

MONO LAKE

N E W S L E T T E R

Summer 2014



Well, the forecasts, measurements, and calculations are in, and it looks like Mono Lake is going to drop somewhere in the ballpark of a foot and a half this summer. Ouch.

Here at the Mono Lake Committee we are collectors of lake level stories. They help us paint a picture of this place informed by more than just our own experiences. They're benchmarks, data points of a different variety. Of course, we can crunch numbers and come up with an accurate answer to the question of what a drop of a foot and a half will look like, but in some ways, an exact measurement is not exactly what we're looking for.

The Committee recently received a generous gift along these lines—eight photo albums filled with beautiful, and meticulously dated, photographs of Mono Lake by the late Jay More, donated, and hand-delivered to Lee Vining, by his granddaughter and her family. For this issue's benchmark photos (page 13), I took copies of some of Mr. More's photos down to South Tufa to re-photograph them.

It's hard to see the lake so low. You almost feel like you should look away, but the landscape left behind is oddly fascinating. It feels like progress lost. But as I navigated the freshly-abandoned mud flats, I began to see the silver lining in this landscape of lake level stories. It is the lake level story that we know so well: People made the lake level drop, but people also made the lake level rise. All of us—students, birders, lawyers, politicians, toilet flushers, engineers, lawn-ripper-uppers, anglers, photographers, paddlers....

Just about every article in this issue of the *Mono Lake Newsletter* hits on this theme: make the most of the water you have. This is the lake level story that Mono Lake tells us. Conserve, plan ahead, use good data, get creative, don't become complacent, and take care of your water. I hope you find this in the pages that follow. And as hard as it may be to see, I hope that you get a chance to see Mono Lake for yourself this summer.

—Arya Degenhardt, Communications Director



An elusive badger (*Taxidea taxus*) seen scurrying along Mono Lake's north shore.

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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Olympic dry

by Bartshé Miller



ROSE CARTON

After three consecutive drought years and the warmest winter on record, the level of Mono Lake is telling.

From South Tufa and the west shore of the lake, where most visitors travel, new expanses of alkali flat and tufa have emerged. The walk to the shoreline is now a bit longer. The infamous Mono Lake mud, which strips footwear off of unsuspecting feet, grows in extent as the water recedes. Shallow stretches below Navy Beach test the patience of paddlers as they struggle to carry, drag, and scrape their craft over sand and shoals to reach navigable water. The tufa- and alkali-studded bathtub ring above the water's edge grows and becomes a more frequent topic of conversation among visitors in the Information Center & Bookstore—"wow, the lake has sure dropped since I last saw it."

This past winter the wait for significant snow was insufferable. We finally rejoiced in a single storm at the end of January, but when you have nothing, something seems like a lot, even if it's really not.

Soon after we found distraction with the XXII Olympic Winter Games in Sochi, Russia. There was not much snow there either. With the "ridiculously resilient ridge" in the west, and the crushing, cold, and snowy winter in the east, it seemed that the climate was holding an Olympic event of its own.

The medal winners

The recent paltry winter marks a new milestone in California climate—it is now the warmest on record. This earned a solid gold medal in the Average High Winter Temperature Anomaly event.

The December–February average temperature exceeded 118 years of record-keeping by 0.7 degrees Fahrenheit, the Olympic equivalent of winning gold in downhill skiing by 0.7 seconds—rarely do you eclipse the top competitors by such a margin. If you expand the scope of the winter from November–March, typically the wettest months of the year, the record continues to hold. Warm winter temperatures are a further curse to drought, accelerating early runoff, evaporation, and sublimation.

Like ice hockey for the Russians, the drought was the main event, and despite the brutally close and agonizing competition, our drought year did not medal. This winter placed fifth overall, a bit behind the big drought contenders from the 1970s, 1923–24, and 1989–1990.

In the 36-Month Drought Relay, along with fellow team members 2011–12 and 2012–13, this winter brought home the bronze. The last three years are among the driest consecutive years on record in California, placing very close behind 1928–31 and 1974–77.

Downstream results

Like many lakes and reservoirs around the state, Mono Lake is an affected bystander to California's winter rainy season. Its level rises and falls according to Sierra Nevada snowfall and runoff—both of these a function of precipitation and temperature (see graph on page 6).

Predictably, Mono Lake has dropped in response to drought. Since April 1, 2011, Mono Lake has receded three vertical feet. Unfortunately, the lake will continue to decline through this fall, and we can expect to lose another 1–1½ feet of elevation. What does this mean for Mono Lake and water diversions to Los Angeles?

This year on April 1, Mono Lake Committee and Los Angeles Department of Water & Power (DWP) staff cooperatively measured Mono Lake's elevation. The lake stood at 6380.7 feet above sea level. This elevation allows DWP to export up to 16,000 acre-feet (af) of water from Mono Lake's tributary streams this year. By April 1, 2015 the level of Mono Lake is forecast to be below 6380 feet (see page 12), the threshold for reducing exports to 4,500 af.

Weathering the dry

Fortunately for Mono Lake, there is a plan in place to protect the lake during the inevitable episodes of drought. Fortunately for Los Angeles, the city has adapted to past water scarcity and has reduced its per-capita water consumption despite a growing population. Thirty years ago, in 1984, during the Olympic summer games in Los Angeles, the city's population was just over three million. Its total annual water consumption was roughly 630,000 af. In 2014, with over 800,000 additional people, estimated water use will be between 550,000 and 600,000 af. This is a double gold medal performance in efficiency and conservation.

Part of LA's strategy has included investment in water conservation and water recycling. Today, for example, the bounty on lawns in the DWP service area is \$2 per square foot. If you want to tear out your lawn for the sake of

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Major Stream Restoration Agreement flowing forward

by Geoffrey McQuilkin

The Mono Lake Committee recently completed an innovative Stream Restoration Agreement with the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power (DWP) that promises a healthy future for 19 miles of Rush, Lee Vining, Parker, and Walker creeks and certainty about the restoration of their fisheries, streamside forests, birds, and wildlife.

The Agreement, negotiated jointly with California Trout and the California Department of Fish & Wildlife, implements a comprehensive plan for streamflow delivery, monitoring, and adaptive management built on extensive scientific studies over the past 15 years. In short, the Agreement will make the most of the water allocated to the creeks and lake under Los Angeles' Mono Basin water licenses.

Stream Restoration Agreement benefits

In 1994 the California State Water Resources Control Board ordered intensive study by designated Stream Scientists of how, exactly, to assure restoration of Mono's tributaries damaged by excessive water diversions. The studies resulted in the development of specific day-by-day, stream-by-stream flow regimes that mimic natural runoff patterns and activate the natural processes that will restore the streams.

The Agreement implements these flows—the single most important element for effective stream restoration. Rush Creek's valuable and rare bottomland forest and channel habitat will be restored. Walker and Parker creek flows will benefit trout all the way to the lake's edge. Lee Vining Creek flows will be optimized for fish and wildlife habitat.

Additionally, under the Agreement, collaborative operational planning

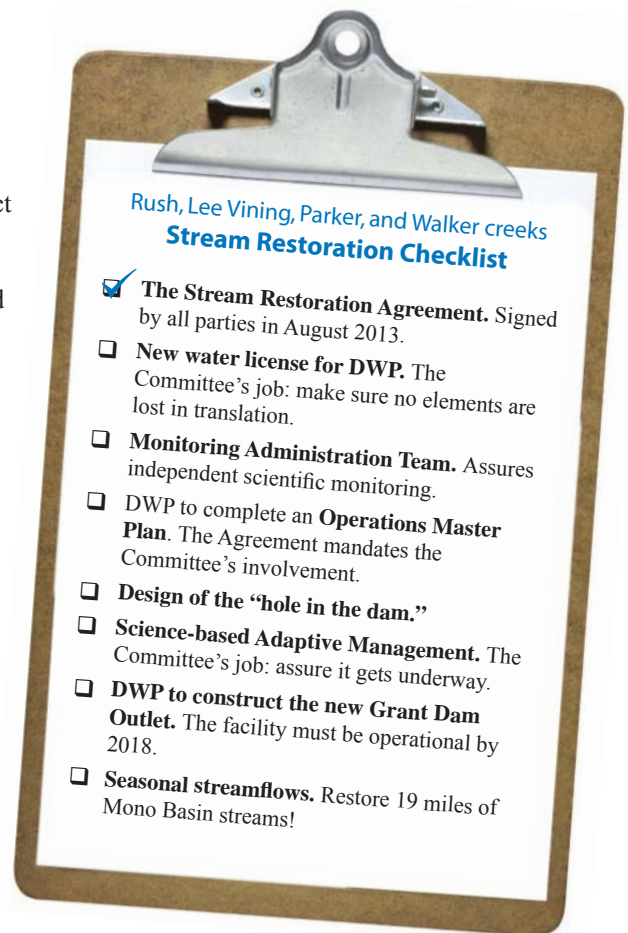
will assure reliable aqueduct operations to achieve both restoration and water export. Costs will be shared and compliance will be simplified. Additionally, scientific monitoring and adaptive management, directed by independent scientists, will assure that recovery is achieved. The Fall 2013 *Mono Lake Newsletter* provides extensive details on all of these Agreement elements.

Implementation progress

So where do things stand now? As Mono Lake Committee members know, an agreement on paper is one thing; translating it into progress on the ground is another. The Agreement includes a four-year timeframe for accomplishing a long checklist of items. There have been a few delays, but progress is being made.

First on the list is the completion of a new water license for DWP. The license must include both the new provisions of the Stream Restoration Agreement as well as the current requirements, which exist in a scattered set of State Water Board documents, decisions, and orders. During the meticulous process of bringing all license requirements together, the Committee's top priority was to make sure that no requirements were lost. In early May a final document was submitted to the State Water Board, which will now proceed with internal review, public comment, and the final steps necessary to issue a new license.

One major item on the Agreement



checklist—design of the new Grant Lake Reservoir outlet—is well underway. This “hole in the dam” will allow the aqueduct to achieve two goals: to deliver water to the people of Los Angeles and to protect and restore Mono Lake and the Mono Basin streams providing that water. Analysis of core samples drilled at the site last winter is informing DWP's conceptual design work, and two design options remain under consideration. More detailed work on a preferred design will begin this summer. Additionally, and significantly, environmental review of construction impacts began in April 2014.

The Committee will continue to dedicate significant time and effort to moving these checklist items and others to completion. The rewards are close at hand, and with continued vigilance we can accomplish real change on the ground. ❖

The State Water Board decision at 20

by Geoffrey McQuilkin

It goes by many names. The Water Board Decision. D1631. The ruling to save Mono Lake. Implementation of the Public Trust Doctrine. The day we took a bite out of the moon. Whatever name you choose, what happened on September 28, 1994 was a momentous day for California and a truly revolutionary one for Mono Lake.

