

Fall Colors of the Mono Basin



Fall colors at Sagehen Summit. Photo by BreeLynn Butler

October 10, 2026 • Hannah Ashby

**\$185 per person / \$170 for Mono Lake Committee members
enrollment limited to 15 participants**

Fall in the Mono Basin brings us a spectacular display of color! As the seasons change, fall foliage is on display for a just short period of time, making the “hunt” for fall colors an exciting one. In this one-day field seminar, we will learn about the science behind these brilliant hues and venture to local hotspots for leaf-peeping.

Our day will start with a brief indoor presentation about the biological processes for these color changes. We’ll then head outside and take a naturalist’s perspective to look for the plant communities that give us the most dramatic shows of color. As we move around the Mono Basin, opportunities for birding, botanizing, art, and photography will be available, so bring your binoculars, field guides, journals, and cameras if you have them.

Hannah Ashby is the Mono Lake Committee’s Education Coordinator. She is excited to combine her background in biochemistry with her love of the fall season to provide a new perspective into the world of fall colors. Hannah is a Certified Interpretive Guide and Wilderness First Responder.

ITINERARY

Saturday, October 10, 9:00am: Meet at the Mono Lake Committee Information Center & Bookstore in Lee Vining (51365 Highway 395). We'll start the day in the Committee's gallery with introductions and a short presentation about the science of fall colors. We'll then head outside to tour the best of the Mono Basin's changing colors. The day will end around 5:00pm.

ACTIVITY LEVEL: ADAPTIVE

This seminar's activity level: *adaptive*. This seminar's activities and terrain will be dependent on the experience and comfort level of participants and the instructor will adapt the route and/or locations based on the group's need. There will likely be periods of sitting and reflecting, movement along trails, and using binoculars which may require lifting arms up and down. We will be visiting high elevation areas as well as dry, arid areas. Please reach out to fieldseminars@monolake.org if you have questions or to share accessibility needs.

WEATHER & ALTITUDE

Fall in the Mono Basin can include anything from warm, sunny days to chilly, cloudy weather. In case of the latter, come prepared with layered clothing and a waterproof jacket. 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 6,000 to 10,000 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.

TO BRING

- Warm, insulating layers
- Waterproof layer/rain jacket
- Water
- Daypack
- Snacks and sack lunch
- Footwear you can hike in

- Sunglasses, sunscreen, and hat

RECOMMENDED READING

- *Sierra Nevada Tree Identifier* by Jim Paruk (2014)
- *The Sibley Guide to Trees* by David Allen Sibley (2009)



Mono Lake Committee Field Seminars

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