

THE
JEFFREY PINE JOURNAL

Newsletter of Friends of the Inyo

SPRING-SUMMER 2006

VOLUME III, ISSUE I



Volunteer restoring the Buttermilks

photo: Todd Vogel

Get Outside

*Restore the land,
climb a peak,
learn your butterflies*

Forgotten Fishes of the Eastern Sierra

*A guide to Owens Valley
native fish*

What's Cookin'

*Vegetable oil-powered
Stewardship*

Working to preserve the public lands and wildlife of the Eastern Sierra

THE Jeffrey Pine Journal

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 1

SPRING-SUMMER 2006

Newsletter of Friends of the Inyo



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Friends of the Inyo is a local non-profit conservation organization dedicated to preserving the ecological, cultural and recreational values of the Eastern Sierra's public lands.



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The Cover Photo



When not showing folks how to properly dangle from a rope, Bishop resident Todd Vogel can often be found on the backside of a pair of binoculars or a camera lens. You can view more of his photos at the FOI web gallery.

The Jeffrey Pine Journal, a biannual publication of Friends of the Inyo, is named after the Eastern Sierra's most aromatic conifer, *Pinus jeffreyi*. The Jeffrey Pine Journal is distributed free to members of Friends of the Inyo and is available at various locations in the Eastern Sierra and beyond. Written material and images herein are the sole property of Friends of the Inyo or are used with exclusive permission. We welcome submissions of artwork, writing and field observations.

Please send all submissions and comments to Paul McFarland at paulmc@friendsoftheinyo.org. Thanks.

President's Message

by Frank Stewart

Winter is getting in its last licks, as we continue to see significant storms build up the snowpack and soak the desert into April. Enough with the weather report.

One thing I've noticed over the years is that even the most well thought out rhetoric eventually falls on deaf ears if not accompanied by action. It's not enough to simply talk the talk, you've also got to walk the walk. In recent years we have watched Congress repeatedly cut the budget of our local resource agencies. This has resulted in funding gaps between what is needed on the ground and what the "budget" can afford. This has adversely affected the ability of the land managers to implement a variety of work projects and staff positions.

This "funding gap" has been recognized by our staff at Friends of the Inyo. They have realized that simply "talking" about proper land management won't cut it anymore. Our natural instinct is to tend to bemoan the fact that our government is not funding the things that are important to us. We wish that somehow there would be enough money to fill the needs. We do a lot of talking about what's wrong with the system. Down at the Friends of the Inyo office, a lot of thought has gone in to possible solutions to these challenges. As a result, Paul, Jamie, Darren, and Todd have translated "talk" into "action".

They have started something that is really catching on. They have asked you for help on a variety of work projects. And guess what? Not only did you show an interest in pitching in, you had a great time doing it. A recent restoration project in the Buttermilks attracted 70 volunteers. Folks have eagerly turned out to repair unauthorized off-highway vehicle (OHV) damage on local public lands, participated in trail maintenance on several miles of hiking trails, and turned out to simply clean up trash.

I think that public's interest in these projects tells us something about ourselves. It demonstrates the true depth of our feelings and commitment about this place, the Eastern Sierra. We are recognizing that there are things that we can do, projects that we can contribute to. These efforts are enjoyable, we learn something, and we get the satisfaction that we have made a contribution to our natural heritage. By leaving a place in better shape for those who follow after us we feel as if we have made a difference. And everyone wants to make a difference. This summer you can help make a difference by spending a day outside with us. We will be involved in building a handicap-accessible fishing dock at Convict Lake, a trail from the Mono Lake visitor's center down to the Lake, restoration projects and trail work throughout the Eastside. Even something as simple as picking up trash can help eliminate an illegal dump site on BLM land.

Maybe you have a favorite place that could benefit from a work project, or you know of some damage resulting from improper use? Let us know about it.

Remember, even if you're not physically able to work on a project, financial support of Friends of the Inyo and our Stewardship Projects are a great way to help get things done. To find out more about these and other projects go to our website at www.friendsoftheinyo.org <<http://www.friendsoftheinyo.org/>> and see what's cookin'.

Hope to see you out there, and with any luck you'll be giving back amid desert wildflowers with the snow laden Sierra as your backdrop.

