

THE
JEFFREY PINE JOURNAL

Newsletter of Friends of the Inyo

WINTER 2009

VOLUME VII, ISSUE II



Saline
Valley

Stewardship
Roundup

Winter
Survival

Wilderness
Work

Preservation, exploration and stewardship for the public lands of the Eastern Sierra

THE Jeffrey Pine Journal

VOLUME VII, ISSUE II

WINTER 2009/10

Newsletter of Friends of the Inyo



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



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The Cover Photo



Chocolate Mountain, in the Piper Mountains Wilderness, on a winter afternoon. Hike the peak with Friends of the Inyo on February 14.
Photo: Todd Vogel/Outdoor Link Photography

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

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

President's Message

by James Wilson

Late this summer I awoke in Cottonwood Basin in the White Mountains with tired muscles and a sense of contentment. The previous day, my daughter Rosanne, members of the Friends of the Inyo stewardship crew, a U.S. Forest Service hydrologist, and I had spent the day rehabilitating spawning beds in the North Fork of Cottonwood Creek for the endangered Paiute Cutthroat Trout. While it did make an old back sore, it was rewarding work. Cottonwood Basin was one of the first places we went to in Eastern California when we moved here over 30 years ago. It was the first place Rosanne went backpacking with us. Now we were volunteering our weekend to help the rare fish and make Cottonwood a better place.

Friends of the Inyo depends on our volunteers for success. We need different kinds of capital to achieve our goals, including moral, financial and human capital. Our volunteers and partners give us all three kinds of capital. Through opinions, efforts and ideas you build moral capital: you give us a land ethic. Through donations you build our bank accounts: you give us money. Through volunteer hours you get stuff done. You give us time, a priceless asset.

That volunteer time is a critical source of strength for Friends of the Inyo; we depend on our volunteers for success.

As Friends of the Inyo volunteers you do many things. You pick up trash: You clean up campsites. You pull tamarisk from desert streams and washes. You write letters to county supervisors and congressmen and congresswomen. You make phone calls (sometimes hundreds of phone calls). You serve on the Friends of the Inyo board. Board members donate many hours of work a year. You go to Washington, D.C. and lobby. You build fences, both literal and figurative.

This past year we have had many accomplishments in our three program areas of preservation, exploration and stewardship, thanks in no small part to volunteers. Through the Eastern Sierra and Northern San Gabriel Wild Heritage Act, nearly 500,000 acres of new Wilderness and 50 miles of Wild and Scenic rivers were designated. We skied to Glass Creek Meadow and hiked and monitored tamarisk in Surprise Canyon. We explored the Volcanic Tableland, led Crossroads School service trips, built a fence at Dechambeau Ranch, restored switchback cuts on the Duck Pass Trail and celebrated Coastal Cleanup Day at Convict Lake by removing 90 pounds of trash. It is a big list; these are only a few examples.

Our partners in this work included the Bureau of Land Management, the Inyo National Forest, the Eastern Sierra Climbers Coalition, the Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep Foundation, various schools, the Mono Lake Committee, the Owens Valley Indian Water Commission, the Youth Conservation Corps, as well as many others.

All this work is a huge investment toward the goal of sustainability for our public lands—a sustainable, functioning economy and ecosystem in Eastern California for humans and all of the creatures that make our home unique and wonderful. The bighorn sheep, the colored lizard and the chickadee all thank you.

For all of the above, the board and staff of Friends of the Inyo are truly grateful. Thank you again for your time, energy and financial support. Be well, and take time to walk plenty, and talk to those chickadees.



Get Out!

Exploring Saline Valley

By Todd Vogel

Once, while sitting at the bar of a local diner, my wife and I overheard a longtime resident ask his buddy when he'd moved to the area. "Fifty-seven," he responded. "Aww, you're just a newcomer," the buddy replied. My wife and I glanced at each other. "I guess we know where we stand," I remarked (having lived here a mere ten years). Now twenty plus have gone by since our move, and I feel like I am finally making a tiny bit of headway into exploring the copious public lands within an hour's (or three hours') drive from home, though I am several lifetimes away from getting to all the nooks and crannies. For instance, I've looked at Basin Mountain, in the Sierra out of Bishop, nearly every day of my brief life as a resident of the Owens Valley and yet have never rested on its summit. This causes me some degree of distress as I feel a personal obligation to climb every named peak within sight of my house.

I also would like to visit and explore every named valley in the Inyo region, which is ironic because until my first visit to Saline Valley five years ago, it too was a blank spot on my personal map. For many people, Saline Valley needs no introduction, but for me it was always the place I'll get to "one of these" years. Seen one desert, seen 'em all, I figured. Anyway, I was reminded of this "I'll get to it" way of planning recently at the FOI membership picnic when the subject of Saline Valley came up. One of the participants in the conversation expressed a sentiment much like "I've been meaning to get over there..."

So, consider this an exhortation to get your butt over to Saline Valley if you haven't been there. Lots of desert. Big mountains. Deep canyons. Flowing streams. Waterfalls. Ho-hum: hot springs, too.

Getting there

I've entered Saline Valley via four different routes, each somewhat of a commitment in its own way. By vehicle and not for the faint of heart—Eureka Valley, Dedekera Canyon and Steel Pass make for a fun way to go if you have a true 4WD vehicle and know how to use it on technical terrain. This route ranks a 4 on the 1 – 5 bumpy scale, and you actually drive up small (usually) dry waterfalls. If driving over basketball size rocks is your thing, you might enjoy this route. The other two more typical approaches are either from the north or south end of the Saline Valley road. Plan on the longest 25 miles of dirt you've ever driven. Ease or difficulty of travel just depends on conditions, which are sometimes suitable for sedans, and rarely a goat cart would be a better choice. Finally, using the fourth route, I have arrived on foot after hiking up and over the Inyo Mountains and descending a remote canyon on the north end of the valley. There are many other permutations on this tactic, which I will leave to your own research.

