Angeles—and because the Committee continues to stand strong for Mono Lake, for finding win-win solutions, and for forging connections between the lake and the residents of the city. Mono Lake and Los Angeles are forever connected by the aqueduct; looking to the future, it is

our job to renew and maintain these ties to make our successes lasting.

A water decision without every last detail

The State Water Board decision contains critical, specific protection terms; most importantly, a set of water export rules for DWP that are tied to the maintenance of a healthy level for Mono Lake.

A surprising amount of the decision, however, set a broad course for the future—without spelling out all the details. For example, restoration of Rush, Lee Vining, Walker, and Parker creek fisheries and forests is mandated as a matter of public policy, but the requirement was for the development of a restoration plan, which took another four years. Streamflow requirements were set, but the decision called for subsequent revision of those very details in light of improved scientific information about restoration. This approach produced rules that benefit the creeks built on the best knowledge available, but at the same time recognized that with new future knowledge, even better rules could be crafted.

In 1998 the State Water Board doubled down on this strategy in the restoration plan, setting restoration requirements, yet calling for their future revision after further real-world analysis by scientists. It even posed

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PHOTOS COURTESY OF JAY B. MORE



A relatively small amount of water can make a huge difference to Mono Lake. In December 1997 it stood at 6381.9 feet above sea level....



....and in January 1999 at 6384.3', with just 2.4 more feet of water, it's a huge visible change.

Grant Outlet design coming into focus

by Geoffrey McQuilkin

The design plans for the new Grant Lake Reservoir Outlet advanced significantly over the summer, with a preferred option now receiving finishing touches.

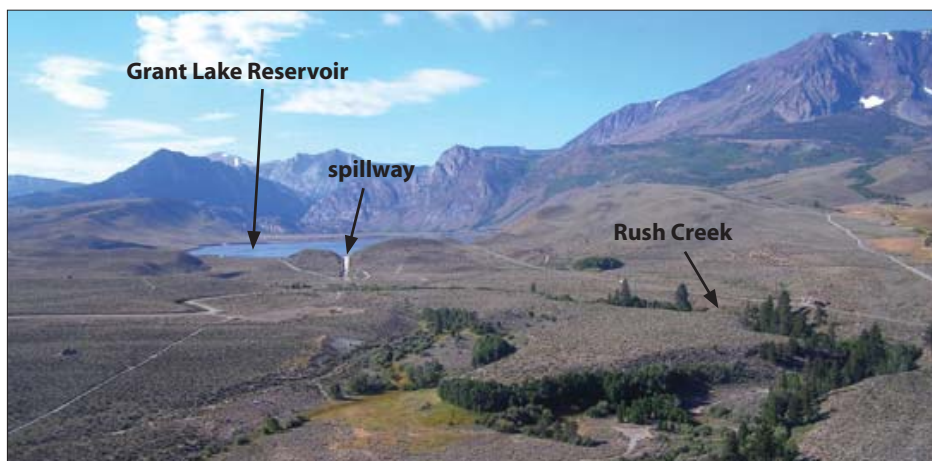
The Grant Outlet is a critical element of the 2013 Mono Basin Stream Restoration Agreement (see Fall 2013 *Mono Lake Newsletter*), reached by the Mono Lake Committee with the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power (DWP) and partners California Trout and the California Department of Fish & Wildlife. Once operational, the outlet will deliver the water needed for restoration of the Rush Creek fishery and wildlife habitat at the times of year it needs the water most.

Under the terms of the Agreement, DWP is the lead in designing the facility, which must assure that 750 cubic feet of water per second can move out of Grant Reservoir and into Rush Creek in the wettest years. Large-diameter pipes and siphons have been evaluated, but the main option now being

considered is notching the existing overflow spillway to create the ability to release regulated flows from the reservoir into the creek.

The design currently being considered calls for a pair of 12-foot-high Langemann gates to be installed in an excavated notch in the spillway, thus allowing DWP to access the top dozen feet of water stored in the reservoir and release it in a controlled manner. Committee staff are working with DWP hydrologists to confirm that the gate specifications will reliably deliver required flows in all year types.

Further engineering and environmental analysis of construction effects is currently underway. As with any large construction project, deployment of best practices for equipment staging, revegetation, and water quality protection will be important. In the end the payoff will be stream restoration like we've never seen before. ♦



The Grant Lake Reservoir Outlet design currently being considered calls for a pair of flow gates to be installed in an excavated notch in the spillway.



PHOTOS BY ARYA DEGENHARDT

With the new Grant Outlet constructed, this view will show new flow gates installed in a notch in the existing concrete. When high flows are required, the notch will carry water to Rush Creek.

Grant Outlet timeline

2013

November/December: DWP conducts geotechnical studies for Grant Outlet construction

2014

DWP hones in on design possibilities; works with Committee staff to make sure design will deliver flows

2015

DWP to submit engineering and design for Grant Outlet for State Water Board approval

2016

DWP to secure all necessary permits, begin construction on Grant Outlet

2018

Grant Lake Reservoir Outlet completed and operational to deliver full stream restoration flows

Outdoor Education Center's 20th year

by Elina Rios

Things have been busy at the Mono Basin Outdoor Education Center this year—with 23 groups of students between May and November, water-conservation and landscaping improvements to the building, and celebrating our 20th anniversary, we've been on the move!

We kicked off 20 years of connecting Los Angeles youth with the source of their water in a most fitting way: with a work party. Students from one of the original community groups to come to the Mono Basin from Los Angeles in 1994 installed a new sign at the OEC. The returning students, led by Elsa Lopez, who has brought groups to the OEC for all 20 years of its existence, brought members of the community group, Mothers of East Los Angeles–Santa Isabel (at right), back for a meaningful visit.

To see more photos and read stories about stewardship activities, canoeing on Mono Lake, and watershed education from this year's 23 OEC groups from Southern California and beyond, visit the OEC Facebook page at facebook.com/mono.oec. ❖



A group from Homeboy Industries cleared a space and planted the first trees in a new aspen grove. Following groups have since added more trees to the grove.

New on-site water conservation in action! Students use water collected by the rain barrel installed on the OEC building storm drain to water the new aspen grove.

SANTIAGO ESPINOZA, ELINA RIOS

2014 Outdoor Education Center groups

- AADAP Olympia Academy, Los Angeles
- Beyer High School Global Lab, Modesto
- Casa Esperanza, Panorama City
- Communities for a Better Environment, Huntington Park (two groups)
- East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice, Commerce (two groups)
- Franklin High School Generation Green, Los Angeles
- Hearthstone Charter School, Oroville
- Homeboy Industries, Los Angeles
- Kid City South Park, Los Angeles
- LA Conservation Corps, Los Angeles
- LA WYLD, West Hollywood
- Neighbors Acting Together Helping All, Pasadena
- Outward Bound Adventures, Pasadena
- Pacoima Beautiful, Pacoima
- Port of Los Angeles High School, San Pedro
- Roosevelt High School ESP, Lincoln Heights
- Roosevelt High School, Los Angeles
- Sierra Expeditionary Learning School, Truckee
- The Renaissance School, Oakland (two groups)
- West Career & Technical Academy, Las Vegas, NV

SoCal water notes

by Bartshé Miller

The last three years of drought are making history in California. By some measures, this is the worst drought in the history of the state. The situation has provoked historic political and legal action to regulate groundwater, and renewed effort in Los Angeles and Southern California to reduce outdoor water use. We have watched Mono Lake drop this summer, and with wildfires, agricultural impacts, and stark images of near-empty reservoirs elsewhere in the state, the question comes up in most conversations—what will next year bring?

New groundwater regulation for California

On September 16, 2014, for the first time in its 164-year history, California adopted state-wide groundwater legislation. Despite California's legal reputation as environmentally forward-thinking, it was the last western state to regulate groundwater. Unfortunately, it took a devastating three-year drought to shift the political and legal winds.

The goal of the legislation is to achieve sustainable groundwater basins through oversight by local groundwater management districts. This is especially critical in the most imperiled groundwater basins in the San Joaquin Valley. The California State Water Resources Control Board will review management plans from districts and have the final authority if the plans fall short. However, many groundwater pumpers may never have to divulge how much they pump in a particular year. Furthermore, groundwater pumping compliance may not be required until 2020, or in some cases, 2025.

Southern California will be largely unaffected by the legislation since groundwater basins in that part of the state are adjudicated and have a long history of monitoring and careful regulation.

Groundwater and the public trust

Over the summer, citing the 1983 Supreme Court ruling for Mono Lake, the California Superior Court in Sacramento, in a preliminary non-binding ruling, tied the public trust to groundwater. It said that the public trust doctrine applies to groundwater “when the extraction of groundwater causes harm to navigable waters

harming the public's right to use those navigable waters for trust purposes.” The court also asserted that in this case, Siskiyou County, “as a subdivision of the State, is required to consider the public trust when it issues drilling permits.” 2014 has been a truly historic year for groundwater regulation and management.

Water bond proposition on the November ballot

Proposition 1, if passed, would authorize over \$7.1 billion in general fund obligated bonds and a transfer of \$425 million in unissued bonds for a variety of water-related projects, including storage, dams, and reservoirs, drinking water quality improvement projects, water recycling, regional water reliability, groundwater sustainability, and watershed protection and restoration. There are a number of projects that are recognized as beneficial while others are more controversial.