Frank Stewart works as a general building contractor and enjoys exploring the backcountry of the Sierra Nevada

Fixing the Path to Climb the Mountain

Get out this summer with the Eastern Sierra Stewardship Corps

by Todd Vogel

Wilderness Stewardship Coordinator

The Eastern Sierra Stewardship Corps (ESSC) continues to grow after nearly a year of operation with many successful projects completed or in the works.

Volunteer response to these opportunities has been humbling - as I write this we have over 2000 volunteer hours that have either already happened or are booked with people committed this year. Many more hours will no doubt be added to the roster.

I was a board member of FOI when my position as Wilderness Stewardship Coordinator became available and, even though I already had a full time job as one of the operators of Sierra Mountain Center, I jumped at the chance to take the Stewardship post on a part time basis. I hoped when I took the position that my nearly twenty years of experience as a permit holder with the local land management agencies and as an outdoor educator with schools and other organizations from around the Southwest would make for a valuable synergy and this has certainly been the case. Though I have had to make some connections from scratch, my existing contacts proved very helpful, and I have been able to get many schools involved with community service projects in our area.

The Corps is, of course, not just for schools and organizations, and we have many, many opportunities for people of all ages, interests and abilities to come and help give back to our public lands. Some of our outings take place within sight of the parking lot; others are overnight and even multi-night Wilderness-based trips. The definitive listing can be found at our website (just pull down the link to the calendar). While we are excited about all the excursions, there are a few in particular I would like to highlight here. See our calendar on pages 4 and 5 for more info and trips.

Wearing both my FOI hat and my certified mountain guide hat, I put this summer's trips together in the hopes that sweetening the pot with both community service opportunities, as well as some mountain skills would entice some of those reluctant volunteers into helping out. Each month, from April through June, we have several trips going from Big Pine Canyon to the Mammoth area that will spend a day on a work project and a day doing the Sierra Mountain Center snow travel skills course.

While you are at the FOI calendar take a look at the Coldwater Canyon trips. This area, just south of Mammoth Lakes, sees quite a bit of use and is on the Forest Service's high priority list for some attention. With agency budgets as tight, it is quite possible no ranger will be able to visit the Coldwater area this summer. It is up to all of us to help pick up the slack.

All our stewardship outings are a great chance to spend some time helping to keep ourselves and our public lands healthy, as well as just get outside and enjoy the Eastern Sierra.



photo: jenny hudson

A newly restored sagebrush forest.

From Rock Stars to Rock Bars

We got it done!

by Jamie Anderson



Buttermilks restoration crew.

photo: Jamie Anderson

Well, winter has been anything but slow... We've been rocking out with concerts, redesigning our website, launching new websites, hosting slideshows and concerts, slinging dirt, sharpening tools, and planting seeds for this summer's eternal warmth.

It all started with an incredible day of restoration amongst the majestic buttermilk boulders on Saturday, November 19th. While I am still not sure how those gigantic rocks landed there, the Buttermilks climbing area is an international climbing destination, and all that fame has taken its toll on the native plants, soil quality, deer and quail habitats. The weather was incredible with temperatures in the 70's and no wind...It was too hot to climb on that November day. Ohh, did I mention we had an equally amazing Indian Summer with beautiful weather—a nice introduction to what was to become one of our biggest, windiest, and wettest winter on record. As I write this, winter is slowly releasing its grip, the migrating birds have started draining my feeders, and the desert is turning an iridescent green. But for now, back to the winter...

On Saturday, February 4th we hosted singer, songwriter Todd Hanning at the Sherwin's in Mammoth. The dinner party sold out, the lucky guests witnessed a wonderful and intimate concert featuring acoustic melodies and enjoyed* a wonderful diner menu. Folks walked out the door full of good food and an armfull of wonderful

goodies and prizes. Then the Mammoth locals swarmed the place, rocking out in the name of local conservation and draining the donated keg supplied by our wonderful supporters over at Mammoth Brewery.

Well, after putting together a successful concert and fundraiser, I got a call from Roxanna Brock who had recently heard of our work in the Buttermilks and asked if she could help raise awareness of our work...I said "Sure, let's make a plan." On Sunday, March 12th Roxanna was joined by over 80 volunteers who helped delineate trails, restore vegetation, and plant native seeds in impacted areas. The list of volunteers included many USFS employees, several education groups, local Native American tribal members and the Owens Valley Indian Water Commission Youth Group. The list of individuals included such local eastside climbing heroes as Allen Steck, John Fisher, Tony Puppo, Bob Harrington, and many others.