Exploring

Have at it—there's a lifetime of exploration to do. Some suggestions: many roads penetrate the mouths of the canyons on the eastside of the Inyo Mountains (the west side of Saline Valley). These are worthy forays. Start with Hunter Canyon, which has a decent 4WD road to its mouth and a surprise a short way into the canyon. A couple of canyons to the north of Hunter, Beveridge Canyon is worth a jaunt. The road washed out a couple of years ago, so you may have to walk from the main dirt road. Then, continuing north, McElvoy Canyon also has some surprises waiting for you. The only real problem with a visit to Saline Valley is all those other valleys, peaks and canyons you'll see, with names of their own that beg for another visit, another time...

Resources

Books: Much has been written about Saline Valley, and there are several guide books including the recent Michael Digonnet book, *Hiking Western Death Valley National Park: Panamint, Saline, and Eureka Valleys*.

Maps: First time visitors will want the National Geographic map to Death Valley National Park, as well as the individual topo maps to any areas you intend to visit.

A Google search for any of these keywords will reward the searcher: "saline valley hot springs, mcelvoy beveridge canyon, steele pass."



photo: Todd Vogel

Spring colors—and Costa's hummingbirds—brighten the scenery in Saline.

A brilliant sunset ends another day of adventure in the Inyos.

photo: Todd Vogel

Stewards

Caring for the Eastern Sierra

In 2009, Friends of the Inyo played a bigger part in stewarding the public lands of the Eastern Sierra than ever before. Two professional crews worked on Inyo National Forest lands from June through October, repairing trails on high Sierra passes and building fences in the Glass Mountains and the Mono Basin. Two stewards cared for the popular recreation areas in the Mammoth Lakes Basin, one worked in the Mono Basin while wilderness stewardship volunteers partnered with Forest Service crews in the back-country. Read on for field reports from three teams. The numbers aren't final yet, but still they far exceed expectations. On the Inyo National Forest, Friends of the Inyo projects included **694 people** (202 of whom were under 18) for **5469 hours** of volunteer labor, generating the equivalent of **\$110,747** in work!

Mono Stewardship Crew

Disappearances and Discoveries

By Justin Hite

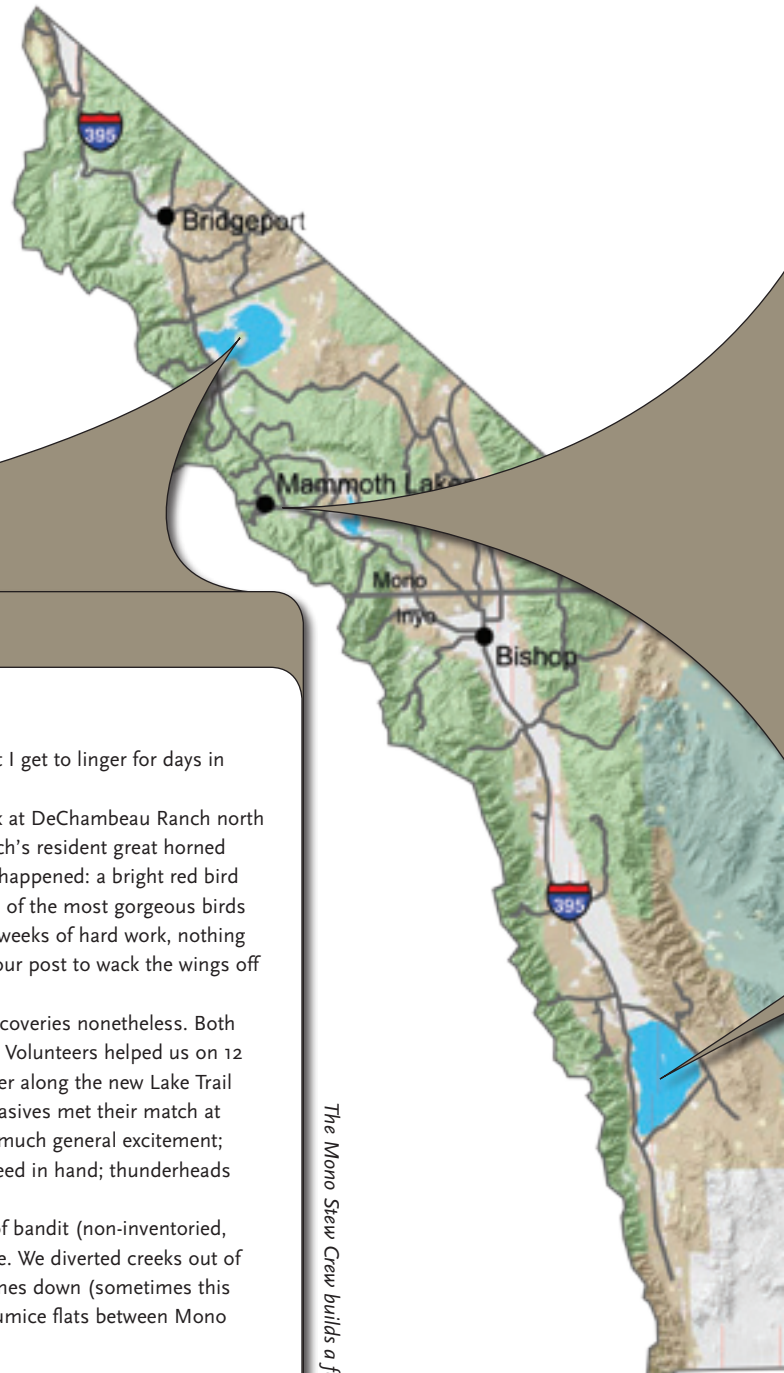
Sometimes I feel pretty lucky. Not only does work take me to beautiful places, but I get to linger for days in those remarkable areas and allow the character of the place to seep in.

