

Jeffrey Pine JOURNAL

FALL 2016 | VOLUME XIV, ISSUE II

Making a Difference

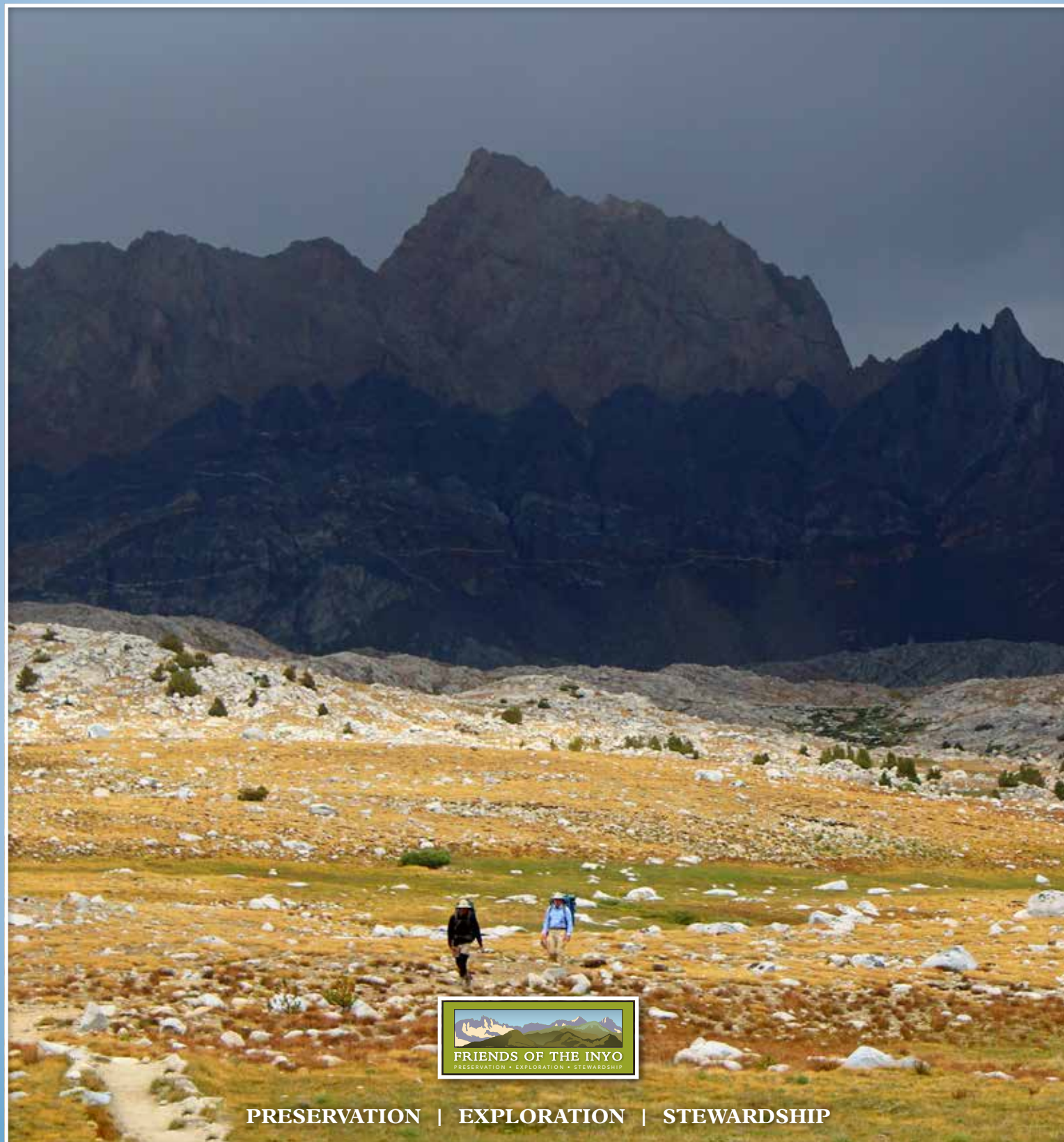
Volunteers Inspire

Get Out

Exploring the Eastern Sierra

Reflections on a Forest

The Whitebark Among Us



PRESERVATION | EXPLORATION | STEWARDSHIP

THE JEFFREY PINE JOURNAL
VOLUME XIV, ISSUE II, FALL 2016

NEWSLETTER OF Friends of the Inyo



819 N. Barlow Lane
Bishop, California 93514
(760) 873-6500

www.friendsoftheinyo.org

Newsletter Design: www.nilsdavisdesign.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Sam Roberts, President
Dave Herbst, Vice President
Chris Lizza, Treasurer
Mike Prather, Secretary
Tom Boo, Barbara Kelley,
John Louth, Sydney Quinn

STAFF

Laura Beardsley, Executive Director
Jora Fogg, Preservation Manager
Paul McFarland, Special Programs Manager
Casey Penn, Stewardship Program Manager
Ben Wickham, Membership & Outreach Coordinator

2016 Stewardship Crew Members:

Andrew Call, Marshall Davis, Gabrielle Guerrero,
Aaron Johnston, Tristan Kadish, Bill Miller, Elias
Goutos, Jack Hereford, Astra Lincoln

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



Printed on Recycled Paper



COVER PHOTO

A Friends of the Inyo volunteer and staff member make their way across Humphreys Basin as an end of summer storm builds above the peak.

PHOTO:
Ben Wickham

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.

Executive Director's Update

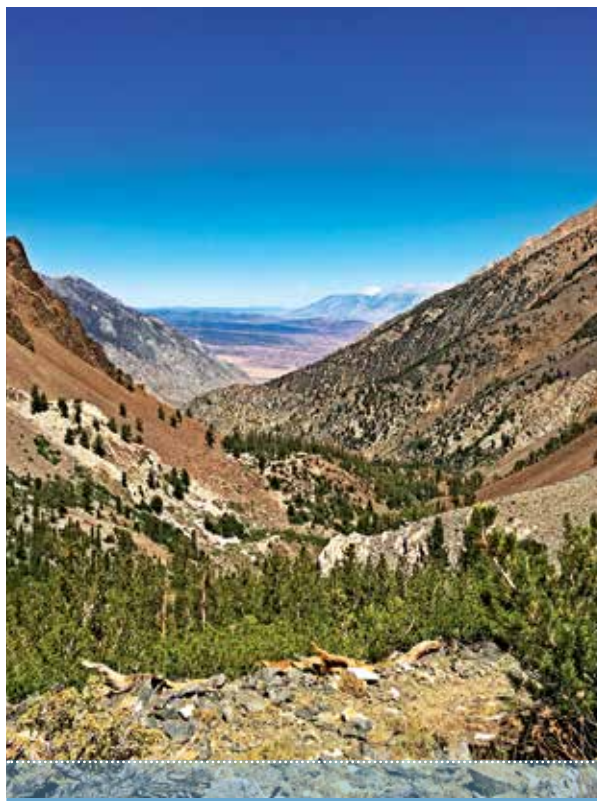
by Laura Beardsley

I recently spent a beautiful if challenging day hiking up the steep trail from Pine Creek Canyon to Gable Lakes. As I slogged up the narrow, sun-drenched trail, I saw the historic tram line of miners past and marveled that the towers survived the work let alone the winter snow and wind of countless seasons. I silently cursed myself for following my husband blindly up this trail, which was steeper, longer, and drier than I imagined, and I questioned my ability to reach our destination. But I did. We took a break to let the dogs play at the first point where the trail reached the creek and kept going – up a small pass, past an old cabin with peeling tarpaper falling from the walls and rusted part of stoves, cars and beds littering its yard, then down to the lake on the other side. We imagined life in the wind and weather of this unforgiving place – the rugged reality of the contrast and sacrifice of days, weeks, and months surrounded by this glorious landscape without the comfort of others. We watched the dogs relish the cold water and chilling fall breeze before descending the way we came, our view transformed to that of the canyon leading down through increasingly wooded slopes to the expanse of the Owens Valley framed by Montgomery Peak and the White Mountains in the distance.