Reducing irrigation in Los Angeles

Roughly 60% of all potable water use in Los Angeles and Southern California is dedicated to outdoor use. A good portion of that amount goes specifically to lawns, which, surprisingly, are the largest irrigated crop in the country.

If you live in the LA area and you're up for upgrading your yard into a water-conserving and money-saving landscape, you can cash in on your grass. The Los Angeles Department of Water & Power is offering up to \$3 per square foot for your traditional lawn if you transform it to a water-saving landscape. Residents who live in the Metropolitan Water District service areas are eligible for \$2 per square foot.

Don't have the time for the yard work and the paperwork that follows? Can't afford to hire a landscaper to do it? Companies with names like “Turf Terminators” are willing to do the work in exchange for your rebate.

Water for 2015?

Predictions for a weak to moderate El Niño developing by December continue. However, as is always the case, no one can reliably predict the outcome of any particular California rainy



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Two Mono Basin wildfires this fall

by Arya Degenhardt

Two wildfires, both determined to have been started by vehicles, burned in the Mono Basin in September.

The Conway Fire started the afternoon of September 12 just south of Conway Summit on the west side of Highway 395. The fire closed the highway for several hours while fire crews, including air attack, tankers, helicopters, and hand crews got the blaze under control. All told, it burned 50 acres of sagebrush scrub, and some piñon-juniper woodland, but no structures.

Investigators determined the cause of the fire to be a blown tire.

The June Fire broke out just days later, on September 16, when a June Mountain employee was operating heavy machinery at the ski area. Homes and campgrounds along the June Lake

Loop were evacuated, and June and Gull lakes were closed to the public due to use for water supply to fight the fire. No structures were lost in the fire, but strong, gusty winds in the thickly-wooded area complicated firefighting efforts. The June Fire burned 65 acres and 271 personnel worked together to put the fire out.

These two fires serve as a good reminder to make sure your vehicle is in good working order before traveling, and to keep in mind that roadside areas are particularly dry and susceptible to sparks in a drought.

Mono Basin residents are extremely grateful for the

coordinated effort of the many agencies and fire crews who worked long hours in arduous conditions in order to keep everyone safe. Thank you, firefighters! ♦



GEORGE MOULIN

An air attack plane drops fire retardant on the Conway Fire.

The Forgotten Season

Winter Photography in the Mono Basin

January 16–18, 2015

\$225 per person / \$200 for Mono Lake Committee members

Winter at Mono Lake: a lifting morning poconip fog, tufa towers jacketed in snow and reflected in the mirror of the lake's surface, ice sculpting crystalline filigree along creek and lake banks. This photography seminar will be based in Lee Vining and will explore locations along the lake to photograph the serenity and beauty that is the Mono Basin in winter.

Instructor Rick Knepp is a former Mono Lake Committee staff member, popular seminar leader, and veteran of Mono winters. His experience will allow participants to take advantage of many winter photographic opportunities.

Come prepared for cold winter weather. This seminar will take place regardless of weather or road conditions. Cost is for tuition only. Participants must arrange their own accommodation. There will be no refunds due to weather. This seminar is limited to 15 participants.



PHOTO COURTESY OF RICHARD KNEPP

to sign up, call (760) 647-6595 or visit monolake.org/seminars

Hap Dunning honored with the 2014 Defender of the Trust Award

by Geoffrey McQuilkin

September 28 marked the twentieth anniversary of the California State Water Resources Control Board decision protecting Mono Lake—what better time to bring together friends and advocates at Mono Lake for a weekend of celebration? With welcome September rain falling outside and a gala dinner overflowing with lake supporters, the Mono Lake Committee presented our Defender of the Trust Award to Professor Harrison “Hap” Dunning.

The award honors individuals who have made extraordinary contributions in championing Mono Lake and advocating for the public trust. The two are forever entwined thanks to the landmark 1983 California Supreme Court Mono Lake Public Trust Decision that established that the State of California (and the water rights it issues) has a duty to manage our shared public resources for the public good. This decision built on the state’s constitutional public trust doctrine, which itself dates back to Roman times.

“The public trust,” the Court wrote, “...is an affirmation of the duty of the state to protect the people’s common heritage of streams, lakes, marshlands and tidelands....”

Hap Dunning’s work directly influenced that legendary Court decision. A professor of law at UC Davis, Hap served as Director of the Governor’s Commission to Review California Water Rights Law in 1977, and he has been credited with inspiring the careers of a large number of California’s environmental lawyers and scholars. In 1980, Hap organized a major public trust law symposium that



ARNA DEGENHARDT

Hap Dunning addresses the group gathered for the 20th anniversary of the State Water Board’s decision to save Mono Lake.

debated and reviewed his notion of applying the public trust doctrine to water rights for the first time. The significant thinking accomplished there framed the issues, and the landmark significance was confirmed when the Court cited the published proceedings in its decision.

Decades later, Hap told the evening’s attendees that the invigoration of the public trust all looks like a well-orchestrated plan. But at the time it was an unstudied, wild idea—about as wild as the notion of protecting Mono Lake. Hap’s independent thinking and dedication make him a truly worthy Defender of the Trust. ❖

Gary Snyder book signing benefits Mono Lake Committee



ARNA DEGENHARDT

*Writer Gary Snyder, along with fellow writers and artists Laurie Glover, Tom Killion, and Kim Stanley Robinson paid a visit to Mono Lake for a reading and book signing in late September. Snyder read from several of his volumes of poetry and shared excerpts from the re-release of his book, *Danger on Peaks*.*

The earth we leave to those we love

Why Mono Lake is in our will

by Vern Gersh

We are sometimes asked to explain why we are willing a portion of our estate to the Mono Lake Committee. Like most other people my wife Terry and I have loved ones and family. Like most other people we want to be remembered. But touching immortality is difficult for the greatest of the great. Truly for each of us, great and small, the memorial of a life is not a marble tomb but how we touch other people's lives.

Just west of the Sierra foothills the largest grave memorial in California has stood for a hundred years. Centered on a plinth of 13 stairs; an obelisk of granite climbs 70 feet. As in Percival Shelley's poem *Ozymandias*, the name of George Hicks Fancher is carved on the pedestal. Mr. Fancher was a worthy man, pioneer, gold miner, rancher, and banker. Men like this built a state and raised a nation.

If you were to stand at this monument today the whoosh of traffic would only be interrupted by the roar of locomotives passing a few dozen feet away. Littering the site of this once-proud tomb are cans and wrappers—the detritus of trucks that park on the earth surrounding the sepulcher. Grain silos, power lines, and utilitarian buildings vie for a place against the sky. Rock doves crown the obelisk.

Long ago a local teacher tried to convince the Fancher family to build a library instead. Recently (and perhaps unkindly) a local newspaper has used “eyesore” to describe this one man's grasp at our memory.

Just east of the Sierra another memorial has stood for half

Including Mono Lake in your will or estate plans

Mono Lake Committee members have helped restore and protect one of California's great natural wonders, Mono Lake. You can also help ensure that Mono Lake will remain protected for generations to come by including the Mono Lake Committee in your will or estate plan.

Making a bequest or an estate gift is less complicated than it might seem, and Membership Coordinator Ellen King would be happy to help you. You can contact Ellen at (760) 647-6595 or ellen@monolake.org. Your inquiry will be confidential, of course, and without obligation.

Thank you for considering this thoughtful way to keep Mono Lake protected forever.



Vern Gersh (right) birding with Birding Intern Erv Nichols at the Lee Vining Creek delta.

a million years. Mono Lake is a blue jewel set among rocky titans. It is a monument to the beauty and adaptability of nature. It is also a monument to the ethos of those who fought to keep something intact for the generations to come.

If you stand at this monument today the murmur of a million birds is only interrupted by the cry of hawks and falcons. The surrounding earth is covered with blooming brush and wildflowers. Because people fought for it; it is not a dry, dusty, alkaline plain. It doesn't need to vie for a place in the sky. It reflects it.

There isn't just one obelisk. Tufa towers litter the site. Some are crowned with Osprey nests.

You'll never hear the word eyesore.

Why is the hardest question to answer. Why are we leaving part of our estate to the Mono Lake Committee? Ultimately, it is not *what* we leave to people upon this earth but the earth we leave to those we love. ♦

Vern Gersh is the Committee's maintenance volunteer. Working for the Committee and living on the east side of the Sierra fulfills a life-long dream for Vern and his wife Terry McLaughlin. Vern often patrols the office with tools in hand, and when he's not fixing something, he's wandering the mountains trying to key out the most obscure of the high country plants and birds.

questions that the scientists were charged with answering a decade hence, including evaluating the need for the Grant Lake Reservoir Outlet now slated for construction (see page 5).

In doing so, the State Water Board established a long-term commitment to involvement as a regulatory agency in Mono Lake protection and stream restoration—exactly as it should to protect the public trust on an ongoing basis—and it launched a science-based adaptive management process to implement that commitment.

In 1994 the State Water Board, it turns out, put into motion a multi-decade effort that is at the forefront of modern resource management strategy: set clear goals, implement solutions based on the best information available, use science to measure the results, and then synthesize the science and adapt the management strategies to better meet the goals.

The State Water Board strategy has worked with great success. Science has guided 25 years of restoration activity, and with the 2013 Mono Basin Stream Restoration Agreement we are now implementing critical science-based management changes to the stream program and launching into the third full cycle of adaptive management.

Looking to 2034

Twenty years from now, where will we be? I can forecast that the lake will

be higher, and that restoration will have progressed even further. And I can forecast that the Los Angeles Aqueduct will still be active.

