

THE
JEFFREY PINE JOURNAL

Newsletter of Friends of the Inyo

SUMMER 2013

VOLUME XI, ISSUE I



After the rain.

photo: Dan Mingori



Cavity
Nesters

Forest
Planning

Summer
Stewardship

Preservation | Exploration | Stewardship

THE Jeffrey Pine Journal

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Newsletter of Friends of the Inyo



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Friends of the Inyo is dedicated
to the preservation, exploration and stewardship
of the Eastern Sierra's public lands.



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The Cover Photo



A common spring wildflower,
Arrowleaf Balsamroot adds
a bright burst of color to the
Eastern Sierra landscape.
Image by Dan Mingori,
photographer and coauthor
of Backcountry Skiing Cali-
fornia's Eastern Sierra.

Inyo is a Paiute word meaning "dwelling place
of the Great Spirit." For us, this dwelling place
extends from the bottom of Death Valley to the
top of Mount Whitney, from Owens Lake to Topaz
Lake, from the crest of the Sierra Nevada to the
roof of the Great Basin atop the
White Mountains.

The Jeffrey Pine Journal, named after the
Eastern Sierra's most aromatic conifer, is
distributed free to all members of Friends of the
Inyo and wherever great spirits tend to dwell.

President's Message

by James Wilson

Recently Kay and I walked up Big Pine Creek. It was so dry, so very dry, the falls were almost not there. Sobering. The spring birds were still singing however. Green-tailed Towhee, Fox Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, and friends, I wish them luck and summer rains.

Like for many other non-profits, 2012 was a tough year for Friends of the Inyo. Our revenues and budget were challenging. We dug in and are stronger for it. The board and I would like to thank our staff for their hard work and perseverance in difficult times.

The US Forest Service is starting a new process of Forest Planning. Those with long memories will recall that Friends of the Inyo was founded in 1986 as a coalition of local environmental groups to work on the first Inyo National Forest planning process. My first thought about the earlier forest planning process is that I can't remember #\$\$^! It was a long time ago. Recently I went to the FS office for a preplanning meeting; other FOI staff and board members were there, and it was pointed out, that I was the only one in the room who was present at the previous forest planning 25 years ago. Sobering. But also significant that work that was done 25 years ago is still the guiding document for how Inyo National Forest conducts business today. In 2040, 25 years from now, what happens in the next few years of planning may still be in place!

So what did we accomplish that we can look back on? The Forest Plan of 1988 zoned the possibility of Mammoth Mountain and June Mountain being connected by San Joaquin Ridge into a truly immense ski area, and perhaps destroying the most important connection between the flora and fauna of the east and west side. It is the Owens Headwaters Wilderness now, a big victory. The timber harvest plan was originally predicated on liquidating all large trees, and growing plantations that would be harvested on 60 years rotations. A 60-year-old tree on the Inyo is a big pole. Poles make poor wildlife habitat and a huge fire danger. Now we are managing to mimic a preindustrial condition, a much more natural landscape. In the last 25 years many of the domestic sheep allotments have changed to create a safer space for the return of the endangered Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep. All of these issues were part of the previous planning process and are issues that Friends of the Inyo has worked on.

Planning will be a lot of work in the next three years. If you have a long-term vision for our place please be involved. Show up at meetings, be informed, and continue to support Friends of the Inyo with your time, money, and spirit.

Director's Note

by Laura Beardsley

My first spring in the Eastern Sierra has rapidly come to a close. The warm days and cool nights have given way to a steady heat in the desert which leaves me dreaming of days high among the peaks. Once a visitor, now a resident, I'm thrilled daily to notice something new, a flower, a bird, an unfamiliar phenomenon that keeps me learning from this amazing place. The Eastern Sierra is blessed with some of the most varied and spectacular landscapes. In the last few months, I've explored desert canyons, skied snow covered peaks, marveled at petroglyphs, and spent hours watching the open skies change with wind and light.

Summer promises long days of hard work for everyone at Friends of the Inyo. Over the next few months, we will provide thousands of hours of stewardship, both paid and volunteer, comment on countless pages of planning and project documents, and encourage ongoing exploration and appreciation of our public lands. Our members make our work possible, and I thank each of you who contribute your time, money, and energy to Friends of the Inyo and our public lands. More and more people visit and fall in love with the Eastern Sierra each year. As things heat up and summer visitors take to the land, thank you for another season caring for the Eastern Sierra.

Glyphs: Come Take a Walk in an Outdoor Gallery

By Crystal West

Thirst sticks in my throat like a dry cotton ball. We've been walking in the desert for hours. The dog's feet are raw. My friend with the umbrella, who we laughed at when we started this journey, now seems to be the only one faring well. I turn the corner of the wash and am surprised by a dark, desert varnished boulder inscribed with circles, crosses, and lines, exposing the white rock underneath. At first I think am I hallucinating, but take a closer look and begin to see images carved in the stone. I can make out animals in the shapes; some look like bighorn sheep, some like bird feet in wet sand, some look like upside down U's, and some are obvious circles with crosses. To my eyes, accustomed to reading text on a cell phone, I see a mish-mash collage of shapes and lines, but to the person who walked here 1,000 or maybe 5,000 years ago it may be an elaborate map or message full of meaning. I don't know the language but can only guess: maybe a Paiute or Shoshone hunter sat here hot and thirsty and chiseled these images into stone waiting for deer. Or maybe a shaman doctor travelled here to record his dreams. Or maybe women traveled here to ask for fertility and a safe passage into motherhood. Archaeologists call these ancient symbols carved and pecked into rock petroglyphs. The outer patina is carefully removed to expose the lighter surface rock underneath creating a contrasting design.