As my feet pounded the miles of broken rock, I thought about how lucky I am, how lucky we all are to have wide open spaces and trails to help us explore them. Too many of us don't have access to the millions of acres set aside for us to enjoy and too many others see the potential profit of privatizing and exploiting the public lands we all share. In our small world in the Eastern Sierra, it's easy to take the landscapes around us for granted – the high granite peaks, the ancient Tablelands and desert wetlands, the expansive views, and the countless opportunities to play outdoors however we choose. We make sacrifices to make this life work for us, but, for the most part, we are privileged to have those sacrifices to make. With this privilege comes responsibility

– the responsibility to share the experiences and opportunities of our public lands with everyone, recognizing the difference in our experience and interests, and the responsibility to care for and preserve these places, both for the enjoyment of future generations and for the health of our world and the plants and animals that depend on the fabric of our landscapes to survive.

In our own corner of the world, Friends of the Inyo strives to meet this responsibility head on. In the face of threats to sell off public lands and the implications of a changing climate, we aim to inspire all to experience, care for, and preserve our public lands. Thank you for being part of our work. Together we can ensure our wild places remain accessible, relevant, and vibrant for all.



Looking down Pine Creek Canyon across
the Owens Valley.
Photo: Laura Beardsley

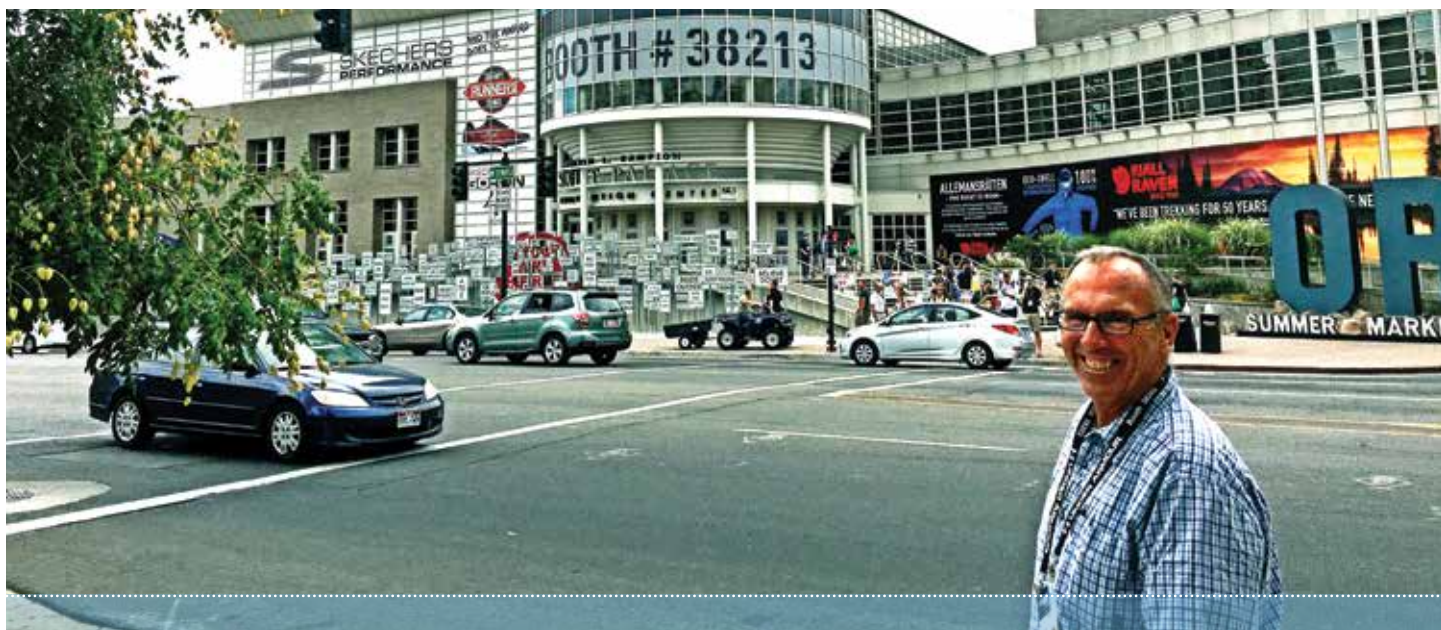
From the President

by Sam Roberts

A chilly breeze, aspen leaves assuming a golden hue, meadows wearing a coat of frost in the morning... Change is in the air in the Eastern Sierra- not only in nature but at Friends of the Inyo, as well. After two years as President of the Board of Directors for Friends of the Inyo, Sydney Quinn is stepping down. Sydney has been a thoughtful, tireless leader who brought dedication and passion to everything she was involved with. Fortunately for us she is not leaving, and I hope I don't take up too much of her time with yet another question. We can't thank you enough for what you have given to our organization, Sydney.

As I write this, the Inyo National Forest has just wrapped up the comment period for its Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the revised forest plan. This is a huge undertaking and we applaud Ed Armenta and his staff for all the hard work and long hours they put into this. I hope you all were able to add your comments to help the Forest Service make this document as strong as possible.

I'm looking forward to taking the reins from Sydney, though I have some mighty big boots to fill. And Sydney, I have your home phone, cell phone, email, Facebook, and home address, so you're not getting off the hook that easily...!



Sam in front of Outdoor Retailer at the Salt Palace Convention Center in Salt Lake City, UT. He and Laura spent three days there in August exploring options for partnerships benefitting sustainable recreation in the Eastern Sierra. Photo: Laura Beardsley



Photo: Robin Morning

THANK YOU Sydney Quinn→→

Two years ago, Sydney bravely stepped up to take the reigns as President of the Board of Directors. Since then she has invested countless hours in Friends of the Inyo, participating in events, hiking to remote corners of the Eastern Sierra, hosting meetings, and helping guide the future of the organization. A lifelong activist, she joined the board in 2007 after being an active volunteer working to protect wilderness in the region. She came to the Eastern Sierra in the 1970's and immediately fell in love. That love has only grown through years of adventure and experience exploring the world around her and sharing her commitment with others. Thank you, Sydney, for your years as president. We are fortunate to have your enthusiasm and dedication remain with us on the board.