**This will be
some of the
most inspiring,
challenging, and
exciting work
ever done at
Mono Lake.**

After that, there are many questions. How much higher? How much more restored? How will climate change factor? Will the Grant Lake Reservoir Outlet be working as planned? Will water recycling have reached its potential in Los Angeles? Will we still have an agreement with DWP to live by the terms of the State Water Board decision?

The future is full of unknowns, and so just as in years past we have to strategize our future actions based on what we value: the birds, wildlife, tufa, streams, fish, forests, scenic views, and inspiration of this remarkable place.

The State Water Board decision

was a piece of paper that made a promise to the people of California of a healthy Mono Lake and restored tributary streams. Collectively we have advanced that promise and brought parts of it to life.

But in many ways the outlook is similar to 20 years ago. There is much to be done, including a Grant Outlet to be built, and 12 feet of Mono Lake level rise to be achieved. It takes more than a piece of paper—it takes committed people, multiple strategies, and a large dose of vigilance. “The political, grassroots, and scientific strategies were equally important” as the legal strategies to the successes so far at Mono Lake, observes law professor Hap Dunning, this year’s Defender of the Trust Award recipient (see page 9).

This will be some of the most inspiring, challenging, and exciting work ever done at Mono Lake.

There’s one thing the past 20 years show for sure: working together, all of us who value Mono Lake and its streams and surrounding lands can change the world for the better, right here in the Mono Basin. Working together, we can keep saving Mono Lake, we can restore health to the lake and streams, and we can give future generations an inspiring example of doing the right thing, year after year, for a special place that is unique on this earth. ❖



SHADIA NOLL

Policy notes

by Lisa Cutting

Caltrans rockfall project planning advances

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) project to improve safety for the traveling public by reducing rockfall incidents along a one-mile section of Highway 395 near Old Marina is approaching final contract approval. Construction is scheduled to begin in June 2015. The project will stabilize six slopes through a combination of anchored mesh material—necessary for the three northern slopes—and an aggressive revegetation component for all slopes.

What was originally proposed by Caltrans as a safety project to reduce rocks falling on the highway seemed to the Mono Lake Committee to offer the long-term potential for rehabilitating the scarred slopes cut for highway access in the 1930s. Working with Caltrans to incorporate both goals into the project plans has resulted in a comprehensive restoration approach that will further stabilize the slopes through soil rehabilitation and a five-year native plant revegetation effort.

Initially, the area will look worse because of the disruption necessary to install the mesh. Once the mesh is in place the revegetation component of the project can begin, the area will start to recover and develop vegetation consistent with the adjacent slopes.

Conway Ranch easement work continues

Another deadline extension has allowed discussions to continue on the details of a conservation easement for Conway Ranch. Mono County, Caltrans, and the Eastern Sierra Land Trust are now operating under a December 1, 2014 deadline to finalize all legal aspects of the conservation easement.

Key for the Mono Lake Committee is ensuring that the activities allowed by the easement—most notably any fish-rearing operation—are in accordance



The Caltrans rockfall project will stabilize and revegetate six roadcuts along Highway 395 visible from many locations around the Mono Basin.

with the legal water rights allocated for the property, and that Mill Creek's water be returned to Mill Creek after exiting the Lundy hydropower plant once the return conveyance facility is constructed (see Summer 2014 *Mono Lake Newsletter*). The long-term health and continued restoration of Mill Creek is dependent on this water, and the Committee is confident that fish-rearing can happen under these requirements, and that an easement that follows the adjudicated water rights would be beneficial for this Mono Basin property.

No more IAG fish-rearing on Conway

In a letter dated June 18, 2014, Mono County terminated its Conway Ranch Aquaculture Agreement with Inland Aquaculture Group, LLC (IAG). By July 20, IAG had removed all fish-rearing equipment from Conway Ranch.

A tangled web of circumstances led to this conclusion, including the inability of IAG and Mono County to settle a \$1.6 million lawsuit that IAG filed, alleging that Mono County's grant restrictions for the property prevented IAG from making necessary infrastructure improvements. Lower-than-normal water availability as a result of the drought was also a contributing factor. IAG hasn't operated at Conway Ranch

since November 2013.

So for now, no fish-rearing is happening on Conway Ranch. But given the popularity of fishing in the Eastern Sierra and the importance of recreational fishing dollars to local economies, Mono County will no doubt bring back fish-rearing at Conway Ranch in the future.

150th anniversary of Yosemite and the California State Park system

2014 marks two 150th anniversaries that are important to the Sierra Nevada and Mono Lake area—the Yosemite Grant and the creation of the California State Park system. By one stroke of the pen on June 30, 1864, in the midst of the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln signed the Yosemite Grant Act, protecting 39,000 acres of Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Big Tree Grove and ceding them to the State of California as the nation's first State Park.

In 1890, the land surrounding these two tracts was designated as Yosemite National Park. At the urging of John Muir and others, President Theodore Roosevelt and state authorities then combined Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove with Yosemite

Continued on page 13

National Park in 1906.

This landmark act was the first instance of park land being set aside specifically for preservation and public use by an action of the federal government. The historic legislation served as the beginning of the national and state park idea and the concept of setting aside public land for preservation, recreational use, and public enjoyment.

Here at Mono Lake we are especially proud of our own state park—the Mono Lake Tufa State Natural Reserve. Continuing the state park legacy, the Mono Lake Reserve was established in 1982 and was the first legislative protection at Mono Lake.

Inyo forest planning process starts NEPA

In late August the Inyo National Forest, along with the Sequoia and Sierra National Forests, formally entered the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process by issuing a notice of the required 30-day scoping comment period. NEPA is the law that requires that all federal projects be evaluated for environmental effects.

Within the Forest Plan Revision process, scoping comments are a way for the public to tell the Forest Service what issues and concerns should be addressed before it starts drafting the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The next opportunity for the public to comment will be spring 2015 when the draft EIS is released for a 90-day

comment period.

Much work has taken place to inventory desired conditions, strategies, standards, and guidelines that support change in certain areas of the management plan. Issues specific to the Inyo include changing recreational use trends, fuel reduction and fire management, and restoration and protection of at-risk species such as Greater Sage-Grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*). The Inyo National Forest Land & Resource Management Plan is scheduled to be finalized in 2016.

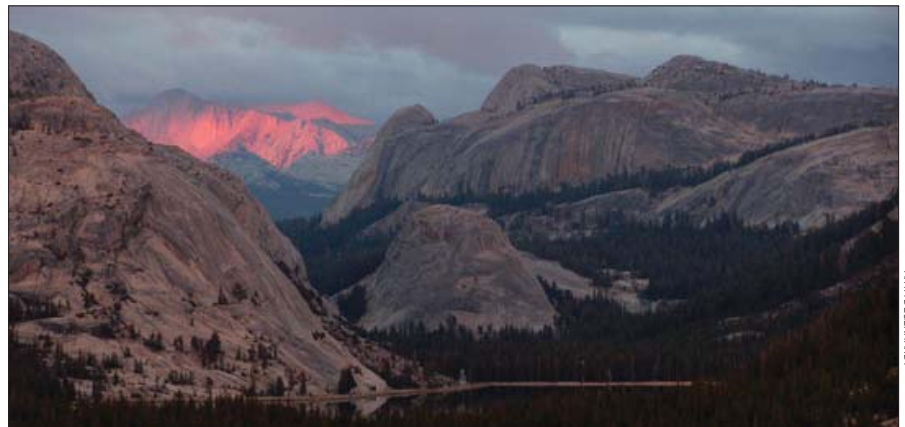
Drones present new problems in natural areas

Mono Lake has been experiencing an increase in the use of drones (or unmanned aircraft systems) by people visiting the area. Primarily linked to photography opportunities not otherwise accessible, the use of drones may have negative impacts on wildlife

and the visitor experience. Ironically, footage shot with drone cameras often shows the disruption of wildlife and the reaction of visitors.

Earlier this year, Yosemite National Park established that drones are prohibited within the park boundary. Yosemite had been experiencing an increase in the use of these popular, increasingly affordable, small aircraft in the park, with visitors using them to photograph climbers in Yosemite Valley, film scenic vistas, and “visit” areas that are difficult to access on foot. The park is strictly enforcing this regulation because of the impacts of drones on wildlife, wilderness areas, and the natural soundscape.

Resource managers for California State Parks and the Inyo National Forest are exploring ways to address drone use, with State Parks evaluating an order that would restrict drone use in the Mono Lake Tufa State Natural Reserve. ❖



2014 marks the 150th anniversary of the Yosemite Grant and the California State Park system.

season regardless of El Niño or La Niña conditions.

A recent, new phenomenon in the Pacific is further muddling predictions: an anomalously large and warm pool of water in the North Pacific. This pool is larger and stronger than has ever been observed in the modern satellite era, and it continues to persist. Further, worldwide ocean temperatures are now the warmest ever recorded—1.6

degrees Centigrade warmer than the 20th Century average—according to the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration.

The ocean and atmosphere interact and influence one another, and the current circumstance of these teleconnections is not well understood on a climate time scale. Is the “Ridiculously Resilient Ridge” that shunts storms well north of California

a correlation, causation, or neither? Will it persist into 2015? There is a lot of focus and research on this current phenomenon, and we will be hearing more about this in the near future. ❖

Bartshé Miller is the Committee's Education Director. At press time he is field checking the snowpack in Canada. More water, eh?