I look under the boulder, careful to listen for the hiss of the rattlesnake and see faint red handprints and long red lines drawn next to them. The hands are small like a child's and I can almost hear laughter echoing down the wash. Was this part of a game or a ceremony? These paintings or pictographs were made by mixing ground-up pigments such as ochre and combining them with a binder such as blood, animal fat, egg white or plant oil and painting or imprinting the design on the rock. They speak to an ancient human language I can relate to. I have used lines and color to represent my world-view since I was a small child. Humans, unlike any other animal, do this. We make art; we carve, we paint, and we write to mimic, translate or illustrate how we see the world. The Paleolithic decorated caves of Europe, South Africa and Australia attest that humans have been expressing their world through art for over 40,000 years.

The handprints and bighorn sheep remind me of other glyphs I have found up in the mountains of similar form but from a different culture and time. Lovely, graceful carvings of women and various forms of domestic sheep, horses, bota-bag wine drinkers and dancers, created in an elegant, fine-line style on the blank canvas of aspen bark. These carvings or arborglyphs were created by the vibrant Spanish/ Basque shepherders who traveled thousands of miles from their homeland to make a meager living, herding sheep in the remote meadows of the West beginning in the Gold Rush.

"Howod Hoghes buelta al Mundo en 91 hors," (Howard Hughes flew around the world in 91 hours) or another carving proclaiming, "Rey-De Los Indios" (King of the Indians), or this slander "Solt, Pork, Hery, Macellin, Es, Listo, Zorro, Y, Falso / Cu Da, Mucho, Ma, Alacalai, Cuando, Da La, Provision (Salt Pork Henry Marcellin is sharp and false as a fox that gives us a lot more alkali then he gives provisions) are just some of the voices found in this grove that resonate: this is life in the 1930s for a young lonely shepherd.

The screech of a red tail hawk pulls me back into the bright sun and throbbing heat. I peer again at the mysterious marks and shapes on the rock and wonder if this is merely a message board, noting events of the day like who ran the fastest over the White Mountains and back. We will never really know what these glyphs or symbols mean. However, even lacking translation they speak to our collective human characteristic of seeing the world symbolically, and to our ability and desire to

understand and communicate this worldview through colors, lines, shapes and words. This is the connection, for me, that makes these places sacred and special.

I feel fortunate to have stumbled upon a piece of the rich array of art left by the many cultures who have lived on this land or have just passed by. Petroglyphs, pictographs, and arborglyphs found in this area are distinctive reminders that we all share this uniquely human tradition of leaving our stories in stone and wood. My dog nudges me signalling that its time to go. I see the shimmer of a silver umbrella far ahead. I look one last time at the painted handprints and say thanks for reminding me of the ones who have passed here before.



*A dancer graces the bark of an aspen.
(Crystal West)*

(Crystal West)

Preservation

Remember – Only You can Postpone Forest Fires!

by Steve McLaughlin

Forest fires are costly both in lives and property, and fire suppression has dominated both the budget and work force of the U. S. Forest Service throughout its 108-year history. But both scientists and land managers are now asking the question “what happens to our forests when they don’t burn?” We know that fire suppression has allowed fuels to accumulate in forests and woodlands over the past century. Fire suppression has obvious benefits, but we are now beginning to understand its consequences as well.

All plant communities have a characteristic fire regime—how frequently they burn, how extensive are their fires, what is their normal severity. Historical records, fire scars on living trees and snags, and charcoal layers in soils and sediments have been used to estimate the fire-return intervals (FRIs) for shrublands, woodlands, and forests.

For the forests in the eastern Sierra Nevada a fairly clear pattern is emerging. High-elevation subalpine forests, those dominated by bristlecone pine, white-bark pine, limber pine, and foxtail pine, appear to have very long FRIs (hundreds of years) of mixed to high severity fires. Thus a century of fire suppression has had little effect on these forests—most were unlikely to have burned in this interval anyway. However, mid-elevation forests—lodgepole pine, mixed conifer, white and red fir—have medium to long FRIs (15 to 150 years) of mixed severity fire, and the low-elevation Jeffrey pine forest have short FRIs (5-40 years) of low to moderate severity fires.

Our low- and mid-elevation forests are thus said to be in a condition of fire deficit, meaning they have missed one to several cycles of burning that would have occurred in the absence of fire suppression. As a result, when fires inevitably occur, they burn at a much higher sever-



*Edge of the June Fire, Mono Basin.
(Paul McFarland)*



A mix of burned with live trees creates excellent habitat. (Paul McFarland)



*Renewed growth in fertilized soils.
(Drew Foster)*

ity than is typical. The recent high-severity, stand-replacing fires in Jeffrey pine forests in the Mono Basin are excellent examples.