I want to thank everyone who made this winter a fun, exciting, and community-driven extravaganza of giving back to public lands filled with happy volunteers, rock stars, and YOU! You are the reason all this happened, without YOU these projects would not happen. Thanks for coming to our slideshows, concerts, and for getting up early on Saturday morning—not to read the paper or watch cartoons—but to physically help improve the conditions of our wonderful backyard playground: the Eastern Sierra Public Lands.

Forgotten Fishes of the Eastern Sierra

Tenacious little reminder's of the desert's fragility and diversity

by Paul McFarland

Many are familiar with the geologic features scattered throughout the Eastern Sierra reminding us of this desert land's soggy past. Features like Mono Lake's wave cut terraces high above Lee Vining or the lake deposits along the Westgard Pass Road high above the valley floor are remnants of the huge, interconnected lakes that covered the Great Basin for tens of thousands of years.

Rocks aren't the only reminder of the desert's pluvial past. If you're lucky enough to gaze into the deep azure pools of Fish Slough, you might just see a living relic of lakes long gone.

The stories of these four fish tell us of more than huge glacial lakes and extinct rivers. These fish are living metaphors of all our fragile oases—those threatened, increasingly rare, lively and beautiful places where water graces the desert. They remind us our actions—history measured in mere decades—can impact life that has been evolving and swimming for millions of years. They also remind us that we can determine what that impact will be—extinction or existence.



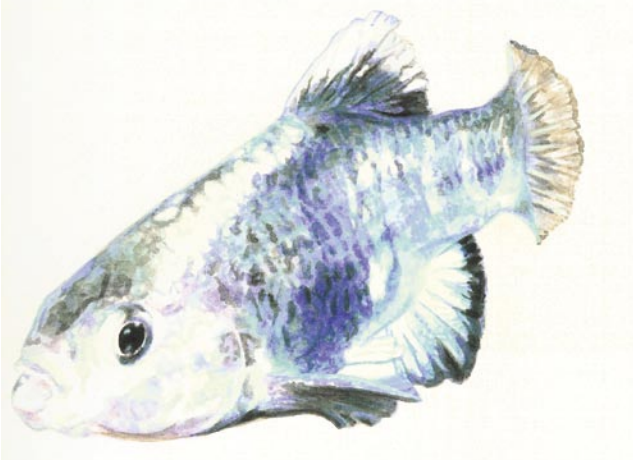
TUI CHUB — *Gila bicolor snyderi*

The Tui Chub is the most widespread of the Eastside's native fish. Extending from Tahoe to the Mojave Desert, the chunky, 6-12" Tui Chub inhabits a wide range of aquatic habitats. In the Eastern Sierra, the federally-listed Tui Chub lives in pools and slow streams with dense vegetation and abundant aquatic insects.



OWENS AND LONG VALLEY SPECKLED DACE — *Rhinichthys osculus* spp.

The spp. epithet, meaning subspecies, at the end of this species' scientific name is a story in itself. While *Rhinichthys osculus* may be the most widely distributed fish species in western North America, populations of speckled dace, isolated from one another as ancient lakes and rivers dried up, became sufficiently different from one another to the point where they are recognizable as distinct subspecies. Hence the spp! The Eastern Sierra contains three distinct speckled dace populations inhabiting springs and streams in Benton Valley, Long Valley and Owens Valley. These diminutive, 3" fish are currently listed as Species of Special Concern by the State of California after being extirpated from much of their historic habitat by water diversions, livestock grazing and predation by illegally planted fish, such as large-mouth bass.



OWENS PUPFISH — *Cyprinodon radiosus*

The largest of the pupfish, coming in at two inches, the Owens Pupfish was believed extinct until a small population was "rediscovered" in 1964 in Fish Slough. The most brightly colored of the Eastside's native fish, male Owens Pupfish shine bright blue during the spring and summer spawning season, while females are green with rows of vertical black bars along their sides. Previously found throughout the Owens Valley, today, the Owens Pupfish, listed as federally endangered, are restricted to a few clear spring pools. Were it not for alert Fish & Game fishery biologist, Phil Pister's two bucket transfer of the last remaining Owens Pupfish out of a drying spring pool, this unique little fish would have joined the California grizzly on the list of lost species. Thanks, Phil.