For the prior half-century, excessive water diversions to Los Angeles had put Mono Lake into steep decline, cutting its volume in half, doubling its salinity, drying its streams, and threatening to turn one of the planet's unique biological wonders to dust.

After that day 20 years ago, everything was different. California had said, in essence, that the old way of managing water was over. A new era that considered the needs of birds and fish and brine shrimp had arrived and, as a result, the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power (DWP) would have to restore much of the damage it had caused.

It was the turning point in Mono Lake's long recession, the sweet success of a broad-based citizen outcry for more sensible policy, the decision that solved problems ranging from fish habitat to air quality in one fell swoop, the moment when future generations were promised the same opportunity that we have to marvel at the millions of migratory and nesting birds that rely on the lake's scenic waters.

A vote and an ovation

The decision was issued by the California State Water Resources Control Board, the state agency charged with control of water rights. Thanks to precedent-setting litigation by the Mono Lake Committee and others, it is also charged with protecting the public trust—"the duty of the state to protect the people's common heritage of streams, lakes, marshlands and tidelands," in the words of the California Supreme Court.

In 1994, after years of environmental study and 43 days of evidentiary hearings, the State Water Board gathered in the State Capitol, beneath a grand mural depicting California history. As the unanimous vote was cast, Board member Marc del Piero summed it up: "Today we saved Mono Lake." Seldom do audiences stand to applaud state agency decision-making, but on that historic day the crowd rose as one with a genuine and enthusiastic ovation.

And then, back to work

The Mono Lake Committee promptly published a special celebration issue of the *Mono Lake Newsletter*: "Assuring the transformation of paper into water, words into wetlands, and ecological health back

into the landscape is the work ahead," it said, setting forth a fundamental theme that will continue to guide us for decades. As we have seen repeatedly, victories are preserved and realized through continuing vigilance.

How are Mono Lake and its tributary streams doing, 20 years later? Is the recovery envisioned by the State Water Board being realized? The lake has fallen painfully due to the current three-year drought, yet the 20-year answers to these important questions are simultaneously positive and incomplete.

We have avoided a dire fate for Mono Lake. We have made much progress with restoration. And yet years and perhaps decades lie ahead before we reach the required management level for the lake, and along the way new questions of ecology and management will challenge us.

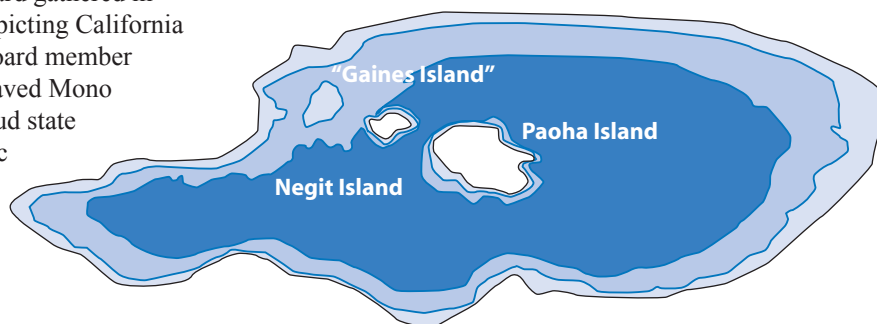
The catastrophe we chose to avoid

To evaluate the twentieth anniversary state of affairs at Mono Lake, one must consider what condition the lake would be in otherwise. What if the people of California had not called for change? What if the Committee had never been founded? What if the State Water Board had not taken action? What if—in other words—water diversions by DWP had continued at their full historic levels?

The lake, in that grim scenario, would be a shocking 20 feet lower than it is today. The west shore a vast dry expanse. South Tufa a long slog past dusty land-locked tufa to a barren, tufa-free shore. Negit Island would long ago have been landbridged.

At a surface elevation of 6360 feet above sea level, the lake would be a third smaller in surface area and one million acre-feet of water drier than today—that's three Hetch Hetchy Reservoirs' worth of water, gone. Most significantly, the lake would be deep in ecologically unsustainable territory with salinity more than four times that of the Pacific Ocean.

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The dark blue represents what Mono Lake might have looked like at 6360' if DWP diversions had continued at their full, unrestricted, historic levels. The lightest blue represents pre-diversion Mono Lake, at 6417 feet above sea level, and the medium blue represents Mono Lake's current level of 6380'.

The outcomes of a full-diversion water management scenario were studied by the State Water Board, and the results were jaw-dropping. Brine shrimp and alkali fly numbers would fall by up to 90%, making the food supply for phalaropes, grebes, and migratory birds “low or nonexistent.” California Gull habitat would be virtually destroyed. Shoreline wetlands would be gone, and hazardous dust storms would rage more frequently. Stream habitats for fish and streamside forests would be almost entirely wiped out. The economic benefits of protecting Mono Lake, including tourism and recreation, would evaporate at a cost, in the State Water Board’s estimate, of \$1 billion annually.

But this doomsday scenario—so possible decades ago—did not happen. Nor will it. Instead, Mono Lake is where we as citizens, as Californians, as the State Water Board, drew a line, crafted a different future, and said: Long Live Mono Lake!

The up and down of Mono Lake

The restoration of Mono Lake and protection of its wildlife is premised on raising the lake to its mandated ecologically healthy level of 6392 feet above sea level. Human actions—especially the rules about water diversions—are critical to

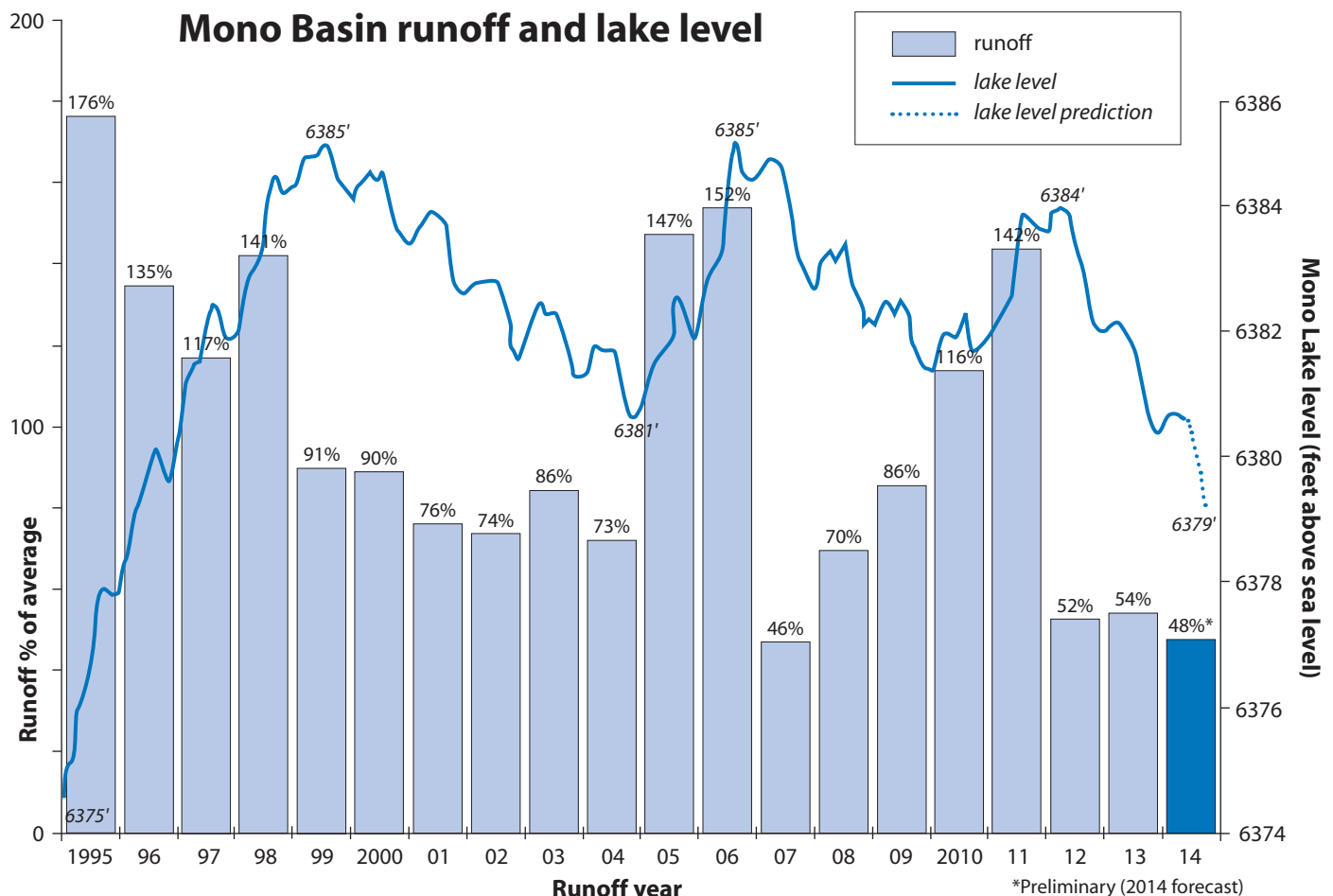
getting there. Yet nature is the ultimate force at work, and few things move in straight-line trajectories, especially amid California’s fluctuating pattern of wet and dry years.

After the State Water Board decision, a string of wet winters rapidly pushed the lake upward, achieving a ten-foot gain to 6385 feet above sea level by 1999. The lake then dropped a few feet, rose up again to 6385’ in 2006, dropped, and rose to 6384’ in 2011. Then the current three-year drought arrived, and we have reluctantly watched the lake fall four feet, exposing sections of lakebed we had hoped to never again see dry.

There is no question that the lake will rise again when wet winters return. The additional time it will now take to reach 6392 feet is sobering, yet at least these fluctuations are taking place within a zone where the ecosystem has resilience; were the lake 20 feet lower, there would be nothing but unbearably bad news to report.

Looking ahead, the fundamental Mono Lake restoration questions that demand our continuing vigilance swirl around climate change. Will Mono Basin precipitation diminish? Are lake surface evaporation rates increasing? Will larger swings

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Mono Lake rises and falls according to wet and dry years; its progress since the 1994 State Water Board decision has not been a straight-line trajectory. However, long-term, Mono Lake is on the rise to the management level of 6392 feet above sea level.

Caltrans' rockfall project to begin in 2015

Visual disruption in the short-term, increased safety and scenic value in the long-term

by Rosanne Catron

In 2012, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposed a project to improve safety for the traveling public by reducing rockfall incidents along a one-mile section of Highway 395 beginning two miles north of Lee Vining near Old Marina. More than 650 Mono Lake Committee supporters commented on the proposed project, advocating for an effective and ecologically sensitive project with minimal visual, and no water quality, impacts.

