

Jeffrey Pine JOURNAL

FALL 2015 | VOLUME XIII, ISSUE II

An Incomparable Legacy

Remembering James Wilson

Get Out

Glass Mountains

Forest Planning

Opportunities for Special Places



THE JEFFREY PINE JOURNAL
VOLUME XIII, ISSUE II, FALL 2015

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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COVER PHOTO

James Wilson at home in the mountains. James left an indelible mark on the wild open spaces of the Eastern Sierra. From the peaks of the Sierra across the open sagebrush steppes, we are grateful for his dedication and collaborative approach to conservation of our precious public lands.

PHOTO: Chris Howard

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

August 2015

On July 15th, we lost James Wilson, one of our founders and long term board members. He served in most positions on the executive committee over the past 29+ years. James was an incomparable colleague, mentor, leader, and the ultimate local champion for all things wild. His inspiration will guide us for decades. Many situations will arise when I will think "what would James say"?

James would say "we have a lot of work to do"! This is why all of YOU are crucial in our mission to protect and care for our public lands. We have appreciation for all who have or will join us on an outing or stewardship project and for all our members and donors. Your generous donations allow us to continue our work. Gratitude for our awesome board members who are always there to assist and guide our mission cannot be expressed adequately. Most importantly....get outside; take a walk, bike, hike, kayak, bird, and enjoy the solitude of our phenomenal Eastern Sierra.

Happy Trails, Sydney
sydney@friendsoftheinyo.org

A group of tired, happy volunteers after a day of work at Convict Lake. Thanks to Convict Lake Resort for sponsoring the project and our work on the Convict Lake Loop Trail. Read more about it on page 9.

Photo:
Dennis Schumacher



Director's Message

by Laura Beardsley

I've been spending a lot of time wandering in the forest recently. Not traipsing along the granite peaks and passes I crave, but driving the winding routes that crisscross the expansive Jeffrey pine and lodgepole forest between Mammoth Lakes and the Mono Basin. It takes four cords of wood to heat my house for a winter and many hours of scouting, cutting, hauling, and splitting to prepare for long, cozy nights and what I hope will be feet of snow. I cherish this time in the expanses of the Inyo National Forest. I find myself sitting or wandering off the beaten path, soaking in the sun, watching the birds and butterflies go about their day, and listening to the pleasant hum of a silent forest – the buzz of insects, the breath of the breeze.

This fall, in these quiet moments, I'm reminded of how lucky we are to have these wild open spaces throughout the Eastern Sierra and how much work it takes to make sure they thrive. Whether designated wilderness or public wild lands, these places survive because of the hard work of people who care for them. People like James, whose foresight and dedication helped ensure the longevity of the open spaces in Inyo and Mono County. People like the rangers, firefighters, scientists, and land managers of the US Forest Service and the BLM who devote their careers to the life of the land. And, people like you who love the Eastern Sierra and make a tangible investment in its future. Thank you all for the spectacular landscapes, the exceptional recreation, and the resilient habitat that surrounds us. Thank you for these moments on the land and for the healthy coyote that just trotted past en route to another wild place. -LB

A Lasting Gift: In Memory of James Wilson, 1948-2015

by Paul McFarland

My friend James died on the same day I took my oldest son, Solomon, on his first backpacking trip. Solomon is a fisherman; it's what he wants to do every weekend and every day after school. He really wanted to catch a Golden Trout. So he and I planned to head up to Gibbs Lake – a beautiful gem of a Sierra lake tucked between the grey mass of Mount Dana and the red hulk of Mount Gibbs southwest of Lee Vining.

I learned of James' passing while packing our backpacks. In a cloudy shock, we finished packing and left town. There was no questioning, we were going. I knew immediately that this was where I needed to go, where he (Solomon) so longed to go, and where James would be so pleased we went. Not going would let them both down.

James not only spent a professional lifetime helping people explore our wild world through his great Bishop gear shop, but he took hundreds of people outside, leading them through Jeffrey pine forests, bristlecone groves, and subalpine meadows. With the Eastern Sierra Audubon Society and Friends of the Inyo, James took people to wild places that needed people to know about them. Locals, senators' staff, Bishop elementary schoolers, fellow nature mystics, birders...so many of us saw a wild place or critter for the first time through his eyes.

James didn't just take people outside, he brought the outside to them. As part of a crack team of desert rats, he lobbied the halls of Congress, cajoled around local dining room tables, and bore thoughtful witness time and time again at innumerable local hearings, meetings, and campfires. His work, along with so many others, established Death Valley National Park, the White Mountains Wilderness, the Inyo Mountains Wilderness, Cottonwood Creek Wild & Scenic River, and millions of other rad acres now protected for those yet to come. There are quite a few Jeffrey pines still nurturing White-breasted Nuthatches thanks to James.

Once out of town, Soli and I turned west on Horse Meadows Road. Climbing towards the Gibbs trailhead, I broke down

behind the wheel. Through anguished tears, I told Solomon that the last time I was on this road was a bike ride with James. He taught me how to fix my busted chain that day.

Once at the trailhead, I walked a bit ahead of Solomon. I didn't want my grief to overshadow his first multiday trip into the backcountry. As we climbed first through Jeffrey pine into mixed conifer of massive Sierra Juniper and bejeweled Western White Pine, I kept looking back to check on him: he was just plugging away, talking to himself, picking up sticks, flipping rocks, being outside.

