

# MONO LAKE

N E W S L E T T E R

Fall 2020



# W

hat a different world this is than when I last wrote this note in the *Mono Lake Newsletter*. Just as the Winter & Spring 2020 issue was mailed, we headed home and hunkered down.

We saw the year emptied of joyous Mono Lake gatherings—the Bird Chautauqua, Field Seminars, canoe tours, more. But just as quickly, we filled it back up with new and long-deferred projects like virtual tours, renovating the website, and increasing our efforts to be more a diverse, equitable, inclusive, and just organization.

I keep seeing the dualities of this situation like a coin flipping back and forth.

We miss the camaraderie and easy exchange of ideas of the office and the busy hum of members in the bookstore. But we have found new flexibility—adapting to working from home, providing services safely, carrying on with remote schooling happening just feet away—whatever we need to do to keep working on behalf of Mono Lake.

Mono Lake's story, too, is full of these dualities—the two sides of a coin.

The Los Angeles Aqueduct was built with the singular purpose: to take water away from the Mono Basin. But when the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power fulfills the commitments made in signing the 2013 Stream Restoration Agreement, the aqueduct can be a part of actively helping restore the Mono Basin as well.

Those who drink water from the Mono Basin at their homes in Los Angeles receive that water from the system that damaged Mono Lake. But they are also some of the lake's biggest champions, fiercest supporters, conscientious voters, and most steadfast Committee members.

During such a hard time, I hope we all can keep flipping the coin, finding the bright moments that will get us through. I hope reading this *Newsletter* is as bright a moment for you as it has been for us to put together. Thank you for your support, always, and especially right now.

—Elin Ljung, Communications Coordinator



COVER: CALIFORNIA GULLS NESTING ON TWAIN ISLET, 2020. COURTESY OF POINT BLUE CONSERVATION SCIENCE

SANTIAGO ESCOBAR

In June, 80 community members marched in a Black Lives Matter protest in Lee Vining, which was organized by Lee Vining High School students and recent graduates. The Mono Lake Committee made a statement in support of Black lives, with a commitment to become a more antiracist organization, which you can read in full at [monolake.org/blacklivesmatter](http://monolake.org/blacklivesmatter).

## Mono Lake Committee Mission

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



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Founded by David Gaines in 1978

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**NEWSLETTER**

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# DWP attempts to undermine State Water Board mandates

by Geoffrey McQuilkin

**T**he Los Angeles Department of Water & Power (DWP) launched a brazen strategy earlier this year to undermine the California State Water Resources Control Board mandate to protect and restore Mono Lake.

In the spring, DWP abruptly announced it wouldn't fulfill certain obligations to restore Rush, Lee Vining, Parker, and Walker creeks unless it received new water export guarantees in the entirely separate matter of restoring Mono Lake to its healthy management level.

In response to this unexpected and alarming turn of events, the Mono Lake Committee has mounted a firm response and mobilized staff, attorneys, and expert advisors to remind DWP and Los Angeles leaders of DWP's obligations to restore the streams to health and, separately, to raise Mono Lake.

The problem took off in May when DWP announced that it would not release a long-delayed, yet nearly complete, environmental document

despite a scheduled commitment to the State Water Board to do so. The document is a straightforward but essential component of the ongoing State Water Board process of implementing science-based improvements to its ordered stream restoration program.

In fact, for years, DWP has been slowing down State Water Board implementation of the landmark 2013 Stream Restoration Agreement, which provided consensus on science-based stream restoration measures and was signed by DWP, the Committee, California Trout, and the California Department of Fish & Wildlife. DWP previously promised delivery of the document in 2016 and had even completed the public review process before holding it up internally.

## **Weaken lake protection?**

By summer we learned that DWP was planning much worse than its typical delay tactics. DWP proposed that it would deliver the withheld

environmental document and follow through on its stream restoration commitments—if the Agreement parties provided new guarantees about water exports.

Don't worry if you are scratching your head trying to understand how DWP thinks fulfilling existing commitments is a bargaining chip—so were we.

What new guarantees did DWP want? Nothing to do with stream restoration, or the Agreement. Instead it jumped into the entirely separate matter of restoring Mono Lake. It would meet the stream restoration obligations, DWP offered, in exchange for weakening its Mono Lake restoration obligations.

DWP went even further, rolling out unfounded claims that the Agreement contained precisely the provisions it wanted. When asked to point those out, DWP conceded the claims weren't explicitly in the language of the Agreement. Subsequently DWP said that it simultaneously supported but also wanted to alter the Agreement.

The answer to all these games and false arguments is a definitive “no.” The Committee made that abundantly clear at multiple points through the summer, as did our stream restoration partners at CalTrout and Fish & Wildlife.

## **What is DWP really up to?**

Because excessive water diversions by DWP drastically lowered Mono Lake, it is now, 26 years later, still rising from dangerously low levels toward that safe management level. The State Water Board's fundamental Mono Lake ruling requires that the lake be managed at a long-term ecologically healthy level, which it identified after extensive analysis in the landmark Mono Lake decision in 1994.

As the summer wore on we learned

*Continued on page 4*



SANDRA NOLL

*DWP is claiming that Mono Lake has “largely been restored” when it still has more than ten feet to rise to reach the State Water Board-mandated management level.*

more about DWP's intent to interfere with this fundamental mandate. An internal talking points document that was made public falsely claimed that Mono Lake has "largely been restored," suggesting DWP intends to make a case that the lake will be fine without rising to the management level at all. We've heard that before—30 years ago from DWP attorneys arguing in courtrooms and hearing rooms that the lake didn't need protection.

DWP's talking points on paper, unsurprisingly, don't have much to do with the facts on the ground. For example, the lake is only 40% of the way to the mandated healthy level, Mono Lake's exposed lakebed is the source of the largest particulate (PM<sub>10</sub>) dust storms in the nation, and we're less than two drought years away from the lake falling to a level at which predators could once again walk the exposed landbridge to prey on one of the world's largest California Gull nesting colonies.

So why make such a claim? DWP is apparently worried that the State Water Board will look at the status of Mono Lake and modify diversion criteria—in other words, how much water DWP can take annually—to accelerate the rise of Mono Lake to its mandated healthy

level. Indeed, the State Water Board decision contains a plan for a hearing to check on the status of the lake's rise and to consider such amendments to present-day diversion criteria. It is reasonable resource management to ensure that the lake restoration goal is met, but DWP's wish list of new guarantees undermines the value of such a hearing.

The Committee won't be letting DWP ignore its obligations to the lake and to the streams under the State Water Board decision—nor forget history. In 1994, the Mayor and other Los Angeles leaders agreed with the Committee that the State Water Board decision set forth the plan for the future and resolved the dispute over Mono Lake. Raising the lake and restoring the streams is a mutual goal that the City shares with the State Water Board and the Committee. We believe the City is still committed to that goal; we know Los Angeles residents are. DWP cannot be allowed to undercut this alliance for its own myopic self-interest.

### **Work ahead**

With all the Stream Restoration Agreement parties rejecting DWP's untenable proposal, this recent attack on restoration has not worked as DWP

had hoped. Seeing the Committee as the primary obstacle, DWP recently lashed out, accusing us in a letter of acting in bad faith and rewriting the intent of the Agreement. Such correspondence is disappointing to receive but is an easy burden to bear when advocating honestly for the restoration of both Mono Lake and the tributary streams under existing State Water Board mandates.

Our list of action items to keep restoration of both the lake and the streams on track is robust—ranging from politics to legal matters to questions of climate change and the hydrology of the lake itself. In the big picture, that's why we are here. The Mono Lake Committee has existed for more than half the aqueduct's history in the Mono Basin and the need is as great as ever for a strong public voice to counter DWP. Constant vigilance, even during the turmoil of a pandemic, and strong defense of Mono Lake and its tributary streams are core goals of the Committee mission. With the support of Committee members, we will continue to make certain that the damaged streams are restored to health and that Mono Lake rises to its mandated healthy level. ❖

## Vorster Center updates Mono Lake water balance model

by Maureen McGlinchy

**T**he Vorster Center for Mono Basin Hydrology was founded in 2018 to support the Mono Lake Committee's work to better understand the dynamics that affect changes in Mono Lake's level. Projects funded by the Center have included a review of hydrology models used in lake level analyses and an investigation into runoff, precipitation, and evaporation trends from 1940 to present.

One current project updates Peter Vorster's definitive 1985 hydrology model, "A Water Balance Forecast

Model for Mono Lake." This data-driven model balances 19 inflows, outflows, and water storage within the Mono Basin and calculates the subsequent change in lake volume. Examples of inflows are Sierra Nevada runoff and precipitation on the lake. Outflows include evaporation and water exports to Los Angeles.

The painstaking process of updating a model of the basin has required streams of data, attention to detail, and collective expertise. Committee staff, with oversight by Peter, have upgraded the Fortran-based model onto a new

computer platform, allowing more flexibility for model functions. We've also adjusted components of the model that have changed since 1985, such as evapotranspiration from irrigated lands and annual rainfall at Cain Ranch. Presently the model can simulate historic conditions from 1940 to 2019, with an objective to investigate future rises and declines in Mono Lake's level.

For more about the Vorster Center, including how to support this critical work, please visit [monolake.org/vorstercenter](http://monolake.org/vorstercenter).



# A change of plans

*Mono Lake Committee makes the most of a strange summer*

by Claire Landowski

As California ordered residents statewide to shelter in place beginning in mid-March, our staff moved office computers and telephones home and set up what we thought would be temporary work stations in dining rooms, spare bedrooms, and the like. So far we have navigated the uncertain waters of the COVID-19 pandemic by putting our resourcefulness and adaptability to work—balancing safe operations with the non-stop need to stay vigilant and continue to work on behalf of Mono Lake and our local communities.

## **Not this year**

In March, we cautiously canceled the Wild & Scenic Film Festival, and in April, the Andrea Lawrence Award Dinner. As the reach of the coronavirus expanded and its effects grew in scope and gravity, we were forced to reexamine all of our summer plans, from South Tufa tours to Field Seminars to the Tioga Pass Run. Even the seasonal staff program needed to be evaluated. In video meeting after video meeting, we carefully considered whether each program could be held safely, and none of them measured up. The uncertainty around when we might be able to offer tours forced us to recognize that we could not bring on the summer staff we'd hired. Each cancellation was a fresh disappointment, tempered only by our resolve to take on deferred projects, learn new skills, and reimagine the ways we could share our work to reach people in new ways.

## **Evolving Mono Lake experiences**

We launched our first experiment in new forms of visitor experiences, the *Mono Lake Moments* video series, in March amid snow flurries. Each *Moment* highlights something special about the Mono Basin and discusses topics from wildflowers to birds, geology to the Los Angeles Aqueduct. See them all online at [monolake.org/moments](http://monolake.org/moments). As the education team became more video savvy, Nora, Rose, and Santiago were able to expand their reach by offering virtual tours and have begun developing distance-learning curricula for school teachers. Already *Mono Lake Moments* have reached more than 6,000 people, and virtual tours have reached more than 300 students.

As the sulfur buckwheat bloomed brilliant yellow and faded to brown, the gulls and phalaropes arrived and Osprey fledged, we shifted our daily focus from events to other important tasks. Andrew, Arya, and Elin undertook the long-overdue renovation of our website, which will be launching in late October, shortly after this *Newsletter* reaches your mailbox. It's been incredibly exciting to reorganize the website to be more intuitive, update the content, and integrate new technology to make it operate more smoothly. A special thank you to all the members and friends who responded to our



*The Mono Lake Committee's "pop-up" information station outside the bookstore served visitors and members alike throughout the summer.*

request for website testers. Every comment was useful, and many member suggestions have been incorporated into the final product.