This fall I was with Friends of the Inyo's Stewardship Crew taking a water break at DeChambeau Ranch north of Mono Lake. We were putting the final touches on a new rail fence with the ranch's resident great horned owl keeping a half-lidded eye on us to make sure we didn't get too close. Then it happened: a bright red bird alighted on one of our fence posts. It was a young male Vermillion flycatcher, one of the most gorgeous birds in North America, seen only once before in the Mono Basin (back in 1981). After weeks of hard work, nothing could have been a more perfect christening than this scarlet desert visitor using our post to wack the wings off a hapless little butterfly.

We didn't see vagrant birds on all our work days, but there were marvelous discoveries nonetheless. Both the Mono Lake Committee's Outdoor Experiences volunteers and the Mono Lake Volunteers helped us on 12 different weekends pulling invasive plants throughout the basin. From sweet clover along the new Lake Trail to bouncing bett at the mouth of Mill Creek to tumbleweed at South Tufa, the invasives met their match at the hands of the intrepid kids and adults. Scorpions lurked under rocks, causing much general excitement; phalaropes swarmed past hot springs and tufa groves as we stood with tumbleweed in hand; thunderheads wandered by over the distant hillsides, rumbling in possible approval.

The Mono crew stayed busy without volunteers, too. We disappeared dozens of bandit (non-inventoried, user-created) roads to such great effect that no one will ever know they were there. We diverted creeks out of roads and back down their native channels. We put new fences up and tore old ones down (sometimes this felt a little silly). We raked away at least a dozen miles of off-route tracks in the pumice flats between Mono and Mammoth.

Simply put, it was a wonderful season.



The Mono Stew Crew builds a fence at DeChambeau Ranch.



Photo: Justin Hite

ip Diaries

Mammoth Lakes Basin Stewards

Tours and Trails

By Drew Foster

Backpacking out toward the Silver Divide, fishing Lake George, finding your own route up Crystal Crag, photographing the Mammoth Crest at sunrise: the Mammoth Lakes Basin in the summertime is a truly spectacular place, and this is no secret. It is one of the most heavily trafficked and utilized places in the area for locals and tourists, alike. For the second season in a row, I feel both proud and lucky to have spent my time working in this basin.

Given it's high use, the Lakes Basin demands a significant amount of attention. This summer, two of us stewards (Brian Scavone and I), in partnership with the Forest Service, lead naturalist tours, maintained trails, cleaned fire rings and fielded questions from hikers and campers. We also ran several very successful volunteer days, as part of the "Summer of Stewardship" program (see page 6 for details) painting signs and picnic tables, working on trails and cleaning up trash. Thanks to all who participated!

The spring rains this year brought out some beautiful floral displays to the Sierra, which provided an abundance of flowers from May to September, and the usual Yogi Bears came sniffing around campers, anglers, and even breaking into the Twin Lakes general store! Now the first big snow has come down, the plants have gotten the last of their seeds and fruits dispersed, and the animals are looking to hunker down for the winter months. What a short, productive, and exciting summer it was!



The Stew Crew tackles Twin Lakes Trail.

Wilderness Stewardship

Campsites and Causeways

By Andrew Schurr

I spent most of my summer in the High Sierra as part of Friends of the Inyo's Wilderness Stewardship team. From Cottonwood Basin in the south to Rush Creek in the north, we covered the range. Here are some highlights:

Mount Whitney Trailwork

Working with the American Hiking Society and the Inyo National Forest on the Mt. Whitney Trail, my major job was to make sure no one went hungry and was feeling fit and ready for the trail. Bacon at 12,000 feet will keep anybody going!

Wilderness Campsite Inventory

The Friends of the Inyo Volunteer Wilderness Campsite Inventory program kicked off this year with nine volunteers working in the Golden Trout, Inyo Mountains and Hoover Wilderness areas. Hopefully we can expand this program to other areas on the Forest next year so members of the public can contribute and see what it takes to manage our beloved wilderness areas.

Athenian School

In late August, Forest Service Ranger Katy Hancock and I worked with two separate groups of students from the Athenian School in Danville, CA maintaining the Pacific Crest Trail along Rush Creek. Getting kids involved in this way really builds a wilderness ethic for the future.



Clearing the Fish Creek Trail, another Wilderness Stewardship project for Andrew.

Special Thanks

Our Members—your donations make this work possible

The Basin Crew (Justin, Drew & Brian)

The Stew Crew (Chris, Lauren, Mike, Rebecca, Bayard, Dave, Carson and Eiger)

Inyo National Forest's dedicated staff

National Forest Foundation's Ski Conservation Fund, Wilderness Stewardship Challenge Grant and Matching Awards Program

Mammoth Mountain Ski Area

Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access

Resources Legacy Fund Foundation

Bill Carter & the Backcountry Horsemen of California/Bishop Mono County



0 10 20 Miles



US Forest Service
Bureau of Land Management
National Park Service

State Lands
Other
Highways

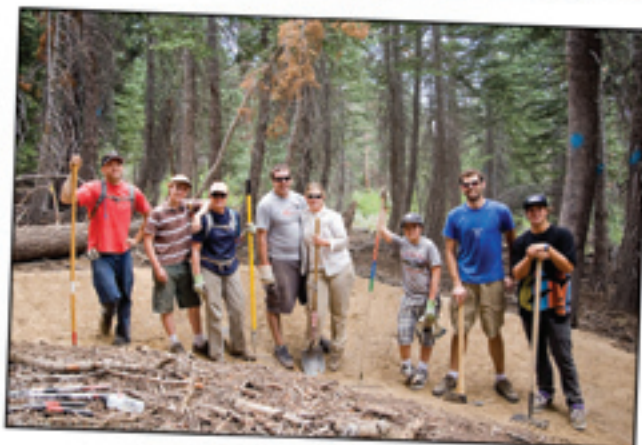
Summer of Stewardship 2009

Giving Back to Mammoth's Favorite Places

Thanks to a generous grant from the National Forest Foundation (NFF), Friends of the Inyo and the Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access Foundation (MLTPA) teamed up with the Inyo National Forest to bring a series of trail-stewardship days to the Mammoth Lakes community. The grant is awarded through the NFF's Ski Conservation Fund, which is generated through optional \$1.00 contributions made when purchasing a Mammoth Mountain Ski Area (MMSA) season pass or staying at lodging properties owned by MMSA. Contributions are matched by NFF federal funds and are available to nonprofits to conduct on-the-ground stewardship work on their local forests.