Summer thunderstorms give Mono Basin streams a reprieve

by Greg Reis

During the third year of the three-driest-consecutive-years-on-record, Mono Lake's tributaries were stressed. Trout populations in Rush Creek suffered due to warm water temperatures, and cottonwood trees grew slowly or died back due to low water levels.

The good news is that late July and early August thunderstorms kept things from getting even worse. July and August were wetter than average, and August was the only month so far this year to be cooler than average. August

streamflows tended to be higher and cooler as a result, reducing stress on both fish and vegetation.

In 2013, the flow in Walker Creek dropped to 1 cubic foot per second (cfs) on August 8. This year, it didn't get that low until September. Lee Vining Creek dropped to 21 cfs by the end of August, about 4 cfs higher than last year at that time. Outside of rain events, Parker Creek's flows were similar to last year.

Rush Creek was the exception, with worse conditions than last year. Below Grant Lake Reservoir, the Los Angeles

Department of Water & Power (DWP) released the minimum required flow of 31 cfs, although the unnecessarily-low reservoir (see Summer 2014 *Mono Lake Newsletter*) resulted in warmer water going down Rush Creek, which was worse for the trout fishery. Above the reservoir, Rush Creek dropped to 10 cfs in late August, less than half the flow as the same time last year, and tied with 2007 for the lowest August flow in at least three decades. ♦

Lakewatch

About a 40% chance of Mono Lake reaching 6380 feet on April 1

by Greg Reis

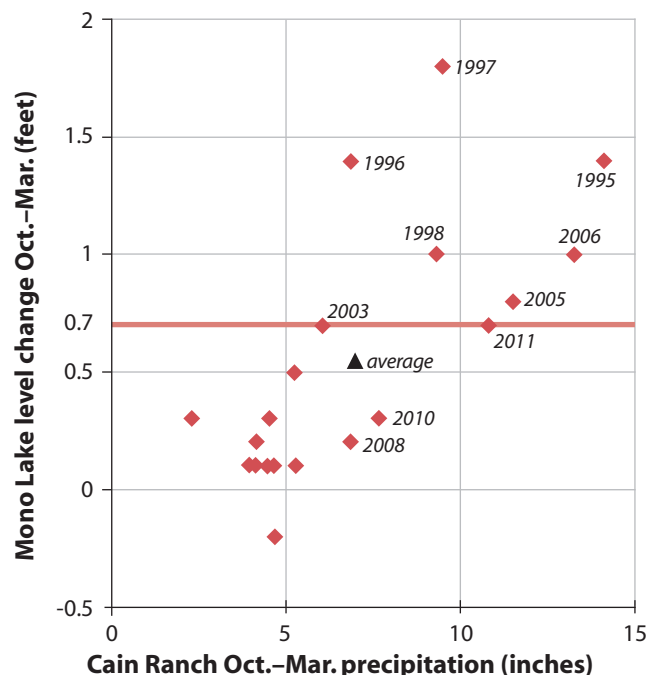
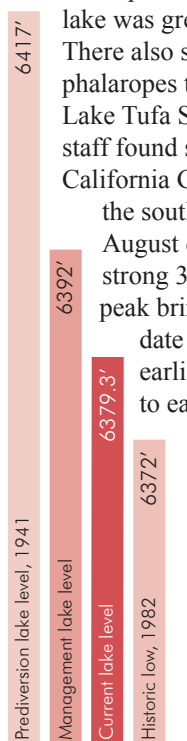
This past summer, Mono Lake dropped to its lowest level since 1996. According to DWP biologist Debbie House, and as visitors and Mono Lake Committee staff noticed, brine shrimp seemed sparse. The lake was greener than usual. There also seemed to be fewer phalaropes than usual. Mono Lake Tufa State Natural Reserve staff found seven dead juvenile California Gulls washed up on the south shore in one late August day. Data shows a strong 35-year trend of the peak brine shrimp population date shifting about 50 days earlier—from late August to early July—that could explain some of these events. Unfortunately, we have to wait for answers, since the results of the 2014 limnology monitoring won't be available for a few more months.

Mono Lake dropped faster than

predicted this spring (due to warm, dry weather), and slower than predicted this summer (due to wet thunderstorms and a cool August.) The lake level ended up at 6379.3 feet above sea level on October 1—a tenth of a foot above DWP's forecast.

If Mono Lake is below 6380' on April 1, 2015, then DWP's export limit will be 4,500 acre-feet of water for the runoff year (April 1–March 31). The export limit has been 16,000 acre-feet per year since April 1, 1997. The only way for DWP to avoid this cutback is for Mono Lake to rise 0.7 feet between October 1 and April 1. A repeat of one of the eight wet winters we've seen over the last two decades

could make this happen—this translates into a 40% chance, based on historic hydrology. ♦



Mono Lake rose at least 0.7 feet during eight of the ten wettest winters of the last two decades, which are labeled with the year when winter ended. Precipitation measured at Cain Ranch tends to be the biggest predictor of how much the lake rises from October through March.

Mono Basin Journal

A roundup of quiet happenings at Mono Lake

by Geoffrey McQuilkin



Geoff McQuilkin

Vibrant colors of fall have been spreading down Sierra slopes—the aspen groves turning orange and yellow as the lakeshore willows adopt their own golden hues. It is a colorful reminder of the many places there are to explore and to see in the Mono Basin.

And yet there are some places here that I never want to see at all, two of which thrust themselves into view this summer.

The first is the land at the very edge of Mono Lake, now exposed thanks to three years of drought. I last saw this land in 1996, happily watched it disappear underwater the following spring as deep winter snows melted, and had not seen it baking in the sun since, until now. The lake has 12 feet to rise to its ecologically protected level, and watching it slip downward in the drought is no joy.

The drought is also the revealer of the second spot, nearly

as high as one can climb in the Mono Basin. These are patches of metamorphic rock on the slopes of Mt. Warren that no one can remember seeing. Permanent snowfields have draped across the northern slopes every summer of all the decades I have lived here. This year, by August they were gone, and I have yet to find anyone who remembers seeing the full exposure of these slopes to the summer sun.

I would happily bid a permanent farewell to seeing both of these pieces of the landscape. Fingers crossed, this winter will bring the solution: robust, moisture-laden storms that blanket the mountains with deep, drought-busting, lake-lifting snows. ❖

Geoff McQuilkin is the Committee's Executive Director. This winter he plans to ski on all the deep snow he is counting on—with his newest daughter in the baby carrier.

Benchmarks



Elin Ljung

The end of the South Tufa boardwalk in July 2010. Mono Lake level: 6382.1 feet above sea level.



Arva Deenhardt

With 2.8 feet less water in October 2014, the tufa towers stand on dry land. Mono Lake level: 6379.3'.



MONO LAKE COMMITTEE

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PIKA T-SHIRT

Project Specialists Robbie and Lily model one of this season's best-selling shirts. Designed by scientific illustrator and former Mono Lake Committee staffer Logan Parsons, these 100% cotton, sand-colored, short-sleeved T-shirts feature one adorable pika on the front and two in their native mountain habitat on the reverse. *Mono Lake Committee exclusive!*
Pika T-shirt, sand, S-XXL: \$25.00



FRONT



BACK

FOREST NIGHT T-SHIRT

Mono Lake Committee Board member Sherryl and her husband Tony are sporting this artistic new T-shirt depicting a starry forest night underscored with John Muir's words "...the one great bedroom of the open night." This black, 100% cotton, short-sleeved T-shirt is printed with 100% water-based ink. Why not give the gift of John Muir's wisdom this holiday season?
Forest Night T-shirt, black, S-L: \$23.00, XL-XXL: \$25.00



HOLIDAY CARD SETS

BY WENDY MORGAN

You can't go wrong with Wendy Morgan's holiday card sets. Choose from Red-breasted Nuthatches, Great Horned Owls, or Hairy Woodpeckers ... or get one of each. The sets come with 10 cards of the same image with the message "May you have a happy holiday and a joyous New Year" printed in red, inside.

Holiday card set, 10 cards with envelopes, 4 1/2" x 6 1/4", please specify nuthatch, owl, or woodpecker set: \$13.50



RED-BREASTED NUTHATCHES



GREAT HORNED OWLS



HAIRY WOODPECKERS



order at www.monolake.org/store or (760) 647-6595



MONO LAKE COMMITTEE BUCKET HAT

Birding Intern Erv can pull off both style and practicality in the newly redesigned Mono Lake Committee bucket hat. A perennial favorite, this hat is packable, protects your face from the sun, and is emblazoned with the Mono Lake Committee's lovely logo. Now without any pesky straps, we think it might qualify as the perfect gift for the outdoor adventurer on your holiday list. *Mono Lake Committee exclusive!*

Mono Lake Committee bucket hat, please specify tan or dark blue, one size: \$21.00

MONO LAKE PATCH

This colorful patch depicts a tufa formation glowing under a full moon against a plum-colored sky. Attach it to packs, jackets, bags, hats, or luggage—it's a fun and versatile gift for any Mono Lake fan!

Mono Lake patch, 3¾"x 2": \$6.00



QUAIL AND POPPY EARRINGS

Do you ever think, "Hoops ... boring, studs ... meh. I wish I had something different to spice things up...." Together, California's state bird and flower should do the trick—these graceful earrings from Wild Bryde are sure to get noticed. Earrings hang approximately 1½" and come in either 14-karat gold or sterling silver.