The U.S. Forest Service has an opportunity to address this problem of fire deficits during the ongoing forest plan revisions. The Inyo, Sequoia, and Sierra National Forests are currently in the process of revising their plans, and Friends of the Inyo has been participating in the process. Even if the Forest Service had the resources to continue to put out every wildfire by 10 o'clock the next morning, it would only postpone the inevitable correction to the fire deficit, bringing larger, higher severity fires.

Many units of the Park Service, including Yosemite National Park, currently manage some fires as “wild-fire for resource benefit.” Lightning-caused fires in the backcountry that do not directly threaten communities or structures are allowed to burn. Studies have found that recent fires in Yosemite National Park are both less extensive and less severe than in adjacent national forests.

It is the perfect time for the national forests to revise their fire management plans to allow for resource benefit wildfires. Fuel reductions and fire suppression should be targeted to the wildland-urban interface and around developed front-country recreation areas, but limited funds might be better spent on reseeding and restoring areas that do burn rather than trying to prevent them from burning forever. Eventually the goal, or desired condition, should be to restore fire regimes of moderate-sized fires of mixed severity, with large patches of low-severity fire and some patches of higher-severity fire. Smokey the Bear had it only partly correct when he admonished us that only we could prevent forest fires—for a while.

Preservation

Forest Planning

Inyo National Forest Begins Overhaul of 25 year old Management Plan

By Drew Foster

In March 2012, the USDA adopted a new Forest Planning Rule defining the creation of new management plans for each of the nation's national forests. Of the 155 national forests, eight, including three in the Sierra Nevada, were chosen as "early adopters" – living social laboratories where the US Forest Service will fine-tune a new national process focused on "collaboration and science-based decision making." As an early adopter, the Inyo National Forest, home to Mt. Whitney, the ancient bristlecone pines, and Mono Lake will, along with the Sierra and Sequoia National Forests, set the precedent across the nation for developing plans that promote effective and sustainable management of our precious forest lands.

The new forest management plan, slated for completion in 2016, will replace the 1988 Inyo National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. As an "early adopter", planning on the Inyo presents a unique opportunity to set the bar high for manage-

ment standards and guidelines that determine how the forest service will continue to be good stewards and land managers for some of our most noteworthy and highly visited public lands. Some of the topics to be considered through the forest planning process include landscape level management of habitats and resources, recreation and access, renewable energy, and potential designation of unprotected wild places, like Inventoried Roadless Areas and Wild & Scenic River candidates.

The forest planning process allows the Inyo National Forest, Friends of the Inyo, and other public stakeholders to take a fresh look at managing and preserving our precious wild places. This process will ensure their ecological integrity and wildlife habitat value while providing sources of clean municipal drinking water and economic value as world-class destinations for recreation.

Get involved with planning for the future of your national forests. Be sure to check

out our website for updates and opportunities to engage in the Inyo National Forest plan revision process, as well as outings and hikes to exciting corners of the Inyo and the Eastern Sierra.



(Drew Foster)



Friends of the Inyo leads a group of hikers exploring the flora of McGee Creek Canyon.
(Maggie Wolfe Riley)

Thank you, Conservation Alliance!

Friends of the Inyo is thrilled to announce a generous grant from the Conservation Alliance, whose mission it is to engage businesses to fund and partner with organizations to protect wild places for their habitat and recreation values. With their support, we will engage in the Inyo National Forest planning process in ways that ensure the protection of the wild and incredible places of the Eastern Sierra. Find out more about the great things the Conservation Alliance does at www.conservationalliance.com.

Exploration

Conifer Island: The Heart of Inyo National Forest

By Paul McFarland

This place I'm sitting, at the base of a towering Jeffrey pine surrounded by the duff and cones of centuries old pines, has been called many things. The Jeffrey pine forest, the timber base, where I get my firewood, Bald Mountain, the core timber management area, the Glass Mountains...

Call it what you will, but the more time I spend out here, the more I grow to think of this place as the true heart of the Inyo National Forest. Sandwiched between the granite wonderland of the Sierra crest and the ancient desert ridges of the White Mountains, like a sagebrush and pine needle veggie burger, this landscape of subtle surprises is defined by Highway 395 on the west, Highway 120 on the north and the Benton Crossing road on the east and south.

An island of conifers in a sea of high desert shrublands, Pacific storms funneling up the San Joaquin River drainage pour through the low gap in the mighty, moisture-robbing Sierra from Mammoth Pass to Deadman Pass to nurture this forest. You can watch these storms tumble through the crest to form counter-clockwise swirling bands of clouds dropping rain and snow right into the thirsty needles of these pines.

Every exploration into this heartland yields new surprises: a cathedral-like patch of old-growth Jeffrey pine just two minutes walk off 395; an old paved highway in the middle of nowhere; an explosion of fat and furry Pandora moths emerging from the duff; a secret meadow splatter-painted with flowers and butterflies; or hidden cliffs nestling aspen-choked canyons.

Leave the hardcore mountain busting to places with guide-books. This is a land inviting unlimited meandering. By foot, bike, motorcycle, skis, snowshoes, horse or truck, every nook and knob, forested or bald, has left me thinking "rad spot" and wanting more.

It'd be easy to rattle off a list of recommended places with flowery descriptions of what's to be seen with detailed directions on how to get there, but this forest is one to discover on your own. Spend some time with a good map (or even a bad one), draw out a loop or throw a bottle cap down to pick a spot. Or, like I find myself doing, pull off the highway, shut off the radio and listen to the trees and woodpeckers tell you where to go. They know this place; they've been here, at the heart of the Inyo National Forest, for a long time.