WILDERNESS

Into The Wild with Friends of the Inyo & the Sierra National Forest by Janet Carle

I will never see the wilderness in exactly the same way after a five-day service trip into Humphreys Basin, organized by Friends of the Inyo in partnership with the Sierra National Forest. I have enjoyed many backpacking trips over the years, but "working" in the wilderness took my knowledge and appreciation to a whole new level. Our group of seven intrepid volunteers from all over California joined Sierra National Forest wilderness rangers Greg Dusic and Zach Barton and Friends of the Inyo staff Tristen Kadish and Marshall Davis on a mission to improve habitat for threatened amphibians by restoring campsites that are too close to water. "Restoring" had a lot to do with rocks- moving them to make the area less attractive to camping, thereby encouraging wilderness users to search a bit further up for the perfect campsite. We collected over 50 pounds of trash as well, everything from minute bits of foil to a fossilized flip flop, to tent stakes to BBQ grills. And glass- an amazing amount of shards just waiting to cut the unsuspecting foot.

Another major goal was removing campfire rings. No fires are allowed in this high elevation basin. But over 40 campfire rings were removed by our group. We hid fire-scarred rocks, scooped up all the black charcoal bits and brought in sand and duff. The goal, as Ranger Greg explained, is to "make it look like nothing happened here." It was discouraging to see fire rings in so many inappropriate places and whitebark pines torn apart for firewood. Yes, one fire does leave a scar that can last for years. I spent an hour

on a beautiful boulder with a huge black fire scar, rubbing out the black as best I could with a piece of granite.

Three full days of working together united our group with purpose. It was so satisfying to see the results of hours of work, with campfire scars disappearing, overused campsites restored, and litter picked up. Being a retired State Park Ranger, I thought I knew "ranger work," but now have a new appreciation of what goes into keeping the wilderness wild. The Sierra National Forest rangers were

so inspiring, worked alongside us, answered all our questions and were wonderful role models. On every future wilderness trip, I will be packing out those little scraps of litter and pieces of glass, and maybe breaking up a fire ring or two. We also had a lot of fun getting to know each other, cooking together, taking dips in the lake, watching the sunset from our spectacular camp and singing along with Tristen and his ukelele.

Thank you, Friends of the Inyo, for organizing this trip, recruiting all of us, and feeding us such wonderful meals. Your mission of stewardship throughout the Inyo National Forest and beyond is inspiring so many of us to do our part and get out there to contribute to caring for our public lands.

It takes all of us that love the wild to keep it wild.

This article first appeared in the Inyo Register on September 6, 2016 and is reprinted with permission from the author.

Friends of the Inyo
would like to thank the National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance for their grant to support volunteers on the Humphreys Basin work week and Rachel Leiterman and Colleen Dickenson for providing stock support to bring tools and food to the project site.



National Wilderness
Stewardship Alliance

I'm Zach, the Sierra National Forest Volunteer Ranger that you generously funded this year. Thank you SO much for the incredible opportunity to work and live in one of the most amazing places in the country. Allowing me to gain this experience is an incredible kindness, and I am sincerely thankful for the opportunity. I grew up with an outdoors oriented family in Bozeman, Montana and have always had a great appreciation for wide open spaces and preserved natural beauty. Whether it's climbing, backpacking or just enjoying a sunset there is no more breathtaking place to do so than the wilderness. Having spent many days and

**Wilderness
Ranger Intern
Zach Barton at work in
the John Muir Wilderness.
Photo: Ben Wickham**



nights in wilderness areas across the West, it is truly a dream come true to be able to work and give back to those areas. Here's to many great days and nights in the backcountry.

This spring, more than 39 donors contributed to our campaign on Generosity.com to sponsor a Wilderness Ranger Intern in the John Muir Wilderness. Zach Barton joined the Sierra National Forest Wilderness team this June and spent the summer working to restore and preserve some exceptional country. Zach, and all of us, thank everyone who donated to his sponsorship and an incredible summer in the backcountry.

WILDERNESS

When Volunteer Karma is on Your Side by Ben Wickham

The day before seven volunteers hiked into Humphreys Basin to restore campsites at Lower Golden Trout Lake, Greg Dusic, Lead Wilderness Ranger for the Sierra National Forest, was spotted at Vons in Bishop. He and Zach Barton, the Wilderness Ranger Intern sponsored by Friends of the Inyo, bailed on Piute pass that day because of the weather. An accomplished climber and world traveler, Greg has spent over a decade rangeling rugged places like the Whitney Zone, the Sawtooths in Idaho, and now the John Muir Wilderness high country. Zach grew up in Bozeman and those Montana kids tend to handle weather pretty well. So when Greg was seen at Vons, something epic had clearly happened. Greg described massive hail and lightning flashing horizontally in several directions within Piute Canyon. Rachel Leiterman, a volunteer packer for the Inyo National Forest, deposited their tools and supplies alongside the trail before turning her mules around and racing for the trailhead alongside Greg and Zach.

The next day, the NWS forecast called for similar conditions. Greg advised the group, which now included three Friends of the Inyo staff along with the volunteers, that they may not make it over Piute Pass as planned, and that the weather may dictate camping at Piute Lake, three miles short of their destination. Rachel chose not to risk another venture in such conditions and promised to bring in the bulk of the group's food and supplies the next day. The result of these two details was to leave the plan in total uncertainty. Where will we camp tonight? Will we have enough food? What if we try to make it over the pass and the weather hits while we're on top? What if the weather is the same tomorrow and Rachel still can't make it over the pass? We definitely won't have food then.

Having heard his tales from the day before, the weather concerned everyone, and it was clear that Greg wanted to be conservative with the group's plans. With your average group of folks, this trepidation and uncertainty can overwhelm group morale. Best case scenario is everyone has a bad day and loses confidence in each other. Worst case scenario is mutiny. But this was no average group of volunteers. As the day wore on and the clouds overhead grew more menacing, the volunteers shared a calmness and patience that was surprising for a varied group of folks who just met each other at the trailhead. The group included Terry, a retired prosecutor and regular trail volunteer from Salinas, and Dave and Janet, two former rangers and long-time residents of Mono City. Also Leonie, a journalist from Santa Cruz, spends months each year in the Sierra Nevada. Sebastian lives in Ventura, works for Patagonia, and just completed a 15-day trek in Kings Canyon. Arianne, a doctor, facilitator, and life coach, lives in Mammoth while working part time in Southern California. Last but not least, Tamara is a nurse who lives in Chalfant.

The vibe of the group showed that they were undaunted by the unknown. In fact, they were eager to enjoy their day and each other, and this eagerness propelled them forward towards the pass. Although the clouds built over the course of the day, a halo of clearness remained around Piute pass, and at lunch the group discussed their options. Everyone agreed they should go for it.

"Volunteer karma," Janet said as a promise that the group would make their destination.

The group whizzed over the pass as the winds increased, and they hiked west towards Lower Golden Trout Lake as the storm kicked up behind them, blackening the sky around Mt. Humphreys. They eased into camp with just enough time to pitch tents before the rain hit.

The vibe of the group showed that they were undaunted by the unknown.

