

Jeffrey Pine JOURNAL

WINTER 2013/2014 | VOLUME XI, ISSUE II

Winter Raptors

Wonders of fall skies

Get Out

Marble Canyon exploration

Frogs and Toads

Considering compromise



PRESERVATION | EXPLORATION | STEWARDSHIP

VOLUME XI, ISSUE II, WINTER 2013/2014

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.

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.



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COVER PHOTO
Wonder,
discovery,
renewal; three of
the many gifts of
America's public
lands. Parker
Creek, October
2009 by Paul
McFarland.

President's Message

The October government shutdown really brings the value of our public lands into focus. An acquaintance that works in a visitor center told me of counseling folks on their options facing the closure of National Parks and U.S. Forest Service lands. Some of these folks have come to the California from lands afar for a once in a life time holiday. They were very disappointed. She commented on how lucky we are to live in such a wonderful place. We reflected on that wealth, the public lands that we all share, and what we can do to safeguard our heritage.

Collectively we can influence the future course of these lands, Yosemite, Death Valley, Inyo National Forest, and the BLM lands that are so important to our lives, our economy, wild creatures, and our region. Working with local and national non-profits we can assure that we don't end up like many other nations, with no wild places to recreate and refresh ourselves. That is why Friends of the Inyo is so important. Friends of the Inyo is many people, and I would like to thank them all.

First the Friends of the Inyo staff, Laura, Paul, Andrew, Drew, and Autumn have done a fantastic job of keeping the organization on track and productive for another successful summer working on our pet projects, the Bodie Hills, our many stewardship projects, education in the Mammoth Lakes Basin, and member outings. Good work done by great people.

Great places attract great people.

Our seasonal summer stewardship crews are fantastic. They are wrapping up three years of work helping to define a rational and sustainable road system for Inyo National Forest. They help maintain 2,300 miles of system roads, and this year hauled 5,000 pounds of trash. Thanks to them for a job well done.

A special thanks goes out to Todd Vogel. Todd's title was Outing Manager for Friends of the Inyo. He had or deserved many other titles during his tenure, being responsible for not only our outings, but much of our education, and maintaining our website. He was also a former board member before becoming an employee. Todd's dutch oven cookery was famous. His time at Friends of the Inyo was invaluable; his contributions are lasting; and we hope to have him working with us in the future. Thanks Todd.

And of course our volunteers. This year many days of volunteer work were done by hundreds of volunteers. These folks rock our boat; they help in many ways, some obvious, working on trails or campsites, some hard to see. Thanks to all of them.

And thanks to our Board of Directors, nine people who put in lots of hours each year working on fundraising, stewardship outings, and management, and governance.

The Forest Service, and the Bureau of Land Management are our critical partners in almost all of our work. We continue to work with the stewardship agencies to refine our partnerships and effectiveness. The agencies employ some remarkable folks helping to care for our priceless federal lands. It is not easy to be a government employee in 2013. They deserve our thanks.

And finally all of you who are our members, there are several hundred of you, and we love each and every one of you! You volunteer, you go to meetings, and you support us with your donations. Thanks for remembering us with your memberships and with your special gifts at year-end. Consider giving a Friends of the Inyo gift membership for the holidays. I think we all know someone who would make a great member.

Great places attract great people, thanks to all of the great people who make up the Friends of the Inyo family. Let's all hope for a wet winter for Eastern California.

James Wilson, President

A History of the American Wilderness by Olivia Grah

On September 3, 1964, the United States became the first country internationally to designate wilderness through law. The Wilderness Act, passed by President Lyndon B. Johnson, established the National Wilderness Preservation System, which initially protected over 9 million acres of “wilderness areas.” The Act, which defines Wilderness as “an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain,” seeks to preserve and protect the significantly wild lands of the United States, while still encouraging low-impact recreation upon them.

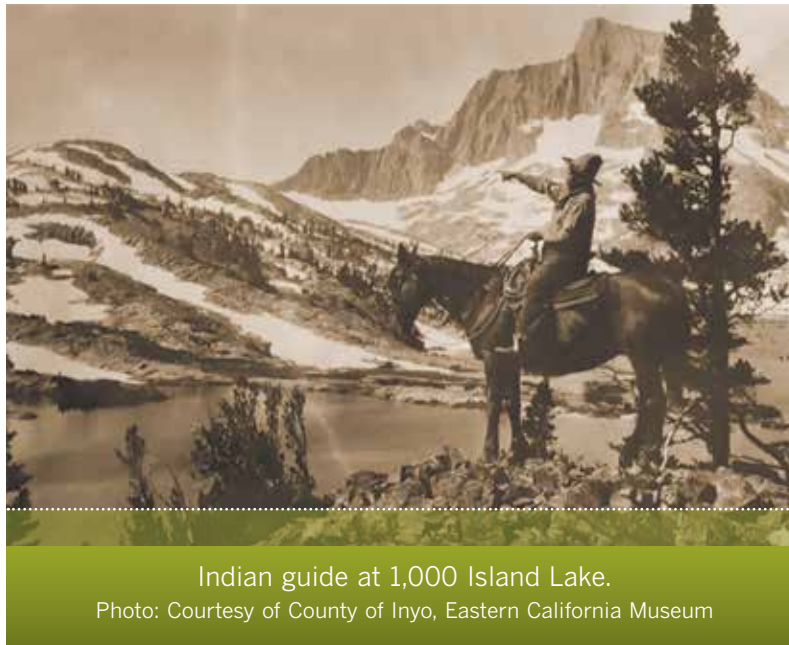
After World War II, the United States experienced a “baby boom,” in which 76 million Americans were born in a span of 19 years. Conservationists during this period were concerned that the expanding population would soon occupy and/or alter the remaining natural lands in the United States, and drafted a bill which would secure the benefits of the enduring resources of wilderness for the American people. The bill was ushered through its 65 rewrites and 18 public hearings by its author, Howard Zahniser, before becoming a law in 1964.