Exploring the heart of the Inyo. (Paul McFarland)

Conifer Island: by the numbers

- 2** Research Natural Areas
- 2** Inventoried Roadless Areas
- At least **9** species of conifer
- 4** historic Forest Service campgrounds
- Over **950** miles of designated roads
- 0** miles of designated foot trail
- Lots** of trees

Exploration

Get Out and Give Back this Summer

Visit www.friendsoftheinyo.org for event details!

Summer is in full swing and Friends of the Inyo is looking forward to all the great programs we're offering this year to give back to the Eastern Sierra. If you're interested in discovering something new or getting your hands dirty in one of the most beautiful places on Earth, we've got something for you. Opportunities to explore will be added throughout the summer. Check out our website or "like" us on Facebook to stay up to date on the latest adventures. See you out there!

Discover the Mammoth Lakes Basin

Thanks to funding from the Town of Mammoth Lakes, we're offering naturalist walks to explore the Mammoth Lakes Trail System and the treasures of the Lakes Basin throughout the summer. Topics include mining, geology, wildflowers, and more. Stop by the Mammoth Lakes Welcome Center or visit friendsoftheinyo.org for a schedule and more details.

July 6: Summer of Stewardship: Mountain Bike Trails Work with MLTPA and Friends of the Inyo

For the fifth year, Friends of the Inyo is joining forces with Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access, Inyo National Forest and the Town of Mammoth Lakes to host Summer of Stewardship Trails Days in and around Mammoth. Get in on the action and lend a hand to keep our playground beautiful. Join us on July 6th, or check out one of the other projects below. Summer of Stewardship Trails Days are sponsored by generous local businesses and organizations including Mammoth Lakes Sunrise Rotary, the



Town of Mammoth Lakes, Old New York Deli & Bagel Co., and Mammoth Brewing Company. Please help us thank them for their support.

July 20: Summer of Stewardship: Mountain View Trail Work with MLTPA.

July 27: Explore the World's Largest Jeffrey Pine Forest

Unlock a few of the secrets of the world's largest Jeffrey Pine forest with an all-day exploration into the heart of the Inyo National Forest. From burned forests to pumice meadows to unique never logged old-growth stands, this trip will be a combination of driving and moderate meandering on foot off-trail. Meet at 8:30am at the Bald Mountain Road junction with Hwy 395 a mile north of Deadman Summit. Bring plenty of water, lunch, binoculars and sturdy footwear. Moderate clearance, 2wd vehicles okay. No dogs, please.

August 3: Summer of Stewardship: Coldwater and Mammoth Mine Sites Trail Work with MLTPA and Friends of the Inyo.

August 9 to 12: **Wilderness Volunteer Days – Boundary Peak**
Spend three days and four nights with Friends of the Inyo caring for the beautiful Boundary Peak Wilderness on the Eastern border of California. All tools and meals will be provided along with exceptional opportunities to explore the Boundary Peak Wilderness. Advance registration required. Please visit our website for more information.

August 17: Summer of Stewardship: Hot Creek with MLTPA.

September 21: Summer of Stewardship: Lake Basin

Celebrate Coastal Clean Up Day by volunteering with MLTPA and Friends of the Inyo.

For more information please visit our website, www.friendsoftheinyo.org or call us at 760-873-6500.

Save the Date! September 28 & 29 2013 Members' Rendezvous

Friends of the Inyo's annual members' weekend complete with a meaningful stewardship project in honor of National Public Lands Day, hikes, and a celebration of Friends of the Inyo and our amazing members. We've got some great surprises in store. Stay tuned for more information, and come spend a night in the Sierra with us.



Volunteers clearing trails near Red's Meadow. (Todd Vogel)

Home Sweet Hole

An Introduction to Eastern Sierra Cavity Nesters

By Paul McFarland, with drawings by Autumn Bahlman

Tap, tap, tap....the sounds of woodpeckers drumming away is a familiar one to those who meander the Eastern Sierra. Following is a brief introduction to both the contractors – those woodpeckers that build these tree cavities, and, via one beautiful representative, the renters, those birds that use cavities already excavated.

Mountain Bluebird

Sialia currucoides Thrush Family

Living flecks of the bluest Eastern Sierra sky, Mountain Bluebirds truly are “feathered epiphanies.” From sagebrush flats to pinyon forests to barren alpine cliffs, these aqua blue bundles of life, sally forth from a favorite perch to catch insects in the air or on the ground (a bird behavior known as flycatching). Bluebirds, along with chickadees, nuthatches, swallows, wrens and other renters, move in when the local cavity contractors – the woodpeckers – move on. Conifer or hardwood, Bluebirds don't seem to care, but they will fight for available holes. However, in trees where holes are abundant – such as tall snags or pines with long, dead lightening stripes – Bluebirds will share a single tree with many other renters, creating an arboreal condo as diverse as a Brooklyn brownstone.