Over the course of the next few days, the weather cleared and the group accomplished a lot of work at Lower Golden Trout Lake. In all, they restored nearly 40 campsites that impacted the grasses and plants that need open space and provide shelter for sensitive species like the Sierra Nevada Yellow-legged Frog. The group cleaned and deconstructed 35 illegal fire rings that leach ash into drinking water and use up wood that should decompose at this high elevation to replenish the soil for slow growing plants like whitebark pine. While at it, the volunteers picked up over 50 pounds of trash.

"Everyone on the trip was really amazing and nice," Arianne would say afterwards. Due in part to their pleasant nature, the group was able to clear Piute Pass on the first day. And once they surmounted this hurdle, there was no doubt this group would work well together and accomplish great things for a beautiful place. It also can't hurt to have volunteer karma on your side.



Photos: Ben Wickham

PRESERVATION

My Favorite Trees by Ben Wickham

I think I first noticed the dying trees in 2010, but others had observed them before me. A friend pointed it out one day while skiing along the Tamarack Bench in Rock Creek. A ski tour can be a quiet endeavor through a forest that at times may seem to have little to say or show besides the hum of the winter wind or chickaree tracks running from one tree to another. We paused in the grove of dead trees, and, standing among the skeleton snags, we listened to a chorus of bird song- what sounded not like an out of season straggler or two, but a whole symphony.

"It didn't used to be like this," my friend said. "You would just ski among the living trees, and it would be silent." When we skied out of the "dead" forest and back into the "living" forest, it got winter silent again.

The trees dying along the Tamarack Bench are whitebark pine. The whitebark is the

beautiful pine species with five needles to a fascicle that grows at the highest elevations and puts up with the wind and snow load by bending and twisting but never giving in to being broken. Its cones come out dense and purple and covered in sap. You can barely open them with your fingers- you'll need a knife to get at that seed. They hang at the top of the tree's branches, and the Clark's Nutcracker is so adept at collecting the whitebark's seeds that you'll rarely find the cones laying on the ground, although once I wandered through an untrammelled basin and discovered the scarlet shavings of their scales carpeted atop logs where there must have been a festival of nutcrackers sharing their spoils. The nutcrackers place thousands of whitebark seed caches in the soil of mountainsides and ridgelines, and the very few they lose track of sprout in clumps. When California had grizzlies, digging up the nutcracker's buried caches of

whitebark seed was the last boost the great bears had before they curled into their den to slumber the winter away.

These days the whitebark pine is not doing well. Drought and a non-native blister rust are decimating the species across the Western United States, particularly among the Rocky Mountains. And, where is a species that inhabits the highest of elevations supposed to go as global temperatures rise? The United States Fish and Wildlife Service formally listed the tree as a candidate species for the Endangered Species List, but citing lack of resources and other priorities, has yet to officially list it as endangered. So up to this point the agency has determined that the scale of the problem and the lack of practical solutions precluded official protection and that essentially the best action is to stick our heads in the sand and hope for the best.

Wilderness sign among a whitebark pine forest. Photo: Ben Wickham



Since 2010 I've watched the spread of the die-off across the Tamarack Bench and up the shoulder of Mt. Morgan. Across the canyon, it's overtaking the Hilton Bench and Patricia Bowl. Now I've started to notice the bleeding begin in Little Lakes Valley.

To be fair, the die-off in Rock Creek is not to the same scale as other places on the Eastside like June Lake, and an ecologist informed me that the White Pine Blister Rust is not affecting whitebark in our area. The whitebark die-offs in Rock Creek and June Lake pale in comparison to other places, like Idaho and Colorado where whitebark have been decimated across whole mountain ranges.

Other species of trees are not immune either. If you've driven through the west side of the Sierra, you've noticed hillsides covered in the golden hue of dead trees. A recent High Country News article stated that in places like Shaver Lake, 90 percent of ponderosa pine have died, and in a recent Friends of the Inyo staff meeting, Laura Beardsley described the die off on the hillside above El Portal as heartbreaking.

It pains me to imagine people helplessly observing the loss of trees they hold dear in places they call home. For many of us, trees are as much a part of the definition of place as lakes and rivers and mountains and rock, especially here in the Sierra where spectacular trees blanket the landscape.

I once heard a ranger in Yosemite talking about hibernating black bears quip that it must be nice to sleep away a stressful period of your life. Part of me wants to sleep this away and return sometime in the future when it's all been put back in place. Still, if there's one thing I've noticed in my nearly four decades, it's that change is inevitable, and it can be futile to fight the change you cannot stop. Who am I to say that I know what's going to come of this place in the future and to assume that it will not still be beautiful?

Now when I'm on the Tamarack Bench in Rock Creek, whether I'm skiing or hiking, I find myself slowing down and enjoying the whitebark more than I used to. I pause at the base of the trees and look up at their majestic crown, whether they're living or dead. I get excited in summer when the cones emerge. I also notice the stark beauty of the bare branches reaching towards the gray sky and how it's opened a view of Pointless and Patricia Peaks looking through the dead branches. Most of all, I'm damn sure to pause and enjoy the whitebark that are still vibrantly green, that are still popping sappy purple cones out of their branches, that are not giving up on the changing temperatures at this elevation, that are still bending but not breaking.

Little, Jane Braxton. "Forest Fatalities." High Country News, Vol. 8 No. 13, August 8, 2016, 5-6.

Wrapping Up Forest Planning

by Jora Fogg

At the end of August, Friends of the Inyo had the pleasure of reviewing and commenting on the draft Inyo National Forest Land Management Plan. The current plan is from 1988 and is well overdue for an update. Over the last four years, we have commented on the many integrated steps leading up to the draft land management plan. These included a Forest Assessment, a Need for Change to identify areas of the existing plan that required changes, the Proposed Action, and finally this year, the draft plan and its associated analysis.

In our comments we focused on balanced and informed recreation opportunities, management of the Pacific Crest Trail, species conservation, aquatics and meadow health, timber, fire management, invasive species, and the future of partnerships. We also emphasized land and waterway protection in the form of alternative designations, wild and scenic river eligibility, and wilderness recommendations.

We had many events this summer to engage residents and visitors in forest planning, and we thank all of you who attended and wrote comment letters to your Board of Supervisors and the USFS.

We also enjoyed time exploring some of the areas being considered for wilderness recommendation including additions to the Ansel Adams and White Mountains Wilderness Areas and Glass Mountain.

What's next? The Forest Service will review all the comments they received and use them as they revise the draft plan and analysis into final documents. Look for the final land management plan in late 2017.

Many thanks to our individual donors as well as the Conservation Alliance for funding this important work and to our partners including Winter Wildlands Alliance, the Sierra Club, and the Mono Lake Committee among others.

Our comments can be viewed on our website at: friendsoftheinyo.org/foiD7/forest_planning



All smiles on an outing in the White Mountains. Photo: Gregg Vane



Dexter Canyon. Photo: Paul McFarland

STEWARDSHIP

Nine Days in the Golden Trout Wilderness by Jack Hereford

For nine days at the end of June and going into the beginning of July the Friends of the Inyo Stewardship crew was packed up to Chicken Spring Lake above Horseshoe Meadows. This was my inaugural season of trail work and the crew's first big trip for the summer. I had already blundered through learning how to run a chainsaw, had no idea how to set a stone step and was quite unsure how many more 10 hour days of manual labor I could muster. For me this was the longest backpacking trip I had yet been on as well as the most time I had spent at altitude. So I went in expecting to be exhausted, starved, and languid from the elevation.