While James loved wild places, solitude, and critters, he loved people just as much, perhaps more. For many drawn to the natural world, a love of one's fellow humans may not come easy. James loved people – he loved friends, he loved seeing people light up at the sight of a Western Tanager, and more and more as he grew older he spoke of how much he loved seeing people outside. Outside enjoying the places he loved so much. He knew that places don't protect themselves. People protect places. James was one of those people, and he taught many others – people who love and will work for places – in his wake.

That first night, as we unpacked our bags, it seemed everything I pulled out –heavy, old Evernew steel pots, water filter, Z rest – was tied to James. They all came from his store. Then, as now, gear or ancient trees, I see James in so many things.

Once settled, Soli and I cruised around through the

Whitebark-Lodgepole forest and Labrador tea. The sun was setting, and the peace was profound.

Solomon stood on top of a granite boulder looking around. "Dad," he said, "Dad, this is freedom. This place is freedom."

"Yes. Yes it is, Solomon," I said. Damn straight, son.

And we have people like James to thank for it.

Thank you, James. You're so missed, but you're everywhere now. Everywhere across our wild Eastern Sierra. Thank you.



James enjoying a moment in the sun
in Short Canyon ACEC. Photo: Julie Anne Hopkins

WILDERNESS & SPECIAL DESIGNATIONS

Forest Planning: Opportunities for Wilderness

by Jora Fogg & Paul McFarland

This past spring, as part of the process for developing their new General Management Plan, the Inyo National Forest announced areas they are considering recommending for wilderness designation within the plan. We are pleased to see much overlap between wilderness recommendations recently compiled by Friends of the Inyo and other groups and those of the agency. Here are some of the last wild places in the Eastern Sierra still deserving permanent protection under the Wilderness Preservation System:

Inyo National Forest Potential Wilderness Recommendations:

Glass Mountain (1)

A new potential wilderness area of 17,440 acres in the Glass Mountains, centered around Glass Mountain peak. Currently identified potential boundaries are set back from roads and motorized trails and avoid sage grouse habitat as well as Lahontan cutthroat trout in O'Harrel Canyon. The 2,041 acre Sentinel Meadow Research Natural Area is already closed to motorized use and is surrounded by inaccessible, heavily forested sheer slopes to the north, south, east, and west extending along the ridgeline around Bald Mountain to the Indiana Summit RNA.



Photo: Buck Wahl

White Mountain East and West (2, 3)

Two separate additions to the existing White Mountains Wilderness to the north would eliminate an arbitrary county line boundary, separating wilderness from roadless areas. To the east are the slopes of Blanco Mountain, containing a scenically varied mix of granite hoodoos, open sagebrush steppe, and limber-bristlecone forests. To the west, the landscape contains granite and volcanic highlands with riparian areas such as Dead Horse Meadow and Black Birch Canyon. These additions also include ecological features in the congressionally designated Ancient Bristlecone Pine Forest.



Photo: Sydney Quinn

Deep Springs North and South (4,5)

Aptly named, these roadless areas lie north and south of deep

springs valley. To the north, the Birch Creek roadless area is a lush riparian corridor at the boundary of the Mojave and Great Basin deserts. The rich birch-cottonwood riparian forests host a recently discovered isolated population of Black Toad, a California Fully Protected Species. Higher elevations hold extensive pinyon-juniper forest, transitioning down steep slopes to desert habitat from saltbrush scrub to sagebrush steppe. Deep Springs south encompasses part of the Soldier Canyon inventoried roadless area with the Inyo Mountains. This potential wilderness area presents a unique opportunity to conserve an east-west corridor for species moving from the Mojave to the Sierra, as it's contiguous with the Piper Mountains Wilderness.



Photo: Julie Anne Hopkins

South Sierra (6)

An addition to the South Sierra Wilderness and contiguous with the BLM administered Sacatar Wilderness to the south, this 18,000+ acre inventoried roadless area is characterized by rugged high desert peaks scattered with yucca and Joshua Tree woodland, rare vegetation types on the Inyo National Forest.

Additional Opportunities for Wilderness:

Horse Meadows (A)

A proposed addition to the Ansel Adams Wilderness, Horse Meadows is a long and narrow roadless area which includes the

transitional slope from the floor of the Mono Basin to the mid-slope boundary of the Ansel Adams Wilderness. Lands here contain mature, mixed conifer forests in Gibbs, Bloody, and especially Sawmill canyons. This mid elevation, old-growth mixed conifer forest is poorly represented in protected areas on the Inyo National Forest. This mixed conifer zone is also unique for its diversity and inclusion of relatively rare conifer species – namely healthy limber