Black-backed Woodpecker

Picoides arcticus Woodpecker Family

Perhaps the most persnickety of the North American Picidae (Woodpecker family), the Black-backed woodpecker is tied to burned forest like salt is to pepper. These two – black-backs and conifer burns – were literally made for each other. Once extremely rare here at the southern end of its range, Black-backs are back. Starting with the 2001 Crater Fire south of Mono Lake, Black-backed Woodpeckers began showing up in increasing numbers in natural, accidental, and prescribed Jeffrey and lodgepole pine burns throughout the Eastside. Today, one can find these bark-chipping, bark beetle larvae-eaters with some regularity in burns across the northern Inyo National Forest. Calm and quiet, Black-backs can be closely approached. Look for bare ovals of chipped bark low on burned trunks and boughs, and in winter, piles of charred bark chips in the snow for clues to this wonderful woodpecker's whereabouts.



Red-breasted Sapsucker

Sphyrapicus ruber Woodpecker Family

The bright red hood spilling down on the chest readily identifies the Red-breasted Sapsucker. Here in the Eastern Sierra, these “strawberry-heads”, as David Gaines calls them in his incomparable *Birds of Yosemite and the East Slope*, are intimately tied to aspen groves where they excavate cavities in dead and living trees. As their name suggests, the Red-breasted does suck sap. These sapsuckers drill rows of small oval holes, known as wells, into the bark of hardwoods. Sapsuckers will eat the cambium – the soft layer of plant tissue below the bark – from these wells, and return again and again to a favored tree to drink the oozing sap and catch insects attracted to and caught in the sticky tree blood. Fair weather friends, Red-breasted Sapsuckers migrate to lower elevations with winter’s cold temperatures.

White-headed Woodpecker

Picoides albolarvatus Woodpecker Family

The woodpecker king of Eastern Sierra conifer forests, the bright white head and contrasting black body of the White-headed in undulating flight or clinging to conifer bark is unmistakable. True to their regal nature, these woodpeckers prefer groves of relatively large, older conifer trees where they can be found year-round chipping bark for bugs or stealing seeds from pine cones. White-headed Woodpeckers also stumble around the ends of boughs searching pine needle clumps for insects and spiders like their diminutive Chickadee friends. White-headed excavate cavities relatively low to the ground (averaging 5-8 feet up) in dead, often broken off, large conifer snags and stumps. White-headed Woodpeckers are often seen in recently burned Eastside forests along with Black-backed and Hairy woodpeckers.



PINE DROPS

NEWS AND NOTES FROM THE EASTERN SIERRA'S PUBLIC LANDS

By Laura Beardsley, Andrew Schurr & Paul McFarland

The Eastern Sierra has been bustling this year, and Friends of the Inyo is keeping pace with a whirlwind spring of projects and events, public meetings, and news to keep us working well into fall.

RECENT EVENTS

March and April kicked off the stewardship season with a bang! In March, seven Washington State University students completed a week of desert restoration in the Kivah Wilderness with Friends of the Inyo. No beach trips for this crew; for the 5th year in a row, this amazing group spent their spring break giving the desert a little love and helping restore illegal routes in wilderness.

Closer to home, Friends of the Inyo spent time in the Alabama Hills working with the Alabama Hills Stewardship Group and the Bishop BLM to turn a closed jeep road into a walking trail that explores some of the unique granite arches in the area. We also joined forces with a cadre of local organizations at the second annual Alabama Hills

Day hosting both a work project and a flower walk with Board Secretary Steve McLaughlin.

Not that we needed a reason, but Earth

Day is a great one to get folks out caring for their public lands. We made the most of it with two volunteer projects and a popular display at the Bishop Earth Day Celebration. For the fourth year, Friends of the Inyo joined the Bishop BLM, the Bishop Area Climbers Coalition (BACC), the Access Fund, and the American Alpine Club to host an end of the season clean up at the Happy Boulders. Close to 30 very helpful climbers came out to steward some of the Eastern Sierra's iconic climbing areas, highlighting a great partnership and a great community of local climbers. We're

improving the Horton Creek Campground with the Bishop BLM and 45 students, teachers, and parents. Students in the 4th-6th grade built the beginnings of an interpretative trail, planted cottonwoods to shade the campsites, and pulled invasive weeds to make room for native flowers. In addition to the great work the students had a chance to learn some stream health science from Friends of the Inyo Board member Dave Herbst and a team of Bishop Union High School science club volunteers. It was a great day to be a public lands steward!

Finally, not to be outdone by Earth Day, we celebrated National Trails Day in similar style with three events across the Eastern Sierra. Volunteers worked in Black Canyon, in the White Mountains, and a group of curious kids searched for lizards and snakes in the Tungsten Hills. In Mammoth, more than 50 people helped re-build biking and hiking trails around Panorama Dome as part of the first Summer of Steward-



WSU's spring break crew ready for a week working in wilderness. (Laura Beardsley)

looking forward to next year.

Also in celebration of Earth Day, Round Valley School worked with Friends of the Inyo for the 6th year in row. This year's project:

ship Trail Day of the season. Hosted in partnership with Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access, and Inyo National Forest, these events are sponsored by a number of

local businesses and organizations including Mammoth Lakes Sunrise Rotary, Old New York Deli & Bagel Co., and Mammoth Brewing, and funded in part through Mammoth Lakes' Measure "R" initiative.