OWENS SUCKER — *Catosomus fumeiventris*

Looking much like the suckers stuck to home aquariums, the gray-backed, white-bellied Owens Sucker is found in lakes and streams of the Upper Owens River, such as Hilton Creek, Crowley Reservoir, Hot Creek, Mammoth Creek and Bishop Creek. Currently listed as a California Species of Special Concern due to habitat alteration and competition from introduced fish, the Owens Sucker feeds at night on aquatic insects, plants and detritus. A relatively long-lived fish, the Owens Sucker can grow up to 16" in length. Its closest relative is the Tahoe Sucker, endemic to the Lahonton Basin north of the Owens Basin.

S U M M E R C

MAY 13TH BRISTLECONES TO BLACK CANYON NATURALIST HIKE

Come celebrate International Migratory Bird Day with a strenuous 5 1/2 mile hike from the Schulman Grove of Bristlecone pines down to the lush hidden oasis of Black Canyon spring. Expect to see neotropical birds, hummingbirds, wildflowers, and butterflies galore. Meet at the Schulman Grove Visitor Center, 9 miles from Highway 168/Westgard Pass and about 45 minutes from Big Pine, at 8am.

Leader: Paul McFarland.

MAY 27TH-30TH JOHN MUIR WILDERNESS

www.friendsoftheinyo.org/web-content/essc/specific_trips/nfbigpine_blacklake/black_lake_project.html. Trail Work and Snow Skills Course—A great chance to get in an early season backpack, give back to your public lands, and to learn some important mountain travel skills. Day one: It is about a half a day walk to the work site, where we will spend the balance of our day clearing brush and doing basic trail maintenance. The view is spectacular from the work area. Day two: A full day of trail work, and a late afternoon day hike to explore the area. Day three: After all that hard work on the trail we will spend the third day learning snow and mountain travel skills. This includes a full progression in all the basic to advanced skills necessary to be an aspiring mountaineer! Day four: We'll finish up any last minute trail work still to be done and then head out, aiming to be back at the trailhead by mid afternoon. Leader: Todd Vogel Suggested donation \$250.00 per person

JUNE 3RD MONO BASIN NATIONAL TRAILS DAY CELEBRATION

Volunteers Wanted! Join Friends of the Inyo, Mono Lake Committee, and the USFS for the First Annual Mono Basin National Trails Day Celebration. Work on local trails, eradicate invasive plants and help out with various other stewardship

projects through out the Mono Basin. Come show your love of the Mono Basin and end the day with a huge raffle! Meet at the Mono Basin Visitor's Center, Lee Vining at 10:00 am. Please sign up early for this wonderful community event by calling Jamie at 760-873-6500.

JUNE 10TH DEADMAN CREEK RESTORATION PROJECT

Join Friends of the Inyo, California Trout, and the USFS Hydrology Restoration Crew in rehabilitating the Deadman Creek dispersed campground areas that are impacting the riparian and watershed qualities of this amazing headwaters section of the Owens River. Meet at the Deadman Creek Campground at 10:00am for free coffee and bagels. Sign up early to make this trip happen! Leader: Jamie Anderson.

JUNE 16TH-18TH MONO BASIN BIRD CHATAUQUA

www.birdchatauqua.org. A full weekend of seminars, lectures, hikes, music, food and fun all in the name of our feathered friends. Sign up early at www.birdchatauqua.org.

JUNE 28-JULY 2 BOUNDARY PEAK WILDERNESS TRAIL

www.friendsoftheinyo.org/web-content/essc/specific_trips/boundary/boundary.html. Project and Summit Climb. At 13,147 feet, Boundary Peak is the highest mountain in Nevada and sits at the north end of the White Mountains. On this project we will give some much needed attention to the many user-created trails originating from Trail Canyon, as well as delineate the parking area at the end of the road. Day one: meet, pack and logistics check, travel to Trail Canyon for arrival by lunch time. The afternoon will be spent establishing camp and getting a sense of the project and our goals. Days two and three: work days. Day four: early start for Boundary Peak summit climb and return with AMGA certified Alpine Guide, Todd Vogel. Day five: finish up any remaining project work and return to Bishop by mid afternoon. Leader: Todd Vogel Suggested donation \$250.00 per person.