After detailed discussion with Committee staff about solutions to these concerns, Caltrans committed to important elements to assure the project's environmental success. First among these, Caltrans established vegetation test plots along Highway 395 in 2013, which will determine the seed mixtures and soil treatments that are most effective at achieving erosion control (see Spring & Summer 2013 *Newsletter*).

Currently, Caltrans is evaluating the test plot results to determine the best method to restore the native vegetation under challenging soil conditions. Depending on the angle and location of the slopes, Caltrans will apply different treatments, from soil rehabilitation and revegetation, to anchored mesh necessary on the steepest slopes. These stabilization methods will lead to increased soil rehabilitation and allow for native plants to take hold. Project construction is slated to begin in summer 2015.

Visual impacts

Visitors to the area in 2015 might be surprised by the level of disruption on the slopes along Mono Lake's iconic western shore. According to Brian Wesling, Caltrans Design Manager, "To begin, our contractor will remove some vegetation to prepare the slopes. The slopes will look more bare than they do now before they can be properly treated. Drilling holes for

the nearly 3,000 anchors will be the next activity and will also take the longest." After the anchors are placed, tilling compost and amendments into the soil will take place, followed by sowing with native seeds and the application of pine needle mulch. "Lastly, a large crane is expected to lift the anchored wire mesh into place. The mesh will be colored to match the tone of the native soils and vegetation," Wesling said.

Visitors should not be alarmed by this major visual disruption on the hill above Old Marina—while the roadcut slopes will look worse temporarily, the project will improve the scenic value of the area in the long-term, as the slopes will eventually recover with native vegetation similar to adjacent slopes in the area.

Safety is the number one priority

Anchors, cranes, drilling, and rock removal means this section of Highway 395 will become a major construction zone during the project. "Our primary concern is for the safety of the public and our workers. The current plan is to separate the construction zone and the workers from public traffic by placing a temporary concrete barrier with a chain-link rock screen down the center line of the highway. Temporary signals are expected to be placed at both ends of the barrier to control reversible traffic—there will be one lane for northbound and southbound traffic to share alternately," says Wesling.

This means that visitors in summer 2015 can expect delays of up to 20 minutes just north of Lee Vining. While the construction will not occur 24 hours a day, visitors should keep in mind that there will be traffic control at all times, as the traffic control measures will be too extensive

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PHOTOS COURTESY OF CALTRANS

The left photo shows the current condition of the northernmost slope in the rockfall project area. A Caltrans simulation, right, shows how the slope will look once the project is complete. Over time the slope will continue to look better as vegetation continues to grow.

North Mono Basin full of opportunity

Reasonable approach will benefit Mill Creek and Conway Ranch

by Lisa Cutting

With the Mono Basin Stream Restoration Agreement signed and in the hands of the California State Water Resources Control Board (see page 4), four of Mono Lake's tributaries—Rush, Lee Vining, Parker, and Walker creeks—are on a solid trajectory of continued restoration and improved recovery. Three years of working toward and successfully negotiating the Agreement is a reminder that balanced solutions can, and do, work—allowing progress to be made in a way that addresses what may initially seem to be competing interests. In fact, the Mono Lake Committee's 36 years of work have shown that this model is not only a good approach for challenging situations, but also highly successful and durable.

Mono Lake's third-largest tributary, Mill Creek, in the north part of the Mono Basin, is one such challenging restoration situation. Mill Creek is poised to make a remarkable recovery and the Committee is working hard on a win-win solution for getting Mill Creek's rightful streamflows returned.

There is also a new opportunity on the table—a conservation easement for Conway Ranch—that would maintain habitat protection and also allow historical uses to continue on Conway Ranch (see Winter & Spring 2014 *Mono Lake Newsletter*).

Talks continue with all hands on deck

The Eastern Sierra Land Trust (ESLT), Mono County, and Caltrans have moved from discussions to formally drafting legal language of a conservation easement for Conway Ranch, working toward a July 1 deadline. The majority of the easement is straightforward—protecting the values that the grants to purchase the property laid out when ownership was transferred to Mono County in 2000. These values include preserving open space, wildlife corridors, cultural resources,

and wetland habitat, while allowing historic uses of sheep grazing and fish rearing to continue.

The challenge is balancing the needs of the fish-rearing operation infrastructure with the conservation values of the property and within the legal water allocation. The original grantors—Caltrans, National Fish & Wildlife Foundation, and California Department of Parks & Recreation—recognize the County's desire to raise fish for recreational tourism development and are also obligated to uphold the original grant restrictions. Ultimately, the grantors will have to approve the final conservation easement.

The Mono Basin Regional Planning Advisory Committee (RPAC) is heavily invested in the process since the easement property lies exclusively in the Mono Basin. Many local residents are deeply involved with the RPAC and have spent a good deal of time working on this issue—I have served as a member of the RPAC on behalf of the Committee since 2002. Our goal is to help guide the process toward a reasonable and balanced resolution. The history of events in the north Mono Basin is long and complex and maintaining accurate facts by way of the Committee's institutional memory has been beneficial to the process. The 2012 Mono Basin Community Plan offers guidance as well.

Mono County needs to be reasonable and transparent

What's becoming clear through this process is that Mono County needs to be straightforward and honest with how Conway Ranch will be used—in particular, as it pertains to the fish-rearing operation. This is the same challenge that has long applied to the County's use of Mill Creek water (see Winter & Spring 2011 *Mono Lake Newsletter*). The scale of the operation directly correlates to buildings and infrastructure, which could conflict with the conservation values of the property. Also, water is a limiting factor—not so much in normal or wet years—but in drought years like this, available surface flow and water rights can pose problems for the fish-rearing operators (see page 10).

Mill Creek restoration and Conway Ranch

Mill Creek restoration is lacking one critical component: water. Over 75% of the creek's flow is diverted—twice as much as the adjudicated water rights allow. In March 2011 the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) issued an order approving Southern California Edison's (SCE) application to amend its Lundy hydropower license enabling the legal, correct distribution of water per the adjudicated

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ELIN LJUNG

Community members discuss a conservation easement for Conway Ranch that would maintain habitat protection and historical uses.

Mill Creek water rights to Conway Ranch and Mill Creek in priority order. Under the FERC settlement, SCE is legally required to construct a return conveyance pipe to replace the original, degraded ditch in order to get water back to Mill Creek.

Since 2006 all of the water (Conway Ranch water rights plus Mill Creek water) has been flowing to Conway Ranch because the current return ditch could not physically return Mill Creek water back to the creek. This situation has resulted in the County diverting roughly twice its legal water allotment.

Once SCE installs the new return pipe, the water situation at Conway Ranch will change: Mill Creek water will be returned to Mill Creek and Mono County's full water rights will be delivered to Conway Ranch through the Wilson diversion system.

Mono County has Mill Creek water rights that total about 45% of the creek's annual average flow (which, for perspective, is more than three times the water supply for all of the town of Mammoth Lakes). The County has been clear that it plans to continue to divert that water through the Wilson system and operate all Conway Ranch activities using that legal allocation of water.

Time for a reality check

The legal distribution of Mill Creek water is laid out clearly by the Mill Creek adjudicated water rights decree of 1914. Water is delivered to rights holders that call for that

water, when it is available, in priority order (see below). Water not lawfully diverted must remain in Mill Creek. Once the return pipe is built, water rights holders on Mill Creek will realize their full water right once again, and water that belongs in Mill Creek will finally flow there again.

In an interesting twist of fate, one of the water rights holders, the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power, (DWP) has gone on record numerous times formally committing its water right to Mill Creek for in-stream benefits and to fulfill its obligation under State Water Board mandate to raise the surface level of Mono Lake as quickly as possible.

Once the return pipe is built, the Committee expects north Mono Basin water to be legally allocated and delivered. However, actions taken by the Mono County supervisors last fall indicate they may stand in the way, which is cause for serious concern. In a 4–1 vote last summer, Mono County supervisors rejected a request from SCE for an easement across County land for the return pipe. The Committee found this puzzling and particularly odd because for years the County needed an easement from DWP on a section of Conway Ranch to install a pipe to the fish-rearing area. After much prodding and outrage on the part of the County, DWP finally approved that easement. The vote shows that while Mono County is quick to badger fellow water rights holders for easements, it is unwilling to return the favor when it comes to its own property.

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Mill Creek water distribution is actually pretty simple

How Mill Creek water will flow once the new return pipe is constructed



The chart at right shows the Mill Creek Adjudicated Water Rights Table from 1914. It shows that water rights come with both a priority order and a volume. The first water right is held by DWP—it gets 1 cubic foot per second (cfs) of water first. Mono County is next in line, with 2 cfs, and so on.

It is important to understand that not all the water rights can be filled all the time—it depends on how much water is available. For example, if there are only 12 cfs available, only the first (1 cfs), second (2 cfs), third (2 cfs), and a portion of the fourth (7 of the 8 cfs) water rights can be filled.

As we all know, the thing about water rights is that no one can take more than their right allows.

For over 20 years Mill Creek has received less than half of the water it should lawfully receive according to this official water rights table, due to the lack of a return pipe. The dark blue bars represent water that will go to Mill Creek once the new return pipe is built. The light blue bars represent water that will continue to flow to Conway Ranch.

priority right	right holder	quantity of right (cfs)
1 st	DWP	1
2 nd	Mono County	2
3 rd	BLM	2
4 th	Mono County	8
5 th	DWP	9.2
6 th	Simis	1.8
7 th	DWP	14
8 th	Mono County	5
9 th	USFS	12.6
10 th	DWP	18
11 th	Mono County	1

 water that will go to Mill Creek
 water that will continue to go to Conway Ranch

Policy notes

by Lisa Cutting

Returning Cliff Swallows are safe once again

Just in time for spring, the Inyo National Forest has removed netting that was installed to protect structural beams of Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area Visitor Center but caused Cliff Swallows (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*) to become entangled and die. Three years ago, netting was installed under the eaves of the roof because the wet mud of the swallows' nest building activity was affecting the wooden beams. Almost immediately, the swallows—determined to nest where they have since 1992—struggled to find a way past the netting to complete their nests.

The Mono Lake Committee was alarmed at the decision to install the netting in the first place and formally urged the Inyo to reconsider its decision. Committee members and Scenic Area visitors witnessed swallow

waterproof sealant to protect the building in the future. The Committee feels that balancing responsible building management with responsible swallow habitat management is possible, and we have offered to help the Inyo find and implement a workable solution.

Visitors can once again enjoy seeing the swallows build nests, raise young, and catch bugs while doing their captivating aerial acrobatics.

Drought forces Inland Aquaculture Group to halt fish-rearing this season

Water is a crucial factor in raising trout and after three dry years in a row and a particularly meager snowpack this year, the water just isn't there. As a result, Inland Aquaculture Group (IAG), the company that has been raising fish on Conway Ranch since 2002, canceled plans for raising trout

trout before suspending operations.