The Mammoth Lakes Summer of Stewardship 2009 was a six-event program that ran from June through September. Local recreation user groups, clubs, and businesses joined in to care for some of the area's best-loved places.

*Huge Thanks
to all the volunteers and sponsors!*



Where

- Sherwin Lakes Trail
- Mammoth Rock Trail
- Valentine Lake Trail
- Horseshoe Lake
- McLeod Lake
- Panorama Dome
- Twin Lakes
- Duck Pass Trail
- Emerald Lake Trail
- Heart Lake Trail
- Convict Lake
- Inyo Craters

Who

154 Volunteers on 6 Projects:

Bob, Denise, and Matt Riley	Colin Blackman	Andrea Colasardo
Lisa, Storm, and Torrey Patrie	Alejandra Gonzalez	Jim and Elaine Smith
Jay and Noelle Deinken	Carolyn Mitchell	David Wilbur
Doug and Jason Will	Kevin Green	Julien Harpigny
Michael McLaughlin	Natalie Wolf	Greg McDonough
Greg Norby	Lynda Wu	Malcolm and Sharon Clark
Stacey Crockett	Alex Fabbro	Maureen Gates
Bill Taylor	Won Suh	Lisa Powell
Laurel Martin	Kim Angelus	Tom Moody
Heidi Kanayan	Jordan Jacob	Carol Broberg
Clayton Mendel	Rose Kuljerich	Sandy Dowling
Trevor Stevenson	Jessie Bowman	Bryce Wheeler
Randy Hall	Kathy Moberg	Victoria and Olivia Hamilton
Brandon Ezra	Brian Wilson	Karen Murphy
Jo Bacon	Charlie Hurd	Ken Wells
Bruce Torrence	Monte K.	Doug Ferreira
Jordan Jacob	Steve Speidel	Carolyn Palmer
Mike, Lisa, and Dani Harris	Kathy Copeland	Noel Bell
Melanie Vulgamore	Carol Haselton	Sydney Quinn
J. Andino	Christine Souza	Sara Steck
Robert Schulz	Lynda Roberts	Michelle and Scott Quirsfeld
Allen Blumer	Dennis Kostecki	Jen Heintzelman
Dottie and Ken Duddridge	John Milne	Amanda White
Michael Payne	Janelle Owens	Devon Fredricksen
Rick Espy	Cherie Fitzpatrick	Sandra Sommer
Tim McClanahan	Rebecca Garrett	Roger Rilling
Lisa and Charles Wiles	Dave, Elizabeth,	Caroline Sanderson
Dan Meyers	Angelica, Ben, and	Jesse Locks
Jamie Levy	Jack Stephens	Russ and Kristin Reese
Pam Barker	Sherryl Taylor	Mike Colbert
Stephanie Wolff	Scott Cooper	
Mike Munson	Cheryl and John Casdorff	
Nancy Hardy	Dec English	
Shane Traceski	Corty Lawrence	

What

- 616.5 volunteer hours = \$12,485 worth of work
- 820 feet of new trail constructed
- 920 feet of use trail restored
- 16.1 miles of trail maintained
- 6 signs repaired or replaced
- 317 pounds of trash removed
- 35 picnic tables and benches sanded and painted
- 25 campsites cleaned and restored
- 46 switchback cuts restored
- 30 logs removed from trails
- 5 bridges maintained

*The work continues
in 2010!*



Local Businesses and Clubs

(Cosponsorship and Raffle Prize Donation)

Michelle Mather Massage, Mountain Mobile Massage, Mammoth Mountain Ski Area, Eastern Sierra Avalanche Center, Convict Lake Resort, Footloose Sports, Mountain Air Sports, State Farm Insurance/Linda Wright, The Trout Fitter, High Sierra Striders, McDonald's of Mammoth Lakes, Bishop, and Lone Pine, Roberto's Mexican Café, Mammoth Brewing Company, Après Pooch, Mammoth Pet Shop, In Touch Microspa, High Sierra Equestrian Club, 395 Fat Tire Council, Mammoth Lakes Fire Protection District, Mammoth Trails, Mammoth Snowmobile Adventures

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Get Down, Get Out, C

Four Pathways to Winter Survival

By Paul McFarland

Illustrations by John Muir Laws

As with most things, how you perceive winter depends on where you're standing. The silent downward sifting of huge white flakes is calming when viewed from next to a warm wood stove, steaming tea in hand. Likewise, morning air so cold you feel you could shatter it is "bracing" when locking into skis while wrapped in layers of high-tech, moisture wicking fabrics.

What does the mountain chickadee – weighing less than two 25-cent coins, with a normal body temperature around 108°F – think when the air drops below 32°F? What about when a 30-mph wind gust rattles their snow-covered Jeffrey pine, dropping the perceptible temperature to 18°F?