In the 50 years since the passing of the Wilderness Act, over 100 million acres of wilderness, encompassing snow-capped mountains, lush forests, fragrant meadows, rocky coastlines, and vast deserts, have been added to the National Wilderness Preservation System. Under the management of the U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Bureau of Land Management, 757 wilderness areas in 44 states and one territory have been protected and preserved for their ecological, historical, scientific, geological, educational, and/or scenic significance; ensuring their presence in the lives of the

American people for years to come.

In Inyo and Mono counties there are 26 designated wilderness areas, and 22 more designated wildernesses within a two-hour drive. The Ansel Adams, John Muir, and Hoover Wildernesses

were designated in 1964 as part of the original Wilderness Act. The Endangered American Wilderness Act in 1978 designated the Golden Trout Wilderness, and the California Desert Protection Act of 1994 designated 19 Wildernesses. Most recently, the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009, which Friends of the Inyo worked on, designated three new wildernesses in Inyo and Mono counties including the Owens River Headwaters and White Mountains Wildernesses.



Indian guide at 1,000 Island Lake.

Photo: Courtesy of County of Inyo, Eastern California Museum

Mechanical transport is prohibited in wilderness in an effort to limit the biophysical impacts on the landscape, but considering the ample opportunities for hiking, camping, backpacking, fishing, hunting, and horseback riding, the ban on motor vehicles is seldom a deterrent to outdoor enthusiasts hoping to experience the pristine wild of the United States.

The protection and preservation ensured through designation as wilderness is instrumental in the endurance of natural lands across the United States. As September 3, 2014, the 50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act, swiftly approaches, Friends of the Inyo and other organizations and agencies nationwide are preparing to celebrate the legal preservation and protection of wild land across the United States. Join Friends of the Inyo in celebrating the 50th birthday of the Wilderness Act by enjoying our precious local wilderness areas through recreation, volunteering, and other commemorative, wilderness-friendly activities.

Thanks to the Eastern California Museum for their help researching this piece. The Eastern California Museum now offers public access to the Inyo National Forest Administrative Archive, which includes U.S. Forest Service annual reports, grazing reports, power plant permits, photos, and other historic material dating from 1901 to the 1950s. Visit Eastern California Museum at 155 N. Grant Street, Independence, CA or call 760-878-0258 for more information.

PRESERVATION

Forest Planning – What's Next? By Drew Foster

Friends of the Inyo Coming Full Circle

As the Inyo National Forest revises its management plan, Friends of the Inyo is returning to its roots. Initially formed as a coalition of groups in 1986, Friends of the Inyo tackled the issues of that time, which included timber management, wildlife, roads and access, and wilderness management. Since then the organization has grown tremendously, thanks to your help, enthusiasm, and hands-on-the-ground work that has helped our programs evolve into what they are today.

As the Inyo National Forest begins revision of its plan 25 years later, many issues remain pertinent, and new ones have emerged. Three massive fires in the Sierra Nevada this past summer have brought the discussion of fire and fuels management to the forefront of how to manage forest and sagebrush ecosystems. Recreation and tourism have seen steadily increasing numbers on public lands, while facilities, trails, staff, roads, and infrastructure sorely lack the funding and resources needed. At-risk species, watersheds, partnerships, and designated areas have also risen to the top as key issues needing more attention in the upcoming revision of the plan.

A crucial overriding theme, highlighted throughout the initial process, is ongoing U.S. Forest Service budgetary constraints and cutbacks. This has resulted in a huge lack of capacity for the Inyo and many other national forests to accomplish tasks, maintain the integrity of facilities, programs, and management activities, and comprehensively take care of the lands that they are tasked to manage. This lack of capacity trickles down to every aspect of the Inyo National Forest's management activities, from wildlife monitoring, to invasive species removal, to

wilderness rangers, to facilities maintenance, to being able to work with partner groups like Friends of the Inyo. While this is largely a national problem, Friends of the Inyo and other partner groups, are looking at ways we can help to fill some of these gaps, working effectively and efficiently with our public lands partners, while ensuring the federal

management plans. The joint process presents some advantages and disadvantages. On one hand, it is good to consider a regional scale like the Sierra Nevada where management overlaps arbitrary boundary lines. While on the other, the Inyo National Forest encompasses western portions of the Great Basin and desert mountains and valleys, unique from other national forests, with different management challenges and prescriptions than the western slope of the Sierra Nevada.

So why is the nebulous and esoteric planning process so important to Friends of the Inyo, and to you? The components and direction laid out in this newly revised plan create the backbone and will define management activities on the Inyo National Forest for the next 20 or more years. It's important that we invest the time now to get the best possible product that we can. Because they are public lands,

and everyone who enjoys them is a stakeholder, Friends of the Inyo, will be working in the coming years to keep you engaged in the process. To date, the planning process has been very open and collaborative, so make sure that your voice is heard:

- **Share a story of an experience you have had on the Inyo National Forest.**
- **What places, activities, and qualities are special and important to you?**
- **What are the most important issues that interest you?**
- **How do you want the Inyo National Forest and the Eastern Sierra to look in ten, twenty, thirty years?**
- **What are some places you would like to see protected?**

Your feedback is important, please send it to us, info@friendsoftheinyo.org, or to the Inyo National Forest: comments-pacificsouth-west-inyo@fs.fed.us.