The early morning drive down to Lone Pine where we were to meet with the packers seemed normal and relaxed for everyone else, but I was quiet with trepidation. I had tossed and turned most of the night, running through the mental list of gear in my pack and wondering what I had inevitably forgotten. Yet, once we started my pack felt encouragingly light (the mules had all the

heavy gear), and my shovel had a comforting heft to it as I chucked rocks out of the trail. We jaunted up the steepest part of our hike in and upon reaching the saddle we stopped for a snack and water break. Meager, but dark clouds had begun to roll in above us and we all instinctively reached for a rain layer. Right then the mule train came around a bend and we were off hustling to keep up with them. They quickly passed out of sight, and we almost lost their tracks to the campsite as the building thunderheads opened up.

The cheerful packers helped us unload the mules and pile our gear under the nearest Foxtail pine before they hightailed it out in the inclement weather. In the rush of hiking in and setting up camp in the rain I had nearly missed the topography around our site. We were in a semicircle basin a half mile wide at most. To the north rose granite cliffs and at their feet was Chicken Spring lake, which we spryly started calling Spring Chicken lake, for there were no springs or chickens we could see but rather an exuberance about the place, at least to us. South of the lake was a plateau covered with bizarrely beautiful snags of foxtail pines. These trees have dense wood, and when they die their corpses stay standing for years, becoming scoured by wind into smooth white figures that up close are lined with sharp and distinct grooves.

I walked off from camp, ambling my way around the lake in the light rain. To the South the clouds had already broken up and I could see mountains after mountains stretching away before me. The light was becoming soft and as it passed through the pine trees a million needles exploded with color; across the surface of the lake rippling diamonds shown in the facets of each scoop of water. The smell of rich earth mixed with the falling scent of pine sap and the wafting of mule manure was a nasal medley gifted to my nostrils. Craggy and cracked, proud faces of granite stood above the husks of dead foxtails while dark cumulous clouds dispersed under the late afternoon sun. I found a flat rock jutting out into the lake and sat watching this world slowly exist around me. Every trouble I had trudged up here with me

began to fall away. What had I been afraid of? There was no exhaustion that could keep me uninfected from the quiet energy of that basin, no hunger that could overshadow the appetite for life embedded in those mountains, no elevation sickness that would debilitate me from gulping the thin, crisp air. Once I had arrived there was no place I'd rather be. And, I already dreaded having to leave at the end of our hitch.

Of course after nine days of breaking and setting stones, trudging on sore feet with heavy tools, smelly clothes, and dwindling food, a beer sounded pretty damn good, so leave we did. We had accomplished every job that we had been expected to and found our own sections of trail that needed TLC. Some 20 miles of backcountry routes had been trimmed and cleaned, four switchbacks were rebuilt to open up the turns for mule trains and to minimize erosion, and more water bars and steps than I can remember were repaired. We all walked away with a little pride at having contributed a small part to the legacy of the PCT.



Jack Hereford wields a rock bar as the Friends of the Inyo Stewardship Crew builds the new multi-use Alabama Hills Trail connecting Lone Pine to Whitney Portal.

Photo: Tristen Kadish



Jack joined Friends of the Inyo's Mammoth Lakes Trail Stewards for a week of trail work on the Duck Pass Trail in Mammoth.

Photo: Ben Wickham

STEWARDSHIP

Stewardship Highlights by Casey Penn

We all love the Eastern Sierra for one reason or another, and we can truly say that for our volunteers. So far this year more than 650 people have devoted their time to care for this amazing place, and we still have a few volunteer events to go. As a small non-profit, every year we face similar challenges, and I am always amazed at how much work we get done. This is a direct result of the countless people who help us on volunteer events and/or make donations to help us keep up the good work. Every year we work with a staggering number of people who care so much about the Eastern Sierra that they are willing to spend a day getting dirty giving back to the trails and our public lands. We want to send a big thank you out to all of our volunteers who help us do what we do best- connect people with their public lands.

It is amazing to think that we are wrapping up another busy summer season that took us throughout the Eastern Sierra. This summer we have worked in some incredible places:

- **Golden Trout Wilderness**
- **John Muir Wilderness**
- **Inyo Mountains**
- **White Mountains**
- **Mammoth Lakes Basin**
- **June Lake Loop**
- **Lundy Canyon Trail**
- **Robinson Creek Trail**
- **Green Creek Trail**
- **Owens River Headwaters**
- **Devils Postpile National Monument**
- **Bodie Hills**
- **Ansel Adams Wilderness**
- **Alabama Hills**

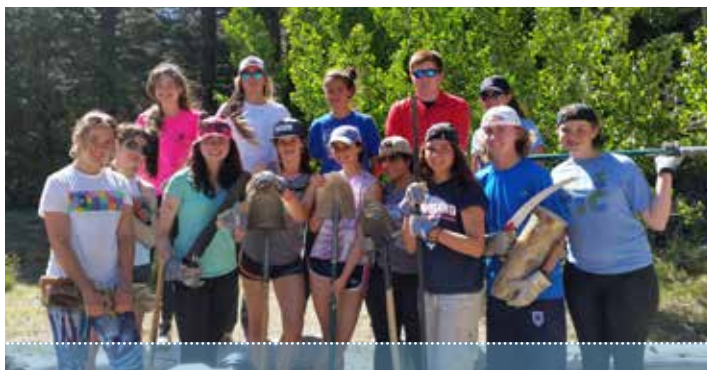
While every place we work is beautiful and worthy of a mention, some of our favorite projects this summer have been working near Marie Lakes in the Ansel Adams Wilderness with the Athenian High School; spending a week with seven volunteers and two Rangers from the Sierra National Forest near Lower Golden Trout Lake in the John Muir Wilderness; removing trees that had fallen on the Pacific Crest Trail out of Horseshoe Meadows in the Golden Trout Wilderness; working with the Town of Mammoth Lakes, to make sure that the trails in the Mammoth Lakes Trail System are well maintained; and helping with the creation of a trail through the Alabama Hills. Across all of these different areas, we worked on 60 miles of trails, removed ten trees that were blocking the trail, and built 110 structures.

Throughout the summer we hosted 27 volunteer events where more than 650 volunteers contributed over 2,300 volunteers hours caring for our public lands.

As each season comes to an end, we are always looking forward to what's next. We're already starting to think about winter and a new season of stewardship and exploration. We plan to continue grooming this upcoming winter, ensuring opportunities for free winter recreation activities exist. In addition, we plan to continue our involvement with Inyo County on the Owens River Water Trail, which we are really excited about. We are still in the planning phase of this project, so be on the lookout for volunteer

events on the Owens River.

As always, if you are interested in helping out on a volunteer project, check out our website or give us a call at our office. We can always use more volunteers!