## **Research persists**

Scientific research in the Mono Basin has also continued despite the strange circumstances, and Committee staff participated in surveys of flora and fauna even more actively than would be possible in a "normal" year. Nora was able to help with Osprey banding (see page 9) and butterfly surveys; Santiago accompanied a group surveying vegetation around Warm Springs, and Bartsché piloted the boat for California Gull counts. Because we could not bring on the summer staff, we had empty spaces in the Mono Basin Field Station and have provided coronavirus-conscientious housing for both visiting scientists and members of the Lee Vining community. We've hosted Sage Grouse surveyors, White-crowned Sparrow researchers, several geologists, a photojournalist, a Bodie Foundation employee, and more.

## **Responding to high visitation**

The pandemic did not stop people from traveling to the Eastern Sierra, and uninformed visitors were loving it to death. Disturbing reports trickled in: unprecedented numbers of dispersed campers in the Jeffrey pine forest were lighting illegal campfires, toilet paper was being left around the restrooms at South Tufa, trash cans in the June Lake Loop were overflowing. California State Parks and the Inyo National Forest have both faced major staffing challenges this season, so their presence in the Mono Basin has been reduced.

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# Tioga Inn indecision

by Bartshé Miller

**T**he largest project of its kind ever proposed in unincorporated Mono County, the Tioga Inn development project continues to transmute and persist despite nearly unanimous public objection to its significant adverse environmental impacts.

On three days of hearings this past summer (June 29, 30 and August 6), the Mono County Board of Supervisors navigated overwhelming public opposition to the project, considered project changes, posed questions to the developer, and ultimately delayed a final decision to sometime this fall.

At the August hearing the developer advocated for the most recent “Alternative #7–Hybrid Plan,” along with other last-minute project changes. Public comments and concerns addressed the project’s impacts, hydrology questions, and CEQA issues. The project has not incorporated sufficient solutions to mitigate the five adverse impact areas, so comments in support of the project are scarce, numbering roughly a dozen, while those in opposition have been in the hundreds. The August hearing was the third time that the local community and the public strenuously challenged the project in a public forum.

Unfortunately, the four voting Supervisors did not indicate a majority interest to deny the project outright. Instead, they asked detailed questions and gathered additional information and clarifications, signaling the possibility of approving the project and overriding public opposition to its significant adverse impacts to the visual quality of Mono Lake, public safety, and more.

## **Developer threatens Supervisors with an appeal-to-fear argument**

During the August hearing, the developer, Dennis Domaille, threatened the Supervisors with a worsening housing crisis in Mono County, alleging that a separate hotel project—which has still not been built after 27 years—will suddenly become an economic reality that will saddle Mono County with a serious housing crisis.

Domaille concluded his opening comment at the August hearing with, “If the hotel gets built without approval of this project, instead of the housing situation maintaining somewhat of a status quo, it’s going to get infinitely worse... Right now there are a couple people looking at the hotel site; they want to build it.”

Important questions persist about the economic viability of building and running a hotel within the stipulations of the



BARTSHÉ MILLER

*Without proper mitigations the Tioga Inn project would be highly visible from South Tufa, as demonstrated here with 2' x 3' piece of glass reflecting the rising sun from the project site.*

project’s 1993 Specific Plan, and no evidence of an actual buyer with the necessary financial capacity was presented. If building a hotel on the site is a real economic interest, why suddenly now, three decades later, and during a pandemic?

Important questions also surround whether the proposed housing would be available or affordable for future hotel employees when and if a hotel is ever constructed. While the housing is described as “workforce,” there will be no legal requirement for affordable rental rates, and the Hybrid Plan’s description of “new market rate units” provides no guarantees that the housing will be within the economic reach of seasonal employees.

The project remains a poorly planned effort that fails to address worker housing needs within the context of a hypothetical hotel. What will the Tioga Inn project look like in the next 27 years? It’s anyone’s guess, and appealing to fear is an easy reach.

## **Why this project matters**

The Mono Lake Committee does not typically engage in development projects, but this one impacts Mono Lake, plain and simple.

Mono Lake is among the natural wonders of the world, loved by millions. The California Supreme Court affirmed Mono Lake’s scenic value in its landmark 1983 Public Trust decision. Just as Los Angeles’ excessive water diversions imperiled the lake’s recreational and scenic uses, so too does a major commercial development that brings significant adverse visual impacts to future visitors. Approving a project that impairs Mono Lake’s scenic value and diminishes the visitor experience is, by default, granting permission to erode the Public Trust.

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# It takes a village to raise a pond

*Working to revitalize the DeChambeau Ponds once again*

*by Robert Di Paolo*

**T**he DeChambeau Ponds are four managed ponds, each between one and two acres in size; combined, they make up about six acres of open water that attract a wide variety of waterfowl and other birds. This year, however, the ponds reached a critical threshold of disrepair that threatens this vital habitat.

## **A history of collaboration**

The DeChambeau Ponds, located near the north shore of Mono Lake, are managed by the Inyo National Forest, which acquired them in 1991 in a leaky state of disrepair. The Mono Lake Committee secured funding in collaboration with the Inyo National Forest, Ducks Unlimited, the California Transportation Commission, and local residents to rehabilitate the ponds, and because of that successful effort they have served as waterfowl habitat for nearly two decades.

Given the tremendous loss of shoreline waterfowl habitat at Mono Lake due to the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power's historic excessive water diversions, the Committee has been a longtime partner with the Inyo on this project to ensure that the DeChambeau Ponds serve as waterfowl habitat. As part of that effort, in recent years the Committee has been working to help the Inyo quantify water availability and delivery to the ponds.

## **Gauging the problem**

The ponds are designed to receive water from both an on-site artesian hot water well dating back to the early 1900s and a small diversion of Mill Creek water delivered by the Wilson system approximately two miles to the west. The hot, mineral-rich water flows at  $\frac{1}{3}$  of a cubic foot per second (cfs) and can be delivered to each of the four ponds by way of a metal pipe. However, around 2009 the pipe conveying the

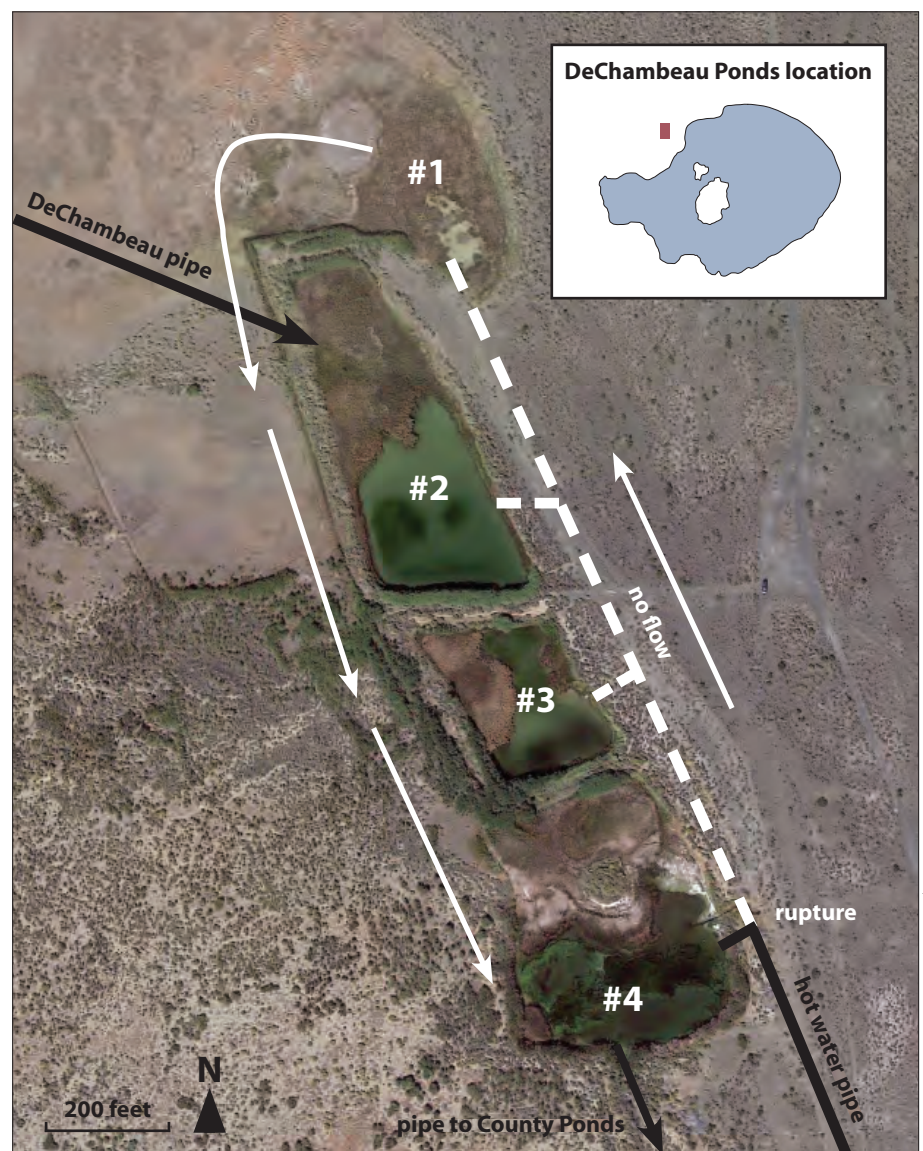
hot water began to corrode and leak; by 2018 a rupture in the pipe meant it could only deliver water to the southernmost pond.

In 2000, the Inyo installed a two-mile-long pipeline (the DeChambeau pipe) to efficiently deliver water from the Wilson

system to the ponds and, optionally, the adjacent meadow. That pipe can reliably convey water year-round and serve multiple ponds as water cascades from one to the next.

The on-site hot water combined

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*The current DeChambeau Ponds water distribution system: Arrows show the direction water moves through the system when the hot pipe is fully functioning and the ponds are full. Less than 1 cfs of Mill Creek water flows from the Wilson system into pond #2 through the DeChambeau pipe. A rupture in the hot water pipe leaks water into pond #4 at the expense of ponds #1, #2, and #3. Water from pond #4 is piped to the County Ponds.*

# Weedy struggle benefits California Gulls

by Bartshé Miller

**T**hanks to a series of logistically challenging weed eradication efforts last winter and spring, California Gulls have returned to nest in healthy numbers on Twain Islet in Mono Lake.

This past February and March, Mono Lake Committee staff, volunteers, and Inyo National Forest firefighters conducted a series of weed treatments on Twain Islet that included hand removal and a prescribed burn. The treatments dramatically reduced stands of an invasive weed called *Bassia hyssopifolia*. This noxious weed has spread across the Negit Islets in recent years, severely reducing available nesting habitat for California Gulls.

## A partnership endeavor

The late-winter effort involved months of planning and multiple days of ferrying people and equipment out to Twain Islet for prescribed burning and hand removal of weeds to ultimately clear the worst of Twain's *Bassia* invasion and restore the islet for nesting gulls. Following the burn, Committee staff experimented with spraying Mono Lake water over a section of islet habitat to see if saturating the soil with alkaline water would inhibit future *Bassia* germination.

The Committee's new research boat was critical to the weed removal and burn activity, reliably transporting staff, Inyo National Forest firefighters, volunteers, and equipment across the lake to Twain.

## The gulls respond in numbers

This summer's California Gull research, conducted by Point Blue Conservation Science in partnership with the Committee, revealed robust numbers of gulls occupying nesting habitat formerly covered by *Bassia*. Imagery from Point Blue's specially permitted drone surveys showed gulls nesting across the islet, and dense stands of *Bassia* were absent (see the cover of this *Newsletter* for one of Point Blue's research images). This observation affirmed that the efforts to control the weed and reverse the rapid loss of nesting habitat are working. Point Blue is currently analyzing this summer's data, and a final report on the gull's reproductive success is expected at the end of the year.