Students enjoy a sunny day at Glass Creek Meadow.
Photo: Drew Foster

land management agencies are still doing their job. Partnerships need to remain effective and sustainable over the long term, and they will be essential in the coming years to keep the Eastern Sierra the fantastic place we all know and love.

Next Steps in Plan Revision

The Final Inyo Assessment should be publicly available at the end of 2013, with 2014 kicking off the official NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) process, to begin scoping for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the forest plan. The final product is scheduled to wrap up sometime in 2016. This is planned to be a joint process that will release one comprehensive EIS document for the Sequoia, Sierra, and Inyo National Forests, with individual management plan components separated out. This process is experimental in nature, and will set the precedent for how other forests across the nation revise and create their man-

PRESERVATION

A Future for our Frogs & Toads? By David Herbst

Populations of Sierra Nevada Yellow-legged Frogs and Yosemite Toads continue to dwindle in the Sierra prompting the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to release a proposed rule in the Federal Register last spring to establish critical habitat for these vulnerable species. The decline of the amphibians is attributed to a number of factors including a deadly fungus and historic fish stocking. A copy of the proposed rule and related maps can be found online. The proposed habitat designation has generated a firestorm of controversy locally with significant questions arising as to how such a designation will affect our local economies including grazing, fishing, and other types of recreation.

As an initial step, the USFWS cast a broad net over potential habitat for the amphibians, using data from models that predict the maximum extent of these species, and generated maps covering nearly two million acres of possible habitat over the entire Sierra Nevada. Throughout the process of designating critical habitat, these maps will be refined by recovery teams of scientists, managers, and public stakeholders to carefully identify the most suitable habitats. The collective expertise of the teams then identify the best “primary constituent elements” or combination of preferred habitat features, where management actions are practical and likely

to succeed and do not interfere with high priority public recreational or commercial uses of public lands under consideration. Broad-brush maps thereby become far more detailed finer-scale maps of the areas that combine multiple interests and ultimately are directed at promoting the survival of the species. These will cover far less area than initially proposed and promote outcomes

The most healthy fishing lakes and streams, sustainable livestock grazing, and amphibian habitat do not need to be in conflict.

that are intended to permit other uses to coexist with the recovery of threatened and endangered species.

Fishless lakes, as were common in the historic High Sierra, are essential to the survival of frog populations whose disappearance from former ranges is largely the result of past fish stocking practices. Limited removals of fish in recent years have allowed frogs to regain a foothold

in certain high elevation lakes. Does this mean the end of fishing and grazing on public lands throughout the Sierra for the sake of the diminutive frogs and toads? Of course not. What it means is that we have to work together to come up with common sense maps designating where uses can coexist and where sufficient, high quality amphibian habitats are available. Whether livestock grazing impacts the habitat of frogs and toads is equivocal, with studies reporting damages in some cases and no effect in others, possibly related more to wet and dry year limitations on habitat. Here again though it seems grazing and habitat may be compatible or manageable through strategic grazing practices. To further complicate matters, the primary present threat to frog survival, where it has been freed of fish predation, is from what is known as a Chytrid fungus – a disease that is rampant through amphibians, and partly responsible for global declines in these sensitive animals. Whether MYLF can persist remains to be seen, but providing critical habitat could give it a fighting chance.

The most healthy fishing lakes and streams, sustainable livestock grazing, and amphibian habitat do not need to be in conflict. This may be a rare opportunity to find agreement when we sit down and where wildlife habitat needs can be compatible with reasonable human uses.

Yosemite Toad in Glass Creek Meadow, Owens River Headwaters Wilderness.

Photo: Paul McFarland



EXPLORATION

Get Out! By Paul McFarland

An expedition up Marble Canyon embodies what makes exploring the Eastern Sierra second to none: Close enough to town for a day trip, but far and rough enough to yield a meaningful four-wheel drive tour (or really long pedal!); easy enough to walk, but just challenging enough to keep your mind off your in-town troubles and on your feet, the rocks, and the desert creek; diverse enough to contain plants from the Mojave Desert, Great Basin, and Rocky Mountains all in one desert canyon. And it's accessible and inviting year-round.

I first stumbled into Marble Canyon over a decade ago while mapping the Black Canyon Inventoried Roadless Area for potential inclusion as part of the White Mountains Wilderness. Honestly, it was the name – Marble Canyon – printed on the topo map that first captured me. Marble? Really? Sounds meander-full!

That first trip – from astonishing scarlet locoweed (in February!?) to fern-draped dripping springs to peaceful pinyon forests – didn't disappoint. As with nearly every corner of our Eastern Sierra, a little exploration yields great rewards.

Getting There

Head east out of Bishop on East Line Street over the Owens River towards the White Mountains. Follow the paved road around a sweeping right turn, head south on Eastside Road. Turn left onto Warm Springs Road. Follow Warm Springs first east then south to Black Canyon Road. Turn left and follow Black Canyon Road south and then east into the mouth of Black Canyon. Once in Black Canyon proper, the road becomes much rougher. Moderate to high clearance four-wheel drive is recommended for the final two and a half miles winding up

From the desert to the mountains, looking east down Marble Canyon.

Photo:
Paul McFarland



JOIN US
for an exploration of
Marble Canyon
SATURDAY, DEC. 7TH
visit friendsoftheiny.org
for hike details,
maps and more
information.

canyon to the parking spot. As you bounce up the canyon floor, watch for a thick white layer of rock stacked in the cobbled wall to the south. Dated to around 760,000 years ago, this layer is Bishop Tuff - rock formed by deposits of molten ash erupted from the massive Long Valley Caldera atop the Sherwin Grade.