Quail and poppy earrings, please specify gold or silver: \$22.00



RECLAIMED HARDWOOD BIRD PIN

BY JOHN WEBBER

John Webber hand-makes these sweet bird lapel pins from reclaimed hardwoods, sterling silver wire, and a twig of mountain mahogany. A perfect gift for the bird-lover in your life.

Reclaimed hardwood bird pin, approx. 1½": \$60.00



BADGER SUNSCREEN AND LIP BALM

Do your skin and lips feel as if you have just traversed the Sierra Nevada? 100% natural and 87% organic, Badger products are ready to come to your rescue! The broad spectrum SPF 30 sunscreen is water-resistant, biodegradable, and comes in unscented or chamomile-calendula for babies. The Badger cocoa butter lip balm comes in cocoa, pomegranate, or mint.

Badger sunscreen, please specify unscented or chamomile-calendula, 2.9-oz: \$16.00

Badger cocoa butter lip balm, 0.25-oz, please specify cocoa, pomegranate, or mint: \$5.00 each



STAINLESS STEEL AND BAMBOO WATER BOTTLE

Made of only three materials—sustainably harvested bamboo, food-grade silicon, and stainless steel—these elegant 27-ounce bottles are perfect for the nature enthusiast. Made by Klean Kanteen, they are durable, portable, and ready to stand up to use in the great outdoors (or the hectic indoors).

Stainless steel and bamboo water bottle, 27-oz: \$33.00



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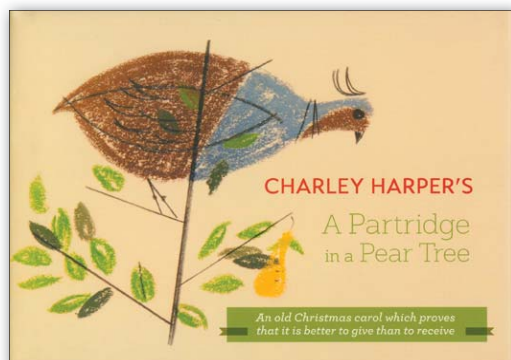
COTTONWOOD LEAF ORNAMENT
Artist Jean Butterfield captures the beauty of autumn by electroplating real cottonwood leaves in 18-karat gold and rhodium silver. The leaves naturally vary in size, but are approximately 3" long and are strung with either a silver or burgundy ribbon. Add a little sparkle to your home this winter—for the holidays and beyond.
Cottonwood leaf ornament, please specify gold or silver: \$16.00



BRINE SHRIMP ORNAMENT
These brine shrimp ornaments by Wild Bryde serve as a festive tribute to the *Artemia monica* of Mono Lake. The ornaments are just over 3" long and are packaged in a custom blue envelope making them a fun and easy-to-mail holiday gift. Choose between silver and gold ornaments, or buy one (or lots!) of each.

Mono Lake Committee exclusive!

Brine shrimp ornament, please specify silver or gold: \$10.00



A PARTRIDGE IN A PEAR TREE

BY CHARLEY HARPER

This book was originally created for artist Charley Harper's family, with the message that it is better to give than to receive. A playful riff on the traditional Yuletide carol, "The Twelve Days of Christmas," it is full of whimsy with its pastel sketches and humorous text.

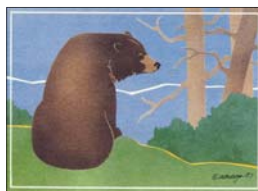
A Partridge in a Pear Tree, hardcover, Pomegranate, 28 pages, 7"x 5": \$9.95

MOUNTAIN ANIMALS CARD SET

BY WENDY MORGAN

New from Wendy Morgan, this collection features 12 different mountain animals. The cards are blank inside so they can be used for many different occasions. A favorite of Mono Lake Committee staff, we think they'll become one of your favorites too.

Mountain animals card set, 12 notecards with envelopes, 4½"x 6¼": \$16.95



order at www.monolake.org/store or (760) 647-6595

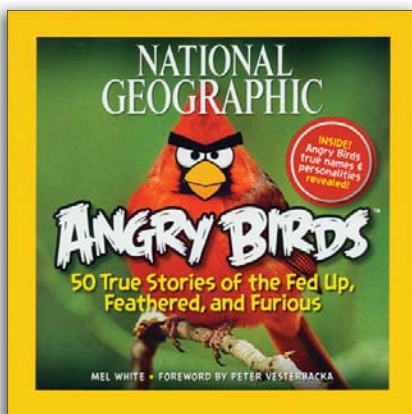
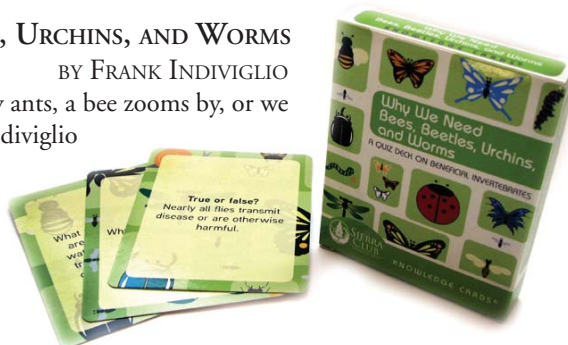
WHY WE NEED BEES, BEETLES, URCHINS, AND WORMS

BY FRANK INDIVIGLIO

Most of us don't think about invertebrates until our homes are invaded by ants, a bee zooms by, or we observe brine shrimp during a visit to Mono Lake. Zoologist and author Indiviglio

has jam-packed this quiz deck with fun facts about invertebrates. It's a great way to learn why these diminutive creatures are so important.

Why We Need Bees, Beetles, Urchins, and Worms, deck of 48 quiz cards, 3¼"x 4": \$9.95



NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC ANGRY BIRDS: 50 TRUE STORIES OF THE FED UP, FEATHERED, AND FURIOUS

BY MEL WHITE

You've heard of *Angry Birds*, the game. Now you and your kids can learn about real angry bird behavior. Astonishing stories of real bird behavior from all over the world can be found in this book. Egg thievery! Nest sabotage! This book will delight and intrigue all ages.

National Geographic Angry Birds, paperback, National Geographic, 160 pages, 7"x 7": \$13.95

BIRD WING FEATHER

BY SIRI SCHILLIOS

On one side of every page, a bird appears against a colorful sky. The corresponding side features a detailed shot from the painting—a wing, an eye, soft shapes, and vibrant colors. Perfect for children and children at heart, this book is a great introduction to the art of seeing.

BirdWingFeather, hardcover, Pomegranate, 32 pages, 8½"x 8½": \$17.95



NEW!



CHARLEY HARPER BIRDS MOBILE

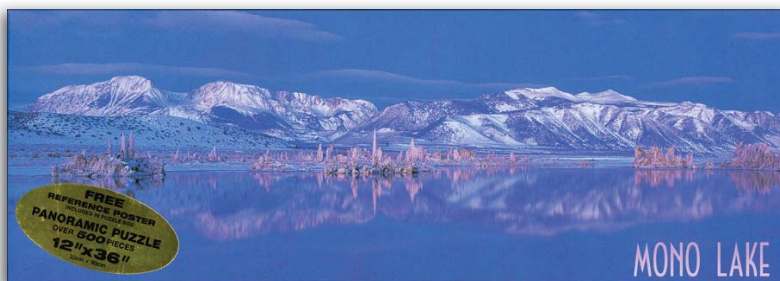
We love Charley Harper's art, and were happy to find this beautiful mobile just in time for the holiday season. The mobile spans 20" when assembled, and comes with filament and a hanger for suspending it. With eight birds circling above your favorite room, this is a truly unique gift.

Charley Harper birds mobile: \$34.95

MONO LAKE PANORAMIC JIGSAW PUZZLE

This beautiful 500-piece Mono Lake jigsaw puzzle can provide hours of family fun. Bring Mono Lake's tufa and mountains to your kitchen table! Puzzle measures 18"x 36" if you can complete it....

Mono Lake panoramic jigsaw puzzle: \$14.50





THE SIBLEY GUIDE TO BIRDS: SECOND EDITION

BY DAVID ALLEN SIBLEY

Originally released in 2000 and widely claimed to be the finest guide to North American birds, the first edition of this guide became the new standard by which natural history guides are measured. The second edition offers improvements and updates including larger illustrations, expanded habitat information, and more than 600 new paintings. This book is helpful for every level of birder, from the jet setter with a hefty life list to the backyard bird watcher.

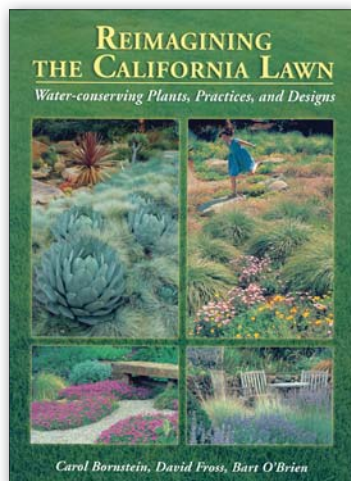
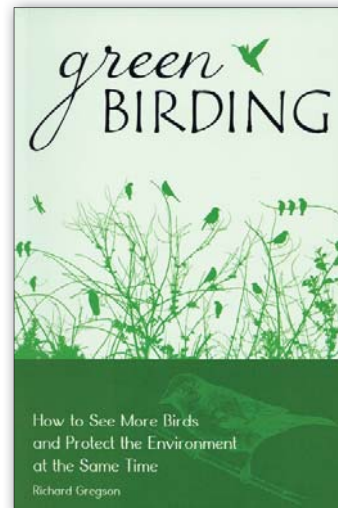
The Sibley Guide to Birds, paperback, Knopf, 599 pages, 9½"x 6": \$40.00

GREEN BIRDING

BY RICHARD GREGSON

Do you wonder where to look for birds close to home? This book presents many often-overlooked spots in cities and suburban neighborhoods that can be bird magnets. Perfect for the amateur birder, it includes advice on how to attract more birds to your garden. You'll also learn how to get deeper into birding by studying the birds around your home and participating in citizen science.