JULY 8TH—2ND ANNUAL OWENS RIVER HEADWATERS CLEAN UP AND RESTORATION PROJECT

Calling all local fisherman, anglers, families, campers, and nature lovers to attend this great event to continue further protecting the upper Owens River. This project will focus on delineating roads on the north side of Glass Creek, restoring illegal creekside vehicle damage, and protecting the river banks with barriers and signage. Meet at the Inyo National Forest Big Springs Campground at 10:00am. Leader: Jamie Anderson.

JULY 9TH-11TH JOHN MUIR WILDERNESS

Coldwater Canyon Trail Project www.friendsoftheinyo.org/web-content/essc/specific_trips/coldwater_canyon_trail_project.html

Friendly Outings Reminder

Please sign up in advance by contacting Jamie Anderson at **760.873.6500 ext. 2** or send an email to **jamie@friendsoftheinyo.org** for more information and trip registration forms.

Overnight trips require a detailed trip sign up form to be filled out in advance. Some trips include a suggested donation to help us ensure we can continue our restoration and education program; donation amounts are fully flexible! More details on our trips, photos of project sites, and downloadable maps can be found on our website: **www.friendsoftheinyo.org**

CALENDAR

content/essc/specific_trips/coldwater/coldwater.html. Coldwater Canyon, just south of the Mammoth Lakes Basin, receives an incredible amount of use, yet sees very little ranger presence. On these trips we will address normal seasonal trail maintenance and remove illegal campsites and fire rings. This is a great chance to make a difference in an area that really needs some help! Three days of trail work, campsite restoration, fishing, hiking and wilderness solitude. Each day we'll be done with time for an afternoon hike, fishing, or birding walks. Leader: Todd Vogel Suggested donation \$200.00 per person

JULY 15TH REDDING CANYON WILDFLOWER AND BUTTERFLY HIKE

www.friendsoftheinyo.org/web-content/pages/hikes/redding_cyn/redding_hike.html. White Mountains *Come explore this great, seldom-visited canyon on the west side of the Whites. Co-sponsored by the Bristlecone Chapter of the California Native Plant Society and Friends of the Inyo, this half-day, moderate, 4-mile round trip hike through Redding Canyon in the White Mountains just east of Bishop will explore the contrasts found where water graces the desert. Meet at the intersection of Redding Canyon Rd. and East Side Rd - follow East Line Street around its big curve at the base of the Whites - at 7:00 AM. Leader: Paul McFarland.

JULY 22ND SKETCHING THE METHUSELAH GROVE BRISTLECONES AT 10,000 FEET

Paint or sketch these remarkably beautiful yet artistically challenging subjects! Some neat old cabins near the site provide excellent subjects for pen and ink. Wynne Benti, owner of The Coons Gallery in Bishop, California, former design instructor at Art Center College of Design and UCLA is the painting guide. Plan to spend all day. Two-wheel drive vehicles OK. Meet at Glacier Campground at the junction of 395 and 168 just north of Big Pine at 8am. Leader: Wynne Benti (call 760-837-5545 with questions).

JULY 21ST-23RD BUTTERFLIES OF THE EASTERN SIERRA WORKSHOP

www.friendsoftheinyo.org/web-content/pages/hikes/butterfly_workshop/butterflies.html. Join Paul McFarland, Friends of the Inyo Executive Director, for a three day workshop including both classroom and hiking explorations with butterflies and moths in the Mono Basin. From desert alkali flats to alpine rock gardens, the Mono Basin is an excellent place to get acquainted with these splashes of living color. This seminar will focus on learning the basics of "butterflying." Identification of host plants, understanding the life cycle of butterflies, migration, habitat preferences, and their relationship to the entire ecosystem will also be covered. Cost \$130 per person & \$115 for MLC and FOI members. To register, call the Mono Lake Committee at 760-647-6595.

JULY 29TH-31ST JOHN MUIR WILDERNESS COLDWATER CANYON TRAIL PROJECT II

www.friendsoftheinyo.org/web-content/essc/specific_trips/coldwater/coldwater.html. *We will be continuing our trail work and wilderness patrols in Coldwater Canyon area just south of the Mammoth Lakes Basin. See above project description for details. Leader: Todd Vogel.