As the road begins to sweep left into the dark defile of Black Canyon, turn right towards to mouth of Marble Canyon to a nice flat parking area right at the mouth of the canyon.

Being There

From the parking area, the Sierra shimmers in the west across the Owens Valley while sheer, twisting walls of Marble Canyon beckon to the east. From this point, at around 5600', it's two and half miles and 1200' of gentle walking, light scrambling, some slogging and some brush bustin' to make it to the final spring at the head of the canyon. Usually, water can found within the first half mile up the canyon.

While there is no difficult climbing involved if you follow the canyon bottom, there is no trail up Marble Canyon. This is wild country where you will be on your own. In winter be mindful of ice that can form where water runs over usually dry marble falls. Only travel as far as you are comfortable. A walk of nearly any distance rewards with that unique stillness only found in desert canyons. Rather than provide a play by play of natural wonders you'll run into up this canyon, I'll leave you to discover your own moments of "oh cool!" as you wander between twisting walls of 500 million year old white dolomite (a form of limestone rich in magnesium) and listen to the symphony of the desert.



Scarlet
Locoweed, late
winter 2003 in
Marble Canyon.

Photo:
Paul McFarland

EXPLORATION

UPCOMING EVENTS

Join us this fall and winter for some meaningful stewardship and inspiring days of exploration. More opportunities will be added throughout the fall and winter. Please check our website or “like” us on Facebook to stay up to date on upcoming adventures. See you out there!

Happy Friends
of the Inyo
members
enjoying an
outing in
McGee Canyon.
Photo:
Laura Beardsley



WILD & SCENIC FILM FESTIVAL

22&23
NOVEMBER
6
DECEMBER

Join Friends of the Inyo for the 7th annual Wild & Scenic Film Festival in the Eastern Sierra with two different programs – one in Mammoth and Lone Pine, and one in Bishop. Enjoy beautiful, inspiring films highlighting the environment and adventure and help support Friends of the Inyo! Tickets are \$12 per person or free with your new membership or renewal. Friday, November 22nd at the Edison Theatre in Mammoth Lakes; Saturday, November 23rd at Cerro Coso Community College in Bishop; and Friday, December 6th at Lone Pine Film Museum in Lone Pine.

MARBLE CANYON EXPLORATION

7
DECEMBER

Wander between sheer walls of 500 million year old marble to the song of a desert stream hidden just behind Bishop. Moderate off trail hike with some light scrambling. Meet at the White Mountain Research Station on East Line Street in Bishop. Bring water, lunch, and layered clothing for possible cold. 4wd required to reach the trailhead, but carpooling will be possible. Contact paulmc@friendsoftheinyo.org or call 760.873.6500 for more information.

CHOCOLATE MOUNTAIN HIKE

29
MARCH

Saturday, March 29th – Chocolate Mountain Hike – A perennial favorite, this year explore Chocolate Mountain a bit later. We’re hoping for wildflowers on this seven mile, moderately strenuous round trip to our chocolate-tasting perch 7,703’ above the Saline, Deep Springs and Fish Lake valleys on the northern rim of the Mojave Desert. Meet at 8:30am at the Big Pine Campground at the junction of 168 and 395. Bring food and drink for the day, chocolate to share, clothing for warm or cold, a pack to carry it all, and footwear appropriate to the conditions. Contact andrew@friendsoftheinyo.org for more information.

FIELD GUIDE

Winter Raptors: Power and Grace Reigning Over Our Skies

Text by James Wilson, Art by John Muir Laws

The Eastern Sierra is an exciting place to be a birder, especially in the fall, a time of change. As we pick the last of our tomatoes and fondly remember the sweet corn, the days shorten and the light becomes softer and more gold. Our birds change. While summer is the time of nighthawks and kingbirds, we now have birds from the north moving in: winter sparrows and finches, flocks of wintering ducks and geese...and raptors!

The Eastern Sierra has about 20 species of raptors, some summer birds, some year-round, and many grace our winter landscape. Swainson's Hawks are summer residents; Red-tails (perhaps the most common and well-known local hawk), Marsh hawks, Golden Eagles, Red-Shouldered Hawks, and Kestrels are here all year.



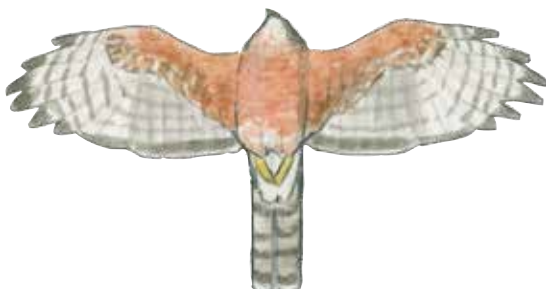
FERRUGINOUS HAWK
Buteo regalis



RED-TAILED HAWK
Buteo jamaicensis



COOPER'S HAWK
Accipiter cooperii



SHARP-SHINNED HAWK
Accipiter striatus



GOSHAW
Accipiter gentilis

Winter brings the lovely **FERRUGINOUS HAWK** from the north. Birds of pasture and grassland, they can be found by birding in the fields of Laws and along Sunland Road south of Bishop. Another favorite place for Ferruginous is the fields near Fish Springs, west of Tinnemaha Reservoir, where the elk pasture. They will be found perched on the ground awaiting the unwary rodent. The adults are large, usually with rufous belly, legs and back and a snowy white chest.