Green Birding, paperback, Stackpole Books, 134 pages, 8"x 5½": \$16.95



REIMAGINING THE CALIFORNIA LAWN

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

Did you know that maintaining a lush green lawn requires more water per square foot than maintaining a swimming pool? This book features water-conserving plants from around the world, and offers design ideas and practical solutions to help you create a vibrant garden that complements California's Mediterranean climate. If you are thinking about removing or reducing your lawn, this book will inspire and help.

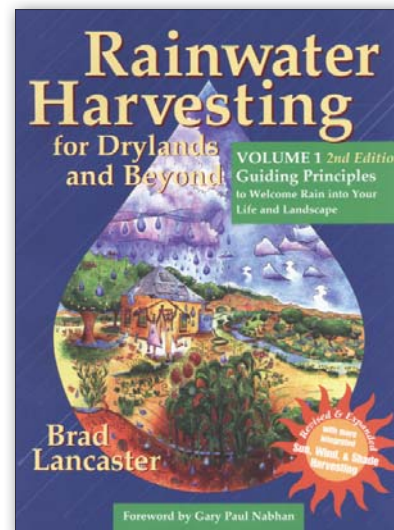
Reimagining the California Lawn, paperback, Cachuma, 154 pages, 8"x 11": \$27.95

RAINWATER HARVESTING FOR DRYLANDS AND BEYOND

BY BRAD LANCASTER

As California faces its third drought year in a row we all need to explore new ways of reducing water consumption. This book, updated in its second edition, will help you conceptualize, design, and implement sustainable water-harvesting systems for your home, landscape, and community.

Rainwater Harvesting for Drylands and Beyond, paperback, Rainsource Press, 282 pages, 11"x 8½": \$29.95

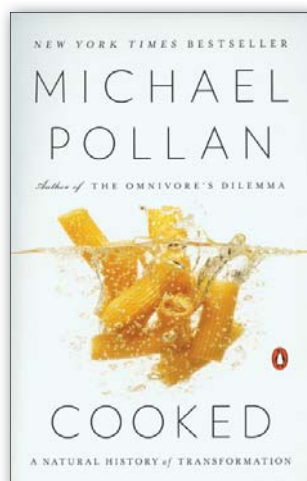


COOKED

BY MICHAEL POLLAN

In his most recent book, Pollan strives to discover the enduring power of the four elements—fire, water, air, and earth—in transforming raw ingredients into delicious things to eat and drink. He apprentices with master chefs, bakers, and fermenters—investigating how cooking interconnects us socially and ecologically. This *New York Times* bestseller is an intriguing and thought-provoking read on the art of cooking that anyone can enjoy, whether you are an expert in the kitchen or are vexed by the complexity of ramen noodles.

Cooked, Penguin, paperback, 468 pages, 8½"x 5½": \$17.00

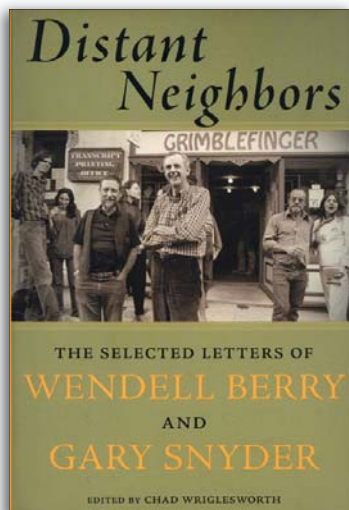
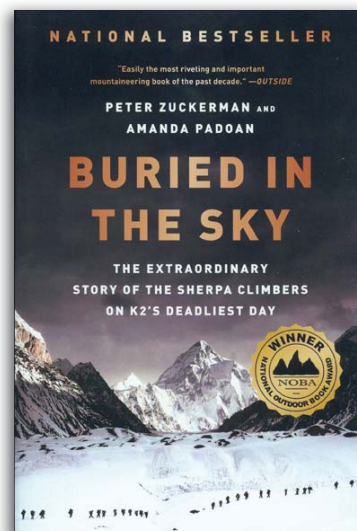


BURIED IN THE SKY

BY PETER ZUCKERMAN AND AMANDA PADOAN

Equal parts gripping, white-knuckled adventure and rich exploration of Sherpa customs and culture, this book re-creates one of the most dramatic catastrophes in alpine history from a fascinating new perspective. Travel from Himalayan villages, to Kathmandu, to the glaciers of Pakistan, to the K2 Base Camp in this book that is sure to intrigue your most adventurous friends and family.

Buried in the Sky, paperback, WW Norton & Co, 285 pages, 8"x 5½": \$15.95



DISTANT NEIGHBORS: THE SELECTED LETTERS OF WENDELL BERRY & GARY SNYDER

EDITED BY CHAD WRIGLESWORTH

A tale of enduring friendship, this book tells of the bond formed between two founding members of the counter-culture movement from a first-person point of view.

Neither man could have imagined the impact his work would have on American political and literary culture, or the impact they would have on one another. Between 1973 and 2013, they exchanged over 240 letters, discussing faith, reason, family, the disintegration of community, and the lives they'd chosen. This is a book for the ages.

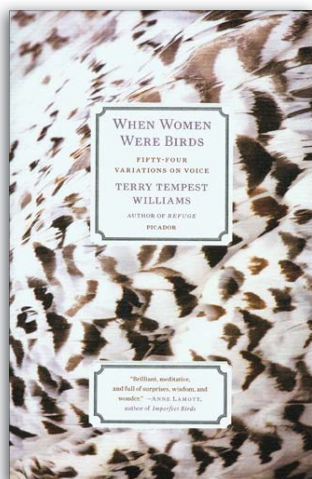
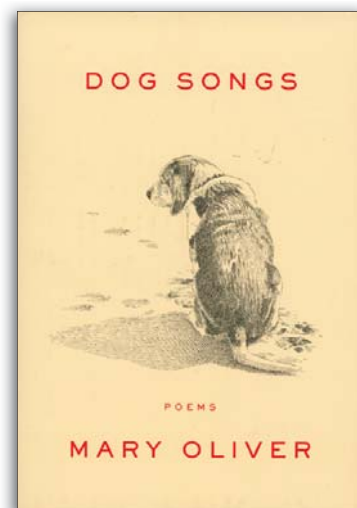
Distant Neighbors, hardcover, Counterpoint, 288 pages, 9"x 6": \$30.00

DOG SONGS

BY MARY OLIVER

Oliver's latest book of poetry is a must-have for dog lovers. With everything from touching poems on the loss of an old friend to hilarious pieces on meals and frolicking, this book is a great addition to the Mary Oliver collection.

Dog Songs, hardcover, Penguin Press HC, 127 pages, 8½"x 6": \$26.95



WHEN WOMEN WERE BIRDS

BY TERRY TEMPEST WILLIAMS

Williams' mother, the matriarch of a large Mormon clan in northern Utah, left Williams her journals and made her promise she wouldn't look at them until after her mother was gone. This book is what happened when Williams discovered that all three shelves of journals are entirely blank. This contemplative bestseller recounts family memories, ponders faith, and contemplates the notion of absence and presence in our world.

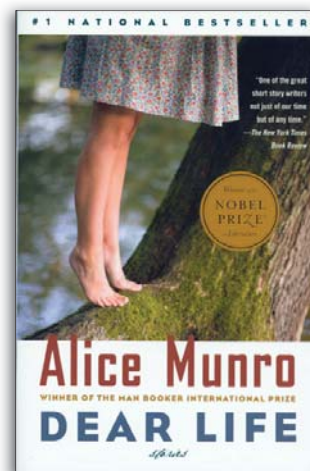
When Women Were Birds, paperback, Picador, 228 pages, 7"x 5": \$15.00

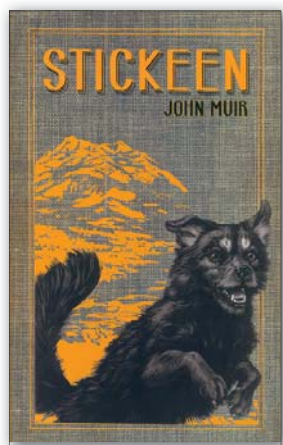
DEAR LIFE

BY ALICE MUNRO

The winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature for 2013, Munro is known for illuminating the moment a life is forever changed by a chance encounter, an action not taken, or a simple twist of fate. Her short stories paint a radiant and indelible portrait of how strange, perilous, and extraordinary ordinary life can be.

Dear Life, paperback, Vintage, 320 pages, 8"x 5": \$15.95





STICKEEN

WRITTEN BY JOHN MUIR, ILLUSTRATED BY CARL DENNIS BUELL,
AFTERWORD BY MALCOLM MARGOLIN

An illustrated edition of the tale in which John Muir recounts how he and a dog named Stickeen struggled to cross an Alaskan glacier during an ice storm. This exhilarating story is an American adventure classic.