AUGUST 5TH SAWMILL MEADOWS RESTORATION DAY

Partner with Friends of the Inyo and the USFS Hydrology Restoration Team to rehabilitate and restore the natural hydrological systems within this amazing meadow complex located in the wild Glass Mountains of the Eastern Sierra. Leader: Jamie Anderson.

AUGUST 5TH-7TH COLDWATER CANYON PROJECT III

www.friendsoftheinyo.org/web-content/essc/specific_trips/coldwater/coldwater.html. *We will be continuing our trail work and wilderness patrols in Coldwater Canyon area just south of the Mammoth Lakes Basin. See above project description for details. Leader: Todd Vogel.

AUGUST 22ND-27TH INYO MOUNTAINS WILDERNESS PROJECT

www.friendsoftheinyo.org/web-content/essc/specific_trips/inyo_mts_wilderness/inyo_mtns_prjct.html and Desert Peak Bagging! The remote and scenic Inyo Mountains Wilderness Area seldom sees regular trail or road maintenance. This trip will focus in the southern portion of the Wilderness Area, cleaning up the area around the historic Salt Tram caretaker cabin on the Inyo crest. The tram was used to transport salt from Saline Valley to Owens Lake in the early 1900's. The remainder of the trip will focus on restoration work at the New York Butte trailhead parking area and surrounding area. This is a special trip to a spot in a rugged and remote range that is in need of a little TLC. We hope to reward ourselves with a climb of Keynot Peak or New York Butte. Leader: Todd Vogel. Suggested Donation \$250 per person.

Outside on the Eastside

Summer time in the Eastern Sierra is a literal dust devil of outdoor activity. From hikes to bird festivals to lectures to stewardship projects, there is something happening almost every day of the summer. To help locals and visitor's alike keep track of all this opportunities, we created OutsideontheEastside.org—a web-based clearinghouse for all non-profit and public agency events.

So looking for something to do this summer?
Cruise on over to www.outsideontheeastside.org,
and don't forget your sunscreen!

A Word from our Friends

Reflections on the Buttermilk Restoration Project

by Sara Steck

On Sunday, March 12, 2006, we attended the restoration workday in the Buttermilks west of Bishop. This was the second time for my son, Michael White, and for me, and this time we were joined by my husband, Steve White, and my father, Allen Steck.

It was a cold and gray day, but warm with the camaraderie of energetic folks out to mitigate impacts on a well used bouldering area. We worked hauling rocks and dry stumps to delineate paths to allow areas to regenerate with grasses and shrubs. One thing that struck me was that so many local agencies were cooperating and getting a job done together. The U.S. Forest Service, BLM, Friends of the Inyo, the Eastern Sierra Climber's Coalition, and the Owens Valley Indian Water Commission all helped out, supplied the tools, the expertise, the vehicles, the guidance, and the cheerfulness to make the day a success.

For me, it was great to be out in the hills with my father who will celebrate his 80th birthday in May of this year! My father has spent most of his life climbing, but has only visited the Buttermilks a couple of times in the past. He reminisced with John Fischer about their trip together to the area. He also recalled a visit with Smoke Blanchard to climb Smoke's famous course through the boulders of the area, which included some rather difficult and dangerous moves as he followed the agile Smoke on his guided tour.

It was also wonderful to see my 10-year old son working with his grandfather, and realizing that from this kind of experience the love and care of outdoor space can be passed on through generations. Of course, for Michael, a big part of the experience is the raffle afterward, especially since he has won something each time he's participated!

I also tried to remember my younger, more carefree days when I cooked for the Palisade School of Mountaineering under Smoke Blanchard, Jack Miller, and John Fischer. The Buttermilks were my campground on Saturday nights when we got the weekend off to go to town. Back in those days there were no crash pads and very few climbers; often nobody was there. The use has changed a lot, and so too the impact on the landscape. It is a wonderful feeling to be a part of helping to restore a well-loved area with such a history as the Buttermilks.

by Rosanna Marrujo

Owens Valley Indian Water Commission

The Owens Valley Indian Water Commission was pleased to provide youth volunteers for the Buttermilk Restoration Project. One of the goals of the Owens Valley Indian Water Commission is to get the youth involved in environmental projects so that they will gain life long appreciation of the natural world and will be better stewards of the land.