IAG raises trout at a fish-rearing facility on Mono County-owned Conway Ranch in the north part of the Mono Basin. As payment for using the County's property, it stocks rainbow and brown trout in Mono County lakes and streams each year, which helps to draw people to the County for recreational fishing. IAG also sells a portion of the fish raised to private resort owners in Inyo and Mono counties. This year, throughout the Eastern Sierra, ranchers, businesses, and residents are all adjusting to the severely reduced water supply.

Inyo National Forest planning process schedule extended

The Inyo National Forest has extended its Forest Plan Revision process timeline by nine months in response to stakeholder requests to allow for more comprehensive analysis, dialogue, and public involvement in the process. The draft Environmental Impact Statement is now scheduled to be released in April 2015 for a 90-day public comment period; a newly revised plan will be released in September 2016.

The Inyo National Forest is one of the first forests charged with revising its 26-year-old Land & Resource Management Plan under the 2012 Planning Rule for America's National Forests & Grasslands. Stronger habitat protection, collaborating with stakeholders, using sound science, planning for new recreational trends, and honoring the economic viability of rural communities adjacent to the Inyo National Forest are values that have repeatedly come up in meeting discussions. Accommodating the goals of the new plan under declining Forest Service budgets will be a big challenge



SANTIAGO ESCHUCERIA

A Cliff Swallow (Petrochelidon pyrrhonota) in its mud nest.

mortality during the Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua and throughout the nesting season and also expressed dismay.

The Committee is relieved that the netting has been removed, and supports the Inyo in thoroughly researching less harmful and more effective options such as treating the beams with a

on Conway Ranch this summer. The decision was made after receiving word from Southern California Edison that the snowpack in the upper Mill Creek watershed was extremely low and water supply this summer would not be reliable. IAG stocked Eastern Sierra lakes and streams with the remaining

Continued on page 11

and will underscore the importance of the Inyo working with partners more than ever.

Deepest Valley advocacy group engages in solar development proposal

The Los Angeles Department of Water & Power (DWP) has proposed a 1,200-acre solar development project in Inyo County located just east of Manzanar National Historic Site in the Owens Valley. The Deepest Valley organization has rallied people to raise concerns—especially given the location of the project.

The Deepest Valley group provides the public a much-needed forum for gathering and sharing ideas with the

goal of facilitating a powerful, unified voice on issues related to protection of the landscape and the local rural communities. Although the group takes its name from a popular book by Genny Smith and Jeff Putnam from 1976, referring to the Owens Valley in particular, the Deepest Valley is concerned with all of Inyo County.

As a result of DWP's Integrated Resource Planning and state law, the City of Los Angeles is charged with creating a diversified portfolio of green energy production to establish a stable and reliable source of electricity for its customers and eventually to eliminate coal-powered plants.

As one member of the Deepest Valley organization stated at the

public hearing, "When DWP realized they had to protect the public trust of Mono Lake, they found other water through conservation and reclamation." The folks involved with the Deepest Valley are encouraging DWP to do so again, this time with its proposed solar development projects.

See deepestvalley.com for more information. ❖

Lisa Cutting is the Committee's Eastern Sierra Policy Director. After giving a CAMMP tour of the MGORD, explaining the transition from GLOMP to MBOP and the new MAT, she needed a BLT and an IPA for lunch at Silver Lake Café.

Endangered Species listings in the Mono Basin

by Julia Frankenbach

This spring, local conversations have often turned to the Mono Basin Greater Sage-Grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*), the Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog (*Rana sierrae*), and the Yosemite toad (*Anaxyrus canorus*)—three native species that the US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) has proposed for listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

The Bi-State Distinct Population Segment of Greater Sage-Grouse habitat encompasses 1.8 million acres in eastern California and Nevada. The bird survives by eating exclusively sagebrush during the winter and is therefore dependent on sagebrush habitat. Any activity that removes sagebrush, such as urbanization, wildfires, piñon-juniper encroachment, and invasive plant species expansion reduces sagebrush habitat and, therefore, has the potential to impact sage grouse. If listed, federal agencies must confer with USFWS before initiating any action within the designated area that may be detrimental to the grouse.

On April 25, 2014, the USFWS announced that the Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog will be listed as endangered, and the Yosemite toad will be listed as threatened under the ESA. The final rule will become effective on June 20. Both amphibians have been extirpated from over 50% of their historic range. The listings will include a recovery plan to help minimize threats like predation from non-native fish and are not expected to adversely affect angling and other

recreational activities in the Eastern Sierra. For more information on the listing process, recovery plans, and opportunities for public comment, visit fws.gov/endangered.

The Mono Lake Committee has submitted comments in support of management practices that balance the needs of people with the needs of sage grouse, frogs, and toads. Such an approach recognizes the importance of both native biodiversity and recreation in the Sierra Nevada.



PHOTO COURTESY OF JOE FUHRMAN

Mono Basin Greater Sage-Grouse.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ROLAND KNAAPP

Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog.

Three-year drought lowers runoff and reservoirs

by Greg Reis

The Los Angeles Department of Water & Power (DWP) has projected the Mono Basin runoff for the 2014 runoff year (April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015) to be 48% of average. The projection is based on the runoff from last winter's very low snowpack and median precipitation over the next year.

If the projection is correct, it would mean that the 2014–2015 runoff year is the fourth-lowest runoff year on record (1976, 2007, and 1977 were lower) and the third dry year of the three driest consecutive years on record. For people who think in regular calendar years, 2013 was among the driest on record for precipitation. By every measure, it has been incredibly dry, and the drought isn't over yet.

As per California State Water Resources Control Board rules, this

projection determines the year type, which determines the amount of water flowing in the streams all year. This year type is officially “dry.”

For Mono Basin streams, a dry year type means that no springtime peak flows will be released downstream of the aqueduct diversion dams this year. For the Rush Creek trout fishery, it means a third consecutive poor year for trout growth and condition.

This will not be helped by DWP's failure to follow one of the guidelines outlined in the State Water Board-approved Grant Lake Operations & Management Plan (GLOMP). The GLOMP states that water “will be exported at a constant rate year round,” at an average of 22 cubic feet per second (cfs). Instead, this spring DWP exported 150 cfs during April and

May, and was on track to take its entire annual 16,000 acre-feet by early June.

As a result, Grant Lake Reservoir will hold about 20,000 acre-feet (40% full) of water this summer instead of 30,000 acre-feet (60% full). This will not only negatively impact Grant Lake Marina operations, but it will also raise the water temperature in Rush Creek, making it more difficult for fish to survive and grow.

The primary reason DWP gave for this rapid export is to keep the amount of water stored in Crowley Reservoir higher. However, Crowley storage is currently about the same as last year, when Mono Basin water was exported more evenly from April through September and about 11,000 acre-feet less inflow is expected this summer from Long Valley runoff. ❖

Lakewatch

Mono Lake to drop to 18-year low

by Greg Reis

DWP's Mono Lake level forecast for the 2014 runoff year translates into Mono Lake dropping 14 inches from its current elevation of 6380.6 feet above sea level to 6379.4' by April 2015. The fall season low point of 6379' would be the lowest lake level seen since March 1996.

With only 43% of average snowmelt runoff expected between April and October, Mono Lake should fall from 6380.6' on May 1 to 6380.0' by August and 6379.2' by October. Already the lake's May 1st level

was a tenth of a foot lower than the prediction—as also happened in the last two years.

The current three-year drought, following so closely on the heels of the 2007–2009 dry period, is a major setback in the lake's long-term rise to the 6392' management level ordered by the State Water Board 20 years ago. Dust storms on the exposed lakebed will get worse this year and coyotes could reach the islands where California Gulls nest.

The current lake level forecast predicts that Mono Lake will be at 6379.4 feet by the beginning of the 2015 runoff year, when DWP's export for the year gets determined again (the maximum export amount is based on the lake level as read every April 1st).

However, a bright spot on the horizon is a likely El Niño next winter, which often means that a greater quantity of precipitation can fall in the Mono Basin and raise the level of Mono Lake.

How much wetter than the current forecast would it have to get to raise the lake to 6380' by April 1, 2015, the minimum level necessary for DWP to avoid a cutback in water exports? About 28,000 acre-feet, in the form of more runoff, less evaporation, and/or more precipitation. A wet winter will probably get us very close to that scenario and keep us waiting to find out until we read the lake level next April 1. ❖

Greg Reis is the Committee's Information & Restoration Specialist. He swam to Negit Island when Mono Lake was this low in the fall of 1996.

6417'

Prediversion lake level, 1941

6392'

Management lake level

6380.6'

Current lake level

6372'

Historic low, 1982

Mono Basin Journal

A roundup of quiet happenings at Mono Lake

by Geoffrey McQuilkin



GEORGE MCQUILKIN

Sweeping, panoramic views of Mono Lake unavoidably capture the attention of visitors. Yet a quick glimpse of the lake—a fleeting view, a flash of color, a hint of a tufa tower—can be equally captivating, enough to stop you in your tracks and make you wonder what more there is to be discovered.

My most unexpected Mono Lake glimpse came this spring at the State Capitol in Sacramento when my wife Sarah and I were showing our daughters where laws are made. Standing outside Governor Brown's office, in the busy hall full of busy people, we watched as a staff member exited the office—wait, was that ... Mono Lake? We adjusted our point of view and awaited the next person authorized to pass through the wooden double doors.

The fleeting moment comes.... Yes, we see Negit Island! As another staffer approached the entry, he inquired about our enthusiastic gaze at the doors. Then, in a solid demonstration of citizen-driven government, he invited us to follow him inside, past the watchful security staff and a dozen well-dressed lobbyists awaiting their appointments. And there it was.

We found Mono Lake on the wall, celebrated in the 2014 Mono Lake Calendar, hanging right where you need it to hang, on the wall of the team handling the governor's appointments. And that left us with only one thing to say to the friendly people in the room: Long Live Mono Lake! ❖

Benchmarks



PHOTO COURTESY OF JAY B. MORE

The shoreline at South Tufa in February 1996. Lake level: 6378.4 feet above sea level.



ARVA DESENHARDT

The same shoreline and tufa grove in May 2014 with 1.9 feet more water at 6380.6 feet above sea level.

SoCal water notes

by Elina Rios

West Basin pushes water recycling forward

Following the third annual Wild & Scenic film festival in Los Angeles, Mono Lake Committee staff had a chance to take a tour of the West Basin Municipal Water District water recycling plant in El Segundo.

West Basin recycles treated sewage water from the DWP service area, which helps decrease the amount of water used from other parts of California. West Basin treats it with an advanced three-step treatment process before providing it to the Water Replenishment District (WRD) for underground saltwater intrusion barriers. Bottled water companies also purchase this water, run it through an extra process of reverse osmosis (it has already gone through filtration, reverse-osmosis, and UV light treatment in the plant) and then re-sell it to the public.