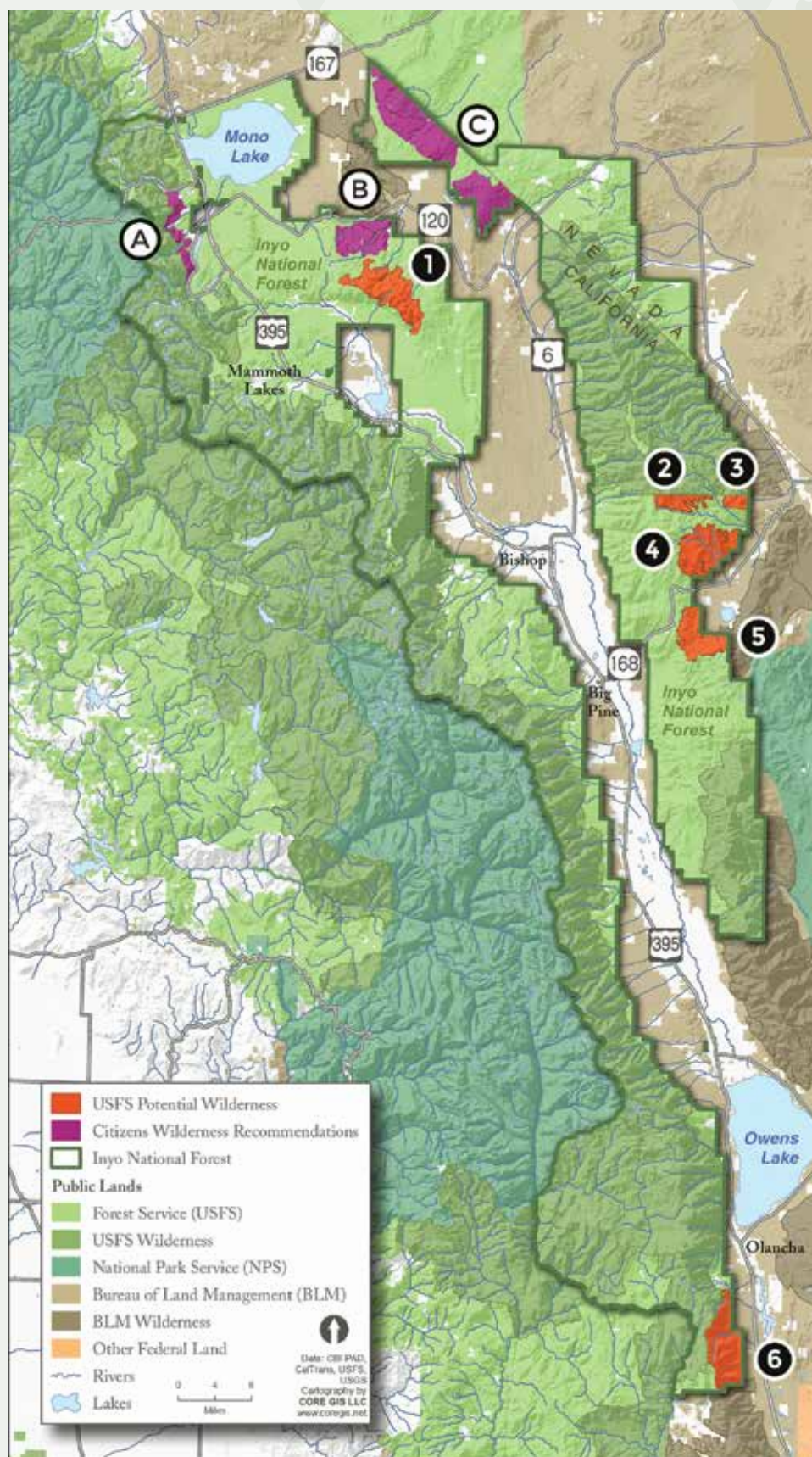


Photo: Sydney Quinn

pinies in Bloody Canyon. The southern section of the Horse Meadows roadless area includes extensive aspen groves, old-growth lodgepole forests, and numerous isolated riparian systems. An isolated population of Southern Alligator Lizards (historically documented and recently rediscovered) exists in aspen groves along the Parker Bench trail. Extending the wilderness boundary here helps support the outstanding opportunities for primitive exploration and recreation. Inclusion of upper Bloody Canyon would enhance protection for this historically significant canyon that supported the main route from Yosemite to the Mono Basin for thousands of years.

Dexter Canyon (B)

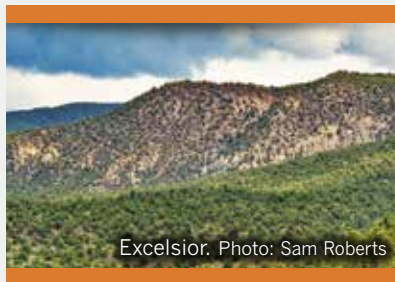
A landscape of rough hewn granite knobs, rolling uplands, and flat volcanic mesas deeply incised with steep-walled canyons reminiscent of the desert southwest, Dexter is unlike anywhere on the Inyo National Forest. The western portion supports old-growth lodgepole and Jeffrey pine forests dotted with sedge/rush-dominated meadows, while the northern and eastern portion are defined by open sagebrush plains, extensive snowbank aspen groves, and narrow riparian aspen-filled canyons. Within the Dexter roadless



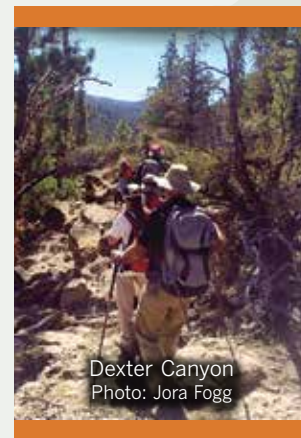
area, free-flowing North Canyon Creek, Dexter Canyon Creek, Wild Cow Creek, and Wet Canyon Creeks support locally-limited but ecologically critical riparian habitat. Goshawk, Greater Sage Grouse, Black-backed Woodpeckers, Willow Flycatchers, and nesting Golden Eagles join badgers, abundant mule deer, and brook trout as wild citizens of this area. Because of its proximity to Glass Mountain, Dexter could be added as a second unit within one new wilderness area.

Excelsior (C)

Sitting in the furthest north and east portion of the Inyo National Forest, Excelsior represents an amazingly wild, untouched chunk of the western Great Basin, containing extensive pinyon-juniper woods, isolated ephemeral lakes, dune systems, and locally limited but ecologically critical springs and associated riparian systems. When taken together with the contiguous wild lands on the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest east of the CA-NV line, the entire roadless complex contains over 200,000 acres of primeval public lands rich in Native American and settlement area history. The Excelsior area also provides habitat connectivity between the northern White Mountains, the Excelsior Wilderness Study Area (WSA), and the WSAs and wild lands of the Bodie Hills.