A NEW NAME

Earlier in the year, President Obama signed legislation formally naming peak 12,240' in Inyo National Forest Mount Andrea Lawrence. Andrea Mead Lawrence was an Olympic skier, mother, member of the Mono County Board of Supervisors, and dedicated conservationist who worked to protect and restore numerous natural and cultural resources in the Eastern Sierra. Her namesake peak is located in Mono County near the Tuolumne County border at the edge of the Ansel Adams Wilderness.

JUNE LAKE TRAILS

In 2011, Friends of the Inyo, the June Lake Trails Committee, Mono County and Inyo National Forest constructed a new trail around Gull Lake. Two years later, the trail is in great shape and enjoyed by residents and visitors to the area on a regular basis. Trail efforts in June Lake continue with sights set on construction of a new trail connecting Gull Lake to the area around the Double Eagle Resort and Spa. Trails in June Lake and throughout the area provide increased opportunities for recreation, improve access of communities to public lands, and encourage visitors to spend more time in our area. Interested in supporting trails in June Lake? Friends of the Inyo has established a restricted fund to support the maintenance and development of trails in June Lake. If you'd like to make a contribution or learn more, please call us at 760-873-6500.

SPEAKING OF TRAILS

Friends of the Inyo has also been working with Mono County and the National Park Service as part of a committee planning trails in an around Lee Vining. The committee's goal is to create a plan for a network of trails in the Lee Vining area with the potential of one day establishing a trail connecting the community and campgrounds of Lee Vining to Yosemite National Park.



Looking across the north ridge from the summit of Mount Andrea Lawrence toward Yosemite. (James Wilson)



Hard work brings smiles at the fourth annual June Lake Trails Day. (Sydney Quinn)

Preserving the Rest of the West: The National Landscape Conservation System

By Paul McFarland

The American West boasts numerous iconic landscapes of jaw-dropping splendor: the rainbow cliffs of Zion, the gaping maw of the Grand Canyon, spewing geysers of Yellowstone and, of course, the towering waterfalls and granite walls of our local Yosemite Valley. As the tasteful entrance gates and well-appointed, flat-hatted rangers greeting us in these places indicate, all are preserved as national parks – America’s best idea, some say.

Anyone who’s spent more than a few minutes wandering around the millions of other western open spaces knows that these places – our national parks – represent only a fraction of the glory to be found here. What about the rest of the West? The second, third, fourth, even, fifth fiddles out there? What’s to ensure future generations can enjoy not just the best of the west, sometimes crowded and costly, but the rest of the West – the wide sagebrush steppes, wild rivers, even near-urban, but publicly-owned green spaces?

Thankfully, America, never short of ideas, is working to solve this question by creating the National Landscape Conservation System. Known also as National Conservation Lands, this network includes Wild & Scenic Rivers, National Monuments, National Conservation Areas, Wilderness Areas, National Scenic and Historic Trails and Wilderness Study Areas managed by the Bureau of Land Management.

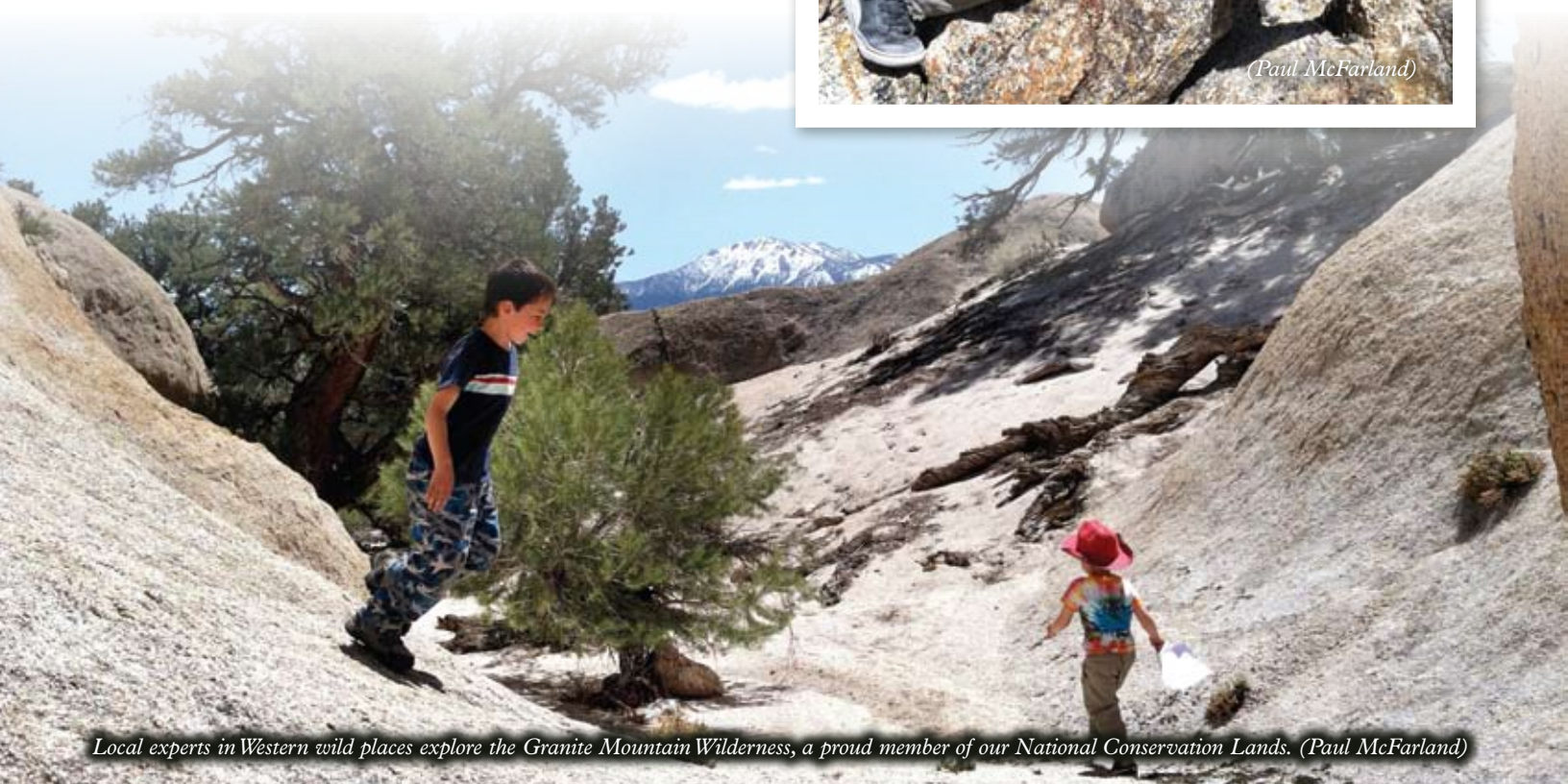
Blessed as we are in the Eastern Sierra with all things wild and public, we’ve got thirty-four local members of this esteemed club