One of West Basin's current goals is to get approval from the state to implement "direct potable"—a process in which treated water goes from the plant into the water distribution system that serves homes. Currently WRD does an "indirect potable" process—it purchases West Basin water and injects it into groundwater wells to filter it and blend it with groundwater. Months later it is pumped, re-treated, and then distributed to homes and businesses.

Through the direct potable process, West Basin would be able to provide customers with more recycled water faster and at a cheaper price. Before West Basin can distribute direct potable water, it is important that it goes through extensive water quality testing procedures to assure that the drinking water that customers receive is of the highest quality. In addition, short-term water holding and real-time water testing can assure that if any problem occurred with the quality of the recycled water it could be held back from the urban supply until the problem was fixed.

West Basin has great expectations for better, more cost-effective distribution of potable water to Los Angeles, which is not a new concept. For example, the town of Big Spring in west Texas already has a successful direct potable system in place.

Metabolic Studio's waterwheel project

If you drive near the Spring and North Broadway Street bridges in Los Angeles this time next year you might be surprised to see a 72-foot-diameter rotating waterwheel being developed in the Los Angeles River.



Committee staff toured the West Basin Municipal Water District water recycling plant in March after the Wild & Scenic Film Festival—Los Angeles.

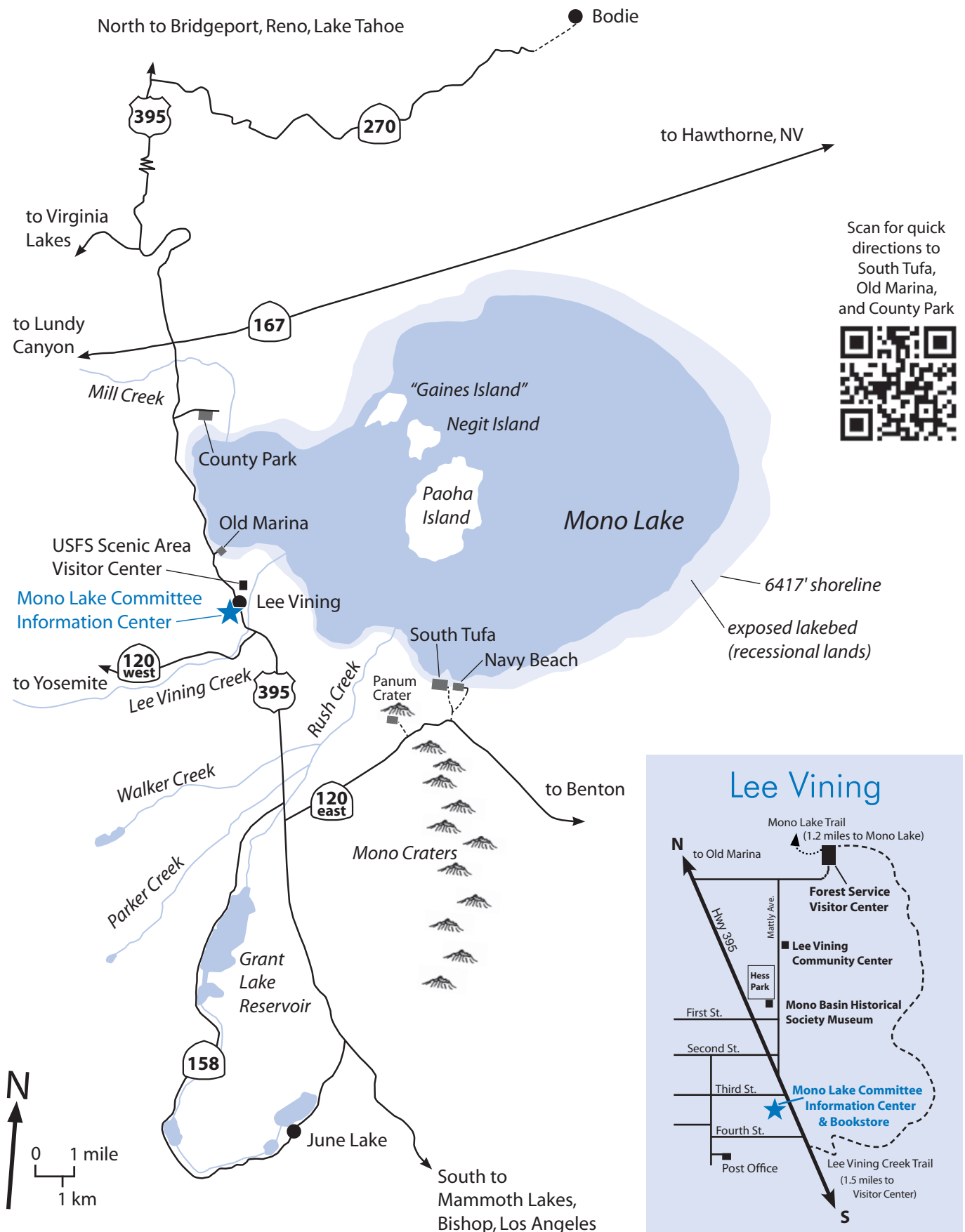
Metabolic Studio in Los Angeles has a new project called "Bending the River Back to the City." They are well underway in planning "La Noria," a waterwheel that, with the help of an inflatable dam, will pump 106 acre-feet of water per year from the LA River back into LA for outdoor irrigation projects that the local community is helping to select. The waterwheel will be a visual and purposeful "homage to Mt. Whitney, which is a big source of our water," said Lauren Bon, project leader, as she explained the important water connection between LA and the Eastern Sierra, including Mono Lake.

In late January Metabolic Studio completed CEQA environmental studies for the waterwheel, and in March received approval from the City Council and Mayor Eric Garcetti. Most importantly, Bon has obtained water rights from the California State Water Resources Control Board for the LA River water for the project.

On March 22 and April 25 Metabolic Studio hosted community discussion forums in Lincoln Heights and Chinatown respectively (after first announcing their idea for "La Noria" in the summer of 2012), asking for ideas for using the 106 acre-feet of water most efficiently. Engineers explained how the waterwheel and inflatable dam would work, leaders explained the permitting process, and a large map was there for people to add ideas for the non-potable water use. Bon and her team hope to receive the approvals they need by the end of 2014 and to have made good progress on constructing the waterwheel by fall 2015. ❖

Elina Rios is the Committee's Los Angeles Watershed Education Coordinator. She liked West Basin's treated water so much she filled her water bottle to the brim!

Summer at Mono Lake



When you visit Mono Lake ...

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.

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 in 1978 in response to the threat of inevitable collapse of the Mono Basin ecosystem. The 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 doctrine, 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

Mono Lake's recovery depends on water conservation in Los Angeles, and the Committee has created solutions to the demand for water by implementing conservation and recycling programs in LA that have saved more than enough water to share with Mono Lake. Today LA is 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.



LYNETTE VILLAGOMEZ

Mono Lake Committee Information Center & Bookstore

Open daily from 8:00AM–9:00PM during the summer
(760) 647-6595 and monolake.org

Stop by to see detailed displays on Mono Lake's political history and the current work of the Mono Lake Committee, "The Mono Lake Story" film, an art gallery, a comprehensive selection of books on natural and local history, T-shirts, maps, and locally made artisan gifts. This is also the Lee Vining Chamber of Commerce and our friendly staff are happy to help with local information for your visit.

In 1994, after over a decade of litigation, the California State Water Resources Control Board ordered DWP to let Mono Lake rise to a healthy level of 6392 feet above sea level—twenty feet above its historic low. DWP has reduced its Mono Basin water exports by over 80 percent, and Mono Lake is on the rise. This is truly an environmental victory.



AMERICAN RIVER CONSERVANCY

Canoe on Mono Lake

Saturdays and Sundays at 8:00, 9:30, and 11:00AM
\$25 per person, tours last one hour
Reservations are required: monolake.org/canoe
or (760) 647-6595
Sorry, no kids under the age of 4

Guided canoe tours provide a unique look at the ecology and geology of this high desert lake. No canoe experience is necessary and all equipment is provided. Discover bubbling springs, alkali flies, brine shrimp, underwater tufa towers, migrating birds, and crystalline water, all from the unique vantage point of a canoe.

you are part of the Mono Lake story.



ARVA DEGENHARDT

Free walking tours at South Tufa

Daily at 10:00AM, 1:00PM, and 6:00PM

Tours are free, but there is \$3 per person entrance fee for the South Tufa Area

Meet at the South Tufa parking lot

Find out why Mono Lake is so salty, taste an alkali fly, make tufa, and catch a glimpse of thousands of phalaropes or Eared Grebes on one of these fascinating and free hour-long walks.

The Mono Lake story is not over

The Committee works in public policy, ecological restoration, public education, water conservation, scientific research, and hands-on stewardship. We continue to strive for thoughtful solutions—an approach that has been consistently successful for Mono Lake.

We protect Mono Lake. Challenges facing Mono Lake include demands for water, poorly-planned development, increasing recreational use, underfunded management agencies, and climate change, among others. The Committee works to balance competing needs in a way that protects Mono Lake.

We restore Mono Lake. Restoration work at Mono Lake seeks to achieve healthy, self-supporting lake and stream systems that will thrive into the future. Rejuvenating the Mono Basin ecosystem's dynamic natural processes is the

way to heal the damage caused by 50 years of excessive water diversions.

We focus on education at Mono Lake. The Committee offers hands-on programs to share the sense of wonder that Mono Lake evokes. South Tufa tours, canoe tours, activities for school groups, field seminars, and the annual Bird Chautauqua all provide ways to learn more about Mono Lake. In addition, the Outdoor Education Center brings students from Los Angeles to the Mono Basin to learn about the source of their water, educating the next generation of California's policymakers.

We support sound science. Science is the base of our policy work, a guide for restoration, and an inspiration for understanding Mono Lake. The Committee supports and works closely with researchers, hosts a comprehensive research library, and runs the Mono Basin Field Station to enhance the scientific knowledge of Mono Lake, its tributary streams, and the surrounding lands.

Long Live Mono Lake

Mono Lake is a great success story, and you can be a part of it! Add your voice to the 16,000 members 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.

Join us on a walking tour, canoe tour, volunteer restoration day, or a field seminar. Check out Mono Lake online at monolake.org for action alerts, letter-writing campaigns, webcams, bird sightings, weather updates, and fun activities happening year-round. By staying connected to Mono Lake, you can help ensure its protection for generations to come. ❖



ELIN LILJUNG

Free bird walks at County Park

Fridays and Sundays at 8:00AM

Meet at the Mono Lake County Park, tours last 1½–2 hours

Magic is literally flying and flitting through the air in the Mono Basin. Join a resident expert to see everything from shorebirds to songbirds on a free tour for all levels of birders. Bring binoculars and a bird book if you have them (not required).