Rustic Pathways youth volunteer group posing after working with on rehab around the Deadman Creek Trailhead. Photo: Casey Penn



Good times stewarding the Ansel Adams Wilderness with Athenian High students. Photo: Aaron Johnston



Volunteers caring for the Parker Bench Trail during June Lake Trails Day. Photo: Ben Wickham

EXPLORATION

Get out! By Paul McFarland

Get out. There are as many ways to intone it as to do it. With a sardonic drawl in response to a fellow angler's fishy claim. Insistently sharp as if to a cat dangling some helpless wildlife in your doorway. Repeatedly and angrily to that wasp banging against the inside of your car window.

On two wheels – pushed, pedaled, or braaaped – four wheels, four hooves, two feet – fleet or plodding – paddle, paddle track, scales, skins...

When we started this irregular newsletter column around a decade ago, the thinking was to highlight some of the cool places we were visiting, to foster and encourage exploration of this expansive, wild place many of us call home (figuratively, spiritually, or literally). Past articles rambled on about rambles into the Bodie Hills, Inyo Mountains, White Mountains, and more. These were (still are, actually) wild places deserving to be known, loved, and cared for.

Many of the places we featured were far flung – drive a hundred miles on this dirt road or down that highway. Perhaps I'm growing lazier or perhaps I've just grown, but more and more I find wildness and exploration closer and closer to home. A daily pedal up the canyon, tracking the progress of the wooly bear on the willows, wandering sagebrush steppe wondering if there is a perfect path to be created through the pathless.

Just as I settle into homebody bliss, we manage to rally three kids and enough junk into our little rattletrap, primer grey Subaru

and off we go to the back of beyond (actually, the back of one of many ranges defining the Great Basin). All the old wanderlust, excitement of new country, new possibilities comes roaring back, and all I want to do is get far out.

Riding along with this excitement comes a familiar fear: what will happen to this new found place, this dusty new Shangri-La we've just discovered? Upon our potential return, will we find it pulverized, developed, disintegrated?

“One of the penalties of an ecological education is that one lives alone in a world of wounds.”
–Aldo Leopold

Aldo Leopold noted that “One of the penalties of an ecological education is that one lives alone in a world of wounds.” I feel the same can be said for those of us who explore and cherish wild places. The “discovery” of a new wild corner of the land inevitably leads to a fear it might not stay that way. I experienced this first hand as kid growing up in the Spanish-tile wonderland of southern California. The hills I once freely wandered, discovering fossils and learning to tell tar-weed from bush sunflower, were one day covered with survey stakes. The next day my wandering became trespassing. I learned a kid could go to jail for more than skateboarding.

Now I know these oak-studded hills were private lands, the holdover of past ranchos, failed hobby ranches, and someone's future millions, not wild land for wandering. Here in the Eastern Sierra, we're blessed with millions of acres of freedom protected by public, not private, ownership. The only way to keep it that way is to get out there, get to know it, and keep it public.

Pine White
 enjoying public
 lands,
 August 2016.
 Photo:
 Paul McFarland



EXPLORATION

Upcoming Events

Winter is just around the corner, and we're excited for a busy field season caring for and protecting public lands in the Eastern Sierra. Please visit our website friendsoftheinyo.org or like us on Facebook to learn more about these and other upcoming events throughout the year. We'll see you out there!

22 OCT	CERRO GORDO EXPLORATION
6 NOV	BISHOP FALL HIGHBALL STEWARDSHIP EVENT IN BUTTERMILK & TABLELANDS
TBA	FRIENDS OF THE INYO WINTER GATHERING & FUNDRAISER: BISHOP
8 DEC	FRIENDS OF THE INYO WINTER GATHERING & FUNDRAISER: WRENCHED IN LONE PINE
21 JAN	CRATER MOUNTAIN EXPLORATION
26 JAN	BACKCOUNTRY FILM FESTIVAL WITH WINTER WILDLANDS ALLIANCE IN MAMMOTH
11 FEB	TABLELANDS ARCHAEOLOGY TOUR
18 MARCH	CENTENNIAL FLAT EXPLORATION, A CALIFORNIA DESERT NATIONAL CONSERVATION LAND
1 APRIL	CHOCOLATE MOUNTAIN HIKE
8 APRIL	CONGLOMERATE MESA EXPLORATION, A CALIFORNIA DESERT NATIONAL CONSERVATION LAND
28-30 APRIL	3RD ANNUAL OWENS LAKE BIRD FESTIVAL



Russell Kokx spots an avian visitor above Owens Lake during the Owens Lake Bird Festival. Photo: Ben Wickham

PINE DROPS

NOTES ON ISSUES AFFECTING THE EASTERN SIERRA'S PUBLIC LANDS

By Jora Fogg and Laura Beardsley

HAPPY BIRTHDAY NATIONAL PARK SERVICE!

Friends of the Inyo celebrated the 100th birthday of the National Park Service as part of a series of events with Devils Postpile National Monument. Thanks to a grant from the California Wildlands Grassroots Fund of the Rose Foundation, we commemorated the Centennial with a summer-long citizen's science project documenting the phenology of plant species throughout the monument and hosted a Founder's Day volunteer stewardship day with twenty volunteers. Thanks to everyone involved for helping us honor this public lands milestone with

meaningful, hands on work.

OVER-SNOW VEHICLES

This past spring the OSV planning process began with a pre-scoping meeting and USFS outreach for initial comments. The Forest is now delaying its winter travel management planning until after the Final Land Management Plan is signed. This provides an opportunity for local recreation groups to begin work on crafting winter travel proposals for high use areas that serve both motorized and human powered winter recreation interests. Polished proposals could then help the USFS develop creative ways of managing these areas to avoid user conflicts and provide exceptional winter recreation experiences on forest lands.

DESERT CONSERVATION

On September 14th the California BLM released their Record of Decision (ROD) for the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan. The California desert will have 2.8 million acres of new National Conservation Lands, aptly named the California Desert National Conservation Lands. There will be 4.2 million acres of total additional lands with elevated conservation status, including increased protection for Areas of Critical Environmental Concern. In Inyo County,

the entire Centennial Flat area is now part of the California Desert National Conservation Lands. Additionally, phased mineral withdrawal begins immediately after the ROD.

KEEPING THE PUBLIC IN PUBLIC LANDS

As you may know, there is an ongoing effort to sell off America's federal lands to private interests and the states. These lands are owned by the American public and, once sold, would no longer provide public access and could become open to development and/or resource extraction. Friends of the Inyo is working on a national level to write letters of opposition on the various bills coming through Congress. Most threats exist at the state level, but our own congressman Paul Cook co-sponsored the HEARD (Hunting, Education and Recreation Development) Act, HR 5836, which proposes to transfer federal lands to states across the west. The reality is states cannot afford to steward and manage our public lands so they will eventually be sold off to the highest bidder. You can make a difference. In addition to writing your elected officials, you can hashtag social media posts of your adventures and why your public lands are important to you with #KeepItPublic.

PROPOSED LAND EXCHANGE AT MAMMOTH MOUNTAIN

The long anticipated Mammoth Base Land Exchange proposes to transfer approximately 30 acres of USFS land at the base of Mammoth Mountain to the Mammoth Main Lodge Redevelopment LLC. The two parcels are currently under special use permit and are developed with



Volunteers celebrate the Centennial of the National Park Service by giving back to Devils Postpile National Monument.