Another winter visitor from the far north is the **ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK**. Erratic in occurrence, they were once more common. In the last few years they have been seen in Long and Bridgeport valleys and occasionally perched near fields in northern Inyo County. In summer, the Rough-legged nests on cliffs in the tundra of northern Alaska and Canada. It is a large dark bird with prominent white at the base of the tail.

Our forest hawks, the **ACCIPITERS**, are the **COOPER'S HAWK**, the **SHARP-SHINNED HAWK** and the **GOSHAWK**.

Long narrow tails and short broad wings, designed to fit in between the tree limbs as they fly, characterize the accipiters. The **GOSHAWK** is rarely seen away from the mountain forests, but the smaller accipiters, the **COOPER'S HAWK** and **SHARP-SHINNED HAWK** frequent the habitat around our waterways and town sites. The adult **COOPER'S** and **SHARP-SHINNED** have finely patterned, reddish breasts and gray backs. (This morning a Cooper's Hawk sat on our fence and feasted on a quail from the local covey.)

FIELD GUIDE



AMERICAN KESTREL
Falco sparverius



MERLIN
Falco columbarius



MARSH HAWK
Circus cyaneus

Then we have our suite of four **FALCONS**.

Year-round one can find the diminutive and lovely **AMERICAN KESTREL** mostly near pastures and town, but occasionally anywhere. The powerful **PRAIRIE FALCON**, brown in color with dark wingpits, is the local ruler of the grassland and terror to squirrel and rabbit. Fall also brings the swift **MERLIN**, slightly larger than the Kestrel, grayer and with a quick, powerful wing beat. We should not omit the King of the Air, the **PEREGRINE**. It is a large dark falcon, the adult having a prominent dark moustachial mark. The **PEREGRINE**, once reduced to remnant numbers by DDT, is now back and seen fairly commonly at Crowley Lake and Owens Lake, especially where ducks and shorebirds congregate. While watching flocks of shorebirds sometimes the calm ends suddenly, the flock takes to the air in a whirl of wings, and looking up you see the streaking **PEREGRINE** heading for the weak and the slow. Or perhaps the **PEREGRINE** chases any bird just to test its own speed?

Lastly there is the regal **BALD EAGLE**, our national bird. Usually seen singly, and only occasionally in pairs or small groups, Balds are most often associated with water. Tinnemaha Reservoir and Crowley Lake are excellent places to see them feeding on fish and carrion. They are immediately identifiable by their large size and white heads.



PRAIRIE FALCON
Falco mexicanus



PEREGRINE FALCON
Falco peregrinus



BALD EAGLE
Haliaeetus leucocephalus

PINE DROPS

NEWS AND NOTES FROM THE EASTERN SIERRA'S PUBLIC LANDS

By Laura Beardsley, Andrew Schurr & Paul McFarland

RENDEZVOUS!

Thank you to everyone who came to the 2013 Members' Rendezvous at the Rock Creek. The event was a huge success with thirty people picking up more than 200 pounds of trash, mostly fishing line, around Rock Creek Lake in the morning. In the afternoon, members enjoyed walks to look for birds or discuss forest planning and climate change from Wheeler Ridge or spent some time relaxing among the aspen. The evening began with a Members' Meeting and social hour followed by a scrumptious dinner and deserts, and closing with a gathering around the campfire. Thanks to everyone who made it happen especially Jan Hostteter at Rock Creek Lodge, Jim & Sue King at Rock Creek Lakes Resort, Barefoot Wines, Sydney Quinn & Dennis Schumacher, Bill & Vivian Mitchel, Steve McLaughlin, Mike & Nancy Prather, Andrew Schurr, Drew Foster, Autumn Bahlman, and Paul McFarland.

LOOKING AHEAD: CONVICT & JUNE

Friends of the Inyo is extremely excited about two great projects for 2014 that incorporate public stewardship with ongoing work to make a difference on our public lands. First up is a season long effort to rebuild the eroding trail around Convict Lake in partnership with Inyo National Forest. With a combination of volunteer trail days and ongoing work by paid crews, we'll be improving the experience for countless fishermen, hikers, and families who spend time at the lake each year. This project is funded by a matching grant

from the National Forest Foundation. You can help us meet our match by making a special donation to Convict Trails by calling 760-873-6500 or donating online at friendsoftheinyo.org.

At the same time, we are thrilled to be continuing our work to maintain and develop trails in the June Lake area. Thanks to Mono County, we will be getting the trails ready this summer and hosting the fifth annual June Lake Trails Day in June. If you haven't been out there already, the Gull Lake Trail was completed in 2011 as a project of the June Lake Trails Committee with Friends of the Inyo and Inyo National Forest. It's a great walk through meadow and forest with a new map and interpretive guide available for visitors.

DIFFERENT MEANS, SAME ENDS

People enjoy the public lands in the Eastern Sierra in as many ways as there are Jeffrey pines in the forest. Through personal outreach, Friends of the Inyo is now working with multiple recreation communities to increase user-group specific stewardship. This season we've partnered with climbers, mountain bikers, historical societies, fly anglers, native plant lovers even highest point in each state peak baggers to build trails, install trail signage and remove invasive species all while building both real and metaphorical bridges. On National Public Lands Day, we worked with the Bishop BLM, Inyo National Forest, the International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA) and the newly-formed and much welcomed, Fat Bike Mammoth to maintain the Lower Rock

Creek Mountain Bike and Hiking Trail. Earlier this season, we kicked off summer with two National Trails Day projects – one building new mountain bike trail in the Mammoth Lakes Basin and another enhancing a hiking, biking and motorcycle singletrack trail in the White Mountains. This coming fall, we'll be partnering with the American Alpine Club, the Access Fund and the Bishop Area Climbers Coalition once again to care for the Buttermilk's and the popular Buttermilk Boulder area November 9th.