The Buttermilk Restoration Project was a great hands-on project for the youth. The youth felt that by gathering seeds and brush and by spreading the seeds they were making a tremendous contribution to the area.

The youth are anxious to see the fruits of their labor and are looking forward to participating in future activities.

The youth's ancestors would be pleased that these young people are taking an interest in, and are helping to restore the areas they once hunted and gathered.

Photo: Jamie Anderson

Gathering sagebrush seeds

Pinedrops...*notes on issues affecting Eastern Sierra Public Lands*

Convict Fishing Platform Update

It's hard to think of fishing when all the standing water on the Eastside is frozen, but we did a good deal of it this winter as we continued working to make Bishop resident, Bob Durkee's dream of an accessible fishing platform at Convict Lake a reality. This project has touched many hearts, and awakened many memories of family members present and past who loved Convict Lake. Thanks to your generosity, we have raised over \$7500 toward deck construction. We're working with the Forest Service to complete the environmental documentation and hope to begin construction sometime in late summer. Thanks to all who have donated time and energy to this worthy project, especially the Tillie S. Totman Living Trust, Brian Balarsky of Convict Lake Resort, Inyo National Forest, Frank Stewart Construction, and Bob and Sara Durkee for keeping this project energized. It couldn't happen without you!

We are still looking for donations of money, time, materials and know-how. If you possess any of these, please contact Paul at 760-873-6400.

Furnace Creek

With some decisions it might just be best never to make them. This seems to be the attitude of the Inyo National Forest and BLM Ridgecrest over the issue of whether to protect the fragile desert oasis of Furnace Creek in the White Mountains or expend buckets of tax payer money to build an unnecessary and damaging new road and ATV trail right through this unique, living stream. The off-road vehicle lobby seems hell bent on seeing Furnace sacrificed for yet another road to add to the Inyo NF's already unmanageable 3600 miles of road, despite the seemingly universal acknowledgement that we need to

strive to balance motorized fun with the health of the land and available resources. While we wait for an official decision – which will most likely not be in the interest of the “greatest good for the greatest number” – the birches, willows, warblers, sage grouse and mule deer continue to re-inhabit their rare desert home.

Building Tomorrow's Stewards Today

Many of us who care about public lands can point back to a certain seed experience – catching our first trout, our first night under the stars in the backcountry, seeing our first bear – that eventually grew into our love for wildlife and wild land. To help ensure more of today's generations can get outside to smell a Jeffrey Pine or spy a marmot, FOI, through the generous support of the National Forest Foundation's Wilderness Stewardship Challenge program (www.natlforests.org <<http://www.natlforests.org/>>), is starting up a new program focused on building connections between youth and designated Wilderness. Our Building Tomorrow's Stewards Today program will combine in class education with single to multi-day backcountry trips. To build a lasting land ethic, outings will not only focus on natural history and proper backcountry etiquette but will give the kids a chance to get their hands dirty and make a real difference through direct Wilderness stewardship and restoration. If you know of an educational or youth oriented group who would like to participate, please email Todd Vogel at todd@friendsoftheinyo.org <<mailto:todd@friendsoftheinyo.org>> or call our office at 760-873-6500.

Putting Names to Places

Human nature seems to dictate that people only take care of what they

know. Places like Yosemite, the Grand Canyon and Mt. Whitney have been protected as National Parks and Wilderness because people knew about them – their beauty, their stories – and fought for them.

Thanks to a generous grant from the Community Foundation of Riverside's Desert Legacy Fund, we are working to expose more people to the beauty and stories hidden in the serene northern Mojave desert of western Inyo County – places like the Piper Mountains Wilderness, Surprise Canyon, the Inyo Mountains Wilderness and the Crater Mountain Wilderness Study Area – through a series of roadside interpretive kiosks focused on the natural and cultural history of places often overlooked, hands on restoration and stewardship projects in target areas, and by providing people with easy to follow hiking directions into some of these trailless areas.

Let's face it; if caring folks don't know what's out there, how can we expect our public desert treasures to survive?

