

Arborglyphs & Aspen Natural History



October 7–8, 2023 • 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 7 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 8 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: STRENUOUS

This seminar's activity level: *strenuous*. 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.

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.



Mono Lake Committee Field Seminars

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