A visit to the islet in August verified that nearly all *Bassia* was eradicated, with few new plants germinating. The gull nesting habitat looked familiar once again—barren, rocky habitat covered in feathers and guano, the remnants of a successful nesting season. While a more detailed follow-up survey of the islet is needed, first impressions are very promising.

The Committee's weed removal initiative in collaboration with the Inyo National Forest, California State Parks, and the Point Blue drone survey illustrates that long-lasting partnerships among scientists, agencies, and non-profits can accomplish effective management goals and restore ecological benefits at Mono Lake.

## Diversions, coyotes, and now weeds

While it has been nearly three decades since the California State Water Resources Control Board modified the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power's (DWP) water rights and set a healthy management level for Mono Lake, the ecosystem continues to cope with the legacy of excessive water exports.

California Gulls began nesting on Twain Islet and the other Negit Islets 40 years ago after decades of excessive water diversions by DWP lowered Mono Lake's level by 45 vertical feet, which exposed a landbridge that connected the gulls' original nesting grounds on Negit Island to the mainland. That landbridge allowed coyotes to reach the nesting ground and prey on eggs and chicks, and as a result, Negit Island's formerly-submerged, newly-revealed islets became the necessary choice for nesting gulls.

By 2016, drought once again brought the threat of coyotes when the lake dropped low enough for them to venture out to the islets. In 2017, accelerated *Bassia* expansion exerted further pressure on nesting gulls.

In recent years the Committee led the effort to protect nesting gulls from both coyotes and weeds—installing a temporary fence across the landbridge that kept coyotes away until the lake rose again, and spearheading this year's burn and weed removal.

## Encouraging results promise more work ahead

While results shown on Twain Islet are tremendously positive, a return trip to Twain is scheduled this fall to more thoroughly document and eradicate germinating *Bassia* before it produces a new crop of seeds. This will help keep Twain relatively weed-free into the 2021 nesting season and allow the Committee to focus time and resources toward weed control on adjacent islets. ♦

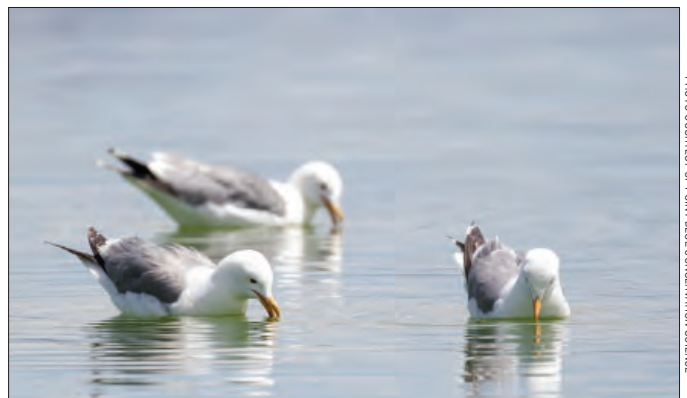


PHOTO COURTESY OF POINT BLUE CONSERVATION SCIENCE

After last winter's successful weed removal efforts, Twain Islet once again provided good nesting habitat for California Gulls this summer.



# Scientific research in the Mono Basin

*News from the Mono Basin Field Station and beyond*

## Phalarope population counts continue

by Rose Nelson

**A**bundant flocks of Wilson's and Red-necked phalaropes at Mono Lake are truly a sight to behold. Their twisting, swooping flight maneuvers mesmerize and instill a sense of awe, making a visit to Mono Lake even more memorable.

These birds are not only key species to the Mono Lake ecosystem, they also tie Mono Lake into a hemispheric connection from the Arctic Circle to South America—created by their annual migration along the Pacific Flyway.

In 2019, for the first time in more than 30 years, phalarope studies were once again conducted at Mono Lake to gain insight on their global population numbers. The research continued this summer, spearheaded by Ryan Carle of Oikonos Ecosystem Knowledge and Dr. Margaret Rubega from the University of Connecticut, and supported by California State Parks and the Mono Lake Committee.

Bird count surveys conducted throughout the summer at Mono Lake both from the shore and by boat are a vital component to data collected across South and North America. In 1988, the last time a global count was conducted, there were 1.5 million phalaropes. Since then, throughout the western hemisphere,

historic phalarope habitat has been severely damaged and diminished, and current global population numbers are unknown. As this important research continues, current phalarope population numbers will become clearer.

Supporting this international research effort is a reminder of how restoring places like Mono Lake is crucial to species survival. ❖



PHOTO COURTESY OF RYAN CARLE

*Researchers count Wilson's and Red-necked phalaropes at Mono Lake when the birds stop here on their annual migration.*

## Thirteenth year of Osprey banding

by Nora Livingston

**I**n mid-July, California State Parks biologist Ashli Lewis invited me to assist her and raptor bander Peter Bloom with banding Osprey chicks as part of the Osprey Research Project at Mono Lake, which has monitored reproductive success for over 13 years. As a former bird biologist myself, I was thrilled to help out.

On a calm and cool morning, I hopped on the boat with the team, along with Sarinah Simons, another State Parks biologist/media tech. My extensive experience with boats on Mono Lake as a volunteer for the Point Blue Conservation Science's California Gull project came in handy as I helped navigate through underwater tufa and safely guided the boat up to tufa towers with nests. Ashli climbed up to the nests with chicks and handed them down to Pete. Sarinah filmed and I held the boat steady.

Three-week-old Osprey chicks are adorable, downy, dinosaur-like, and smell like old fish! Since their feathers are growing in, lots of keratin particles and flakes blow away in the breeze and sparkle when backlit. We were often enveloped in a plume of nature's glitter, which was both awesome and a little gross. Altogether we banded 25 chicks from 12 nests.

All of the birds at Mono Lake are a part of the Public Trust

values that we protect and getting to participate in the research alongside our partners is a true joy. To see the short video Sarinah produced, go to [monolake.org/ospreybanding](https://monolake.org/ospreybanding). ❖



PHOTO COURTESY OF SARINAH SIMONS

*Osprey chicks have been banded at Mono Lake every year for 13 years.*

# Naturalist notes

by Nora Livingston

**T**he pandemic may have slowed down human lives, but flowers and animals and seasons continued to burst with life. **May:** Skunk monkeyflower and desert paintbrush carpeted the pumice flats with magenta and glowing red ... spring migration brought familiar colorful birds back to the basin ... Western Tanagers, Bullock's Orioles, and vagrants like a vibrant Rose-breasted Grosbeak living up to its name ... green-gray hillsides turned pink and butter yellow with desert peach and bitterbrush blooms ... Mono Lake must have been a hundred different shades of blue-green-gray.

**June:** Breeding bird surveys on Mill and Rush creeks turned up the usual suspects, but they felt unusually joyful to behold in strange times ... Yellow Warblers singing back and forth, Dusky Flycatchers throwing their heads back in song, Northern Rough-winged Swallows nesting in creek-side cliff holes alongside Violet-green Swallows ... a Belted Kingfisher on patrol ... a rare second-year male American Redstart singing loudly from a willow as if he was in the Eastern broad-leaf forest where he should have been ... a Gray Fox leapt out of sight in tall grass as it left its hollow log ... fledgling American Kestrels at County Park bleated and begged for their share of a Sagebrush Lizard that mom had procured for breakfast ... wildflowers graced the edges of trails, filled secret springs, and turned meadows white, purple, yellow, and crimson.

**July:** Someone spotted a Gray Catbird pair in a willow thicket and birders flocked to the location to see these rare and secretive Eastern mewing mimids ... Wilson's and Red-necked phalaropes returned to Mono's briny water in small clouds with Wilson's preferring the tufa groves on the west shore, while Red-necked rafted together in open water in the northeast ... butterflies of all shapes and sizes nectared on buckwheats and vetches and goldenrod ... when clouds appear, butterflies disappear like magic—only to spring to life again the moment the sun hits.

**August:** Osprey chicks began to fledge, practicing flapping above the nest or with short circles before their first true takeoff ... summer thunderstorms rattled our bones and soaked the topsoil, but not enough to prevent the Beach Fire from consuming sagebrush and bitterbrush by the acre and scorching a few tufa towers along the southeastern shore ... a lanky Mountain Lion took an evening stroll at the Parker Creek diversion unfazed by the thrilled pair of eyes watching it in awe ... rabbitbrush signaled fall with rich yellow flower clusters slowly spreading across the basin.

**September:** Cooling temperatures told the birds to head south ... we already miss their bright plumage and morning chorus but cherish the chickadees and Steller's Jays, who stay ... fires around the state sent smoke and ash to the Mono Basin too, painting the sun red, the sky peach, and erasing the stars for days ... leaves started to turn high up, starting with lime green aspens trembling and spilling their colors down the canyon walls. ❖

## Beach Fire



*The Beach Fire was ignited by lightning on the evening of August 16, the same night that unusual lightning storms occurred over many areas of California, setting this year's fire season in motion. The Beach Fire ultimately burned 3,780 acres along Mono Lake's southeastern shore, reaching Navy Beach and the very eastern edge of South Tufa. As of press time, South Tufa, Navy Beach, and the area where the fire burned remain closed for resource stabilization and protection.*





**T**his unusually quiet season was an opportunity to give the OEC home base some much-needed improvements. The exterior got patched up and a new coat of paint. More trees were planted in the front yard to increase shady spots for students to relax in the afternoon after days of hiking and learning. We are also in the process of transforming the backyard river-rock labyrinth into a small organic garden in order to produce food for students to incorporate into their meals, which will add to the living skills they gain as part of the program.



**O**ur mission is to build understanding and appreciation for the Mono Basin/ Los Angeles watershed through education programs and muscle-powered recreational activity; to demonstrate that balanced solutions are possible for meeting the water needs of people and the environment; and to kindle stewardship through service projects that restore and improve the quality of the Mono Basin watershed.

[monolake.org/education](http://monolake.org/education)  
[facebook.com/mono.oec](https://facebook.com/mono.oec)

## Keeping connected in the new virtual world

**F**or the first time in more than 25 years the Mono Basin Outdoor Education Center (OEC) was quiet throughout the usually busy season. Every summer the OEC hosts over 300 students and teachers, mostly from the Los Angeles area. During their weeklong visits, participants get a unique opportunity to learn about the source of their drinking water while exploring the outdoors and experiencing personal growth, and are often inspired to get involved with water conservation and environmental justice issues when they get back home.

This year, the OEC's doors remained closed and the house, which is usually brimming with laughter, stories, and learning, got some necessary improvements. The OEC team is looking forward to brighter days ahead when we can share the stories and lessons of nature's resilience once again. That message, it seems, is needed now more than ever. We have already booked groups for the 2021 season and we cannot wait to see our OEC family again.

Once it became clear that we couldn't safely operate the OEC program as usual, we quickly pivoted to offering virtual tours in both Spanish and English. So, despite not having any visiting groups, the OEC staff was able to keep the connection between Mono Lake and Los Angeles alive. Santiago stayed in touch with the groups, offering virtual tours to many and even participating in a virtual campout, complete with songs and s'mores.

Virtual tours have not only been great for connecting with OEC groups, but also making "visiting" Mono Lake more accessible for those who are not physically able. We plan on continuing virtual tours even when OEC groups and visitors come back so the Mono Lake story can continue to spread far and wide.



Together with community partners and volunteers we stepped up to do what we could in the safest ways possible.