I've tried to ask chickadees, while skiing along a snowy ridge on a bluebird day of course, but they don't seem too interested in stopping to chat. Rather, they, like me, seem ecstatic just to be out and about. I can picture them now like ski bums strung along a mountain town bar, huddled together in the crook of some tree, mumbling to one another about how great it's going to be when the wind dies and sun comes out.

Anthropomorphism aside, getting through winter can't be easy for our non-human neighbors here in the Eastern Sierra. What do you do if your food's buried under snow or completely absent, and it's constantly cold enough to freeze you solid?



GET DOWN

Black Bear

MANY PEOPLE FEEL A SPECIAL KINSHIP WITH OUR LOCAL BLACK BEARS. WE OFTEN SEE REFLECTIONS OF OURSELVES IN THESE LUMBERING, FURRY FELLOW MAMMALS. LIKE THOSE OF US FOR WHOM WINTER MEANS CATCHING UP ON READING, KNITTING OR FIREPLACE STARING, WINTER MEANS GETTING COZY FOR THE BLACK BEAR – DOWN INTO A COMFY HOLLOW LOG, ROCK SHELTER OR BRANCH-ROOFED CAVE TO WAIT OUT THE WINTER IN A STATE OF DORMANCY.

ONCE SNUG IN THE DEN, BLACK BEARS LITERALLY TURN DOWN THEIR INTERNAL FURNACE BY SLOWING THEIR HEART RATE TO JUST EIGHT BEATS PER MINUTE (FROM A NORMAL RATE OF 60 BPM). THIS SLOWING NOT ONLY LOWERS THE BEAR'S BODY TEMPERATURE, BUT ALSO ACTS TO CONSERVE ITS SUPPLY OF STORED BODY FAT UNTIL WINTER PASSES.

BLACK BEARS ARE NOT TRULY HIBERNATING. THAT IS TO SAY, THEY DO NOT DRAMATICALLY LOWER THEIR BODY TEMPERATURE, AND THEY CAN BE FAIRLY EASILY AROUSED FROM THEIR DROWSY DORMANCY.



GET OUT

Western Tanager

WHILE IT'S OFTEN DIFFICULT TO DIVINE WHY A CERTAIN CRITTER RESPONDS TO WINTER IN THEIR OWN PECULIAR WAY, THE BEHAVIORAL TRIGGER FOR THE WESTERN TANAGER IS RELATIVELY STRAIGHT FORWARD: FOOD. AS THE WESTERN TANAGER'S MAIN SUMMER FOOD – INSECTS WITH A SIDE OF FRUIT – GROWS SCARCE WHILE SUMMER TURNS TO FALL, THESE FAIR-WEATHER FRIENDS SIMPLY LEAVE.

RATHER THAN COME UP WITH SOME CREATIVE WAY TO ENDURE FREEZING COLD AND FOOD SCARCITY, TANAGERS AND THEIR FELLOW NEO-TROPICAL MIGRATORY SONGBIRDS FLY SOUTH FROM THE EASTERN SIERRA TO SPEND WINTER IN THE PINE-OAK FORESTS OF SOUTHWESTERN MEXICO AND CENTRAL AMERICA, GORGING ON TROPICAL FRUIT AND BERRIES. WHILE TANAGERS MAY NOT ORDER DRINKS WITH UMBRELLAS AND CRUSHED ICE, THE SIMILARITY OF THEIR WINTER ADAPTIVE STRATEGY TO THAT OF SOME OTHER NORTH AMERICAN MEGAFAUNA SHOULD NOT BE LIGHTLY DISCOUNTED.

Get Tough or Get Busy



GET TOUGH

Mourning Cloak Butterfly

THE VERY PICTURE OF GRACE, BUTTERFLIES ARE NOT GENERALLY ASSOCIATED WITH THE HARSHNESS OF WINTER. HOWEVER, ONE ARCTIC FEBRUARY DAY A FEW YEARS AGO WHILE SNOWSHOEING ALONG THE SURFACE OF A FROZEN LOCAL CREEK, THERE, FLITTING EFFORTLESSLY THROUGH LEAFLESS ASPENS AND DORMANT WILLOWS, THE IRIDESCENT BROWN OF A MOURNING CLOAK EXPLODED ANY PRECONCEIVED NOTION OF BUTTERFLY DELICACY.

THE STORY OF HOW THE MOURNING CLOAK—A COLD-BLOODED, FRAGILE INSECT—SURVIVES SUBZERO TEMPERATURES IS ONE OF TRUE GRIT. EMPLOYING A BIT OF BIOCHEMICAL WIZARDRY, THIS BUTTERFLY LITERALLY CHEATS JACK FROST. LIKE NEARLY ALL LIFE, THE MOURNING CLOAK WILL DIE IF ITS BLOOD AND OTHER INTERNAL LIQUIDS FREEZE. ICE CRYSTALS WILL NOT ONLY PIERCE CELL WALLS, DESTROYING THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF LIFE, BUT ALSO DEPRIVE CELLS OF THE LIQUID WATER NEEDED TO CARRY OUT BASIC CELLULAR PROCESSES.

TO AVOID BECOMING A WINGED POPSICLE, MOURNING CLOAKS MANUFACTURE COMPOUNDS KNOWN AS CRYOPROTECTANTS. THESE COMPOUNDS, SUCH AS GLYCEROL (AKIN TO AUTOMOTIVE ANTIFREEZE), ACT TO REDUCE (DEPRESS) THE FREEZING POINT AND CONTROL ICE CRYSTAL FORMATION IN THE INSECT'S BLOOD.

WITH ANTIFREEZE COURSEING THROUGH YOUR VEINS, WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL IF THE TEMPERATURE DROPS? THE WARMING SUN IS BOUND TO COME OUT SOME DAY.