Building a growing family of those who actively care for our public lands will continue into 2014. The 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act is a cause for celebration, and Friends of the Inyo will be working with local communities, land management agencies, and all who love wildness to highlight and build the community of wilderness. The flagship 2014 Convict Lake trail rebuild project is only the tip of the iceberg. Friends of the Inyo staff and volunteer efforts will also focus on enhancing trails in the June Lake Loop, highlighting the Owens River from its headwaters to Owens Lake through series of exploration and stewardship projects, and continuing to partner with folks on wheels, boots, hooves, ropes, or paddles. No matter what our chosen means to get outside, we all share the same ends – to experience the peace and freedom of our public lands. Got a project idea? Give us a call!

PROTECTING AN OLD GROWTH ISLAND

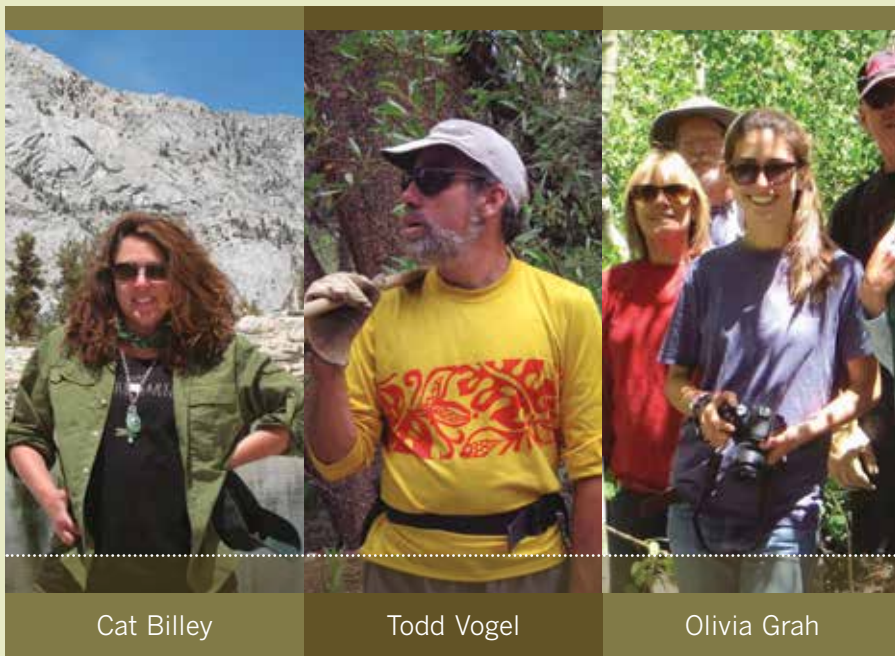
Owing to relatively easy access and booming timber needs of late 19th century Bodie, there are only a few large tag-ends of old growth Jeffrey pine forest remaining on the Inyo National Forest. In 1932, 1,162 acres of majestic untouched Jeffrey pine forest atop the Glass Mountains were set aside as the Indian Summit Research Natural Area. Research Natural Areas preserve outstanding examples of unique ecosystems across the nation's U.S. National Forest system for use as living ecological laboratories. No activities that modify an area's natural processes – from overnight camping to logging to motorized use – are permitted in RNA's.

As part of our routine monitoring, Friends of the Inyo stewardship staff discovered a rather dramatic increase in illegal road creation and wood left in the Indian Summit RNA. Folks were leaving the designated roads around the RNA, driving deep into the RNA to fell and remove large lodgepole and Jeffrey pine – presumably for firewood.

Working in partnership with Inyo National Forest staff, stewardship crew members blocked and restored all the illegal routes created into the RNA and installed new signage along the area boundary to ensure folks know this magical forest of towering pines is open to enjoy on foot, but meant to be left as it is.

Following restoration and signage, our crews haven't documented any new illegal wood removal, but ensuring this conifer cathedral maintains its primeval character will take continued monitoring and rapid restoration of illegal impacts. Next spring, Friends of the Inyo will be rolling out a new program to support volunteer adoption and monitoring of special places like our last island of old-growth Jeffrey pine forest. For more information, contact andrew@friendsoftheinyo.org.

Transitions By Laura Beardsley



Cat Billey

Todd Vogel

Olivia Grah

During this season of change, I'd like to take a few minutes to acknowledge some recent changes within Friends of the Inyo. Over the course of the last few months, two of our hard-working staff have moved on, and we'd like to acknowledge them for their hard work and contributions to Friends of the Inyo.

First, a big thank you to Cat Billey, who headed off for a new life in Texas this spring. Cat spent several years keeping the ship afloat for our membership and outreach efforts. She was the energy behind last year's Wild & Scenic Film Festival, many a Summer of Stewardship volunteer registrations, and other events.

Also this summer, Todd Vogel decided to step down from his long time role with Friends of the Inyo to invest more time in other pursuits including running 100 miles as many times as possible. Originally a member of the Board, Todd joined the staff. He's held many roles with Friends of the Inyo including Stewardship & Exploration Director, outings trip leader, and master chef. Todd will be missed around the campfire at Rendezvous and on adventurous tours to discover hidden gems of the desert and the mountains, but we plan to see him around town and out on the trail. Thanks Todd, for all you've done and continue to do to support Friends of the Inyo and care for public lands in the Eastern Sierra.