Excelsior. Photo: Sam Roberts



Dexter Canyon
Photo: Jora Fogg

A Call for Special Designations

Many special places on the Inyo deserve protection and agency resources but may not be the best fit for wilderness designation. The Inyo National Forest is blessed with nationally unique geology and vegetation. These include snowbank aspen, sagebrush steppe, xeric shrublands, and carbonate areas. The Forest also has wide ranging recreational opportunities that are heavily utilized. These lands require care and protection to ensure future generations can enjoy multiple forms of recreation with little change in resource condition. In these cases, we advocate for administrative designations that can be put in place through the plan revision process under approval by the Forest Supervisor. The following special places are worthy of attention:

The Mono Craters

A north-west string of volcanic craters, the Mono Craters form a unique and one of the most striking landforms in the Inyo National Forest. The youngest stand-alone mountain range in the county, the Mono Craters house an isolated population of pika, surprising conifer diversity, unique plants, and outstanding exploration potential.

Coyote Plateau

Just below the Sierra crest is a unique alpine island of flats with whitebark pine forests, a variety of alpine lakes, pristine streams, and wildflower-decorated meadows. Nowhere along the Eastern Sierra escarpment does such geology exist, creating a recreational paradise. Just over 75,000 acres, Coyote is loved by locals and visitors alike and accessed by numerous designated motorized routes.

Mount Olsen

Containing steep slopes of metamorphic ocean sediment along the northern wall of Lundy Canyon, the Mount Olsen area supports good forage and escape terrain for endangered Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep. Sheep are often spotted here in winter where south facing slopes melt off early. This area is contiguous with Hoover Wilderness on the west and the Hoover East Roadless Area on the north. There is potential for a zoological area designation to aid Sierra Nevada Bighorn recovery and provide habitat connectivity.



Coyote Plateau. Photo: Jora Fogg

ACTION ALERT

1. Write a letter to Forest Supervisor Ed Armenta supporting his potential wilderness recommendations and asking him to bring them forward to the final forest plan. You can also ask him to reconsider alternative designations and protect areas through administrative action. Send your letter to:

Edward Armenta - Forest Supervisor
Inyo National Forest
351 Pacu Lane Suite 200
Bishop, CA 93514
earmenta@fs.fed.us

2. Attend the Inyo National Forest public meeting during the 90-day comment period this winter. Watch our website, e-news, and Facebook for announcement of the date, time, and place. For more information about how to get involved contact Jora at jora@friendsoftheinyo.org.

STAY TUNED

The spring edition of the Jeffrey Pine Journal will showcase the Inyo National Forest's streams and rivers whose outstanding remarkable values make them eligible for Wild and Scenic River designation.

FIELD GUIDE ◀◀

IMAGE: *Glaucomys sabrinus* in full glide by Autumn Eanes

Flying Squirrel: Grey Spirit of the Forest

by Paul McFarland

One of the profound gifts of natural history is living in a world of windows. Everything one finds – from a Sierra Juniper to a chunk of salt and pepper granite to a half chewed truffle – provides a window through which to gaze into the interconnected workings of the natural world. Nowadays, they call this study of the interrelationships of organisms with one another and their environment ecology. But at its heart, any exploration of the natural world is really about reading stories -stories of sun, seasonality, soil, sex, water, eating, and getting eaten (or not).

Recently, some friends introduced me to one of these amazing windows into the workings of our Eastern Sierra world: the flying squirrel. And the more I learned about this little forest fuzzball, the more I learned about forest ecology, mammalian population dynamics, underground fungus, and that there is real wildness still to be found within earshot of a free concert at the Village at Mammoth.

Known to mammalogists as *Glaucomys sabrinus*, the flying squirrel is a poseur right off: it doesn't really fly. Rather, flying squirrels, like their fellow imposter the flying lizard, have mastered the art of gliding. Thanks to their patagium – a thin stretch of skin extending from the fore to hind leg – the flying squirrel can jump from a tree trunk and glide up to 200' through the forest canopy. Using their flattened tail as a sort of rudder, the squirrel swings upright to land on all fours on a vertical tree trunk. Immediately upon landing, the squirrel scampers around to the far side of the tree. Many think this 'land and scatter' behavior evolved as a defense against the flying squirrel's arch forest enemy – the owl.

While the only local mammal that glides from tree to tree, the flying squirrel is surrounded by family here in the Eastern Sierra. With nine chipmunks, three ground squirrels, marmots, and chickarees joining the flying squirrel as local members of the Squirrel Family (Sciuridae), our local sagebrush flats, shady forests, and alpine expanses are truly a squirrely landscape.

Before reading about flying squirrels, I thought truffles were either boxed chocolates or an expensive mushroom French used pigs to find. Little did I suspect we had truffles right here in our rather parched forests. Turns out, flying squirrels furtively flit above and about the forest floor with a distinct fondness for this underground fungus. Truffles – also known as *mycorrhizal hypogeous* fungus – are the fruiting body of an underground fungus that literally ties the forest together. Enjoying a symbiotic relationship with conifers, these fungi help tree roots take up water and nutrients while the tree provides the fungus with food. This fungi is critical for tree health in times of drought stress, as well as to help trees successfully re-establish burned over forests. The flying squirrel helps spread truffle spores both while digging them up from the soil, as well as in their poop. Bombs away! What better way to spread yourself around the forest?