Stickeen, paperback, Heyday, 88 pages, 8½"x 5¼": \$9.00

PYROGRAPHY ART VASE

BY GINA WEBBER

Eastern Sierra artist Gina Webber burns original illustrations of aspen leaves onto vases crafted of locally-harvested sugar pine. There are a limited number of pieces in this Eastern-Sierra-inspired series, each individually numbered and signed by the artist.

Pyrography art vase, 5"x 2½"x 2": \$65.00



CALIFORNIA QUAIL PYROGRAPHY BLOCK

BY GINA WEBBER

Webber's depiction of California Quail among rocks and grasses is an original fine art monochromatic illustration, made using heated metal tools on locally-harvested sugar pine. Each piece is individually numbered and signed by the artist.

California Quail pyrography block, 5¾"x 3½"x 1": \$65.00



CAT KEEPSAKE BOX

BY JOHN WEBBER

Eastern Sierra artist John Webber has created this limited series of miniature hardwood boxes each topped with a tiny sleeping cat. Each box is unique and is handmade in Webber's studio workshop in Bishop, California from select sustainable hardwoods from around the world.

Cat keepsake box, 2½" tall: \$55.00

HANDMADE CERAMICS

BY MICHAEL COOKE

Bishop, California local Michael Cooke combines craftsmanship and functionality in his beautiful and useful ceramics. Made with lead-free glaze, these bowls and mugs are dishwasher and microwave safe. The bowl and tall mug come in shades of cobalt blue, and the short mug comes in harvest tones of pumpkin orange and goldenrod.

Handmade ceramic bowl, 12-oz, cobalt blue: \$29.00

Handmade ceramic short mug, 8-oz, harvest colors: \$29.00

Handmade ceramic tall mug, 14-oz, cobalt blue: \$29.00



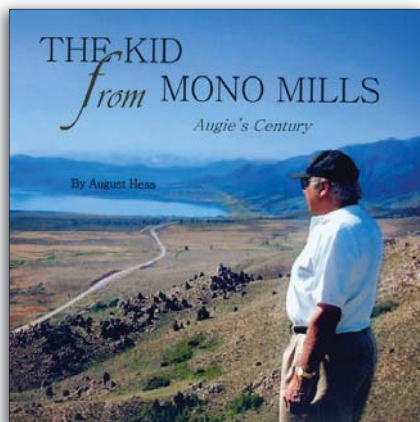
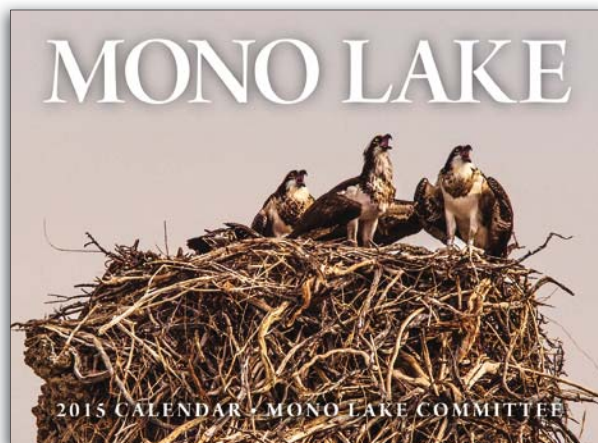
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order at www.monolake.org/store or (760) 647-6595

2015 MONO LAKE CALENDAR

The *2015 Mono Lake Calendar* features stunning images of this wild and wonderful watershed. See the Mono Basin's birds, tufa towers, sunsets, fall colors, winter landscape, and starry skies as captured by skilled photographers. Bring Mono Lake into your home 365 days of the year, and call us for bulk discounts and holiday shipping options for gifts this season. Printed in the USA on recycled paper.

2015 Mono Lake Calendar, 13"x 9½": \$14.95



THE KID FROM MONO MILLS: AUGIE'S CENTURY

BY AUGUST HESS

Born in 1914 at Mono Mills just southeast of Mono Lake, Augie Hess' hundred years are told in his own colorful words. He shares his Paiute mother's culture, stories from his Swiss miner father, and tales of growing up along Rush Creek and in the fledgling town of Lee Vining.

The Kid from Mono Mills, paperback, self-published, 147 pages, 8½"x 8½": \$19.95

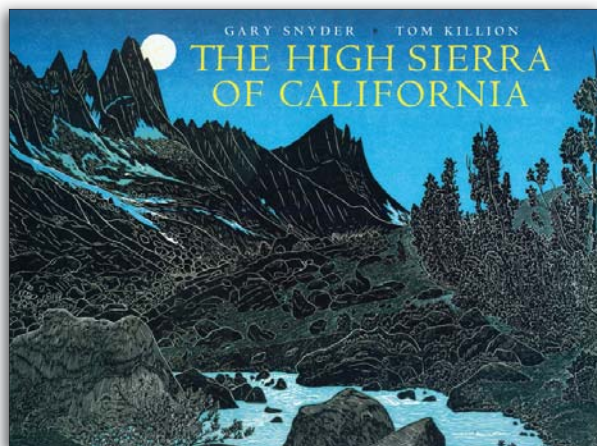
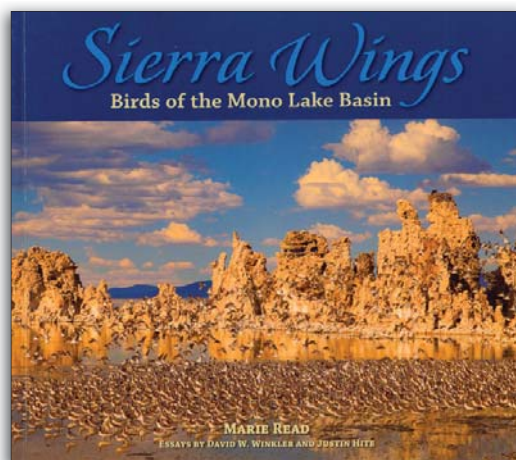
NEW!

SIERRA WINGS: BIRDS OF THE MONO BASIN

BY MARIE READ

Wildlife photographer Read's new book is a must-have for any birder, would-be birder, or Mono Lake enthusiast. *Sierra Wings* contains essays by ornithologists David W. Winkler and Justin Hite on featured birds and habitats, accompanied by Read's beautiful full-color photographs and an introduction by Committee Executive Director Geoff McQuilkin.

Sierra Wings, paperback, Companion Press, 124 pages, 8"x 9": \$29.95



THE HIGH SIERRA OF CALIFORNIA

BY GARY SNYDER AND TOM KILLION

Winner of the California Book Award Medal, this book combines the dramatic work of printmaker Killion and the journal writings of Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Snyder. It is a tribute to the bold, jagged peaks that have inspired generations of naturalists, artists, and writers. Whether you live in the Sierra, visit, or have never been, this book will help you appreciate the mountains' beauty and wonder.

High Sierra of California, paperback, Heyday, 144 pages, 9"x 12": \$24.95

To order, call (760) 647-6595—we're here weekdays, 9:00AM to 5:00PM, ready to take your order. Or you can see all products in color and place your order online at MONOLAKE.ORG/STORE.

Free Drawing to restore Mono Lake

Send in your tickets by December 10th to win....

Thank you to the generous businesses and organizations who donate the wonderful prizes for the Mono Lake Committee's annual Free Drawing, which is one of our largest fundraisers each year. Send in your tickets today (find them in the center of this *Newsletter*) for a chance to win. Thank you, and good luck!

Locally
handcrafted
stoneware

June Lake resort stay plus
boat rental and free meal



A personal
Bodie
Foundation
Heritage Tour



Mammoth Food & Wine festival passes plus
Edison Theater season tickets

Personalized research
tour of the Mono Basin, plus a
kayak trip and free meal



Stay at Rainbow Tarns Bed & Breakfast
plus movie tickets and free meals

Sailboat trip on San Francisco Bay plus
lodging in the city and aquarium tickets



A stay at Convict Lake
Resort, guided fly fishing
trip with lunch, plus
movie tickets



McGillicuddy's
GUIDE SERVICE



Two nights in Death Valley, plus a camera
backpack and a photography guidebook



FRIENDS
OF THE
RIVER

A whitewater
rafting trip for
two down the
American River

GoPro HERO3
camera

Mammoth Mountain Ski
Area season pass



Lodging at the Mammoth
Mountain Inn



Muir-Hanna
VINEYARDS

Vineyard tour plus wine
and cheese tasting at Muir-Hanna
Vineyards in Napa

Jim
Cokas
poetry
prints

Stellar
Brew gift
certificate,
Wave Rave
sweatshirt



Raven block
print by local
artist Rosanne
Catron



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

San
Francisco
vacation



YOSEMITE
CONSERVANCY

Yosemite Conservancy
field seminar, lodging
and dinner at the
Wawona Hotel

Friends of the Inyo
membership

patagonia

Patagonia men's and women's R1
full-zip fleece jackets



Mono Lake Committee field seminar for two
\$250 Mono Lake Committee shopping spree

Mono Lake Committee guided canoe tour for two
Mono Lake Committee logo T-shirt, hat, water bottle,
Mono Lake Story DVD, and 2015 calendar

REI
Flash 22
backpack

iPad
mini

Gift certificates to Black
Sheep Espresso and Sage
to Summit in Bishop, plus
Juniper Ridge bath products



Thank you, Mono Lake Volunteers!



PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVID CARLE

The Mono Lake Volunteers give generously of their time to ensure that visitors to the Mono Basin see the birds, taste the water, hear the Mono Lake story, and get travel information.

This year Sharon & Stan Bluhm, Judy Erb, and Sherryl Taylor were recognized for ten years of volunteering, and Cathy & Rich Foye, Mike & Mary Shore, and Rosemarie Willimann reached five years. “Volunteer of the Year” went to Kathy Cecere—congratulations! Thank you to volunteer coordinators Janet Carle, Rosanne Catron, and Terry

McLaughlin for keeping the program running smoothly.

The Mono Lake Volunteer Program is a joint initiative sponsored by California State Parks (the Mono Lake Tufa State Natural Reserve), the US Forest Service, and the Mono Lake Committee, with support from the Eastern Sierra Interpretive Association and the Bodie Foundation. If you are interested in volunteering, or for more information, please contact Terry McLaughlin (terry@monolake.org) at (760) 647-6595.

Lee Vining celebrates local Augie Hess’ 100th birthday

Augie Hess was born October 25, 1914 at Mono Mills. His father was a Swiss miner and blacksmith and his mother a Mono Basin Paiute, and he grew up along the lush and roaring pre-diversion Rush Creek.

In the early 1940s Augie’s father built a dance hall in Lee Vining—it was frequented by DWP workers who were building the aqueduct. Later, the fledgling Mono Lake Committee rented and then bought the dance hall building from Augie, and it continues to house the Committee bookstore and offices to this day.

His recently-published autobiography, *The Kid from Mono Mills: Augie’s Century*, tells of his Eastern Sierra life, military service during World War II, championship ski racing, and many more adventures, shaped by 100 years of history. See page 23 to order Augie’s book!



PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVID CARLE

Augie with his daughters Vineca and Heidi at his birthday party.

Staff migrations

by Terry McLaughlin

Summer has flown out on the wings of the nighthawks. The rarified air chills us. Mountainside ravines exhibit spectacular fall colors, and our summer staff has migrated back to school, home, or the next adventure.

On August 8 an exciting, brand-new migration happened in the **McQuilkin** family—**Geoff, Sarah, Caelen**, and **Ellery** welcomed a new daughter and sister: **Cassia Parker McQuilkin**. Her name is inspired by *Cassiope mertensiana*—white mountain heather—and its nodding flowers that John Muir called cathedral bells.



GEOFF MCQUILKIN

Ellery and Caelen McQuilkin with their new sister, Cassia Parker.

In August we bid a fond goodbye to Project Specialist **Emma Oschrein**. Emma helped with many events and restoration projects over the last year. Emma started a biology graduate program at Indiana University this fall.

Melissa Boyd has been an exceptional Outdoor Experiences Intern. Her willing attitude has made her a pleasure and treasure on staff. Melissa will stay in the Eastern Sierra this winter, no doubt keeping up her long-distance trail running in the snow.

Tina Weedman spent her second summer as an Information Center & Bookstore Assistant, and married her high-school sweetheart, **Nathan Ernster**, while working here full-time. Congratulations! In August Tina headed to Humboldt State University to finish her degree in Conservation Biology and Applied Vertebrate Ecology.

Will Dluger also worked as an Information Center & Bookstore Assistant, bringing his patience and calm nature to the busy summer bookstore atmosphere. He now teaches physics at Kehillah Jewish High School in Palo Alto.

Canoe Coordinator and Project Specialist **Julia Frankenbach** managed the canoe program for two summers, and her competence and passion for the paddle were evident in every canoe trip. Julia now pursues a graduate degree

in Western US environmental and cultural history at the University of Colorado at Boulder.

This year **Sandra Noll** and **Erv Nichols** job-shared the Birding Intern position. They will spend winter celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act in Albuquerque and attending Sandhill Crane festivals in three states. Last summer was so much fun, they will return next year!

Mono Lake Intern **Julie Curtis** brightened our summer for a second year with her sense of fun. Julie entered her third year at the University of San Diego, studying Sustainable Development in Costa Rica this fall. Following that, she will travel around the world with Semester at Sea.

Fluent in Chinese, Mono Lake Intern **Adam Dalton** translated key Mono Lake materials for the public into Mandarin during the summer. This fall he returned to Grinnell College in Iowa, competing in cross-country races during the snowy Iowa winter. In the spring, Adam will study in Shanghai, China.

Mono Lake Intern **Erica Stephens** shared her artistic talent and passion for interpretation this summer. This fall, she continues her career with the National Park Service at Grand Canyon National Park.

We hired two late-season Information Center & Bookstore Interns this year: **Jessica Ruiz** and **Craig Morse**. Jessica first came to Mono Lake with the Committee's Outdoor Education Center program, and we think that was what made her greet every visitor with such enthusiasm. She is already off to be a field instructor with New York City Outward Bound Schools before returning to Los Angeles to continue her degree in Social Work at Mt. Saint Mary's College.

Craig, a retired finish carpenter, has been a Monophile for years. He delights in kayaking on Mono Lake and exploring the basin. It was Craig's dream to work at the Mono Lake Committee, so even though he has returned to his home in Sebastopol, we know he will visit Mono Lake often.

Mono Lake Interns **Robbie Di Paolo** and **Lily Pastel** have been indispensable and will continue as Project Specialists this winter—working on a variety of events, membership tasks, and ongoing research and monitoring projects. They will brave the snow, warm our firesides, and learn that hot cocoa is medicinal.

It is with mixed feelings that we watch our seasonal staff depart. They carry the Mono Lake story to far reaches, leaving behind a quiet, emptier office. We send gratitude to our summer staff and wish them the best. ❖

Terry McLaughlin is the Committee's Office Director. She brings a "dream of glory"—a quote, a poem, or a story—to staff meeting every week to keep us all inspired.



From the mailbag

News from members and friends

by Ellen King

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

In honor

Mary Theresa de la Pena of Santa Monica sent a contribution in honor of **Terri Geissinger**. We received a gift from **Marsha Epstein** of Los Angeles in honor of Mono Lake volunteer **Joy Zimnavoda**.

In memory

Mary Auble of Carson City, NV sent a contribution "in memory of my co-worker **Lori Buck**." **Charles Enoch** of Van Nuys made a donation "in memory of my wife **Gloria**. She loved Mono Lake." **Christina Irvin** of Stockton gave a gift in memory of **Karl Irvin**. **Fred Lucas** of Huntsville, AL sent a contribution "in memory of my mother **Alice Lucas**, whose canoe trip on Mono Lake was a special experience!" **Carol Mathews** of Walnut Creek made a donation "in loving memory of **Robert Mathews**." **Karen Simon** of Palo Cedro gave a gift "in memory of **Kathy**."

We received a gift in memory of **Fred Eissler** from **Margaret Eissler** of Yosemite and her mother **Anne Eissler**. **Bill & Nina Graham** of San Marino and **Rose Marie Irwin** of Monterey Park sent contributions in memory of **Andrea Lawrence**.

Linda Pittman of Wilton, **Philip Gordon** of Hayward, **William Bianco** of West Sacramento, **Dan & Jan Tankersley** of Sacramento, and the "self-styled sorority **Stagnaro Sisters**" of Boulder Creek, CA made donations in memory of **Don Schmoldt**.

We received gifts in memory of **Norma McKinney** from her daughter **Kathy Schreiner** of Naperville, IL, and from **Gwen Wharton**, **Nance Urban** of Capitola, and **Margaret Odiorne** of Wilmington, DE.

New membership database

We're pleased to announce that we have a new and vastly upgraded membership database system! Gone are the days of using outside services to update members' information and donations. Now we can do it ourselves here in Lee Vining, and in real time.

What does this mean for you? It means that when you ask us to update your address, phone number, or email address, the change will be made here and will take effect right away. In addition, when we deposit your check or process your credit card gift, that donation will appear in your membership record immediately.

Also, now we can do things that we couldn't do before. In the past, we could only store one mailing address—

now we can keep a vacation address for you, too. In the past we were limited to one email address per membership record. Those of you who share a membership record had to choose which email address would be recognized as a member on our website or which email address could receive our monthly e-newsletter, the *Mono Lake Effect*. Now you no longer have to choose.

If you would like to have an email address added to your membership record, please send it, along with your name and address, to me at ellen@monolake.org and I'll put it in myself! ❖

Ellen King is the Committee's Membership Coordinator. In our bustling office, when Ellen is wearing a tiara it's her sparkly way of saying "do not disturb!"



The 2014 Mono Lake Committee staff. Top row, left to right: Emma Oschrin, Julie Curtis, Geoff McQuilkin, Terry McLaughlin, Bartshé Miller, Erica Stephens, Erv Nichols. Second row: Barbara Ball, Robbie Di Paolo, Elin Ljung, Lisa Cutting. Third row: Adam Dalton, Lily Pastel, Julia Frankenbach, Sandra Noll. Bottom row: Arya Degenhardt, Ellen King, Rosanne Catron.



MONO LAKE
COMMITTEE

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Mono Lake Committee

the 14th annual

**Mono Basin Bird
Chautauqua**

June 19–21, 2015

registration opens

April 15

at birdchautauqua.org



Join us for the fourth annual

**Wild & Scenic Film
Festival—Los Angeles**

Thursday, March 5, 2015

Old Town Music Hall in El Segundo

For more information, visit
monolake.org/wildandscenic



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