Keep up with Mono Lake



monolake.org



Mono Lake
Mono Lake Committee



@Mono_Lake
@MonoLakeCmte



monolakeca
#mono6392



(760) 647-6595



info@monolake.org

2014 Andrea Lawrence Award presented

by Emma Oschrin

On the blustery evening of April 26, friends and family of Andrea Mead Lawrence gathered at Parallax Restaurant on Mammoth Mountain to continue the tradition of honoring Andrea's legacy.

Andrea was a two-time Olympic gold medalist, local environmental champion, and Mono Lake Committee board member. Since her passing in 2009, the Mono Lake Committee has hosted the Andrea Lawrence Award Dinner to celebrate Andrea and to present the award she created to a person or group that shares her passion for the environment, community, and collaboration.

This year, the California Department of Fish & Wildlife (DFW) received the award for its dedicated work to achieve the Mono Basin Stream Restoration Agreement (see page 4).

DFW Senior Environmental Scientist Specialist Steve Parmenter and Senior Staff Counsel Nancee Murray were in attendance to accept the award. Their extraordinary willingness to surpass the requirements of their respective positions in order to achieve the

Agreement exemplified the tenets of the Andrea Lawrence Award.

Although the clouds that evening shrouded the view of Mt. Andrea Lawrence, all enjoyed stories of Andrea over wonderful food while spending time with good friends in celebration of passionate engagement in community and the land.

The Committee is honored to help keep Andrea's memory and legacy alive in the Eastern Sierra. The evening would not be possible without the generous and continued support of Mammoth Mountain Ski Area, the Lawrence family, and the dinner guests. We would love to have you join us for the next Andrea Lawrence Award Dinner—keep an eye on monolake.org. ❖



Quentin Lawrence, left, with Department of Fish & Wildlife staff Steve Parmenter and Nancee Murray, and Geoff McQuilkin with the 2014 Andrea Lawrence Award.

Third annual Wild & Scenic Film Festival—Los Angeles

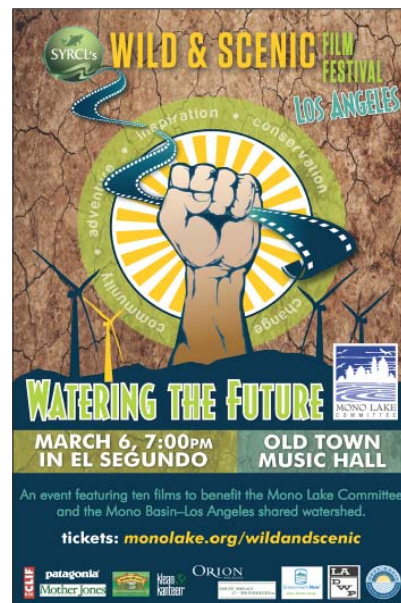
by Julia Frankenbach

In early March, the Mono Lake Committee hosted its third Wild & Scenic Film Festival—Los Angeles at the Old Town Music Hall in El Segundo. Recognizing film as a powerful tool for connecting with people, the Committee brings the film festival to Los Angeles each year to strengthen ties between the Mono Basin and the people directly connected to its water.

This year, the lively audience of members and new friends enjoyed eight adventure and environmental films on the theme of “watering the future.” Audience favorites included: *Cascade*, a profile on daring waterfall kayakers; *Backyard*, a compilation of testimonials about living near water-intensive hydraulic fracturing projects;

and *Nord for Sola*, a story about two young men who build an Arctic beach home out of washed-up plastic so they can surf and snowboard to their heart's content. The screening came complete with a live Wurlitzer organ performance synchronized to a silent film for a fun night of music, film, new friends, and reinforced water connections.

Many thanks to our volunteers and sponsors: the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power; Environment Now; West Basin Municipal Water District; Shute, Mihaly, & Weinberger; Patagonia; Clif Bar; Mother Jones Magazine; Sierra Nevada Brewing Company; Klean Kanteen; and Orion Magazine. For updates on next year's festival see monolake.org/wildandscenic.



2014 Field Seminars



BARTSIE MILLER

Visions of the Past: First Discoveries

June 7–8 • Terri Geissinger
\$155 per person / \$140 for members

The Mono Basin is filled with monuments to a bustling past—take a journey back in time and discover its fascinating history. The past will spring to life as you hear stories of the discoverers, the prospectors, and the families who settled here and made the Mono Basin their home. Visit Dogtown, Monoville, Bodie (with a special visit to the Bodie Bluff!), Mono Mills, stagecoach routes, railroads, and gold mines. Terri Geissinger is a Bodie State Historic Park interpreter and guide with a contagious love of history.

South Shore Kayak

June 14 • Stuart Wilkinson & Committee staff
\$105 per person / \$95 for members
limited to 12 participants

Early summer reveals snow-capped mountains towering over a glassy Mono Lake—a great time to kayak! Join Stuart Wilkinson and a Mono Lake Committee staff member for a guided naturalist expedition that will cover a wide variety of topics relating to this unusual Great Basin lake, such

as geology, ecology, history, and politics. Expect to see underwater tufa towers, birds, brine shrimp, and lake-bottom springs. Some kayak experience is helpful, but not necessary; kayaks and safety equipment are provided.

Capturing the Mono Basin in Pastel

June 27–29 • Ane Carla Rovetta
\$175 per person / \$160 for members
\$40 materials fee
limited to 12 participants

The sparkling light and radiant skies of the Mono Basin are pure inspiration. Add a set of brilliant pastel chalks and your own unique imagination, and you have an incredible weekend of color exploration and art. Landscape painter Ane Carla Rovetta is known for her realistic depiction of western landscapes. She will guide students through a value system she modeled after Ansel Adams' work that will help organize the overwhelming hues of the summer terrain. Each participant will go home with at least one small finished painting and several sketches, color studies, and value experiments that will fuel future artistic endeavors. Ane Carla can provide you with your own set of 72 pastel chalks; *you must reserve your set when you sign up for the class.*

**Mono Lake Committee Field Seminars fill quickly every year—
call (760) 647-6595 or register online at monolake.org/seminars.**

Mono Basin & Bodie Photography

July 11–13 • David Gubernick

\$300 per person / \$275 for members

limited to 12 participants

Join this warm and supportive field seminar to enhance your photo-taking abilities in the uniquely beautiful Mono Basin and at the world-renowned Bodie State Historic Park. Field trips and classroom sessions will combine to cover a multitude of photographic topics. Plus, the group will visit Bodie for private after-hours evening access. David Gubernick is an internationally and nationally published and award-winning nature photographer and workshop leader. His exhibition prints can be seen at Gallery Sur in Carmel and the Ventana Inn & Spa in Big Sur.



PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVID GUBERNICK

South Tufa photographed by instructor David Gubernick.

Summer Birds of the Mono Basin

July 11–13 • David Wimpfheimer

\$165 per person / \$150 for members

This field seminar will concentrate on the identification and ecology of birds that breed in the Mono Basin and others that migrate to Mono Lake during the summer. In sagebrush meadows and riparian and montane forests, the class will explore a number of sites—mixing short leisurely walks with periods of observation and natural history discussion. A major focus will be Mono Lake and surrounding wetlands where phalaropes and other shorebirds feed. David Wimpfheimer has been an educator and interpreter for over 20 years, focusing on birds and California's natural history.

Los Angeles Aqueduct Tour

July 19 • Greg Reis

\$105 per person / \$95 for members

The Mono Basin extension of the Los Angeles Aqueduct began transporting water 350 miles south to the City of LA in 1941. 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. The group will discuss the history of water diversions, the effort to save Mono Lake, and the future of habitat restoration. Greg Reis is the Committee's Information & Restoration Specialist with nearly 20 years of experience in Mono Basin hydrology and restoration.



ELIN Ljung

Searching for pikas in the high country during the mammals seminar.

Mono Basin Streams: Flow, Fish, Forests, & Feathers

July 20 • Greg Reis

\$75 per person / \$65 for members

The new Mono Basin Stream Restoration Agreement reached with the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power will begin changing the Mono Basin's streams for better in the next few years. Join the Committee's Information & Restoration Specialist Greg Reis for a tour of Lee Vining and Rush creeks to see and discuss evolving restoration philosophies, the process of reaching the Stream Restoration Agreement, and what the expected results are for flows, fish, trees, birds, mammals, and Mono Lake.

Mono Basin Mammals

July 25–27 • John Harris

\$155 per person / \$140 for members

This class will cover the diversity of mammals found in the Mono Basin, from desert sand dunes to forests and alpine meadows of the high Sierra. More mammals occur here than in many states, and the group will try to see as

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

many as possible by live-trapping and field observation. Participants will look for tracks and learn to identify skulls, focusing on identification and adaptations to Mono's varied environments. John Harris is a Professor of Biology at Mills College whose interest in Mono's mammals began in 1975 while studying chipmunks as an undergraduate.

Introduction to High Country Plants & Habitats

August 1–3 • Ann Howald

\$165 per person / \$150 for members

This class will explore the mosaic of habitats found in the Eastern Sierra high country—flower-filled meadows fed by meandering streams, sagebrush-covered slopes, lodgepole pine forests, subalpine lakes bordered by willows, and flowery rock gardens. Sight identification of common trees, shrubs, and wildflowers will be emphasized, as well as the many ways that plants, birds, insects, and other wildlife interact in high country habitats. Ann Howald is a retired consulting botanist who has taught popular Committee field seminars for over ten years.

Mono Basin Moonlight Photography

August 8–10 • David Gubernick

\$275 per person / \$250 for members

limited to 10 participants

Nighttime photography opens up a new world of photographic possibilities, both compelling and challenging. Through guided practice sessions, field trips in the Mono Basin and upper reaches of the Eastern Sierra, coaching in the field, and review of images, you will learn to create nighttime images with visual impact. David Gubernick is an internationally and nationally published and award-winning nature photographer and workshop leader. His exhibition prints can be seen at Gallery Sur in Carmel and the Ventana Inn & Spa in Big Sur.

Geology of the Mono Basin

August 15–17 • Greg Stock

\$165 per person / \$150 for members

From volcanic craters to glacial moraines, earthquake faults to tufa towers, the Mono Basin displays some of the most unique, spectacular, and accessible geology anywhere in the world. This seminar, consisting mostly of field visits to the premier sites, will present in understandable fashion the geologic stories of the Mono Basin. Greg Stock is the first ever Yosemite National Park geologist. He has authored or co-authored over 50 papers and abstracts on Sierra Nevada geology and is co-author of the book *Geology Underfoot in Yosemite National Park*.