Photo: Ben Wickham

ski area infrastructure. The USFS will receive approximately 1,317 acreage of land on 12 parcels to become part of the Inyo, Plumas, and Stanislaus National Forests. The Inyo National Forest held a public meeting regarding the exchange on Sept 8th and public comments are most useful this fall. The USFS expects to release an Environmental Impact Statement sometime in the winter of 2017. At that time, the EIS will be subject to a 45-day comment period before land acquisitions take place.

COMMEMORATING THE ANTIQUITIES ACT

The Antiquities Act, one of the most important conservation tools available, allows presidents to create new national monuments, and since 1906 sixteen presidents have used it. Thanks to the Antiquities Act we have the Statue of Liberty, Devils Postpile National Monument, and Giant Sequoia National Monument. Many national monuments created under the Antiquities Act such as Death Valley (1933) and Joshua Tree (1936), are now national parks. President Obama has used the Antiquities Act ten

times to protect natural and cultural sites as monuments, in turn generating \$156.4 million in annual economic benefits for local communities (Small Business Majority, 2015).

The past year has seen repeated attacks on the Antiquities Act in Congress, but if we can protect and defend it as law, future presidents can protect places of significant American heritage here in our backyard and beyond.

OWENS RIVER WATER TRAIL

Earlier this year, Friends of the Inyo

began working with Inyo County and a host of partners on plans to establish a river trail on the Lower Owens River near Lone Pine. The County has been approved for a grant to establish a 6.3 mile trail on the Owens River to allow swimming, paddling, and fishing access for people of all ages and abilities. We're committed to supporting the project by providing professional stewardship and volunteers support to maintain the new water trail for years to come. If you are interested in supporting this project, contact Ben or Laura at 760-873-6500 or email info@friendsoftheinyo.org.



Symmes Creek WSA. Photo: Jora Fogg



Inyo County has received extensive community support for a proposed water trail along the Owens River near Lone Pine. Photo: Ben Wickham

Partner Profile: April Sall, Bodie Hills Conservation Partnership Director

Home Town: Pioneertown, CA.

Current Town: Mammoth Lakes, CA

What brought you to the Eastern Sierra?

After spending most of my life in the desert mountains, I was looking for a restart: new career challenges, different personal opportunities, and a new landscape to explore. When this position became available, the location was high on my list, so I jumped at the opportunity.

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

I'm energized to take on the role and am delighted folks here are warm and passionate about the outdoors and surrounding areas.

How has your past work prepared you for the role?

My deep, professional experience as both a land manager overseeing restoration, education, and preserve management as well as my knowledge in land policy and grassroots activism, will serve me well in addressing the different needs of this campaign. Through my work I have made valuable connections with state and federal decision makers. I am especially proud of my leadership with an amazing volunteer grassroots board, the California Desert Coalition, that thwarted an ill proposed and unnecessary transmission corridor as well as my role in the designation of three new national monuments in the California Desert.

Which environmentalists have most influenced you?

While I have been inspired the writings of the great environmentalists John Muir and Aldo Leopold, it is the village of living ones whom I have encountered and worked with who have left their mark. I'm thinking of the late, great Elden Hughes - the father of the California Desert Protection Act, Joan Taylor of the Sierra Club, David Myers of The Wildlands Conservancy, Ruth Rieman of California Desert Coalition and The Morongo Basin Conservation

Association, Cindy Zacks of Yucca Valley High School, and my parents who have been tireless protectors of desert land.

What are the greatest challenges facing the Bodie Hills today?

I think the Bodie Hills face some of the same challenges that many of our federally managed public lands do- with ever-shrinking budgets and less staff combined with increased restoration needs and impacts from a changing climate, there is a backlog of projects and management needs. Furthermore with fewer young people

going into land management agency jobs and an all time high of baby-boomer career employees retiring simultaneously, I am concerned for the future and culture of the agencies. We need to find ways to engage our younger generations in the outdoors and stewardship of our public lands. There is also the potential for new industrial projects from commercial mines to energy projects and transmission lines, which as we have seen across the west, can flood an area with applications almost overnight.

What do you hope to see in the Bodie Hills in the future?

I would like to see the results of watershed restoration for fisheries and water quality and

diverse wildlife flourishing in the hills- as many species are today. I would like families and younger generations to be spending time exploring the Bodie Hills and enjoying the landscape and natural beauty. I would also like to see some passive recreation trails maybe even on old failing roadbeds or rails to trails and protection from industrialization.

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

While I have downhill skied and snowboarded, I have never lived right in ski country. I am excited to learn to cross country ski and snow shoe so I can enjoy and photograph the backcountry in winter, and maybe, even ice skate again.

You can learn more about the Bodie Hills Conservation Partnership and protecting the Bodie Hills at bodiehills.org.



Photo: Steph Paulson

Special Thanks

Each year, Friends of the Inyo accomplishes essential work to support the quality and longevity of trails and waterways on the Eastern Sierra's public lands. We couldn't do all that we do without the generous support of our partners, donors, and sponsors. As we wrap up another incredible season, we thank all of you for your support:



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, 2016:

Membership and Supporters

Kathleen and Duncan Agnew
Clifford Anderson
Kathy Anderson
Sheila Anderson
Todd Anderson
Molly Attell
Charles Bacon
George Barnes
Timothy and Pam Bartley
Dale Beitspacher
Max Beller
Phil Bellman
Denis and Sherrie Besson
Katherine Blume
Michael Boone and Lisa Lilley
Thomas Brill and Edith Trimmer
Paul and Rose Briscoe
Thomas Browne
Lesley Bruns
Mark and Patty Buettner
David and Janet Carle
Alice Chan
Graham Chisholm
Adam Cimino
Lucy G. Clark
Michael and Valerie Cohen
Joan Collignon
Cortlandt and Barbara Condit
Dan Connor
Mary Cook
Ken and Elizabeth Corathers
Kevin Corcoran
Anthony Cortez
Jack and Pat Crowther
Diana Cunningham and Greg Smith
Joseph and Patricia Currie
Deena Davenport-Conway
Nancy Devon
Jean Dillingham
Bill Dunlap
Ray Dutcher
Carole Dyck
Eissler Family Trust
Margaret Eissler
Denise Ellestad
Brian Elliott
Linda and Larry Emerson
Judy and Dick Erb
Richard Erb
Phillip Farrell
Zoe Flanagan
Liz Fleming
Pamela Flick
Gayle Frickel
Steven German
Don and Linda Goffinet
Michael Graber
Nina and William Graham
Helen Green
Susan Greenleaf
Sondra Grimm
Gerry Hans and Mary Button
Vivian Hanson
John Harris and Lisa Palermo