waiting to be explored with even more on their way. From the only river in the Great Basin protected from its headwaters to its terminus – the White Mountain’s own Cottonwood Creek – to the Wilderness Study Areas of the Bodie Hills, to the four-year old Granite Mountain Wilderness, what these places lack in visitor centers and campgrounds, they make up for in peace, wildlife, and wildness.

When you do get around to exploring the rest of the west, our National Conservation Lands, members of one of America’s better ideas, hold the rest of the best – hidden gems, off-the-beaten path, waiting to be explored and cherished.



(Paul McFarland)



Local experts in Western wild places explore the Granite Mountain Wilderness, a proud member of our National Conservation Lands. (Paul McFarland)

Stewardship

Stewardship Roundup

By Andrew Schurr

The crews have sharpened their tools, geared up the trucks, studied GPS tracking protocol, and are excited to hit the dirt. This year marks the final year of Friends of the Inyo's grant to implement Travel Management through stewardship on Inyo National Forest. Here in the home stretch, two Friends of the Inyo Stewardship Crews will once again work across the vast Inyo National Forest front country. Splitting the forest into north and south zones, our work will focus in targeted areas and include a robust schedule of monitoring to keep tabs on work done in previous years. Once work goes into high gear and the crews hit their stride, it is a hot, dusty, dirty job restoring closed routes to a more natural state. Still, you're guaranteed to find a smile each crew member's face. According to them, their job just keeps getting better. And, who could argue? Exploring the beautiful Inyo National Forest while doing a hard days work is great way to spend the summer. As always we will be on the look out for ways to improve recreation opportunities across our work area, and will rigorously document our findings.

Further afield, Friends of the Inyo is planning exciting work to restore wilderness areas. From June 28 to July 1, we will be living and working in the northern Inyo

Mountains near Squaw Flat. This is a great chance to explore rare desert alpine and do some great work. We are also installing trail head registers and doing trail restoration in the Boundary Peak Wilderness in August. Boundary Peak is an oft forgotten gem on the Inyo and the tallest peak in Nevada at 13,147 feet. In addition, we continue our partnership with the Backcountry Horsemen of California and the Pacific Crest Trail Association to conduct a nine day restoration event based out of Red's Meadow to repair damage caused by the catastrophic wind-storm of 2011. Along with these projects we are continuing our robust summer stewardship schedule. Find out how you can get involved by visiting our website, liking us on Facebook or giving us a call at 760-873-6500.

Mammoth Lakes Basin— A fine destination for the last 135 years

By Drew Foster

Summer of 1878: the snow is finally melting after a long, cold winter and an elusive spring season. The trail toward Fresno Flats down the San Joaquin river drainage is safely passable. The days have finally grown longer and more pack trains will be coming over with produce and supplies. The mines at Mineral Hill in the Lake District haven't been producing the bonanza of rumor, but there is still a lot of promise for a big strike. People have been showing up to Mammoth City by the hundreds as word of the newly organized Mammoth Mining Company has spread. Gold and silver have their way of luring all manner of folk like fish to a baited hook. Hopefully the trout have grown fat and plentiful in Lake Mary and the Twin Lakes, the ice should be thin enough to get a boat back on the water

and stock up fish for a few months.

By 1881, harsh winters, fires, and lack of production at the mines left hardly anyone at Mammoth City, in what is now known as the Mammoth Lakes Basin. It wasn't until the early 1900s that pioneers came back to settle more permanently in the Mammoth area, and many chose the more hospitable meadows of Old Mammoth. The Wildasinn Hotel



Volunteers move logs and debris to established trails and disguise cutoffs in the Lakes Basin. (MLTPA)

and Store of the early 1900s and Charles Summers' Mammoth Camp, built in 1918, were the first resorts in the area. The following century saw the evolution of Mammoth City of gold mining days to the resort and tourism destination of Mammoth Lakes.