GET BUSY

Pika

EVERYONE AROUND THE EASTSIDE SEEMS TO HAVE ONE OF THOSE FRIENDS WHO ALWAYS HAS THEIR WOOD SPLIT AND STACKED BEFORE LABOR DAY, OR SKIS TUNED AND WAXED BEFORE HALLOWEEN—CONSTANTLY RUNNING AROUND PREPPING FOR SOMETHING. IN THE HIGH COUNTRY, THIS “BE PREPARED” BUSY-BODY ROLE IS FILLED BY THE PIKA.

LOOKING MORE LIKE AN EXTREME MOUNTAIN GUINEA PIG THAN A HARE, THIS ALPINE MEMBER OF THE RABBIT FAMILY SEEMS TO SPEND EVERY WAKING HOUR RUNNING AROUND MEADOWS, OVER ROCK PILES, THROUGH TUNNELS AND EVEN ON SNOW, WITH CLUMPS OF VEGETATION IN ITS MOUTH.

INSTEAD OF TAKING THE STRAIGHT FORWARD (MIGRATE), COMPLEX (MAKE YOUR OWN ANTIFREEZE) OR BORING (GO TO SLEEP FOR A FEW WEEKS) WAY OUT OF WINTER, PIKAS RESORT TO FARMING. THIS FRETNETIC CREATURE ACTUALLY HARVESTS GRASSES AND HERBS TO DRY AND STORE IN “HAYSTACKS” AMONG ROCKS. THESE CURED FOOD STORES, HIDDEN IN VIGOROUSLY DEFENDED ROCKY BARNs, ALLOW THE PIKA TO REMAIN ACTIVE ALL WINTER LONG.

WHY ALL THIS TROUBLE? MUST BE TO WATCH SUNSET ORANGE AND PURPLE SPLASH ACROSS SNOWY GRANITE IN JANUARY AT 12,000' WHILE YOUR FRIENDS ARE ASLEEP WITH ORION OVERHEAD.

Pinedrops

Notes on issues affecting Eastern Sierra Public Lands

Travel Management Decision Proves Appealing



photo: Paul McFarland

Collaborative planning is a way forward. The next step is implementation, such as this volunteer delineated route, Upper Owens River, July 2009.

CREATE A LEGACY OF STEWARDSHIP

Your bequest helps Friends of the Inyo forge new paths for stewardship of the public lands of the Eastern Sierra. Planning now could help reduce taxes on your estate. Many gift options are available.

Please contact Darren Malloy for more information:

Darren Malloy
Friends of the Inyo
Gift Planning
699 W. Line St.
Bishop, CA 3546
760-873-6500

THIS AUGUST, Inyo National Forest Supervisor Jim Upchurch released his final decision on the Inyo's Motorized Travel Management process (also known as route designation). The Supervisor's sound decision culminates a nearly decade long journey to sort through the unplanned spaghetti of roads criss-crossing the Inyo and create a sensible, manageable and more sustainable system of roads and trails for motorized use.

In making his final determination, Supervisor Upchurch wrote that he was "especially pleased that the Selected Alternative was developed in part as a collaborative community-based effort." Known as the Collaborative Alternative Team, or CAT, nearly two dozen individuals came together, independent of the Forest Service, to see if a compromise on which roads to designate and which to restore could be found.

The CAT embodied a break-

through in local public lands dialogue. As the CAT Statement of Findings finally read, "the goal of the CAT, collectively, and its members, individually, was not to 'win' or 'beat' anyone or anything. The goal was to use our local knowledge to create a designated system of roads, trails and areas across the Inyo that works for people and the land."

In the case of travel management, it appears this effort has worked well enough to produce a decision that received only two, relatively minor, appeals. This is huge considering opposing forces have long been massing their resources to appeal and stall this critical process on forests across the country.

The true test of whether collaboration can work will be written on the land and in our community—a demonstrated increase in a land ethic, users staying on designated routes, better maintenance of the designated system and efficient on-the ground implementation of this decision.

Sherwins Working Group Wraps Up

By Stacy Corless

ANOTHER COLLABORATIVE planning effort with the Inyo National Forest has reached an important milestone. The Sherwins Working Group, which included Friends of the Inyo members and staff, completed its proposal for recreational planning on Forest Service lands in the Sherwins/Mammoth Meadows area. This "diverse volunteer citizens' committee" (in the group's own words from the proposal) took as its guiding

principle "to value and respect the many different users, the natural habitats and resources of this area. Appropriate land use, avoidance of potential user conflicts...and wildlife considerations have been core to consensus."

Inyo National Forest staff will review the proposal and begin the planning and implementation process this winter. Friends of the Inyo will continue to stay involved as this planning effort moves forward.

Fish Slough Volunteer Effort Continues

By Andrew Schurr

FRIENDS OF THE INYO, in coordination with the BLM and the Department of Fish and Game, continues to monitor the sensitive Fish Slough area on the Volcanic Tableland north of Bishop. With the help of many dedicated volunteers, we work to protect endangered pupfish, sensitive desert riparian habitat and prevent vandalism and theft of important cultural resources. Fish Slough is an absolutely beautiful area that every one should see. With its abundant plant and animal life, the Fish Slough area is a rare oasis in a stark volcanic landscape that has provided humans and animals with sanctuary for centuries. Petroglyphs and lithic artifacts abound, birds are ever-present and rare fish species call it home. It is important to continue to protect this very special place. We can't do it alone and are always looking for more help. If you would like to volunteer contact Andrew Schurr at andrew@friendsoftheinyo.org.

Essay

Many Hands for Public Lands

Implementing Wilderness

By Paul McFarland

There's an old truism that it's not so much how you handle a loss that matters, but how you handle success. Here in the Eastern Sierra, we have some pretty huge, recent success for public lands—none greater than the Omnibus Public Lands Act of 2009 and the nearly half a million acres of new Wilderness it protects.