To fill the need for traveler resources, we opened an outdoor information station on the front porch of the Mono Lake Committee Information Center & Bookstore during weekends, staffed by Rose, Lily, myself, and volunteers. What began in June as a simple setup of just two tables and some flyers morphed into a full service station where visitors could get answers to questions about travel and Mono Lake, shop a curated selection of merchandise, and even join the Committee and renew memberships. Our new online store is up and running and offers curbside pickup in addition to regular shipping options. In late August Mono County opened a volunteer-staffed outdoor information booth at the Mono Basin Scenic Area Visitor Center, and the coordination between our two groups was a wellspring of collaboration and support.



ROSE NELSON

Virtual Mono Lake tours reached more than 300 students this year.

## Mono Lake Volunteers step up

The Mono Lake Volunteers stepped into the void on the interpretive side at South Tufa, County Park, and Old Marina, answering questions and encouraging visitors to protect the lake's precious resources. "We've had to be nimble in ways like never before," said Karen Gardner, co-coordinator of the Mono Lake Volunteer Program. "Our volunteers were quick to adapt and have knocked it out of the park as usual."

Janet Carle, co-coordinator of the program, said, "It was comforting to do the training and small outings, to pull invasive thistle together, and to let Mono Lake work its magic on psyche and soul. It has seen many things in its millions of years, and this too shall pass."

As the aspens and cottonwoods begin to turn from green to vibrant yellow and orange, all of us at the Mono Lake Committee are safe, healthy, and still working hard from our dining room tables and spare bedrooms. The year has brought so many unforeseen changes and challenges, and we're proud to have discovered how flexible, creative, and adaptable we can be. We are already thinking about what programs and events might look like in the coming year, so stay tuned. In the meantime, our commitment to the lake hasn't wavered, and no matter what the next months and years bring, we know that we'll be here, protecting the Mono Basin for all those who depend on it and love it. ❖

*Claire Landowski is the Committee's Office Manager. She helped remove the 1980s-era gull fence from Negit Island this summer, her first trip out on Mono Lake.*

## Remembering Patrick J. Flinn, Defender of Mono Lake

by Arya Harp

**M**ono Lake lost one of its fiercest courtroom interrogators, and the Mono Lake family lost a very good friend and creative advocate with the death of attorney Pat Flinn to brain cancer. As a Morrison & Foerster attorney, Pat helped represent the Mono Lake Committee in Judge Terrence Finney's courtroom and in the State Water Board hearings—the linchpins of protection and restoration for Mono Lake and its tributary streams.

Pat's interrogations and boundless energy bolstered the Mono Lake case in the courtroom, and his behind-the-scenes political strategy and team-player approach bolstered the motley crew with much-needed planning and humor.

The Committee honored members of our outstanding legal team—Pat, Bryan Wilson, and the law firm of Morrison & Foerster—with the 2016 Defender of the Trust Award. Together with fellow Defenders of the Trust, Pat went on to help create the Vorster Center for Mono Basin Hydrology in 2018.

Mono Lake is lucky to have had people like Pat on its team ensuring that future generations have the chance to celebrate Mono Lake for many years to come. Read more about Pat at [monolake.org/patflinn](http://monolake.org/patflinn).



Pat Flinn, left, with Peter Vorster at the State Water Board hearings in 1993.

GEOFF MCCOULKIN



with water from the DeChambeau pipe provides an approximate flow of 1 cfs, which is about 2 acre-feet of water per day, and enough water to keep the ponds at a healthy level. But, as is currently the case, due to dilapidated infrastructure keeping all of the hot water confined to the southernmost pond, slight variations of water in the DeChambeau pipe (literally tenths of a cfs), make the difference between ponds filling and spilling or going dry from lack of spill, evaporation, and water consumption from plants. Unfortunately, low pond levels happened this year as a result of these infrastructure issues and constraints.

### **A wrench in the plans**

Complicating an already complex situation, on September 1 an Inyo National Forest biologist discovered illegal tampering with the infrastructure

designed to maintain water levels in two of the DeChambeau Ponds, causing the ponds to drop precipitously. While it is troubling and confusing that someone would seek to damage the ponds, we are glad the Inyo was able to correct the issue, and both ponds have been recovering quickly.

### **Community working toward a solution**

Local residents and community organizations have been concerned about the hot pipe failure and are working toward finding a solution. As part of this effort, the Committee secured a grant to help repair the hot pipe, and the planning needed to fix it is underway with the Inyo as of press time.

Once the hot pipe is repaired and delivering water into all four ponds in conjunction with the water from the

DeChambeau pipe, it is expected that all four ponds will fill and stay full once again. After that, there are additional ponds to the south—the County Ponds—that are also designed to receive water from the DeChambeau Ponds that could be revitalized with a little planning and maintenance work.

There is still much to do, but it is hopeful and inspiring to see groups and individuals teaming up with the Inyo National Forest to help revitalize this Mono Basin resource beloved by birds and people alike. ❖

*Robbie Di Paolo is the Committee's Restoration Field Technician. This summer, his favorite after-work activity was a 12-mile bike ride from his house to the DeChambeau Ponds and back.*

## A star from the Mono Basin Scenic Area's past retires

by Bartshé Miller

**D**eanna Dulen, Superintendent of Devils Postpile National Monument and former Director of the Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area Visitor Center, retired in May after a four-decade career working for federal land management agencies.

In 1991 Deanna became the first director of the Mono Basin Visitor Center, and her nine years of dedicated work at Mono Lake shaped the world-class visitor center and interpretive resources for the recently established Scenic Area. Deanna rigorously sought funding and opportunities to maintain a facility and staff that introduced Mono Lake to millions of people. The diversity and quality of interpretive programs rose under Deanna's leadership, setting a high standard for the Scenic Area. These programs helped establish an interpretive legacy that the Mono Lake Committee, California State Parks, Eastern Sierra Interpretive Association, and the Mono Lake Volunteer program endeavor to maintain.

During her career with the US Forest Service and National Park Service, Deanna applied an ethic that helped these agencies achieve their best for the public despite declining budgets. The Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area and Devils Postpile National Monument are better places today because of Deanna's devotion to public service and land management. While the days of better funding for the Scenic

Area may have long passed, the strong, principled standards of how and why these places are protected is one of Deanna's enduring and influential trademarks.

Deanna remains in the Eastern Sierra with her husband, Wangdowa Sherpa, where they tend to one of the most bountiful backyard gardens in the Mono Basin.



Deanna Dulen at Rainbow Falls in Devils Postpile National Monument.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

# Mono Lake drops to same level as two and three years ago, triggers State Water Board hearing

by Greg Reis

**2**019 was wet, and Mono Lake rose 1.2 feet in the October through September water year. 2020, however, was dry, which set the lake level clock back to 2018. Since August 1, Mono Lake has been at the same levels as it was on the same dates in 2018. On September 1, Mono Lake was at 6381.8 feet above sea level. Assuming the predicted drop in lake level in September occurs, if you had a time machine and came to Mono Lake on October 1 in

2003, 2010, 2017, 2018, and 2020, Mono Lake would be about the same level: 6381.5 feet above sea level.

6381.5' is also roughly the level we expect the lake to reach on April 1, 2021, after declining this fall and rising this winter.

The lake is clearly spending a lot of time around the current level. For the past 20 years we have been concerned about the lake failing to rise more

quickly toward the future management level of 6392'. Despite the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power's (DWP) recent assertion that the lake has "largely been restored," at a level only 40% of the way to the management level, clearly it has not. Since the lake hasn't reached the management level yet, California State Water Resources Control Board Decision 1631 requires a hearing on the matter and consideration of amending current diversion criteria (see page 3). ❖

## Streamwatch

# Wet April weather with little data leads to incorrect runoff forecast

by Greg Reis

**O**n April 1, snow surveyors found only 48% of average snow water content in the Mono Basin. Then over the next eight days, automated snow sensors recorded a 20% increase in snow water content. On April 10, the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power (DWP) incorporated the early April increase into its runoff forecast of 71% of average for the 2020 runoff year (April 1, 2020 through March 31, 2021), as well as the peak snowmelt period of April–July. The runoff year forecast officially classified 2020 a Dry-Normal I runoff year-type.

Based on snow data and runoff forecasts from nearby watersheds, and the lack of snow below 9,000 feet, the Mono Lake Committee was skeptical that the runoff would be higher than 60%. A 60% of average runoff forecast

would have resulted in a Dry year-type, requiring lower flows and keeping about 2,000 acre-feet more water in Grant Lake Reservoir. This was reminiscent of a situation in 2008 when DWP's forecast was two year-types too high and Grant Lake Reservoir was emptied, with detrimental impacts to Rush Creek.

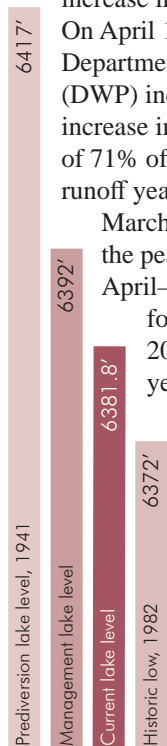
DWP stood by its 71% estimate, and increased Rush Creek flows on April 15. The April–July runoff turned out to be 56% of average, with Parker Creek being the only creek that matched DWP's runoff forecast (81% of average for that creek).

The Committee worked with Tom Painter of the Mammoth Lakes-based company ASO Inc., who contributed airplane and instrument time to measure the Mono Basin snowpack with LiDAR three times last winter. ASO Inc. measures snowpack using LiDAR-based technology from the Airborne Snow Observatory (see Summer 2017 *Mono Lake Newsletter*). Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic shut down state funding for processing the Mono Basin LiDAR measurements, which would

have provided a much more accurate assessment of the 2020 snowpack in the key months of April and May. Committee consulting hydrologist Peter Vorster and Board member Martha Davis are working with water agencies to secure grants and to pass legislation for a program to measure snowpack using LiDAR-based ASO technology statewide, that would include the often overlooked Mono-Owens watersheds.

This season was the first non-wet year in which temporary approval allowed the Stream Restoration Agreement's Stream Ecosystem Flows (SEFs) to be released to the streams, the first time Dry-Normal I SEFs were released, and the first time SEFs weren't limited by the capacity of the Mono Gate One Return Ditch. As we go to press, a new temporary change is being submitted to the State Water Board so that SEFs can be released this winter. ❖

*Greg Reis is the Committee's Information and Restoration Specialist. On this page is the 78<sup>th</sup> Lakewatch article he has written in his 25 years working for the Committee.*





# Mono Basin Journal

A roundup of quiet happenings at Mono Lake

by Geoffrey McQuilkin



ELIN LUNG

Seldom does one want to escape from Mono Lake's scenic shores, abundant bird life, and grand views of the Sierra. But this year has brought many unusual situations to us all. In September, the smoke from Sierra fires descended with thick persistence, shrouding everything in particulate-laden shades of orange. Those of us working remotely from home in AQIs above 1,000 were left pondering where, if anywhere, we might go to work even more remotely, under clearer skies.

Overall, though, Mono Lake is a beautiful, perspective-inducing place to weather a pandemic. The last snows of spring arrived with no regard to the coronavirus situation, then melted as usual and flowed to the lake, nurturing birds and forests and fish on the way.