Today, the Mammoth Lakes Basin – a stair-step series of glacially carved basins above the town of Mammoth Lakes – sees some of the highest numbers of visitors on the Inyo National Forest, and ranks as one of the most visited places of any national forest across the country. In 2008, as federal budget shortfalls began to impact U.S. Forest Service ranger presence, Friends of the Inyo began a program in the Lakes Basin to help provide presence, stewardship, and maintenance

Member Profile

Lorenzo Stowell: *Gonzo Ranger*

By Michael Rodman

The times away from the trail are the “in-betweens” for Lorenzo Stowell – betwixt a season working a remote wilderness station, or before launching a backcountry adventure. Whether enjoying the side seasons at his shack at the end of the road or trying to keep pace with his girlfriend on an Eastside trail, he is maximizing time away from town.

When asked how long he’s been in the Wilderness business, the responses vary: “Since Moses got out of boot camp”, “1491”, or, “oh...you know...” He isn’t being dodgy; facts aren’t the point. The point, for Lorenzo, is to avoid conflict, to enjoy open spaces, and to ruthlessly lampoon the repetitive absurdity of human endeavor. Nevertheless, forty-some years back,

an NPS helicopter dropped Lorenzo with a summer’s provisions and the keys to the Crabtree Meadows Ranger Station, and he never looked back. It was work he felt good about.

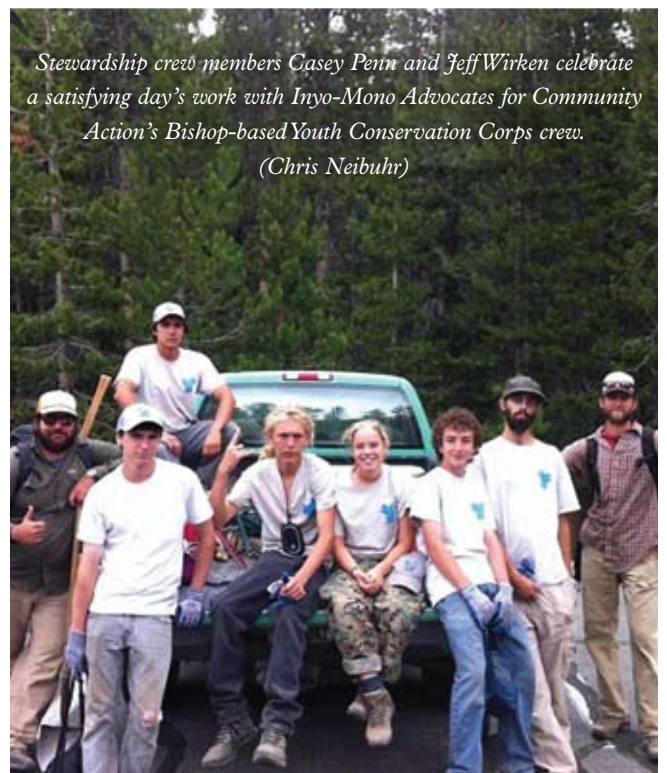
“You have to be careful what you do for money.”

What does it take to protect the resource of Wilderness? “It requires people on the trail, getting the message out and doing the real work to take care of our land.” Is it that simple? Education & maintenance? “Take a walk in the 20 lakes basin.” Lorenzo was the Saddlebag Lake Ranger 20 years ago. With a passionate crew and a proactive administration they systematically inventoried, planned and removed 10,000 pounds of rubbish and rehabilitated 500 campsites - in two summers. The place is a showcase for the positive impact we can have when we invest our energy. Lorenzo shrugs, “It’s the least we can do.”



for this heavily visited place. This began a series of consistent trail patrols, trail maintenance, visitor contact, interpretive programs like wildflower and geology hikes, and cleanups around the lakes and creeks. In 2009, Friends of the Inyo partnered with Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access (MLTPA), the Inyo National Forest, and other local organizations and businesses, to begin a series of volunteer trail days called the Summer of Stewardship (SOS). These volunteer days became wildly successful and popular, and we are excited to be offering several SOS volunteer days throughout the 2013 summer season. We will also be providing regular interpretive tours and hikes in the Lakes Basin, including wildflower and geology hikes, tours of the Mammoth Consolidated Mine, and evening campfire programs.

The Lakes Basin provides great access to the John Muir and Ansel Adams Wilderness Areas and the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail for those that want to plan for day or overnight trips in the backcountry. There are free trolleys, as well as a paved pathway along Lake Mary Rd, connecting the Lakes Basin down into town and the rest of the Mammoth Lakes Trails System. 135 years later, the Mammoth Lakes Basin is still an inspiring destination, so come up and experience it for yourself. Look for our stewards up there patrolling or leading a walk, and come out to a fun SOS trail day this summer!



Stewardship crew members Casey Penn and Jeff Wirken celebrate a satisfying day's work with Inyo-Mono Advocates for Community Action's Bishop-based Youth Conservation Corps crew.
(Chris Neibuhr)

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Thank you!

Friends of the Inyo relies on the contributions of members and donors to care for the public lands of the Eastern Sierra. We are extremely grateful to the following individuals and organizations who have supported our programs so far this year:

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