Loosen Up with Watercolor

August 22–24 • Penny Otwell

\$175 per person / \$160 for members

limited to 12 participants

With larger brushes and brilliant transparent watercolor, learn to express your vision of the remarkable landscape of the Mono Basin through this field seminar. Painting exercises focusing on design and color will form the basis of this class for beginner to intermediate painters while working both indoors and outdoors. Instructor Penny Otwell paints professionally in the Sierra Nevada, and her distinctive style has evolved as a self-taught painter. Her work has been influenced by the work of Chiura Obata, Maynard Dixon, Edgar Payne, and Wayne Thiebaud.

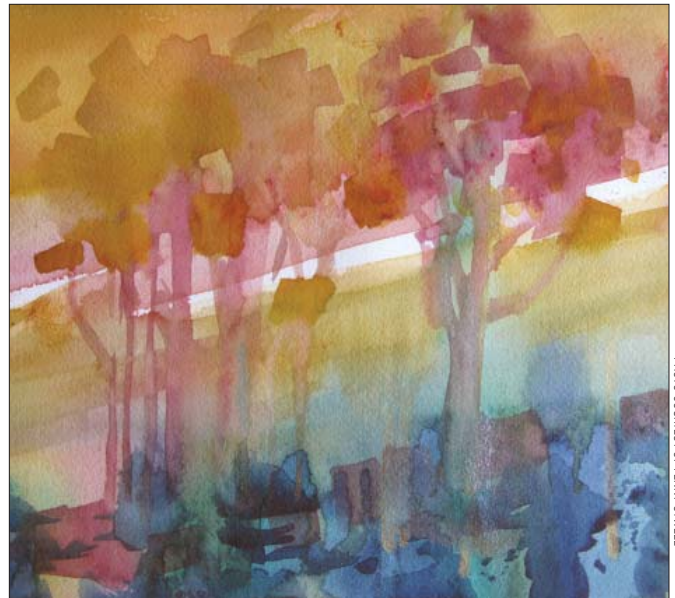


PHOTO COURTESY OF PENNY OTWELL

Watercolor of aspen trees by instructor Penny Otwell.

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

September 6–7 • John Wehausen

\$180 per person / \$165 for members

This field seminar will involve discussions of the fascinating biology of the federally endangered Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep, their relationship with other mammals (including mountain lions and humans), and their conservation in the field. Past participants saw bighorn 14 out of the last 15 years—while there is a very good chance of seeing bighorn sheep during this seminar, there is no guarantee. John Wehausen has been studying the Sierra Nevada bighorn and working for their conservation since 1974. *Please be aware that this seminar involves very strenuous hiking at the 10,000-foot elevation and above.*



ARYA DEGENHARDT

The Mono Basin's diverse habitats, from alpine meadows to sagebrush scrub, make for excellent birding.

Creating the Illuminated Field Journal

September 12–14 • Hannah Hinchman
\$175 per person / \$160 for members
limited to 12 participants

A field journal is an ideal vehicle to record moments of discovery about the natural world, as well as a quiet way of simply being present outdoors. In this workshop, artist/writer Hannah Hinchman will guide you in exploring the variety of nearby habitats—opening windows to nature's many secrets and learning to personalize these experiences through journal entries, both drawn and written. Hannah is the author of three books about field journals, and has been teaching field journal workshops all over the US for over 20 years.

Birding the Migration: Mono Basin & Bridgeport Valley

September 18–19 • Dave Shuford
\$190 per person / \$175 for members

Birding the Migration: Mono Basin & Long Valley

September 20–21 • Dave Shuford
\$155 per person / \$140 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, autumn is the time of year to see late fall migrants and early arriving wintering birds in the Mono Basin, Bridgeport Valley, and Long Valley. Dave Shuford has been a staff biologist at Point Blue Conservation Science for over 30 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.

Visions of the Past: Bodie, Masonic, Aurora

September 20–21 • Terri Geissinger
\$155 per person / \$140 for members

In the Bodie Hills lie three ghost towns full of stories of pioneer families, prospectors, muleskinners, heroes, and gunslingers. This guided tour will visit the town and the cemetery of Bodie, once the second-largest city in California. Next, visit the rock cabins and foundations of Masonic, where 500 people resided in a beautiful canyon—mining gold with great hope and eventually producing considerable wealth. The last stop is Aurora, once a bustling town of 8,000 souls in the 1860s. Your leader Terri Geissinger is a Bodie State Historic Park interpreter and guide with a talent for making history come alive.

Geology of the Mono Basin

October 3–5 • Greg Stock
\$165 per person / \$150 for members

From volcanic craters to glacial moraines, earthquake faults to tufa towers, the Mono Basin displays some of the most unique, spectacular, and accessible geology anywhere in the world. This seminar, consisting mostly of field visits to the premier sites, will present in understandable fashion the geologic stories of the Mono Basin. Greg Stock is the first ever Yosemite National Park geologist. He has authored or co-authored over 50 papers and abstracts on Sierra Nevada geology and is co-author of the book *Geology Underfoot in Yosemite National Park*.

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

Arborglyphs & Aspen Natural History

October 4–5 • Richard Potashin & Nancy Hadlock
\$180 per person / \$165 for members

A century of sheep grazing brought Basque sheepherders into the Mono Basin's aspen-bordered meadows, and they left numerous carvings—arborglyphs—on the aspens. Join the instructors for an enchanting journey into the aspen groves to explore this historic art form and to learn about the wildlife, insects, and birds that are drawn to the groves. Richard Potashin has been discovering and documenting aspen carvings for many years. Nancy Hadlock has been a naturalist, interpreter, and educator for the National Park Service and US Forest Service for over 30 years.

Mono Basin Fall Photography

October 10–12 • Richard Knepp
\$225 per person / \$200 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. Join accomplished photographer Richard Knepp to explore varied shoreline locations at sunrise and sunset, fall color in nearby canyons, and grand overviews of the Mono Basin. Photographers of all levels are welcome; a fully adjustable camera of any size or format is suggested. This is the 20th year in a row of this popular seminar.



PHOTO COURTESY OF PHIL LINDSAV

An autumn dawn along Mono Lake's western shore.

Field Seminar Registration Information

To register for a field seminar, please call the Mono Lake Committee at (760) 647-6595 and ask for the seminar desk, or register online at monolake.org/seminars.

More extensive seminar descriptions are available online at monolake.org/seminars.

We accept VISA, MasterCard, and Discover only. We cannot accept personal checks or registration by mail or email. Seminars are limited to 15 participants except where noted. If a seminar receives less than six participants (with some exceptions) 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 issued *for any reason* if cancellation is within three weeks of field seminar date, but tuition can be applied to another seminar that takes place within one calendar year of cancellation date.

New in 2014: If you cancel within one week of the seminar start date, no credit can be issued.

Participants must sign a liability release form. All seminars operate under permits from the Inyo National Forest and California State Park system.

The Mono Lake 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 this magnificent outdoor setting for a reasonable cost. Proceeds from 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 to register early and receive class discounts. If you are not a current member of the Mono Lake Committee, you can receive the discount by joining when you register.

Registration
opens every year
on February 1st
for members.



State Water Board hearings about Mono Lake took 43 days in 1994.

in precipitation result in larger lake level fluctuations?

The science of stream restoration

The streams have shown remarkable recovery in certain ways—adding water to dry channels does wonderful things for trees and fisheries. At the same time, infrastructure limitations of the Los Angeles Aqueduct have held back restoration. In the 20 years since D1631, the streams have received a tremendous amount of scientific investigation.

Happily, here at the 20-year mark, we can celebrate that we are turning that scientific knowledge into the next wave of on-the-ground stream restoration. Last year's landmark Mono Basin Stream Restoration Agreement (see page 4) is a turning point in restoring Rush, Lee Vining, Parker, and Walker creeks to health. Construction of the new outlet in Grant Dam and the implementation of streamflows that mimic natural snowmelt patterns will be a huge restoration advance. The Committee's job is to make sure these settlement provisions are fully implemented.

The surprises of two decades

Even with the best studies in hand, you can be sure that natural systems will develop and change in unexpected ways over time. For the Mono Lake ecosystem, some surprises have happened since 1994, and Mono Lake restoration must take them into account.

Lake mixing dynamics

Mono Lake commonly stratifies for part of the year when warm and less saline upper waters are too light to mix with denser, colder deep waters. During this time, nutrients collect in the lower levels of the lake and are unavailable to phytoplankton and brine shrimp. The colder temperatures and windy conditions of winter typically cause this stratification to break down, resulting in a full mixing of lake nutrients and waters.

In the eight years after the State Water board decision, what came as a surprise was the onset of meromixis—

persistent stratification conditions. A series of wet winters produced high freshwater inflows; with the lake at half its natural size, stratification locked in, trapping nutrients and limiting the lake's productivity. Meromixis broke down naturally in 2003; however, it continues to confound long-term trend analysis in lake productivity today.

Brine shrimp dynamics

A clear long-term trend of change has emerged in the dynamics of the Mono Lake brine shrimp population—the annual population pattern is shifting in time. In the spring, the first generation of shrimp to hatch is more numerous and emerges earlier than in decades past. By autumn, the total shrimp population tends to be smaller in numbers and to decline more rapidly. This means that Mono Lake continues to be an excellent food resource for gulls, phalaropes, and grebes, but the best season for snacking is shifting earlier in the year. This is likely causing millions of Eared Grebes to migrate south earlier in the fall than they used to.

Large-scale dynamic change of this kind would be hidden from us without consistent scientific monitoring to understand Mono Lake. The Committee continues to safeguard the integrity of the State Water Board-mandated Mono Lake limnology monitoring program. The Committee also sponsors species-level monitoring of California Gulls, and arranges a volunteer effort to census Eared Grebes.

Osprey thrive

In 1994, the State Water Board cautiously noted that its decision “may have some beneficial effect on ospreys.” How right they turned out to be: Osprey have joined gulls, grebes, and phalaropes as emblematic birds for Mono Lake visitors. Their large nests balance atop tufa towers around the lake and they thrive on the fish of the rewatered tributary streams. Ten nests were active last year, fledging an impressive 20 chicks. The inspiring sight of an Osprey swooping above tufa with a trout in its talons is a marker of the widespread benefits of protecting Mono Lake.

The ongoing work of the public trust

Be it brine shrimp health, flocks of phalaropes, stream restoration, or protection of air quality, the many dimensions of the 1994 State Water Board decision are all part of protecting Mono Lake and its outstanding public trust resources.

Public trust protection has often been envisioned as a legal action done at a single moment in time—in a ruling, decision, or order. At Mono Lake, 20 years have taught us that, instead, public trust protection is continual, constant work. It is the duty of the State Water Board. It is an obligation of DWP. It most certainly is the work of the Mono Lake Committee and all of us who care for this special place. In the words of the late public trust scholar Professor Joseph Sax, “it is the ongoing willingness of society to invest in public trust protection that demonstrates its lasting significance.” ❖

conservation and to protect places like Mono Lake and get paid for it, now is your chance.