Mono Lake endures, the cycles of nature continue, and suddenly time has slipped by and the aspen leaves are taking

on yellow and orange hues. The uncertainties of vaccine schedules and school plans and the daily worries about the future are unavoidable, but the lake reminds us that our duty to care for this special place, to care for the land, to care for the environment, remains unchanged. For all its wonders, the lake remains artificially low, with a long way to go to reach its healthy management level. Amidst the turmoil of current events, we must not forget that in our actions, and responses to challenges, we shape years and decades to come with the choices we make today. ❖

*Geoff McQuilkin is the Committee's Executive Director. He has mastered running remote school at home and looks forward to getting outside to help his daughter Ellery on her fall science expedition to the Dana Glacier.*

## Benchmarks



ROBBIE DI PAOLO

*February 2020: Inyo National Forest firefighters, ferried out to Twain Islet on the Mono Lake Committee research boat, burn an invasive weed that was preventing California Gulls from nesting.*



BARTSHE MILLER

*August 2020: The prescribed burn worked! During summer surveys, researchers found gulls nesting successfully on Twain Islet where the burn occurred (see page 8 for more).*



# MONO LAKE COMMITTEE

## INFORMATION CENTER & BOOKSTORE

### Fall Catalog



#### MONO LAKE IS FOR LOVERS T-SHIRT

Show your Mono Lake pride like Robbie, Lily, and Andrew with this bright rainbow brine shrimp design on a heather black, 90% cotton, 10% polyester V-neck tee. *Mono Lake Committee exclusive.*

*Mono Lake is for lovers T-shirt, heather black, unisex sizes XS-XXL: \$24.00*

#### PERFORMANCE FLEECE LOGO BEANIE

John and Claire are ready for chilly fall evenings and winter adventures in these 100% polyester performance fleece beanies featuring the Mono Lake Committee logo embroidered on the front in blue.

*Mono Lake Committee exclusive.*

*Performance fleece logo beanie, dark gray, one size: \$22.00*



**NEW!**

#### HANDMADE CERAMIC COASTER SET

Protect your tabletops and Mono Lake with these *Mono Lake Committee exclusive* ceramic coasters. Each set of four coasters is handmade in California and features the Mono Lake Committee logo in matte black on a background of light blue shiny glaze.

*Handmade ceramic coaster set, four coasters per set, handmade items vary slightly: \$25.00*

#### HANDCRAFTED CUTTING BOARD

This beautifully made and sturdy cutting board will quickly become a staple in your kitchen. Bishop artist Todd Bradlee makes each cherrywood board by hand with a walnut oil finish—making a great cutting surface or charcuterie serving board.

*Handcrafted cutting board, 17"x 8"x 3/4", handmade items vary slightly: \$45.00*



order at [monolake.org/store](https://monolake.org/store) or (760) 647-6595



### MONO LAKE FACE MASK

Stay safe and healthy like Rose while showing some love for Mono Lake with this custom-printed face mask from ChicoBag. Showcasing a beautiful photo of South Tufa by photographer Robb Hirsch, it is made from high-quality, durable polyester with a cotton lining, making it machine washable and both comfortable and convenient to use. It fits snugly against your face, comfortably around your ears or head using an optional clip to relieve ear pressure, and the contoured adjustable nose piece means it won't fog up your glasses. It also has pockets to insert replaceable, high-quality filters (not included). Each mask comes with a pouch to safely stash your used mask for washing later. *Mono Lake Committee exclusive.*

*Mono Lake face mask, one size fits most: \$9.99*



### MONO LAKE NECK GAITER

This handy, multi-purpose accessory worn by Nathan and Elin will make a great addition to your daypack. Made of a light, breathable polyester fabric with UV protection, it is a perfect solution to keeping sun off your neck, protecting you from the wind, and serving as a bandana, beanie, or face covering. Choose between a burgundy gaiter printed with a light gray line drawing of clouds, the sun, and Negit Island within the outline of a California Gull and a white gaiter printed with the detailed art of scientific illustrator John Muir Laws. *Mono Lake Committee exclusive.*

*Mono Lake neck gaiter, one size, please specify burgundy or white, \$14.99*

NEW!



**P**lease understand that our face masks and neck gaiters are not a replacement for medical-grade personal protective equipment and are not intended to replace other recommended measures to stop the community spread of COVID-19.

### LOCALLY DISTILLED HAND SANITIZER

Keep your hands and surfaces sanitized with this FDA-approved, 80% alcohol sanitizer spray from Shelter Distilling in Mammoth Lakes. The bottles feature the Mono Lake Committee logo and the spray top makes these 8-ounce sanitizers easy to use and long lasting too.

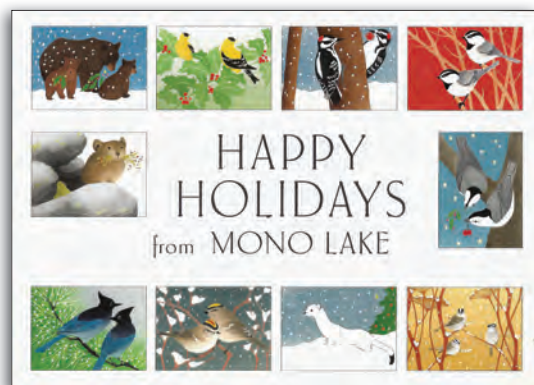
*Locally distilled hand sanitizer, 8 ounces: \$6.00*



### MONO LAKE HOLIDAY CARD SET

Artist Wendy Morgan's original designs make this *Mono Lake Committee exclusive* seasonal card set a beautiful way to send holiday wishes. Each set includes 10 cards with different wildlife designs and the message "May you have a Happy Holiday and joyous New Year" printed in red ink inside.

*Mono Lake holiday card set, 10 unique cards with envelopes, 6¼"x 4½": \$14.95*



### LONG LIVE MONO LAKE LICENSE PLATE FRAME

This in-demand classic design is back! Share the Mono Lake motto wherever you drive with this durable zinc license plate frame printed in blue and white with gull silhouettes. Made in the USA.

*Mono Lake Committee exclusive.*

*Long Live Mono Lake license plate frame, design may vary slightly: \$12.99*





## THE HIKE

BY ALISON FARRELL

Follow along with three intrepid young female explorers as they hike through their local forest and engage with the outdoors. This book is intended for preschool and kindergarten aged children and highlights the highs and lows of any hike in lyrical language. With beautiful, labeled illustrations this charming book offers opportunities to learn about nature while enjoying the story.

*The Hike, hardcover, 56 pages, Chronicle Books, 10½"x 9": \$17.99*

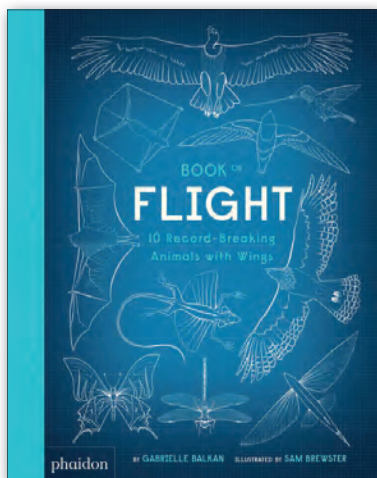
## KINDNESS GROWS

BY BRITTA TECKENTRUP

This peek-through picture book for children 3–6 years old features die-cut pages, whimsical illustrations, and rhyming text.

With each turn of the page follow the growth of a flowering tree as kindness spreads and friendships mend and grow.

*Kindness Grows, hardcover, 32 pages, Caterpillar Books, 9"x 11": \$17.99*



## BOOK OF FLIGHT: 10 RECORD-BREAKING ANIMALS WITH WINGS

WRITTEN BY GABRIELLE BALKAN

ILLUSTRATED BY SAM BREWSTER

This fun and informative book for children ages 5–8 highlights the abilities of ten incredible flying animals in an engaging and memorable guess-who format. Featuring blueprint style diagrams and beautiful, full-color illustrations of each wonderful winged creature, this book will both teach and entertain.

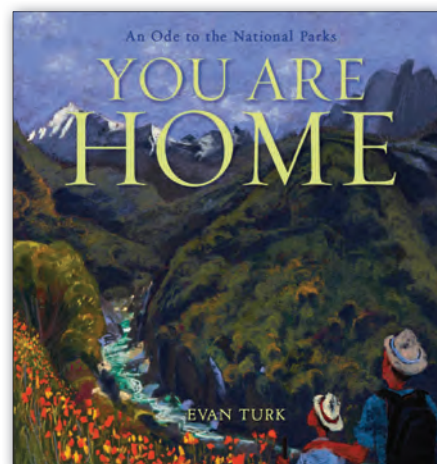
*Book of Flight, hardcover, 48 pages, Phaidon Press, 10½"x 12¾": \$19.95*

## YOU ARE HOME: AN ODE TO THE NATIONAL PARKS

BY EVAN TURK

This book is a beautiful ode to the National Parks, and a reminder that every element of nature, including ourselves, contributes to the complexity and beauty of life. This tour through America's parks is geared for children ages 5–8, but parents and grandparents will also enjoy the illustrations and writing.

*You Are Home, hardcover, 56 pages, Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 11"x 11": \$18.99*



## HOW TO SOLVE A PROBLEM: THE RISE (AND FALLS) OF A ROCK-CLIMBING CHAMPION

WRITTEN BY ASHIMA SHIRAISHI

ILLUSTRATED BY YAO XIAO

This book, geared toward children ages 5–8, is written by teenaged Japanese-American rock climber Shiraishi and is all about problem solving and perseverance. In rock climbing, a boulder is referred to as a "problem" and this story shows how solving problems on the rocks is akin to solving all kinds of problems we may face in life.

*How to Solve a Problem, hardcover, 40 pages, Make Me a World, 9"x 12¼": \$17.99*

order at [monolake.org/store](http://monolake.org/store) or (760) 647-6595

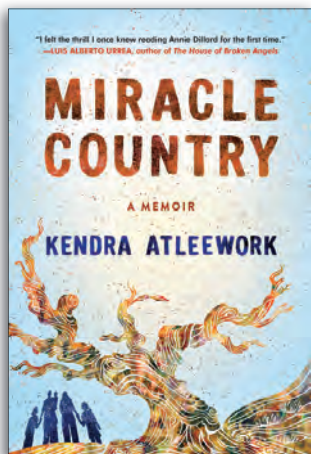
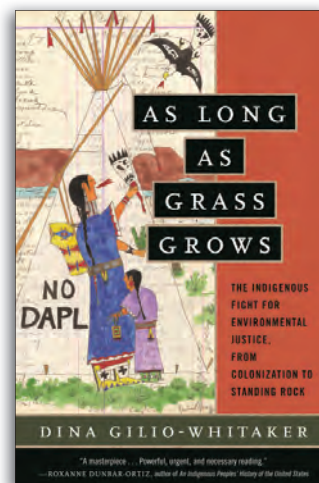


**AS LONG AS GRASS GROWS: THE INDIGENOUS FIGHT FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE, FROM COLONIZATION TO STANDING ROCK**

BY DINA GILIO-WHITAKER

*As Long as Grass Grows* gives readers an accessible history of Indigenous resistance to government and corporate incursions on their land and offers new approaches to environmental justice activism and policy. Through these topics, Indigenous researcher and activist Gilio-Whitaker thoroughly explores the fraught history and longtime tensions between Native people and the mainstream environmental movement, ultimately advocating for modern environmentalists to look to the history of Indigenous resistance for wisdom and inspiration.

*As Long as Grass Grows*, paperback, 212 pages, Beacon Press, 6"x 9": \$16.00



**MIRACLE COUNTRY: A MEMOIR**

BY KENDRA ATLEEWORKE

Atleework grew up in Swall Meadows in the Eastern Sierra and her memoir is a moving story of place, environmental history, and family. *Miracle Country* explores the opposing themes of flight and return, emptiness and bounty, and what makes a place home.