Paul Haskins
Kenneth Hayes
Alan and Patti Heinrich
Jack and Julie Helms
Peter Hoijer
Em Holland
Tammy Hooper
Tom and Julie Anne Hopkins
David Humes
Paul Jagger
Stephen Kalish and Rosemary Jarrett
Joyce Kaufman and Robert Marks
Bruce Kautz
Derrick Vocolka and Barbara Kelley
Richard and Susan Kelty
Janelle Kent
Brad and Linda Kilger
Jeff Kuyper
Art and Debbie Kyser
Brent Lamb
Chris Langley
Gib Lanpher
David Laughton
Jim and Ann Leithliter
Cynthia Lim and Perry Landsberg
Mike Loughman and Lorraine Masten
Nancy Upham and John Louth
Chris MacIntosh
Jim and Ann Marie Mahoney
Carole Mall
Margo Marshall and Wayne Martin
Joel Masser
Darshan Mayginnnes
Pam and Dave McClellan
Steve McLaughlin and Jan Bowers
Douglas and Susan Miller
Patti Milliron
Leigh and Carol Mintz
John Moore
Dennis and Jane Nefeldt
Eric Nelson
Ron Nichols
Greg Norby
Trent Northen
Ben Novak
Jeanne Oakeshott
Bradley and Margo Orr
Cindy Ostrowski
Douglas Parham
Leigh and Steve Parmenter
Terry Penland
Kate Picher
Patricia Pontak and Darrell Wong
Richard Popchak
Martin Powell
Mike and Nancy Prather
Beth Pratt
Sydney Quinn and Dennis Schumacher
Paul Reist
Lois Rice
Lawrence Riff and Debra Thompson
Michael Rinaldi
Robin Roberts and Erica Chapin
Nancy and Charles Robinson
Mary Roper

Edwin Royce
Lani and Thomas Safstrom
Joan Sanderson
Perry and Barbara Schaefer
Debie and Karl Schnadt
Richard and Nicki Schneider
Suzanne Scholton
Tom and Hilary Schroeder
Robert Schuur
Keith Schwab
Wayne Schwartz
Don and Deb Schweizer
Kathleen Scott
Reed Secord
Dale and Deborah Smith
Hugh Smith
Steve Smith
Steven Sorensen
Sarah Spelt
Bob and Connie Spenger
Terry Spitz
Mike Splain
Allen Steck
Susan Steinberg
Carl Stoffel
Pamela Stones
Peter Thiemann
Gary Thompson
Kenneth Tolo and Patricia Elder
Randy Van Tassel
Gregg and Deborah Vane
Jim and Kathy Varnam
Karen Velas
Tim and Gail Villanueva
Buck and Maggie Wahl
Stephen Walker
Tamara Walker
John Walter and Nancy Peterson Walter
Mary Ward
Erich and Edith Warkentine
Ellen and Kevin Wehr
Arianne Weiner
Jordan and Carol Weiss
Janet Westbrook
Bryce and Wilma Wheeler
Drew and Judy Wickman
Lindy Wiebe and Kerry Benjamin
David Wilborn
David Young
Diane Zaeffel

In Memory of Will Crjenko

Tim Pomykata

In Memory of Kenneth A. Kalkis

Cynthia and John Prater

In Memory of John Kasdan

Kathleen Kahn

In Memory of Tre Ostby Family

Paul and Pam Ostby

In Honor of Mike Prather

Cindy Shaw

In Memory of James Wilson

Peter and Roberta Cummings
Darla Heil and Bob Harrington
Mary-Austin Klein
Steve and Lynn Peterson

June Lake Trails Fund

Henry Blommer and Ann Tozier
Jack and Jill Stark
June Lake Brewing
June Lake Pines
June Lake Women's Club

Owens Lake Bird Festival

Chris Allen
Hillary Behr
Robin Black
Lynne Bunn
Bruce and Teresa Eckland
Jora and Mark Fogg
Collette Gaal
Lacey Greene
Nancy Hadlock
Tom and Jo Heindel
Dave Herbst
Julie Anne Hopkins
Deborah House
Chris and Rosie Howard
Andrea Jones
Mark and Clare Kenyon
Phil Kiddoo
Thomas Knudson
Russell Kokx
Paul McFarland
Kristie Nelson
Erin and Jeff Nordin
Nancy Overholtz
Shawna Pettigrew
Richard Potashin
Martin Powell
Sydney Quinn and Dennis Schumacher
Sara Steck
George Steele and Kathy Graaff
Robert Steele
Gregg and Deborah Vane
Libby Vincent

Wilderness Ranger Intern Campaign

Deborah Bayle
Laura Beardsley
Tom Boo and Helene Welvaart
Jeffrey Burbank
Ryan Carle
Stacy Corless
Douglas Dergo
Christine Driehaus
Chuck Edgemon
Bob Finch
James and Donna Gottfried
David Grah
Kathy Halamka
Kurt Harvey
Heidi Hopkins
Frances Hunt

Seung Lee
Rachel Leiterman
Chris Lizza
Mark Leggett
Yvonne Lux
Martina Mooney
Sydney Quinn and Dennis Schumacher
Doug Robinson
Darcy Shepard
Naomi Tarle
Tony and Sherry Taylor
James Thomsen
Agnes Vianzon
Libby Vincent
Erich & Edith Warkentine
Ben Wickham

Foundations & Organizations

The Annenberg Foundation
Audubon California
Boulder Creek RV Resort
Barefoot Wine & Bubbly
Best Western Plus Frontier Motel
California Wildlands Grassroots Fund of
Rose Foundation
Carmichael Business Technology
Clark & Green Associates
Conservation Lands Foundation
Double Eagle Resort and Spa
Dow Villa Motel
Eastern Sierra Audubon
Eastern Sierra Interpretive Association
Eastside Sierra Shuttle
Epic Café
Haynes Foundation
Heidelberg Inn
InTouch Microspa
Inyo County
James Irvine Foundation
June Lake Permittees Association
KMMT/KRHV-FM
Los Angeles Department of Water & Power
Mammoth Mountain Ski Area
Metabolic Studio
Mono County
Mono Lake Committee
Mono Market
Mountain Rambler Brewery
The Museum of Western Film History
National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance
Network for Good
Ohana's 395
Patagonia
Seasons Restaurant
Sierra Maps
Silver Lake Resort
Southern California Edison
Tioga Gas Mart
Town of Mammoth Lakes Measure R
US Fish and Wildlife Service
The Westin Monache Resort

FRIENDS OF THE INYO
819 N. BARLOW LANE
BISHOP, CALIFORNIA 93514



Join with us to preserve the Eastern Sierra

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS:

- ☐ \$35 Clark's Nutcracker
☐ \$50 Yosemite Toad
☐ \$100 Sierra Nevada Bighorn
☐ \$500 Wilderness Steward
☐ Please send a gift membership to the address below
☐ Do not include my name in the annual report

YOU WILL RECEIVE A FREE FRIENDS OF THE INYO T-SHIRT WITH A DONATION OF \$50 OR MORE.

Shirt size ☐ Mens ☐ Womens
(S, M, L, XL)

NAME

ADDRESS

PHONE

EMAIL

**All members will receive our
biannual newsletter as well
as timely alerts on
Eastern Sierra public lands
conservation issues.**

*Please make all checks payable to
Friends of the Inyo. Donations
to Friends of the Inyo may be tax-deductible
to the extent allowed by law.*



www.friendsoftheinyo.org