Finally, I want to thank Olivia Grah for her contributions to Friends of the Inyo this summer. Olivia joined us as an intern preparing for her junior year at Bishop Union High School. She is amazing. She took on a number of projects for us over the summer helping with stewardship events, cleaning up databases, writing and researching, and preparing pages for our website. Check out her article on page three for example. Thanks Olivia. We miss you in the office.

STEWARDSHIP ROUND-UP

Lakes Basin Stewardship

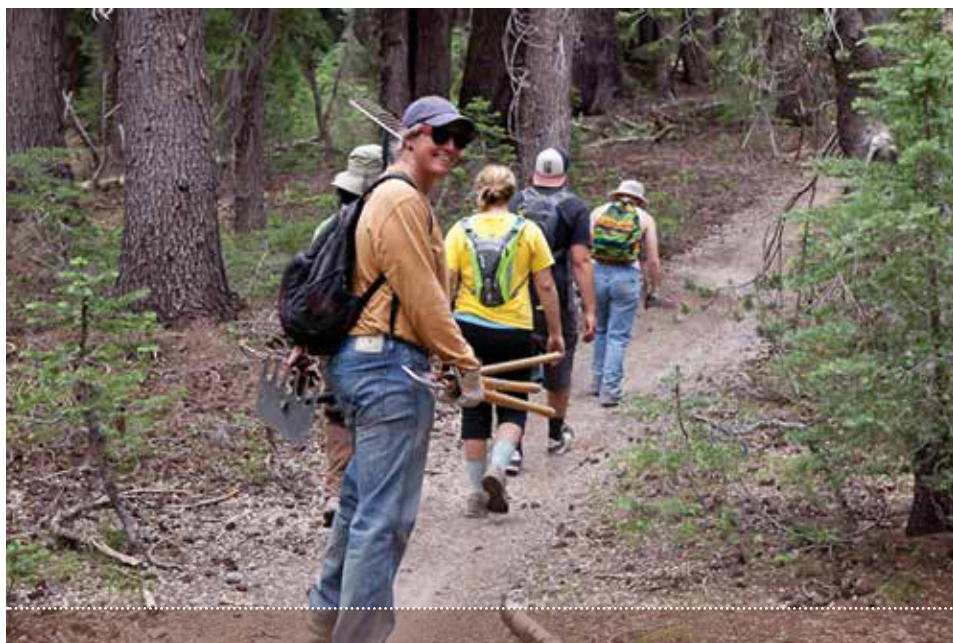
In addition to the robust group stewardship opportunities offered, Friends of the Inyo has finished up its sixth summer in the Mammoth Lakes Basin with two seasonal staff. This program has allowed the development of interpretive programs led by staff and volunteers offering a full suite of programs, from tours of the Mammoth Consolidated Gold Mine historic site, to geology and wildflower walks, to night hikes. Demonstrating the insatiable demand, this year over 800 participants attended free tours in just two months. To compliment the trips teaching people about the Mammoth Lakes Basin, we remain committed to taking care of this wildly popular destination for locals and tourists alike. This summer in the Mammoth Lakes area 40 logs were removed from trails, 52 miles of trail were maintained, 50 illegal fire rings were obliterated, and over 130 trail structures were maintained or repaired including wayfinding signs, waterbars, and steps. Due to the increasing lack of funding for U.S. Forest Service programs, the Mammoth Stewards are often one of the only points of contact for visitors helping to answer questions, educating visitors about Leave No Trace ethics, and providing a helpful presence on public lands. In 2013, more than 850 visitors interacted with our stewards.

While the Mammoth Lakes Basin Stewards provide continuity and boots on the ground, volunteers like you were indispensable in the stewardship of the Mammoth trails and recreation area. Thanks to the Town of Mammoth Lakes, the Inyo National Forest, and a number of wonderful event sponsors, Friends of the Inyo and Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access hosted the 6th year of Summer of Stewardship Trail Days. A record 242 volunteers participated this summer, with an average of nearly 40 volunteers per event. In six trail days, nearly 4,000 pounds of trash were removed, 10 miles of trail

maintained, 354 feet of new trail was constructed, 146 signs were maintained, fixed, or constructed, and 1,200 feet of illegal redundant trail was removed. This year we focused on several mountain biking trails like the Panorama Dome, Mountain View, and the Uptown/Downtown trails. We were able to show some love for under-represented trails and showcase some of the prime mountain bike trails available to the public to ride free of charge. We also completed long-overdue maintenance of the Hot Creek Geologic Site and the Earthquake Fault interpretive area. Thanks to everyone who came out this summer and to all that continue to support the program, and see you out there for Summer of Stewardship 2014!

Thank you!

Several organizations provide funding and other support to make our Summer of Stewardship programs happen. Please join us in thanking season sponsors, Mammoth Lakes Sunrise Rotary, Southern California Edison, and Mammoth Brewing Company, as well as Patagonia and the National Forest Foundation who support our stewardship programs year-round.



Satisfied volunteers heading back to enjoy lunch after a morning of work on the on the trails. Photo: Town of Mammoth Lakes, courtesy of MLTPA

STEWARDSHIP ROUND-UP

Group Stewardship & Travel Management

By Paul McFarland & Andrew Schurr



Volunteers enjoying a beautiful June Lake Trails day.
Photo: Drew Foster

Once again, the collective commitment of our members, partners, donors, and volunteers supported a hugely successful summer caring for our public lands. From the Mojave Desert to the John Muir Trail, Friends of the Inyo's stewardship programs make a real difference on the ground.

Group Stewardship: Friends of the Inyo continued to partner with various groups – from family vacations and Backcountry Horsemen to elementary, high school, and university students – to enhance trails, remove invasive weeds, clean campsites and restore wildlife habitat.