BREAKING NEWS

Congressman McKeon Introduces bill to Protect Hoover and Amargosa

As this issue of the /Journal/ was headed to press, word hit the street that Congressman McKeon (R-25) introduced H.R. 5149 – The Eastern Sierra Rural Heritage and Economic Enhancement Act. The bill aims to preserve the Amargosa River as a Wild & Scenic River and protect the Hoover Wilderness Addition around Leavitt Meadows as Wilderness. This is phenomenal news for the future of the Eastern Sierra. Huge thanks to all who worked so hard to protect these lands. For more information, please call Sally Miller with the Wilderness Society at 760-934-4473.

Pinedrops...notes on issues affecting Eastern Sierra Public Lands

by Paul McFarland & Jamie Anderson

Big Red Truck

"What's up with that Huge Red Truck?"

Early this spring, we purchased a 1986 Ford F250 diesel truck with the help of a generous grant from the Norcross Foundation to transport volunteer groups and work tools to restoration work sites throughout Inyo and Mono counties. You might have seen "Big Red" at its debut at the Buttermilks Restoration Project last March.

Big red not only gets us where we need to go, but actively demonstrates that there are workable alternatives to unsustainable fossil fuel consumption. Thanks to a generous donation from Greasecar Fuel Systems, Big red runs on Straight Vegetable Oil (SVO). The same oil that can fry your doughnuts can power Big Red, a healthy load of tools and a gaggle of volunteers high into the Inyo Mountains for restoration work.

Rather than a radical new idea, Dr. Rudolf Diesel's first engines from 1895 were designed to run on vegetable oil as a fuel dates back to 1895 when Dr. Rudolf Diesel developed the first diesel engine. After demonstrating his engine at the 1900 World Exhibition in Paris Diesel prophetically proclaimed, "The use of vegetable oils for engine fuels may seem insignificant today, but such oils may become, in the course of time, as important as petroleum and the coal tar products of the present." The time is now.



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Pinedrops...notes on issues affecting Eastern Sierra Public Lands

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For information on making a bequest to Friends of the Inyo, please call Darren at 760-873-6500 or email us at accounts@friendsoftheinyo.org

If you decide to include Friends of the Inyo in your estate plans, or have already done so, please let us know. We'd like the opportunity to thank you!

In Memoriam

Tim and Leslie Willoughby of Convict Lake gave a generous donation in memory of Thomas Wright of Paradise whose fanciful art brightened any drive through Paradise.

Lee & Linda McFarland of Cambria donated in memory Marilyn Powers of Reno, whose love for life, her family and the mountains will always be remembered.

Genny Smith of Cupertino and Mammoth Lakes gave a generous gift toward the Convict Lake fishing platform in memory of Howard Todt. Betty Tody of Cupertino also gave a generous gift in memory of her husband, Howard, who loved Convict Lake. Paul McFarland and Yvette Garcia donated in memory of *Tom Strathman*, whose bright eyes and kind face warmed so many mornings at the Latte Da Coffee Shop in Lee Vining.

Dennis Flaherty of Bishop also donated toward the Convict Lake platform in memory of his father, Jesse Flaherty, who introduced his family to the joy of the outdoors.

Thanks!

The Peradam Foundation for their deep and lasting support. Thanks, Bob!

Daniel Patterson of the Center for Biological Diversity for the laptop computer.

Patagonia for their unending and varied support of FOI and the land.

Montrail Shoes for support of the Earth Day Race and our feet.

Great Basin Bakery for filling our volunteer's stomachs.

Maria Argano for her beautiful woodcuts.

Greg Reis for help setting up Outsideontheeastside.org.

Caroline Anaya for her generous gift of time, talent and energy.

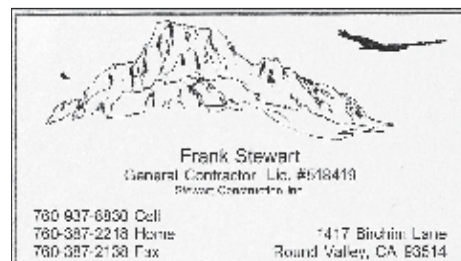
John Muir Laws for his wonderful art.

Gretel Enck for forgiving us for the snafu with her article last issue!

The Mammoth Times, Inyo Register and Sierra Scoop for including our Eastern Sierra Nature Notes in their respective publications.

The Aguabonita Flyfishers of Ridgecrest for their volunteerism and generosity.

And everyone who has supported us, volunteered and done something simple to help the public land and wildlife of the Eastern Sierra!



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Photo: Galen Rowell, Mountain Light

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