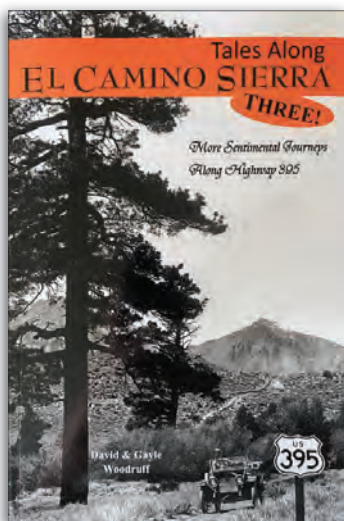
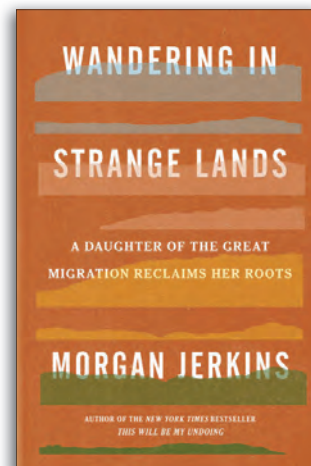
*Miracle Country*, hardcover, 368 pages, Algonquin Books, 5 3/4"x 8 1/2": \$27.95

**WANDERING IN STRANGE LANDS: A DAUGHTER OF THE GREAT MIGRATION RECLAIMS HER ROOTS**

BY MORGAN JERKINS

Between 1916 and 1970, six million Black Americans left their rural homes in the South for jobs in cities in the North, West, and Midwest in a movement known as The Great Migration. Although this transformed America and provided Black people with new economic opportunities, Jerkins argues that it also disconnected them from their roots, their land, and their sense of identity. In this fascinating, illustrated, and deeply personal exploration, *New York Times* bestselling author Jerkins recreates her ancestors' journeys across America, following the migratory routes they took from Georgia and South Carolina to Louisiana, Oklahoma, and California.

*Wandering in Strange Lands*, hardcover, 304 pages, Harper, 6"x 9": \$27.99



**TALES ALONG EL CAMINO SIERRA THREE: MORE SENTIMENTAL JOURNEYS ALONG HIGHWAY 395**

BY DAVID & GAYLE WOODRUFF

This latest addition to the top-selling, local *Tales Along El Camino Sierra* series explores the lesser-known stories and history of familiar places along Highway 395. This newest volume contains 39 new stories and many rare, historical photos to take you back in time along this scenic highway.

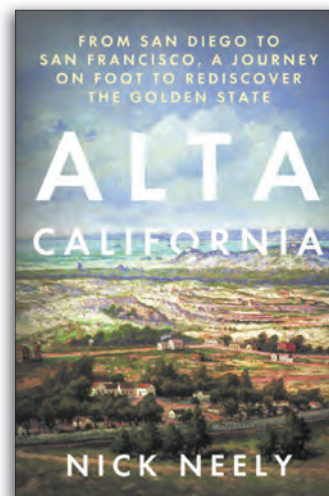
*Tales Along El Camino Sierra Three*, paperback, 153 pages, Bowker, 6 1/4"x 9 1/4": \$10.95

**ALTA CALIFORNIA: FROM SAN DIEGO TO SAN FRANCISCO, A JOURNEY ON FOOT TO REDISCOVER THE GOLDEN STATE**

BY NICK NEELY

This title from former Mono Lake Committee Birding Intern Neely is a collage of historical and contemporary California, lyricism and pedestrian serendipity, and the biggest issues facing California today—water, agriculture, oil and gas, immigration, and development—all of it explored one step at a time as we follow Neely's trek across the Golden State on foot.

*Alta California*, paperback, 432 pages, Counterpoint Press, 6"x 9 1/4": \$17.95





### NATURE OF NATURE: WHY WE NEED THE WILD

BY ENRIC SALA

This brand-new title from the renowned ecologist and director of National Geographic's Pristine Seas project makes a clear case for why protecting nature is our best health insurance, and why it also makes economic sense. Drawing on examples from his own expeditions and the work of other scientists, Sala explores fascinating examples that support his sometimes-surprising conclusion that economics supports leaving room for nature.

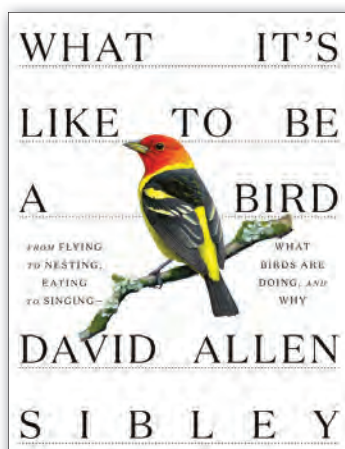
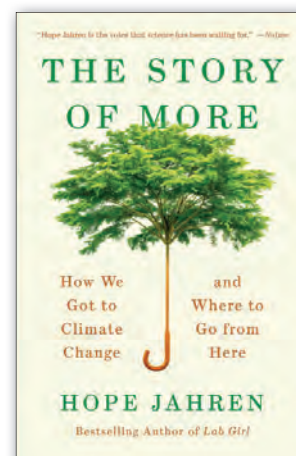
*Nature of Nature, hardcover, 256 pages, National Geographic, 6¼"x 9¼": \$28.00*

### THE STORY OF MORE: HOW WE GOT TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND WHERE TO GO FROM HERE

BY HOPE JAHREN

From an award-winning scientist and the author of national bestseller *Lab Girl*, this book is a concise and accessible introduction to and backstory about climate change. *The Story of More* is perfect for those looking for a narrative-based approach to the topic of climate change and the human behaviors behind it that is both scientific and relatable.

*The Story of More, paperback, 224 pages, Vintage Books, 5¼"x 8": \$15.00*



### WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE A BIRD: FROM FLYING TO NESTING, EATING TO SINGING—WHAT BIRDS ARE DOING, AND WHY

BY DAVID ALLEN SIBLEY

In *What It's Like to Be a Bird*, Sibley answers the most frequently asked questions about the birds we see most often. This special, large-format volume is geared to non-birders and accomplished birders alike. Covering more than 200 species and including more than 330 new illustrations by the author, this title is a must have for bird-lovers old and new.

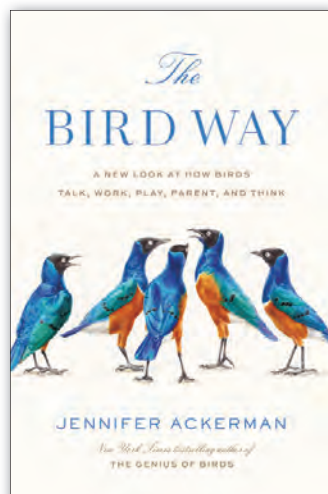
*What It's Like to Be a Bird, hardcover, Knopf, 240 pages, 8¾"x 11¼": \$35.00*

### BIRD THERAPY

BY JOE HARKNESS

Devoid of self-pity and full of practical advice, this book explores how watching birds affected Harkness' wellbeing during his ongoing struggles with mental illness. This title is especially welcome during stressful times like these.

*Bird Therapy, paperback, 272 pages, Unbound, 5"x 7¾": \$16.95*

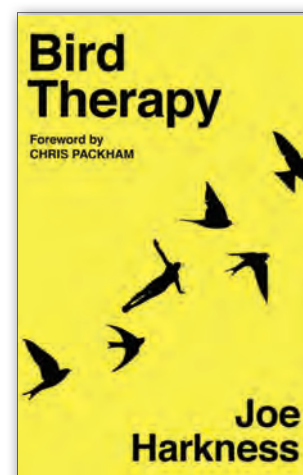


### THE BIRD WAY: A NEW LOOK AT HOW BIRDS TALK, WORK, PLAY, PARENT, AND THINK

BY JENNIFER ACKERMAN

"There is the mammal way and there is the bird way." The bird way is more than a unique pattern of brain wiring, and lately, scientists have taken a new look at bird behaviors that had previously been dismissed as anomalies or mysteries. Their findings are upending the traditional view of how birds conduct their lives and are exposing the remarkable intelligence underlying abilities we once considered uniquely human—from deception and manipulation to cooperation and play. Written by the *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Genius of Birds*, this title is a great addition to any birder's bookshelf.

*The Bird Way, hardcover, Penguin Press, 368 pages, 6½"x 9½": \$28.00*





### VESPER FLIGHTS

BY HELEN MACDONALD

*Vesper Flights*, the newest book from the renowned nature writer and author of *H is for Hawk*, is a captivating and foundational read about observation, fascination, time, memory, love and loss, and how we make sense of the world. This collection of Macdonald's most beloved essays, along with new writings, explores many topics of the natural world and the unexpected guidance and comfort we find when watching wildlife and observing the world around us.

*Vesper Flights*, hardcover, Grove Press, 288 pages, 5½"x 8½": \$27.00



### EROSION: ESSAYS OF UNDOING

BY TERRY TEMPEST WILLIAMS

This newest collection of essays from Tempest Williams is timely—highlighting the erosion we struggle against in many different facets of society. Spanning environmental, political, and cultural issues, this collection is a call to action intended to inspire a way forward through difficult times.

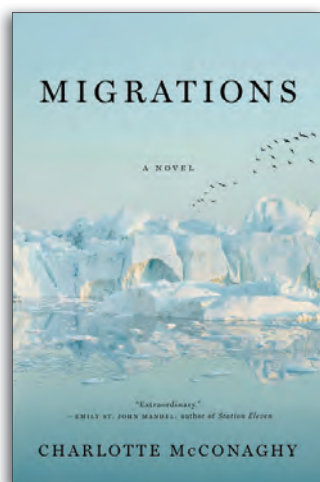
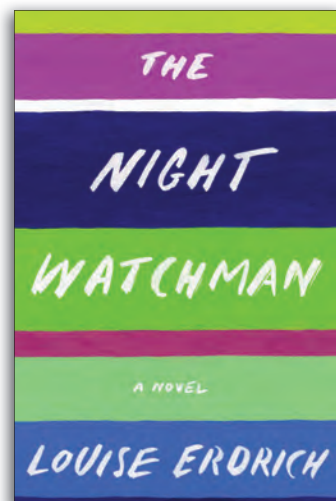
*Erosion*, paperback, 252 pages, Sarah Crichton Books, 5¾"x 8½": \$18.00

### THE NIGHT WATCHMAN

BY LOUISE ERDRICH

This *New York Times* bestselling novel is based on the extraordinary life of National Book Award-winning author Erdrich's grandfather, who worked as a night watchman and carried the fight against Native dispossession from rural North Dakota all the way to Washington, DC. Written in elegant prose with sly humor and depth of feeling, this story is an excellent work of fiction not to be missed.

*The Night Watchman*, hardcover, 464 pages, Harper Perennial, 6"x 9": \$28.99



### MIGRATIONS

BY CHARLOTTE MCCONAGHY

This national bestseller is a gripping novel for fans of suspense. The plot follows Franny Stone, a wanderer following the migration of the world's last flock of Arctic Terns, while unravelling and revealing her mysterious past. This novel is both an elegy to our endangered world and a thrilling page turner.

*Migrations*, hardcover, 272 pages, Flatiron Books, 6¼"x 9½": \$26.99

### A BURNING

BY MEGHA MAJUMDAR

This extraordinary debut novel by Indian author, Majumdar, follows three unforgettable characters who seek to rise—to the middle class, to political power, and to fame in the movies—and find their lives entangled in the wake of a catastrophe in contemporary India.

*A Burning*, hardcover, 288 pages, Knopf, 5¼"x 8½": \$25.95



## ❧ Fall Catalog ❧



### BRINE SHRIMP ORNAMENT

Liven up your holiday decorations with a brine shrimp ornament. Ornaments measure 3 inches long and serve as a festive tribute to the endemic *Artemia monica* of Mono Lake. This *Mono Lake Committee exclusive* is available in either silver or gold.

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



### FELT WILDLIFE ORNAMENTS

These handmade felted black bear and Great Horned Owl ornaments are made from 100% wool, making them as eco-friendly as they are adorable. They make the perfect holiday décor or can adorn your house year-round.