28 groups came out to volunteer
Over **4,300 (or >180 days)** of stewardship hours
12 miles of trail maintained
265 ft of new trail constructed
Over **1,000 ft** trail restored

6,850 ft road restored
27 fire pits removed
Over **300 lbs** trash removed
161 visitors contacted

Travel Management: Closing our third season working in cooperation with the Inyo National Forest to sustain access, protect wildlife habitat, restore watershed health, and enhance all forms of front country recreation, our Stewardship Crews and volunteers completed, monitored and, when necessary, repaired, over two thousand site-specific restoration projects. This partnership has created an extensive, well-signed network of over 2,300 miles of legal roads and trails for motorized use on the Inyo National Forest. A stand out this summer was the amount of trash discovered across public lands: crews removed over 5,000lbs of trash from illegal dump sites, camping areas, and shooting ranges.

Wilderness Stewardship

Working in the wilderness offers its own set of challenges, and once again Friends of the Inyo and their dedicated volunteers made it happen. We had four distinct multi-day wilderness stewardship adventures this summer. From working with the Pacific Crest Trail Association and the Backcountry Horsemen of California to open up trail in the John Muir and Ansel Adams Wilderness areas west of Mammoth Lakes to camping out in the remote and beautiful Boundary Peak Wilderness to replace trailhead infrastructure and remove graffiti and redundant trails, we got it all done and had a good time doing it. A highlight of wilderness work this summer was once again meeting the Athenian School in the second week of their Wilderness Education trip. These students spend weeks hiking through the backcountry of the Sierra Nevada, often off trail, and donate a day of their trip to give back with Friends of the Inyo. This year we cleaned and removed fire rings and maintained the Upper Rush Creek Trail.

Anatomy of a Public Contact

While out working we often encounter other wanderers and users on the land who are always interested in what we are doing. This conversation, known as a “public contact”, gives staff and volunteers the opportunity to interact and spread the message of stewardship to the broader community of those who love public lands. It is always rewarding when out on a trail with volunteers to be thanked for your work. These conversations give volunteers a true sense of ownership, appreciation, and accomplishment for the work they are doing. Seeing a crew of high school kids light up when a passerby says thanks and asks what they are doing is a great feeling.

PARTNER PROFILE

Jeff Hunter

In late August, Jeff Hunter took on the role of organizer for the Bodie Hills Conservation Partnership. Now a resident of June Lake, Jeff grew up in the Lower Hudson River Valley of New York and comes most recently from Chattanooga, Tennessee where he managed Tennessee Wild. No stranger to coalitions, Jeff created the 31-member Southeast Foot Trails Coalition while working with the American Hiking Society. A transplant from the corporate life at Verizon, he is an avid hiker, backpacker, flyfisher, and proven outdoor leader. He took the time recently to answer a few questions about his new role and his new life on the eastside.

How do you feel about taking the lead of the Bodie Hills Conservation Partnership?

I think it's a very exciting opportunity to protect an important American landscape while honoring tradition, and to help to try to grow the economy of Northern Mono County in a sustainable way.

What are some of your favorite places to visit in the Eastern Sierra so far?

Thousand Island Lake in the Ansel Adams Wilderness. The Dry Lakes Plateau and the Masonic Gulch area in the Bodie Hills, and, of course, the whole Mono Lake Basin area is just amazing.

Which environmentalists have most influenced you?

John Muir. He walked through East Tennessee in September 1867, and saw his first mountain streams there before coming to the Sierra. His words and passion for all things wild continue to inspire me.



Jeff and Shadow at Mono Lake.
Photo: Jeff Hunter

Are there any conservation/environmental books that stand out as favorites?

Yes. A Sand County Almanac by Aldo Leopold and Let the Mountains Talk, Let the Rivers Run by David Brower.

What are the greatest challenges facing the Bodie Hills today?

That's a good question. Certainly managing the sage grouse population in a way that hopefully avoids an endangered species listing. I think that's emblematic in a number of ways because it's going to require partnership and cooperation and perhaps some compromise. These values hopefully will allow the sage grouse to persist and even

flourish while allowing continued enjoyment and visitation of the Bodie Hills.

What do you hope to see in the Bodies in the future?

I'd like to see the Bodie Hills become more of a destination outside the ghost town. It's a very special place geologically, with a unique assemblage of flora and fauna, and amazing cultural resources and could potentially be a destination that bolsters the economy of northern Mono County.

What do you like to do when you're not working?

I love to read, birdwatch, and backpack. Also spending some time with family and pets including Trouble, our ten-year-old cat. We have one dog out here, Shadow, and one dog, Abbey, who's still in Tennessee that we're hoping will join us soon.

I understand you're a birder. Any great sightings since moving to the Sierra?

Well, a Golden Eagle encounter in the Bodie Hills stands out as pretty amazing. I've seen all four falcons here. They're all pretty special. The

Bodie Hills has a good population of Northern Harriers. They've always been one my favorite birds.

You're about to begin your first winter in the Sierra. Do you have plans for any new adventures in the works?

Looking forward to snowshoeing and cross country skiing in the Bodie Hills for sure. I also just purchased my first California resident fishing license, so some fly fishing too as opportunities present itself. I came out here with my partner Caara, and I'm looking forward to exploring the Eastern Sierra with her.

MEMBERSHIP & SUPPORTERS

Thank you!

Friends of the Inyo is grateful for the support of members and donors who help us care for the public lands of the Eastern Sierra. We are pleased to acknowledge the following individuals and businesses who have given between June 1ST and October 15TH this year:

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