Because of the work of hundreds of folks over many years – probably many of you holding this newsletter right now— places such as Cottonwood Basin in the White Mountains and Glass Creek Meadow in the Owens River Headwaters are now legally designated Wilderness areas “where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain.”

Does that mean we can rest assured knowing these places are preserved for future generations?

True, they are preserved on paper. Yet, there still is work to do on the ground to secure the physical protection of these amazing lands.

Yosemite toads can't read, and Bristlecone pines probably find trifles like congressional deliberation and legislation dismissible and transitory. “Future generations”, have yet to be born to enjoy this wilderness that they, unknowingly of course, have helped justify and create. It also must be said that there is a segment of our population that doesn't view the long-term preservation of wilderness as a success, much less a good thing.

Our real challenge is to make these hard won designations matter to the Yosemite toad, the Bristlecone pine, the unhappy motorized recreationist, and the future birder, yet unborn. To do right by this protection we have all strived to create, we've a lot of good work still to do.

This work includes everything from putting up boundary signs to educating people about designated wilderness; inventorying campsites, trails, grazing allotments and other human creations to set a foundation for future management.

To make these new designations matter, we need to get out there on the ground. We need to fix the trails that are eroding into streams, restore shortcuts through meadows, assess the current ecological health of these special places, and craft thoughtful plans for maintaining their ecological health, as well as sustaining it in a changing world.

We need to empower people—on-the-ground rangers and stewards, paid and volunteers—to manage the natural resources, along with the human resources: the folks who will inevitably come to these areas seeking the restorative power held in those sacred places we deem wilderness worthy, a designation bestowed upon only .05% of the land in the U.S. In short, we need to make sure future (and current) generations know how to poop in the woods.

Wilderness designation is one of the best tools we have to protect that storied “last best place” we all carry with us. This designation is not the end of our work, but rather just another beginning. If we are going to give these special places a chance at hanging onto their wildness in an ever-changing world, then we—you, me, all of us —must figure out how to gracefully and sustainably implement success.

We have a lot of work to do.

It all starts with going outside. Be sure to take a friend with you.



Friends in the new Owens River Headwaters Wilderness, 4 July 2009.

Member News

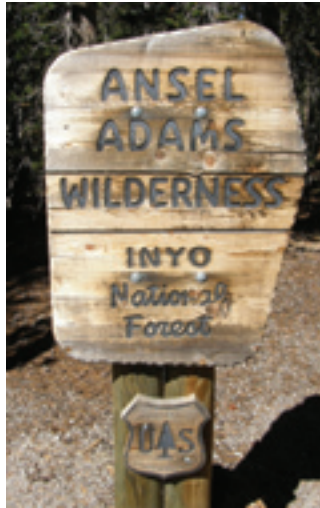
The Original Mammoth Stewards

By Stacy Corless



photos: Drew Foster

(Above) The upper Lakes Basin is much loved and cared for, thanks to the original Mammoth stewards.



(Right) Stopping the trans-Sierra highway led to the Ansel Adams Wilderness.

Last year, we received an inspiring letter from Friends of the Inyo members Bob and Peggy Schotz. Bob and Peggy lived in Mammoth for decades, operating lodges in the Mammoth Lakes Basin. Here's what Bob wrote:

When I drifted into the Eastern Sierra and Mammoth Lakes some 68 years ago, I was smitten with the whole area, its lakes and streams, its mountains and valleys, its seasons and their beauty. And I never left. 54 years ago, I was joined by Peggy...who shared the same love of the area and its meaning and has expressed it so well in her paintings.

We have always been [attuned] to environmental and preservation issues, in a small way to try to help preserve in a natural state what was given us. Some efforts were large, others small. Some were successful, some were not. But they all mattered and all were important.

A number of years ago, the environmental movement suffered personal losses...We were discouraged and wondered who would rise to take their places, who would carry the torch.

We were soon to realize that it is people like yourselves and your organization, FOI, who have risen to accept the challenge, to protect what

is left for the future. You are the new "keepers of the flame." We admire and appreciate all your efforts. Thank you and we wish you continued success.

It was an honor for Friends of the Inyo to be included in such lofty company, and I can assure Bob and Peggy that we will do all we can to keep the flame.

Reading Bob's letter—and spending time caring for places in the Lakes Basin this summer—made me realize what a fine foundation of stewardship he and Peggy helped build. They, along with fellow Friends of the Inyo member and longtime Mammoth Lakes Basin author and resident Genny Smith, were the original Mammoth stewards.

With their hospitality and art, their knowledge and respect of the place, Bob, Peggy and Genny helped generations of visitors fall in love with the Lakes Basin. They also helped save it—an act that eventually created the Ansel Adams Wilderness, forming one of the largest contiguous roadless areas in the United States.

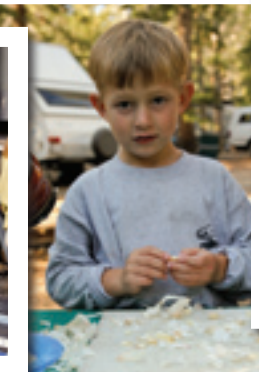
This August, I had the pleasure of visiting Genny at her cabin overlooking Twin Lakes, and she told me some of the story. Back in the mid-1960s, westside governments seeking economic development proposed four-lane trans-Sierra highway through the central Sierra. This year-round route would have followed an old trade trail along the Middle Fork San Joaquin, forever altering the watershed and the wild landscape at the heart of the range.

Despite immense obstacles, these local activists (and business people and parents) banded together in a grassroots effort that ultimately stopped the project. Down in the Reds Meadow Resort cafe, there's a photo of then-governor Ronald Reagan at Summit Meadow (taken there on horseback by Reds Meadow owner, Bob Tanner), declaring that the road would not be built. "We simply don't need another highway," Reagan said, adding that "any additional motorized access through this part of the southern Sierra will have a major adverse impact on the fragile wilderness values we hold so dear."