Special thanks to Deborah and Gregg Vane for first showing me and a dozen other Friends of the Inyo members these furtive and fuzzy critters flying around their beautiful deck in Mammoth's Red Fir forest.

STEWARDSHIP

The Best Supported Volunteer Ever: The Power of One

By Michael Rodman, Sierra National Forest Wilderness Ranger

Frequently, when working with a group of volunteers in the wilderness, I like to discuss a favorite concept: when operating under the self-imposed “limitation” or “restriction” of non-mechanized labor, we, as a group, are able to cooperate in a humane process. That is, work that humans can accomplish with their energy, ingenuity, strength, and conviviality. It never ceases to amaze how large a rock can be moved, how deep a hole dug, how much positive and constructive energy can be generated when a group of humans work together without employing some noxious, noisy, fussy, and oft times dangerous machine. This notion delights me and seems to resonate with big groups about to launch an endeavor.

Comes the 4th Recess restoration project; a cooperative effort between the Friends of the Inyo and the Sierra National Forest, supported by the sassy, do-gooding, frequent Forest Service volunteer (both Sierra & Inyo), and local packer, Rachel Leiderman. 4th Recess Lake is the first lake below timberline (although above the 10,000k wood fire restriction) along the Mono Pass (South) trail. It is full of fish, and is mountain-porn spectacular. Each and all of these characteristics lend a place to becoming “overloved” as a

destination. Friends of the Inyo offered up two staff members, Tom Fitzgerald and Ben Wickham, and the Sierra Forest Wilderness Intern, funded by Friends of the Inyo, Mack Moore, was able to participate as well. At the trailhead, we were all staged and ready when Geoffery Kruse, the single volunteer arrived direct from San Diego (or 17ft above sea level, if you will) for his first ever wilderness volunteer experience. One tends to consider volunteer projects as “many hands making light work” affairs. And though Geoff and I were not alone, it was not with a head full of high expectations with which I passed over the crest into Mono Creek.

Many deep holes, large rocks, countless laps to collect or unload various materials, many laughs, concept discussions, and connections later, I found myself reflecting on a different value of wilderness work. Because these areas we have protected exhibit (relative to, say, Long Beach, Ca) fairly low impact and are closer to a natural condition; a single individual, or a very small crew can manifest, via an investment of their energy, a distinct and positive effect. With only a couple of days, a few tools, and our effort, we transformed a little bit of the 4th Recess from a beaten-down, rubbish, and latrine-filled eyesore to a feral slope in the mountains, unremarkable to the visitor passing by on a ramble or looking for an appropriate, discreet, established campsite.

Mack, the Friends of the Inyo-Sierra National Forest Wilderness Intern, got to work on a Friends of the Inyo project, I got to work with old friends and make new ones, the Sierra National Forest and Friends of the Inyo built a bridge of partnership, and 4th Recess Lake got just a little more spectacular. All because of one volunteer.

Editor's note: Interested in helping Friends of the Inyo and the U.S. Forest Service with a multi-day wilderness project in the beautiful Sierra Nevada next summer? Send us a note to info@friendsoftheinyo.org or call 760-873-6500. We'd love to have you out there with us.



Geoffrey and the crew cleaning up campsites near 4TH Recess Lake.

Photo: Michael Rodman

National Conservation Lands Turn 15!

The National Conservation Lands are America's newest collection of protected public lands and waterways. Today, National Conservation Lands protect 30 million acres of America's most treasured places - places rich in ecological, cultural, and recreational values. The beauty of conservation lands is their ability to provide access and opportunity for all, whether its hiking in a remote Wilderness Study Area or four wheeling to your favorite hunting spot with vistas stretching before you. The National Conservation Lands protect the values of a landscape – and in doing so they drive the nation's \$646 billion outdoor recreation economy.

In the Eastern Sierra, the National Conservation Lands support our western rural way of life and our local gateway communities. While these lands protect clean water and air and provide habitat for wildlife, they also ensure unlimited access to America's open spaces. This preservation system helps ensure that OUR lands remain open for all to enjoy, instead of being sold off for development by private interests, a very real threat facing our public lands today. A diverse group of partners support the National Conservation Lands with their volunteer efforts to steward roads, trails and campgrounds, and other recreational amenities. With the dwindling days of autumn upon us, get out and enjoy your favorite public lands – the Inyo Mountains, the Bodie Hills, Cottonwood Wild and Scenic River – may they endure for generations and may the National Conservation Lands system continue to grow.



STEWARDSHIP

Crew Perspective of Convict Lake by Casey Penn

Situated at the base of Laurel Mountain and Mount Morrison, Convict Lake is a unique spot in the Eastern Sierra. Although not the biggest lake in the Sierra, the formidable size and depth and ease of access make it a popular spot for fishermen with great fishing throughout the season. For those non-fishermen, the hiking is amazing with the mellow trail around the lake as well as a trail leading into the backcountry.

With these many uses at the lake, and because it is so photogenic, the lake sees a lot of use, and a lot of maintenance is required to keep it safe and enjoyable for users. In 2014, the Friends of the Inyo Stewardship Crew spent eight weeks and led four volunteer days at the lake, helping to make the trail more sustainable and improve access to the lake. The crew is continuing this work this fall.

The daily life working at Convict Lake was no easy task. We were digging through the many layers of rock that date back almost 300 million years, to when the Sierra was at the bottom of the ocean. Although we were only digging through the first couple of feet of the soil, we could see the different type of rock and soil that lay beneath the trail. All the while we had Laurel Mountain looking down on us, showing us her red, brown, and tan swirls, reminding us that with time and pressure even the mud at the bottom of the ocean can become a giant in the Sierra.