*Felt wildlife ornaments, please specify black bear or Great Horned Owl, 3": \$16.50*



### SIERRA FOREST BODY WASH

Enjoy the fresh scent of the Sierra Nevada in your home and on the trail with this natural, plant-based body wash. This soap is gentle and concentrated, making it perfect for use on camping and backpacking trips or in the kitchen and bath. The field-distilled essential oils lend it the distinctive scents of spicy resin, fresh evergreen, and crisp mountain air.

*Sierra Forest body wash, 8 ounces: \$12.00*

### SIERRA FOREST ROOM SPRAY

Bring the Sierra Nevada into any room with a few spritzes of Sierra Forest room spray. Spray into the air to freshen a space or apply directly to fabrics and linens to infuse them with the crisp scent of the Sierra.

*Sierra Forest room spray, 2 ounces: \$15.00*



### LOCAL WILDFLOWER HONEY

This delightful local honey, produced by former Mono Lake Committee staff member Alayne Meeks and her bees, is a member favorite in the bookstore. The honey is made by bees who have been pollinating the Eastern Sierra wildflower sulfur buckwheat, which gets its name from its yellow blooms. Sulfur buckwheat honey has a distinctive and rich flavor and pairs beautifully with tea to make a sweet gift.

*Mono Lake Committee exclusive.*

*Local wildflower honey, 8 ounces: \$7.50*



### CHAI TEAS

This tea from Blue Lotus Chai is the perfect warming beverage to enjoy during the fall and winter seasons. Potent and spicy, this powdered tea requires only ¼-teaspoon per cup (scoop included), so each tin contains enough tea to brew 65 to 100 cups. Just add boiling water and your preferred milk and sweetener, and you'll have a customized cup of delicious tea. Choose between traditional black chai or caffeine-free rooibos—or get both—so you can enjoy a tasty cup of

chai at any hour. *A Mono Lake Committee staff favorite.*

*Chai teas, please specify traditional or caffeine-free rooibos.*

*Traditional masala chai: 3 ounces. Rooibos masala chai: 2*

*ounces. Both teas are gluten free, vegan, and Non-GMO*

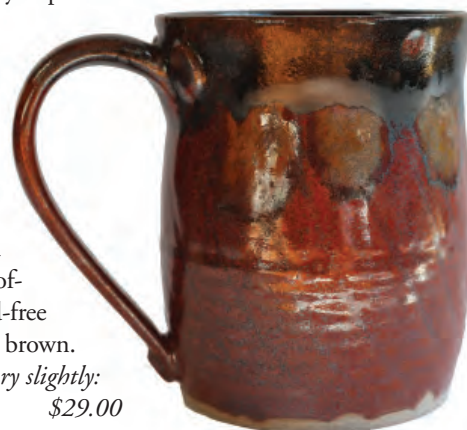
*Project Verified: \$18.95*

### HANDMADE CERAMIC MUG

Cozy up with your favorite hot beverage in this beautiful handmade mug by local artist Michael Cooke. These one-of-a-kind mugs are dishwasher and microwave safe with lead-free glazes in rich shades of orange, bronze, and brown.

*Handmade ceramic mug, 12 ounces, handmade items vary slightly:*

*\$29.00*



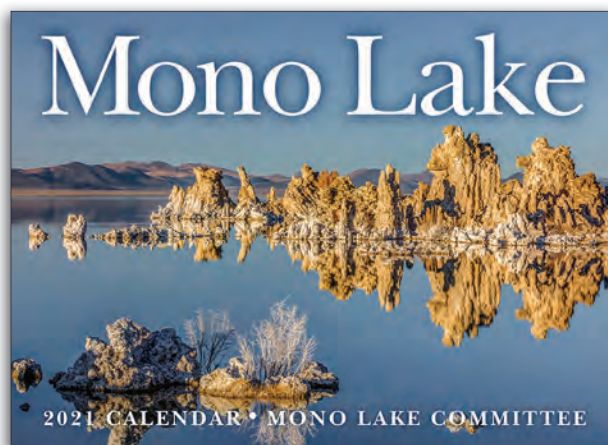
order at [monolake.org/store](http://monolake.org/store) or (760) 647-6595



## 2021 MONO LAKE CALENDAR

The 2021 Mono Lake Calendar features stunning images of our favorite wild and wonderful watershed. Bring Mono Lake into your home 365 days of the year, with views of the Mono Basin's tufa towers, sunsets, streams, wildlife, storms, fall colors, and winter landscapes as captured by skilled photographers. Printed in the USA on recycled paper. Call us for holiday gift shipping options and for special bulk pricing on orders of two or more calendars.

*Mono Lake Committee exclusive.*  
2021 Mono Lake Calendar,  
13"x 9½": \$14.95

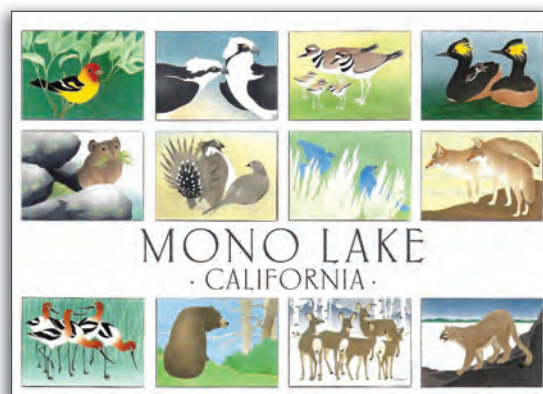


## MONO LAKE TOTE BAG

This sturdy canvas tote, carried by Claire, is an excellent way to carry all your essentials, from binoculars to books to beach blankets. Each tote features a beautifully detailed Mono Lake collage by scientific illustrator John Muir Laws printed on durable unbleached cotton canvas.  
*Mono Lake tote bag: \$18.00*

## MONO LAKE CARD SET

Featuring the popular art of Wendy Morgan, this *Mono Lake Committee exclusive* card set features 12 local and beloved wildlife species from Eared Grebes to coyotes. These cards are blank inside making them great for any occasion.  
*Mono Lake card set, 12 unique cards with envelopes, 6¼"x 4½": \$19.00*



## THANK YOU BIRDS CARD SET

After the gifting of the holiday season, show your gratitude with these charming thank you cards featuring the art of Matt Adrian. This set contains 12 blank cards with different bird designs and corresponding envelopes.  
*Thank You Birds card set, 12 unique cards with envelopes, 5½"x 4¼": \$17.00*



*See all catalog products and more in color and place your order online at [MONOLAKE.ORG/STORE](http://MONOLAKE.ORG/STORE) or call (760) 647-6595.*

The Committee has provided detailed and lengthy comments on this project since the scoping phase in 2016. Many focused on approaches to eliminate or greatly minimize the visual impacts on South Tufa, across the Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area, and in the Mono Lake Tufa State Natural Reserve. Only with the arrival of the Hybrid Plan in early August did the developer take more substantive measures to screen buildings and lower building heights.

However, the Hybrid Plan does not offer any quantifiable standards for eliminating visual impacts at South Tufa, especially in regard to light and glare coming from the project's prominent location above Mono Lake. Consequently, this alternative remains a significant adverse impact to light and glare aesthetics, which is acknowledged in the environmental document.

### ***A poorly conceived project with safety liabilities***

The Tioga Inn project, which would triple the population of Lee Vining, also creates a significant public safety hazard. Without a safe pedestrian access route linking the future residential complex with Lee Vining, children, residents, and visitors moving back and forth between the two sites must walk beside busy traffic along Highways 395 and 120 West. The potential for upwards of three hundred new residents, including students, with no safe way to move between school, residences, the local market, post office, and friends—except by motor vehicle—is simply poor planning.

The lack of pedestrian and bicycle connectivity is a significant impact that genuinely upsets many in the community and Mono County. Mitigating this impact is possible. Unfortunately, the current version of the Tioga Inn proposal asks the Supervisors to approve the project first, and promises six months later to formally study the feasibility of pedestrian access. Regardless, the developer stated clearly during the August hearing that he is unwilling to support any pedestrian access unless it is built with public funds: "It would be very expensive. There is no way I would agree to pay for it."

### ***Public comments have made a difference***

If you have commented in the course of this project's long and winding course, thank you. Public comments have, at the very least, pushed the developer and Mono County staff to consider modifications that would have otherwise never been incorporated. Despite the new Hybrid Plan, the project has yet to achieve sufficient mitigation, and it is disappointing that overwhelming public opposition does not necessarily stop projects with privatized benefits and high social costs.

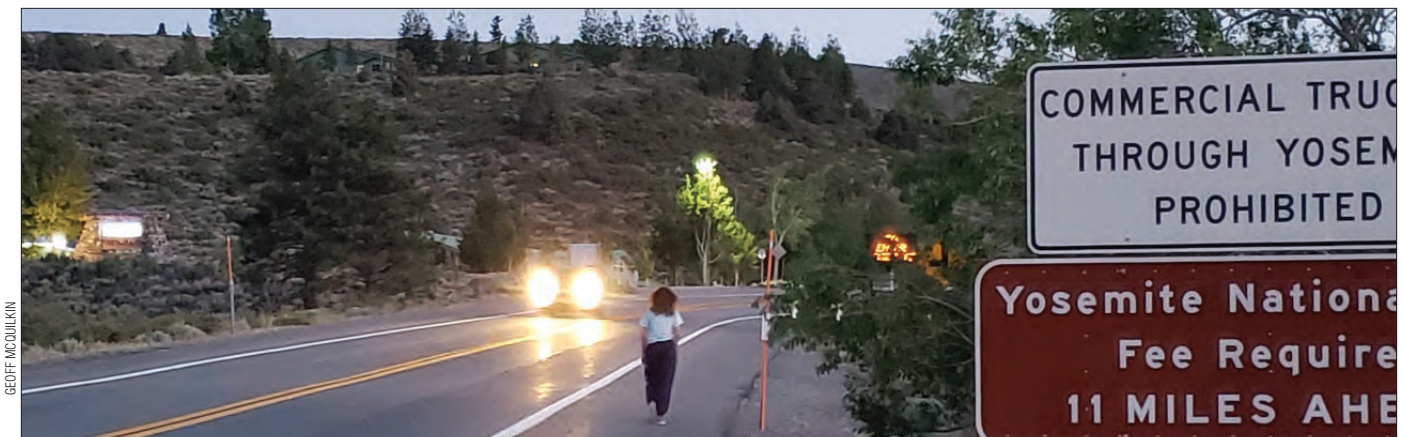
After the August hearing, the Supervisors adjourned with the intent to see more precise site plans regarding new "open development zones" proposed with the Hybrid Plan. Many other parts of the project have yet to be discussed in detail, including site screening, the lack of pedestrian and cyclist connectivity with Lee Vining (despite its feasibility), and the very real challenge to the capacity of the Lee Vining Volunteer Fire Department to serve a project that essentially creates an additional new town site.

### ***Exhaustive process, uncertain next date***

The hearing in June gave clear direction to the developer to address specific project issues. By the end of the August hearing, the Supervisors had not finished investigating the Hybrid Plan to see if those issues had been sufficiently addressed. As of press time, a continuation of the process looks likely for sometime in October.

The Committee supports thoughtfully planned projects that respect the scenic resources at Mono Lake, but the Tioga Inn, which seeks special approval for its five significant adverse impacts—not least among them safety impacts to people—remains a challenge for both supporters of Mono Lake and residents of Lee Vining and the Mono Basin. ❖

**T**he final decision about the Tioga Inn project is likely to be made in October; check [monolake.org/tiogainn](http://monolake.org/tiogainn) to see the latest about this controversial development proposal.



Without a safe pedestrian access route linking the Tioga Inn with Lee Vining, children, residents, and visitors moving back and forth between the two sites must walk beside busy traffic along Highways 395 and 120 West.