We will be sorry to see Mono Lake drop this summer, but we know that it will eventually rise again, and with State Water Board Decision 1631 in place, there is a measured plan to respond to a fluctuating lake level based on climate variability.

The Olympics are now a memory, but weather and climate

are always in motion, dynamic over time. With cautious optimism, we focus on the Pacific Ocean as westerly wind bursts, an equatorial Kelvin wave, and weakening trade winds whisper hope of an El Niño event and a winter that could make us forget about the one we just had. ❖

Bartshé Miller is the Committee's Education Director. He checks weather and climate blogs daily for El Niño predictions.

to put up and take down every day. If you plan to drive on Highway 395 near Old Marina during summer 2015, please be aware that this area will be an active construction zone, and be patient.

Project timeline

The construction timeline is mainly dependent on how long the drilling and anchor installation process takes, but could also be affected by adverse weather conditions. According to Wesling, the best-case scenario is that construction would be finished by early December 2015.

The more likely scenario, however, is that the construction would extend through two summer seasons, and would be completed no later than fall 2016.

This short-term disturbance will prevent future erosion and unsafe rockfall events, allow for successful revegetation in the long term, and increase the scenic value of this beautiful stretch of highway. As this project moves forward, the Mono Lake Committee will continue to work with Caltrans to ensure the best possible outcome—for the traveling public and for the long-term health of the Mono Basin. ❖

Regardless, the County's rejection of the SCE easement permit will neither prevent the return conveyance construction nor the legal distribution of water. Ultimately, the County will have to live within its legal allocation of water.

Environmental benefits of restoring Mill Creek

Mill Creek once supported acres of mature riparian forest interlaced with meandering channels, deep pools, and runs spreading across a wide valley floor—an oasis for birds, mammals, and trout in an otherwise arid Great Basin landscape. Today, there is only a narrow swath of vegetation adjacent to the main creek channel, and the trees and shrubs are showing signs of stress and degradation.

Over the past 20 years Mill Creek has received less than half of the water it should lawfully receive according to the water rights adjudicated in 1914. The lack of water in Mill Creek has caused large, majestic cottonwoods in the creek's lower reaches to die and has compromised the entire riparian system. At times, Mill Creek barely makes it all the way to Mono Lake.

The Mono Lake Committee's success with stream restoration in the south Mono Basin has instructed us on the principles necessary to restore these creek systems. A science-based approach for how to balance a finite amount of water among multiple uses is key.

On Rush, Lee Vining, Parker, and Walker creeks a balance was struck between competing uses for water, and it can be done for Mill Creek too. The SCE return pipe will remove the primary obstacle to the creek's natural ability to heal itself:

water. Once the water returns, Mill Creek is poised to make a remarkable recovery.

Future vision for Conway Ranch

The Committee's vision for the north Mono Basin is quite simple and builds upon decades of work that has established solid foundations for Mill Creek restoration and the protection of Conway Ranch. The best part is that the two are not mutually exclusive and complement each other well, enhancing the collective value of the area.

Restoring Mill Creek begins in earnest once the return conveyance pipe is constructed. Returning the water that rightfully belongs in Mill Creek will benefit the creek in many ways. Large trees and other vegetation will return, resident trout populations will be healthy, and wildlife that depend on rare Great Basin cottonwood-willow stream systems will thrive.

A conservation easement on Conway Ranch will protect in perpetuity all the values that Mono County and the Mono Basin community have struggled to protect all these years—open space, wildlife corridors, cultural resources, and wetland habitat—while allowing historic uses such as sheep grazing and fish-rearing to continue.

If Mono County and the Eastern Sierra Land Trust are successful at navigating and securing a conservation easement for Conway Ranch and if the County gets its lands and water rights in order and plays fair, good things will happen for all. ❖

Staff migrations

by Rosanne Catron

Each spring, soon after I see the first robin, I hear the sharp cry of a single gull arriving early in the basin. Within weeks, there are chattering flocks of Yellow-headed Blackbirds decorating the trees. And soon after that, new birds of a very different sort turn up at the Mono Lake Committee—the new seasonal staff, ready for a summer at Mono Lake.

Our first staff migration is a big one—all the way from Vermont. We are pleased to welcome Information Center & Bookstore Manager **Barbara Ball** to the Mono Lake Committee. Barbara brings years of non-profit experience, and we're so happy to have her on the team.

This year we are fortunate to have a number of returning staff, including Project Specialist **Emma Oschrin**. Emma stayed on through the winter to lend her hand to such projects as the Andrea Lawrence Award Dinner, and we are very pleased she'll be staying through this summer as well.

Information Center & Bookstore Assistant **Will Dluger** majored in Physics at the University of Illinois, and has a passion for Mono Lake and the natural world. Returning Information Center & Bookstore Assistant **Christine Weedman** is back to share her knowledge of the Mono Basin with visitors for another summer—welcome back, Tina!

Julia Frankenbach stayed on with us through the winter as Project Specialist, and is returning to the Canoe Coordinator position this summer. Her enthusiasm for the

canoe program knows no bounds.

We are pleased to welcome Outdoor Education Intern **Melissa Boyd** to the team for the summer. Melissa hails from Oregon, where she majored in Biology at Southern Oregon University.

Volunteers **Erv Nichols** and **Sandra Noll** will be sharing the Birding Intern position and bring years of interpretive and birding experience from around California and beyond.

We welcome four Mono Lake Interns to the crew for the summer: After another year at UC San Diego, intern **Julie Curtis** will be returning to the Mono Basin with her good cheer—we're glad to have you back, Julie! Intern **Adam Dalton** attends Grinnell College, majoring in Economics and Chinese Studies. After graduating from Humboldt State University, **Robert Di Paolo** has managed a bakery and conducted field work at Redwood National and State Parks. Intern **Lily Pastel** graduated from Humboldt State University this May with a BS in Environmental Science.

If you are in the Mono Basin for the summer, be sure to stop by our Information Center & Bookstore to meet our fantastic crew. ❖

Rosanne Catron is the Committee's Office Director. She loves walking the Lee Vining Creek trail with her husband, son, and two dogs.

Volunteering at Mono Lake

As you wander along the lakeshore this summer, you may see people with binoculars, in "Mono Lake Volunteer" shirts, enthusiastically sharing their knowledge of Mono Lake with visitors.

They are part of the Mono Lake Volunteer Program, a joint initiative sponsored by the US Forest Service, California State Parks (the Mono Lake Tufa State Natural Reserve), and the Mono Lake Committee, with support from the Eastern Sierra Interpretive Association. Last year, volunteers dedicated over 2,000 hours to interpretive programs, outreach at Mono Lake, restoration, and a variety of other projects throughout the basin.

One area of focus for Mono Lake Volunteers is removing invasive plants from the lakeshore and tributary streams. When invasive plants are removed, native plants have a chance to flourish. Last summer, volunteers pulled 1,064.9 pounds of invasive white sweet clover and woolly mullein along Mill Creek, Mono Lake's third-largest tributary.

The Mono Lake Volunteer training has already concluded for the 2014 season, but there are still a variety of restoration events you can join. If you are interested in participating, please contact Rosanne



Volunteers help keep invasive white sweet clover from taking over native plant habitat at Mill Creek.

Catron (rose@monolake.org) at (760) 647-6595.

Mono Lake Volunteers are an integral part of the visitor experience in the Mono Basin. If you are at the lakeshore and see a volunteer, be sure to ask them about Mono Lake, and thank them for the important work they do!



From the mailbag

News from members and friends

by Ellen King

In my job at the membership desk I hear happy Mono Lake stories every day. Recently I was chatting with two of our longtime members, and I was amazed to learn that they had been on one of Sally Gaines' first canoe tours in 1978! We agreed that being out on Mono Lake is something special that every visitor should experience.

Thank you to all of you who sent in contributions this season. We appreciate these gifts that help us carry on the work that will keep Mono Lake a special place for many generations and that help keep our canoes afloat.

In honor

Angela Moskow of Albany sent a contribution in honor of **Peter Vorster**, the Mono Lake Committee's longtime consulting hydrologist extraordinaire.

In memory

Dee Beckstrom of Chula Vista gave a gift in memory of his wife **Guin Beckstrom**. **Oswald Da Ros** of Santa Barbara sent a contribution in memory of **Jerry Jamertz**, who loved the Mono Basin. **Angelika Geiger** of San Francisco made a donation in memory of **Don Schmoldt**. **Donna Miguelgorry** of San Jose gave a gift in memory of her brother **James Miguelgorry**.

Danielle More and her family donated eight albums full of Mono Lake benchmark photographs (see page 13) taken by her grandfather, **Jay B. More**, who passed away in 2012—thank you for this great historical record!

Alyssa Wilhelm of Washington, DC sent a contribution in memory of **Richard S. Gerdes**. **Barbara Woelpert** of Los Angeles made a donation in memory of her husband **Don Woelpert** “for all of the wonderful times Don and I had during our visits to Mono Lake and surrounding areas.”

Allan & Linda Biaggi of Minden, NV and **Janet Rose** of Silver City, NV gave gifts in memory of **Lori Buck**. **Patrick & Susan Allen** of Newport Beach and **Jackie Smiley** of Corona Del Mar sent contributions in memory of **Debby Wakeman**.

We received gifts in memory of

Karlene Campo from Glen & **Suzanne Chappell** of Redlands, **Kenneth & Kathryn Green** of Coeur d'Alene, ID, **James Herman** of Glendora, **Charlotte Rutkowska** of Yorba Linda, and **Lee Swanberg** of Rancho Cucamonga.

Farewell Joe Sax

Professor **Joseph L. Sax**, who laid the legal foundation for the application of the Public Trust Doctrine to natural resource protection, passed away on March 9, 2014. The public trust has been most notably applied at Mono Lake, where the protections from excessive water diversions flow straight back to the 1983 California Supreme Court decision that was substantially informed by his visionary work.

Last spring the Mono Lake Committee awarded Professor Sax

the 2013 Defender of the Trust Award. Professor Sax advocated the need for continuing involvement by state agencies and the public in stewardship and the implementation of the public trust doctrine. Here at the Committee we continue those efforts every day, and we do it with Professor Sax as inspiration. ❖

Ellen King is the Committee's Membership Coordinator. She is looking forward to relaxing in the desert, climbing higher and higher in search of the last of the wildflowers.



Joseph Sax, 1936–2014.



A third-generation Monophile, Everett Schiller tries out the head of the table as Geoff McQuilkin and Vireo Gaines Schiller prepare for a Committee Board of Directors meeting.



MONO LAKE COMMITTEE

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PHOTO COURTESY OF RICHARD EBB

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canoe MONO LAKE

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**Weekend canoe tours on Mono Lake offered
throughout the summer. Call (760) 647-6595 or visit
monolake.org/canoe for reservations.**