As difficult as it was on some days, working on the trail around the lake was easy to do. The necessity of the work made it all worthwhile. We needed to be there, doing this work. On most days the sun was strong, but the fishermen and the hikers were extremely nice and appreciative, all of them giving thanks for the work we were doing. These kind words from everyone using the trail helped motivate us on those long hard days. Another group of locals also used the lake, a pair of Bald Eagles who lived in the “Enchanted Forest” on the southern shore. Whenever one of them would fly over us or swoop down to catch fish, we would take a moment to rest and watch the majestic birds. These birds also helped us connect with the hikers and fishermen on the trail. A lot of people have never seen a Bald Eagle before, so when we told them that there was a pair of them at the lake, their eyes got wide at the chance of catching a glimpse. When we would see those people again, they would walk towards us with a big smile on their face. We all knew that they had just seen one of the birds.

Thanks...

to a grant from the National Forest Foundation, Friends of the Inyo is continuing our work along the Convict Lake Loop Trail in the fall of 2015. Founded by Congress in 1991, the National Forest Foundation works to conserve, restore, and enhance America's 193-million-acre National Forest System. Through community-based strategies and public-private partnerships, the NFF helps enhance wildlife habitat, revitalizes wildfire-damaged landscapes, restores watershed, and improves recreational resources for the benefit of all Americans. More information about their work is available at www.nationalforests.org.

Please join us in thanking them for their support.

When we had finished out our time at Convict Lake at the end of the 2014 field season, we had maintained about 1.5 miles of the trail around the lake, built six retaining walls as well as a staircase leading down to the lake. All of this work, done with the help of the Stewardship Crew and volunteers, created a safer trail to hike on and improved access to the lake for everyone.



Steward Pat Morris with volunteers along the trail at Convict Lake.

Photo: Laura Beardsley

EXPLORATION

Get out! Glass Mountain

By Jora Fogg

Collectively referred to as the Glass Mountains, the south summit of Glass Mountain is the highest point along the only transverse mountain range in the Eastern Sierra. The range is part of the Long Valley Caldera, which comprises lava domes, rhyolite, and obsidian flows. The summit of Glass Mountain is reminiscent of the alpine tundra summits of its western neighbors, but the views from Glass extend into the Great Basin and include the northern White Mountains, Mono and Crowley Lakes, the Adobe Valley, and the beautiful red rock walls of the roadless and rugged Dexter Canyon. Hiking Glass Mountain provides reprieve from the often-crowded trailheads of the Sierra and a chance to enjoy a well-earned summit in solitude.

In the past decade, some have discovered this eastern gem, and a class 1 use trail through old growth lodgepole, limber, and whitebark pine ascends to the summit. The trail begins along a closed 4WD road and climbs steeply along side a drainage to a small saddle at 9,880 feet. Behind you, easterly views of the Glass range start to appear. The route continues southwest and climbs steeply reaching tree line at a flat saddle where the summit comes into view. The trail is faint through this fragile tundra area, but the rest of the climb is visible to the east where there

is a final section to the summit. The summit to your north with communication towers is 40 feet below where you stand and both summits are easily accomplished in one day.

To get to the trailhead, take Highway 120 east to the well-graded, signed Black Canyon Road. (mileage is 13.6 miles from Benton and 31.8 miles from highway 395 and 120 east junction). After 0.8 miles turn right at an intersection onto Sawmill Meadows Road and continue 6.6 miles to another intersection. Turn left to stay on Sawmill Meadows Road. After 3.2 miles, keep right and continue another 0.4 miles to a large downed log with pull out just before the road crosses an old fenceline. The old road and trail begins at this downed log and makeshift parking area for 3-4 vehicles. Note

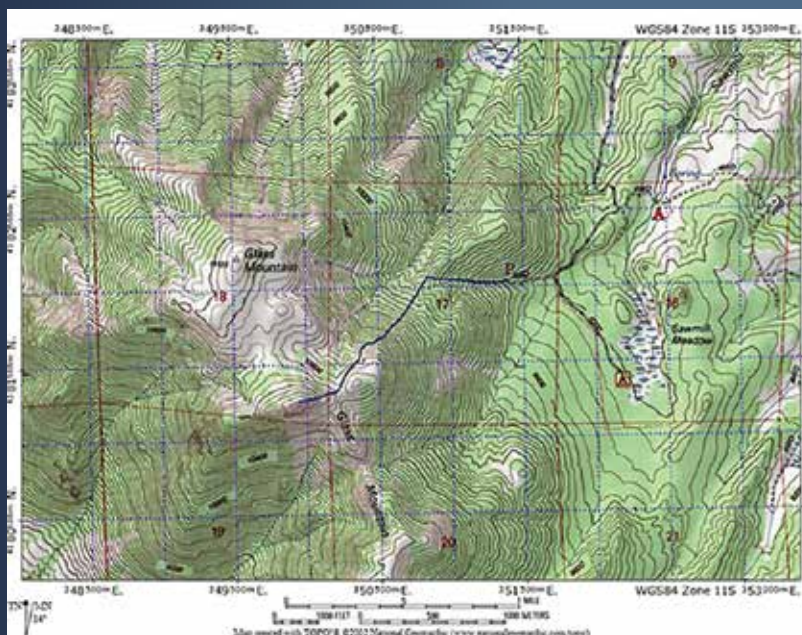
there are no trailhead signs. Another mile down the Sawmill Meadows Road is the Sawmill Meadows USFS campground, free with picnic table, outhouses and an old cabin. Camping options also exist before the trailhead, in aspen groves adjacent to the meadows. Respectfully explore these aspens for arboreglyphs and signs of human history, but please camp in established sites to preserve the area's wild character. The Glass Mountain 7.5 minute quad and the Inyo National Forest Atlas are helpful for first timers to this area.