# Free Drawing to protect Mono Lake

Tickets due by December 10

**W**hen you enter the Mono Lake Committee's Free Drawing you get a chance to win one of these exciting prizes, and you give Mono Lake a chance for a bright future. Thank you to all the generous businesses and organizations who donated prizes for the Free Drawing, which is one of our largest fundraisers each year. Mail in your tickets today (find them in the center of this *Newsletter*) for a chance to win and see all the prize details at [monolake.org/freedrawing](http://monolake.org/freedrawing). Thank you, and good luck!

## You could win one of these fabulous prizes:

- one-night stay at Murphey's Motel in Lee Vining, plus a Mono Basin Field Seminar for two, and coffee from Mono Cup Coffee
- sailing trip on San Francisco Bay with Captain Kirk's Sailing Adventures and lodging at the Golden Gate Hotel
- one-night stay at Evergreen Lodge just outside Yosemite National Park, plus an outdoor adventure and gift pack from Yosemite Conservancy
- two-night stay at Wylder Hope Valley near Lake Tahoe
- one-night stay at El Mono Motel in Lee Vining with a half-day Mono Lake custom trip, plus breakfast at Latte Da Coffee Café
- one-night stay at the Double Eagle Resort & Spa in June Lake, full-day boat rental at Silver Lake Resort, a movie at Minaret Cinemas, and a gift card to Stellar Brew
- Bodie custom trip for four and dinner at the Mono Inn
- one-night stay at the Golden Gate Hotel and a family membership to the Conservatory of Flowers
- Island Packers cruise adventure to Channel Islands National Park
- registration for two for the Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua
- one-night stay at Lake View Lodge in Lee Vining, plus a Mono Lake canoe tour for two, and dinner at Epic Café
- registration for two for the Owens Lake Bird Festival
- National Parks annual pass and copies of Dan Suzio's *Death Valley Photographer's Guide* and National Geographic's *Atlas of the National Parks*
- two tickets to the Aquarium of the Pacific
- Mono Lake Committee canoe tour for four
- Patagonia Nano Puff jackets
- Patagonia Black Hole backpack or duffle bag
- REI camp chair and Rumpl recycled puffy blanket
- gift card to Eastside Sports in Bishop
- Pentax Papilio II 8.5 x 21 binoculars
- Mono Lake canvas tote with copies of Robb Hirsch's *The Nature of Yosemite*, Dennis Flaherty's *Mono Lake: Mirror of Imagination*, Dan Suzio's *Death Valley Photographer's Guide*, and Jeff Sullivan's *Photographing California Vol. 2*
- Mono Lake Committee gift packs with *The Mono Lake Story* DVD and a Mono Lake Klean Kanteen, T-shirt, hat, and 2021 calendar

**El Mono Motel**  
& Latte Da Coffee Cafe



**YOSEMITE**  
CONSERVANCY

**patagonia**



**MURPHEY'S MOTEL LLC**  
Lee Vining, California

THE MONO INN



**BODIE**  
FOUNDATION



# Staff migrations

by Arya Harp

As the seasons march on, we are greeted by signs of animal migrations large and small whose mere existence, especially in these tumultuous times, soothe the soul. For a workplace partially defined by the seasonal fluctuations of staff, this year without any seasonal staff would certainly be an outlier, were scientists tracking our migrations.



RUSS TAYLOR

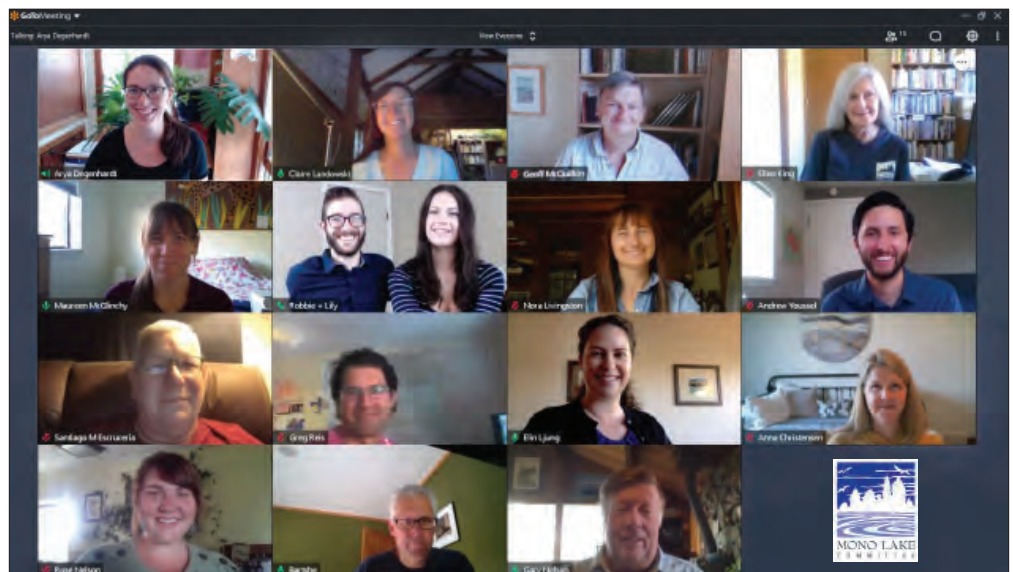
*Lisa Cutting retired after 21 years at the Mono Lake Committee.*

A significant torch was quietly passed as **Lisa Cutting** handed the Mono Lake Committee Eastern Sierra Policy Directorship off to **Bartshé Miller** before launching into retirement. A lifelong Eastern Sierra lover, Lisa came to the Committee by way of a major career change—as a Mono Lake Intern en route to a Master's degree in riparian restoration. Lucky for us, and the streams, she found herself smack in the middle of actually doing some of the most progressive and effective on-the-ground riparian restoration work happening anywhere, right here in the Mono Basin. From years of stream restoration settlement negotiations with scientists and lawyers to navigating steep slope stabilization treatments and detailed vegetation studies for the Caltrans Rockfall Project to helping launch the Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua, to literally hundreds of community meetings, issue focus groups, and agency partnerships with acronyms too numerous to list, Lisa brought her methodical logic, team-player approach, and ability to work towards science-based, balanced solutions to some of Mono Lake's biggest challenges. Thank you, Lisa, for your hard work and dedication. Mono Lake is lucky, and we are too. We'll see you out there "stream monitoring" with your fly rod and dog by your side.

**Claire Landowski's** story of joining the Committee staff as Office Manager is certainly one for the books. Having just moved to June Lake from Mountain View, with a background in science communications and project management with the US Geological Survey Science Publishing Network, Claire's first day on the job was March 25, two weeks after we all left the office. With everything about the Office Manager job shifting significantly due to the pandemic, not to mention nobody even in the office, Claire has managed our operations effectively nonetheless. We are so glad to have her on the team.

While we were not able to provide safe harbor for the much-anticipated annual migration of seasonal staff, we had a stellar lineup, and we hope that we'll all be able to work together in the future. Information Center & Bookstore Assistants: **Trevor Lemings** was to come from Berkeley, and **Pablo McCloud** from Honoka'a, HI. Outdoor Education Instructors: **Ryan Garrett** from Modesto, who was going to be the first-ever person to be an OEC student, group leader, and also work in the program; and **Gabrielle Ortega**, who was also an OEC program participant with Communities for a Better Environment. Birding Intern: **Brenden Peralez** was to come from Rancho Santa Margarita. Mono Lake Interns: **Will Hamann** from Mariposa, **Maria Luna** of Duarte (who also came to us via the OEC program), **Chandra Morgan** from West Hills, and **Erin Phillips** of Ellicott City, MD.

It needs to be said that each and every Mono Lake Committee staff member is grateful to be here—to be able to continue this work, on behalf of this place—and we are acutely aware of what it means to have generations of dedicated Mono Lake Committee members who make it possible at all. Thank you. ❖



*The 2020 Mono Lake Committee staff, all safely working from our home offices.*

ARYA HARP





# From the mailbag

*News from members and friends*

*by Ellen King*

**W**ith staff working from home, the office phone came to live with me. Many callers were taken aback to actually be able to talk to a person, and I appreciated the chance to connect with the world outside my house. I learned of family connections to Mono Lake going back generations, and stories of discovering Mono Lake quite unexpectedly. Callers hoping they could visit told me how much wild places, where you can see stars instead of headlights and hear coyotes instead of sirens, mean to them. It reinforced to me the importance of Mono Lake and the Mono Lake Committee's efforts to protect and restore this special place. Thank you to everyone who called or sent contributions in honor or in memory of friends and loved ones. Your support is what makes this work possible.

## ***In honor***

**Jeff Chavez** of Lancaster made a donation in honor of **Kandace Chavez**, class of 2020. **Terri Parks** of Bishop gave a gift in honor of **Lowell Jones**. **Peter Vorster & Janice Sheldon** of Oakland made donations in honor of **Dr. Robert & Mrs. Jean Sheldon** and **Patrick Flinn**. **Todd & Regina Wilson** of Hoboken, NJ sent a contribution in honor of **Kevin Brown's** birthday. **Carol Winter** of Iowa City, IA made a donation in honor of the 27<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary of her daughter **Kirsten Winter** & son-in-law **Charles Van Tassel**.

## ***In memory***

**Janice Bowers** of Tucson, AZ gave a gift in memory of her husband **Steve McLaughlin**, a longtime Chautauqua presenter. We received gifts in memory of **Joan Leonard** from **F.M. Broughton** of Cocoa Beach, FL and **Michael & Kim Riccio** of Canandaigua, NY. **Reanne Douglass** of Anacortes, WA made donations in memory of her husband **Donald Clifton Douglass** and **Huguette Janin**, "who was my French 'sister.' Every time she came to visit me she insisted on going to Mono Lake." **Linda Elliott** of Glendale gave a gift in memory of **David Gaines**. **Sheri Freemuth** of Boise, ID made a donation in memory of her husband **John Freemuth**. The **Harris Family Charitable Gift Fund** sent a contribution in memory of **Mark Harris**. **Laura Kemper** of State College, PA made a donation in memory of her



*In July, the comet NEOWISE graced the skies over Mono Lake, a bright spot this year.*

aunt, **Sophie Powell**. The **David A. Lamdin Charitable Gift Fund** sent a contribution "in loving memory" of **Ann C. & Charles B. Lamdin, Sr.**

**Chris MacIntosh** of Menlo Park made a donation in memory of **Bob Ulvang**. **Carol Mathews** of Walnut Creek gave gifts "in loving memory" of **Robert Mathews**. **Ken & Gayle Midas** of Chino Hills sent a contribution in memory of **John Slee**. **Mike Roberts** of Los Angeles made a donation in memory of his mother, **Therese Larkin**. **Anne Scheer & Jeff Wilson** of Port Costa gave a gift in memory of **David Stiedel**. **Chris Sowers** of Navarro sent a contribution in memory of her friend **Pam Stanley**. **Betty Shannon** of Placerville made a donation in

memory of her husband **Jim Shannon**, "celebrating all those wonderful experiences exploring the lake, its islands, and the Mono Basin so many years ago." **Dolly Swan** of Nuevo gave a gift in "loving memory of my husband" **Bob Swan**, writing, "Our family has spent many happy times in your area since about 1950. Please keep up your good work." **Marilyn Whelan** of Grass Valley sent a contribution in memory of her husband **Howard Whelan**. ❖

*Ellen King is the Committee's Membership Coordinator. She is looking forward to the long-awaited completion of her and her husband's dome greenhouse, and lots of delicious home-grown tomatoes.*



# MONO LAKE COMMITTEE

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Lee Vining, CA 93541

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## **Free Drawing to protect Mono Lake**

Tickets due December 10

**Enter to win one of 27 fabulous  
prizes, from Mono Basin getaways  
to Patagonia outdoor gear.**

Learn more on page 25 or by visiting  
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