

# Arborglyphs & Aspen Natural History



**October 8–9, 2022 • Richard Potashin & Nancy Hadlock**

\$195 per person/ \$180 for Mono Lake Committee members  
enrollment limited to 12 participants

**Ongi-ettorri!** Welcome to this seminar on aspen natural history and aspen carvings. Fall is the best time to showcase the intriguing and colorful aspen, which will be the object of our affections this weekend, both artistically and culturally.

This seminar is designed as an introduction to the history, culture, and solitary lifestyle of the man responsible for many of the aspen carvings—the Basque shepherd—one of the lesser-known icons of the American West. By visiting several different groves we will compare the designs and artistic and cultural content of aspen carvings. Participants will have an opportunity to document carvings using photography, pencil drawing, and video.

The trees also have wonderful stories to tell. As we meander through the groves we'll discuss the natural history and ecology of aspens, the tremendous community of living organisms they support and the historical impacts of grazing on aspens in and around the Eastern Sierra.

Richard Potashin, aka “Alkali Aspenowza,” has been a longtime Eastern Sierra resident and past Mono Lake Committee intern and canoe guide who continues to discover and document aspen carvings. Nancy Hadlock is a retired National Park Service and US Forest Service naturalist, interpreter, and educator. She has also been studying Basque culture since college, taking classes at the University of Nevada’s Basque Study Center.

## **ITINERARY**

**Saturday, October 8 at 8:30am:** We will meet at the Mono Lake Committee Information Center & Bookstore in Lee Vining. After brief introductions, we'll carpool to an aspen gallery for an introduction to aspen natural history and arborglyphs.

**Sunday, October 9 at 9:00am:** We'll regroup at the Mono Lake Committee and proceed to another aspen grove, where we will spend the morning and have lunch. We'll be outdoors all day and will return to the Committee between 3:00 and 4:00pm.

### **ACTIVITY LEVEL: DIFFICULT**

This seminar's activity level: *difficult*. While we will be walking up to two miles a day at a leisurely pace, much of that walking will be off trail on uneven terrain, include stepping up and over fallen trees, and involve bushwhacking through aspen thickets. This type of walking requires good balance, some agility, and stamina.

### **WEATHER & ALTITUDE**

Temperatures in fall can be comfortable or downright chilly, with possible windy and snowy conditions. Average temperatures in October in Lee Vining are 66°F (max) and 36°F (min).

This seminar will take place at elevations ranging from about 6,500 to 8,500 feet above sea level. It is a good idea to acclimate at the elevation of Lee Vining for at least 24 hours prior to the start of the seminar. Those with a history of heart, ear, or respiratory problems should consult their doctors before attending. Anyone restricted to lower elevations should not enroll. \*Note: If you have residual respiratory effects from having Covid-19, activities at altitude may be particularly difficult for you.

Remember to bring (and drink!) lots of water because your body loses more water at the higher altitudes of the Mono Basin. Begin drinking extra water as you drive to higher elevation in order to prevent dehydration and headaches. Also, the sun is intense at high elevations, capable of burning even on cool and cloudy days, so be sure to protect yourself thoroughly using sunscreen, sunglasses, and hat.

### **MEALS**

Please bring a lunch already packed in the morning plus water and snacks to eat during both days.

### **TO BRING**

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| <input type="checkbox"/> warm clothing (warm enough for snow!)                  | <input type="checkbox"/> camera                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> long pants (due to brush)                              | <input type="checkbox"/> binoculars (optional)     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> raincoat, just in case                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> daypack                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> hat, sunscreen, and sunglasses                         | <input type="checkbox"/> plenty of water           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> hand lens (if you have one)                            | <input type="checkbox"/> boots or supportive shoes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> pencil and paper, if you desire to sketch the carvings |  |

### **RECOMMENDED READINGS**

- *Speaking Through the Aspens*, Jose Mallea-Olaetxe, University of Nevada Press, 2000.
  - *The Basque History of the World*, Mark Kurlansky, Walker and Company, 1999.
  - An aspen fact sheet and introduction to Basque aspen carvings will be mailed to you by the instructors and should be brought to the seminar.
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## COVID-19 REQUIREMENTS FOR 2022

All participants and instructors must be fully vaccinated and boosted. Proof of vaccination will be required after you register for a seminar.

Please minimize your exposure to Covid in the time leading up to your seminar. We recommend obtaining a negative PCR test result within 72 hours prior to your seminar starting.\* If your PCR test comes back positive for Covid, you must cancel your registration and stay home. If you begin to feel sick in the days leading up to your seminar, you must cancel your registration and stay home. You will receive a full refund in either case.

\*Depending on the regional Covid situation we may need to *require* a negative PCR test result within 72 hours prior to your seminar starting.

During the seminars masks will be required indoors and in carpools/Mono Lake Committee van in accordance with Mono County requirements (N95 or KN95 masks offer the best protection). If Mono County has lifted the mask requirement, masks will not be required indoors and in vehicles during the seminars. (You may wear a mask at any time if you wish to.)

If you begin to feel ill with Covid symptoms at any time during the seminar, you must immediately notify the instructor or staff member accompanying the group and leave the seminar.

Please keep in mind that conditions may change at any time and we may have to change our procedures in order to provide the opportunity for everyone involved with the Field Seminars to safely participate. Depending on the Covid situation in the weeks leading up to your seminar, we may have to plan to hold the seminar completely outdoors. Mask requirements may change. There's a chance we may have to cancel seminars altogether. We will communicate with you about any of these changes, and you can always get in touch with us if you have questions or need more clarification about specific circumstances, by emailing [fieldseminars@monolake.org](mailto:fieldseminars@monolake.org) or by calling (760) 647-6595.

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**Mono Lake Committee Field Seminars**

P.O. Box 29 • Lee Vining, CA 93541 • (760) 647-6595 • [monolake.org/seminars](http://monolake.org/seminars)