Enjoying the view in the Glass Mountains.
Photo: Buck Wahl

Glass Mountain Potential Wilderness Addition:

The Inyo National Forest is considering the lands surrounding the summit of Glass Mountain as recommended wilderness in their revised Land Management Plan. Read more about how you can advocate for this area and the other potential wilderness areas on page 3.



EXPLORATION

Upcoming Events

Summer may have come and gone, but there are still lots of opportunities to get out and give back to the Eastern Sierra's public lands this fall and winter. Please check our website friendsoftheinyo.org or like us on Facebook to learn more about these and other upcoming events throughout the year. We hope to see you out there.

8 NOVEMBER	FALL HIGHBALL STEWARDSHIP PROJECT With The American Alpine Club and the Bishop Area Climber's Coalition
14 NOVEMBER	SOUTH SIERRA ROADLESS EXPLORATION
3,4,5 DEC	WILD & SCENIC FILM FESTIVAL Lone Pine, Mammoth Lakes, Bishop
23 JANUARY	CRATER MOUNTAIN HIKE
20 FEBRUARY	TABLELANDS EXPLORATION
12 MARCH	SHORT CANYON WILDFLOWERS
2 APRIL	CHOCOLATE MOUNTAIN HIKE
22-24 APRIL	2ND ANNUAL OWENS LAKE BIRD FESTIVAL



Inyo Mountains
Wilderness
Photo:
Bob Wick,
Bureau of Land
Management



PINE DROPS

NOTES ON ISSUES AFFECTING THE EASTERN SIERRA'S PUBLIC LANDS

By Jora Fogg, Tom Boo, and Laura Beardsley

As always, it's been a busy spring and summer in the Eastern Sierra, especially where issues of preservation and stewardship are concerned. From the US Fish and Wildlife's decision not to list the Bi-State Sage Grouse as an Endangered Species because of ongoing collaborative conservation to the latest efforts to plan for the future of Owens Lake, we've been hard at work to preserve the exceptional landscapes, habitat, and recreation experiences on the Eastern Sierra's public lands.

TRAVEL ANALYSIS AIMS TO IDENTIFY NEEDED/ UN-NEEDED MOTORIZED ROUTES

In May, the Inyo National Forest released a draft of the Travel Analysis Report, a document required by each forest in order to receive funding allocated for the National Forest Transportation System. The agency only gets about 60% of the funds necessary to maintain the existing system of USFS roads, therefore the report analyzes routes needed and not needed across the forest. Friends of the Inyo staff and board spent some time in the field ground-truthing the data presented in the report and provided the agency with up-to-date information on many routes during the public comment period. A final report is expected this fall.

USFS SPECIES OF CONSERVATION CONCERN

The Inyo National Forest released a draft Species of Conservation Concern

(SCC) list in early August as part of the work to prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for Forest Plan Revision. The list differs from that in the 2013 Forest Assessment, with the elimination of many at-risk species. Along with other conservation organizations, we are trying to obtain information on how and why species were either removed or added to the current list. Our comments on SCCs along with other comment letters on Forest Plan Revision are available on our website: http://friendsoftheinyo.org/foiD7/forest_planning.

RENEWABLE ENERGY UPDATES

The Inyo County Board of Supervisors voted to approve the Renewable Energy General Plan Amendment (REGPA)

on March 24th. With language limiting development projects to photovoltaic only and capping megawatt capacity, proposals like Hidden Hills in eastern Inyo County and other destructive large scale solar projects are now off the table. The County planning department has moved on to the next phase of renewable energy planning beginning with the Owens Valley Study Area Project. We attended public meetings in June and September focused on setting priorities, responding to questions and gathering comments and concerns. Data collection using mapping software and a variety of databases is underway for the Owens Lake Solar Energy Development Area (SEDA).

The Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP) will be finalized in phases starting with public lands. The Bureau of Land



Driving routes on the Inyo National Forest. Photo: Laura Beardsley



Executive Director Laura Beardsley with Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell, Mono County Supervisor Tim Fesko, BLM Bishop Field Office Manager Steve Nelson, and other Mono County partners at the announcement of Bi-state Sage Grouse decision.

Management (BLM) has assembled a working group to develop the Land Use Plan Amendment (LUPA) for phase 1 of the DRECP. The LUPA is important because it creates a framework for establishing the permitting of renewable energy projects and associated transmission on BLM lands within the DRECP plan area. The LUPA component of the preferred alternative identifies over 7 million acres of conserved areas, around 500,000 acres of lands prioritized for energy development (development focus areas), and another 3.5 million acres of land that could be available for future energy development.

OWENS LAKE MASTER PLAN

In early August, we drafted a comment letter to LA Department of Water and Power on the Owens Lake Master Plan Notice of Preparation for an Environmental Impact Report. We voiced such concerns as groundwater pumping and water quality impacts, the preservation of alkali meadow systems around the lake, habitat monitoring, and the need for partnership input and third party science.

CONGRESSIONAL THREATS TO PUBLIC TREASURES

We are working to curb continued attacks by Congress to gut the Antiquities Act, sell off public lands to private interests, and shift control of public lands to the states. We have participated in multiple letter writing and citizen action alerts. Just one example is a recent letter asking congress to reauthorize the Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) for another 50 years. The LWCF has provided unmeasured benefit to the protection of Eastern Sierra public lands and will continue to do so, if reauthorized, for the next 50 years. For more information go to: <http://www.lwcfcoalition.org/>

BOBCATS

We're thrilled by the recent decision of the California Fish and Game Commission (CFGF) to completely ban commercial bobcat trapping. Bobcats have been trapped historically for their fur, but increasing numbers of Californians object to such exploitation of a beautiful and shy wild mammal species. We appreciate the efforts of

our members and supporters who expressed their views to the CFGF, and we enjoyed collaborating with allies including the Center for Biological Diversity (CBD), Sierra Club, Project Bobcat, and Project Coyote.

Bobcats are native to much of North America. They are the only spotted cat in the world whose fur can still be legally traded internationally. Bobcats are adaptable and resilient, inhabiting remarkably diverse ecosystems and surviving many decades of trapping and hunting pressure. They are not considered endangered but little data on their populations exist because they are shy, elusive, and largely nocturnal, making them challenging to study.

Friends of the Inyo believes that California wildlife have intrinsic as well as broad aesthetic value to the people of the state and that wildlife advocacy is part of our mission. Our work to protect wildlife extends to forest planning, where we recently submitted comprehensive comments on the Draft Species of Conservation Concern list, which highlights gaps and deficiencies in how the plan will potentially deal with at-risk species.

THANK YOU & WELCOME



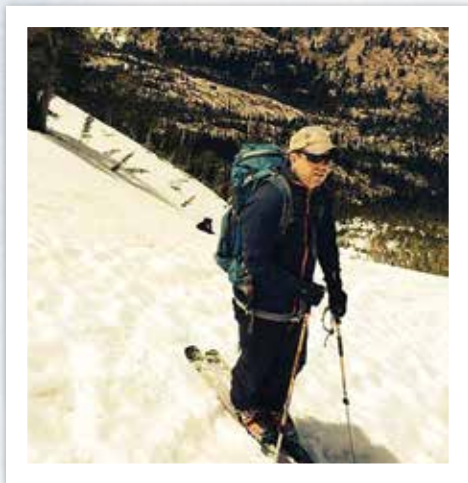
ANDREW SCHURR →→→

In June of this year, Friends of the Inyo bid farewell to long-time Stewardship Program Manager Andrew Schurr. Andrew joined Friends of the Inyo as a Sierra Nevada Americorps member and spent two years as a volunteer before joining the staff as Stewardship Coordinator in 2011. Over the years, Andrew exemplified a strong love for the Eastern Sierra's public lands and for Friends of the Inyo's mission taking on a variety of roles and working hard to make our programs successful. As Stewardship Program Manager, Andrew established a robust program of work and oversaw our highly productive field programs. While we miss him, we're all thrilled for his latest adventure cycling from Mongolia to Kyrgyzstan and look forward to seeing him back in Bishop this fall.



AUTUMN EANES →→→

Autumn joined the staff of Friends of the Inyo in 2010. Though she spent her time with us managing the ins and outs of bookkeeping, insurance, taxes, and all things numbers, her background as a herpetologist and her love of the Eastern Sierra kept her firmly grounded in our mission. A skilled artist, her drawings have graced the pages of our Jeffrey Pine Journal as well as invitations to many events over the years. Autumn was a true asset to the organization in many ways. While we wish her all the best in her new career teaching art to local students, we will miss her as part of our daily efforts to care for and protect our public lands.



BEN WICKHAM →→→

Ben spent the last six months working with Friends of the Inyo as a volunteer with the Sierra Nevada AmeriCorps Program (SNAP). As a SNAP member, Ben supported our Stewardship and Exploration programs leading restoration projects and interpretive programs throughout the Eastern Sierra. Ben grew up in Idaho, where he received a history degree from the University of Idaho. He took his first job in the Sierra, at Merced Lake High Sierra Camp right out of college and has been winding up in the Sierra Nevada ever since. After two summers at Merced Lake, Ben bounced around between Idaho and Montana before returning to the Sierra to work at Rock Creek Lodge. He spent six summers and three winters working, hiking, and skiing in the high country before going back to Idaho where he earned a masters in natural resources with an environmental education emphasis while teaching at an outdoor school. Thank you Ben for your service to SNAP and Friends of the Inyo. We're looking forward to having you join us again this fall in your new role as Membership & Outreach Coordinator.



CASEY PENN →→→

Casey Penn grew up in the quiet suburb of Simi Valley, just outside the bustling metropolis of LA, and always spent time in the summer heading north to the great Sierra Nevada Range. After finishing college at California State University Channel Islands with a degree in Political Science and the many adventures that those years brought him, Casey decided he was ready for a change of pace. In 2011, Casey moved up to Bishop to work as an intern for the Inyo National Forest Trail Crew. The following year, Casey found himself working on the Friends of the Inyo's Stewardship Crew where he worked for three seasons. In January, Casey joined the office staff as to help with membership and outreach efforts and was integral in planning a successful Owens Lake Bird Festival. This fall, we're excited to welcome him to his new role as Stewardship Program Manager.

MEMBERSHIP & SUPPORTERS

Thank you!

Friends of the Inyo succeeds thanks to the generous support of members and donors who help us care for public lands in the Eastern Sierra. We are pleased to acknowledge the following individuals and organizations who made contributions between March 1st and September 15th, 2015:

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