By stopping that road, Bob, Peggy and Genny paved the way for current conservation successes. Thank you!

Rendezvous 2009

We had a fantastic time—and turnout—for the member party back in September. Huge thanks to all who attended. Be sure to save the last Saturday in September 2010 for Friends of the Inyo fun!



all photos: Kevin Shea

Member News...continued

New Photo Book on the John Muir Trail

Editor's Note: Friends of the Inyo member, wilderness advocate and master photographer John Dittli just finished this amazing new project. I couldn't wait until Christmas to order my copy of the book, and start dreaming of the high country.

Walk the Sky: Following the John Muir Trail, a new full-color celebration of the John Muir Trail in California's High Sierra published by Companion Press in Bishop, presents the most comprehensive photographic essay treatment of the Trail since Ansel Adams' treatment in 1938. Over the course of three decades mountaineer-photographer John Dittli has captured the stunning scenery and spirit of wilderness along the summit of the Pacific Crest. *Walk the Sky* features 85 spectacular large format color plates (including 18 double-page panoramas) and four thoughtful essays by Eastern Sierra writer Mark Schlenz on the history of the trail, John Muir's early 20th century wilderness advocacy, the joy of walking the watersheds and passes the trail traverses, and wilderness ethics of High Sierra hiking.

Completed in 1938, the John Muir Trail traverses more than 200 roadless miles through Yosemite National Park, the Ansel Adams Wilderness, the John Muir Wilderness, and Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. In *Walk the Sky*, the reader journeys with John Dittli's spectacular images north to south—from Yosemite Valley to Mount Whitney—along John Muir's 221-mile namesake route through the wilderness areas at the heart of the Sierra Nevada. This is an extraordinary walk: each hiker encounters high passes, stream crossings, mountain meadows and lakes, thunderstorms, and daunting physical challenges along with awesome beauty and the camaraderie of the trail. Those who hike the JMT (or take it on as part of a Pacific Crest Trail journey) devote months to advance planning and weeks to walk these mountain miles. The experience inspires passionate enthusiasm for the John Muir Trail—and precious wilderness preserved in the High Sierra—among



photo: John Dittli

Morning light slips beneath an impending storm, Mt Clarence King, upper Woods Creek, John Muir Trail, Kings Canyon National Park.

hikers around the world. John Muir inspired countless others to share his passions for walking and wilderness conservation—and a century later, no person who has walked his trail remains unchanged.

This stunning collection of photographs by a Sierra mountaineer who knows this country intimately throughout the seasons will appeal to all who have walked the John Muir Trail—and anyone who hopes to walk it—as they follow Muir's trail and “walk the sky.”

A hardcover coffee table book, *Walk the Sky: Following the John Muir Trail* retails for \$49.95 and is available at Spellbinder Books in Bishop and The Booky Joint in Mammoth Lakes, as well as National Park and Forest Service Visitor Centers in the Sierra region. A limited edition slipcased, signed and numbered edition of 300 is available only from photographer John Dittli at www.johndittli.com.

Attention members! Do you have good news for us? Please share it by emailing stacy@friendsoftheinyo.org.



(Left to right)

Chilaquiles taste even better by a morning campfire.

You're never too young to cook at an FOI campout.

Eastside favorite The Dysceltics (and guests) entertain into the night.

Todd Vogel tops off another incredible meal.

Member/photographer Kevin Shea helps Darren Malloy with the prize turkey.

Last Words

Winter Events & Explorations


Go to www.FriendsoftheInyo.org for details!

December 4-5	Wild & Scenic Film Festival
January 9	Snowshoe Glass Creek/Obsidian Dome
January 10	Glass Creek Meadow/White Wing Ski Tour
January 23	June Burn Area Ski Tour
February 14	Chocolate Peak Hike/Snowshoe
February 20	Inyo Craters Ski Tour
March 5-7	Surprise Canyon Tamarisk Tour
March 13	Tablelands Tour
April 24	Grouse Mountain Hike
April 8-11	Argus Mountains Service Trip
May 8	International Migratory Bird Day Hike, White Mountains



photo: Todd Vogel

Hikers enjoy lunch with a view on Chocolate Peak.



DEC. 4-5





MAMMOTH & BISHOP

The festival returns to the Eastern Sierra for a third year, with two different programs in Mammoth and Bishop. This year, Cerro Coso College is the venue in both Inyo and Mono. Films highlight adventure and activism around the globe. And we'll be premiering a new Friends of the Inyo film! Tickets are \$10 per night, and will be available at Wilson's Eastside Sports in Bishop and Access Art & Business Center in Mammoth on November 19. Join Friends of the Inyo or renew/upgrade your membership and get a free film fest ticket!

MAMMOTH
Friday, December 4: 7 p.m.
 Cerro Coso College
 (off Meridian Blvd)

BISHOP
Saturday, December 5: 7p.m.
 Cerro Coso College
 (West Line Street)

Ticket and film information at
www.friendsoftheinyo.org

Accolades & Acknowledgements

Heartfelt Thanks to

Our wonderful members and amazing volunteers
 who showed up all summer long
 MLTPA staff: John, Kim, Lara, Linsey and Chuck
 Kevin Shea
 Alpine Paint
 Doit Center/Mammoth
 Marci Satterfield/Wilderness Catering
 Tioga Pass Resort staff and guests

In Memory of...

Bill Reid, Mono County Supervisor, whose thoughtful,
 fair and considerate leadership will be missed, and Jeffery Maurer, one
 of the earth's gentlest souls who taught us how to know
 and love the land and one another.

Congratulations to...

Sally Miller and Paul McFarland,
 recipients of the Sierra Nevada Alliance's 2009 Frank Wells' Last Best
 Place award for their work in wilderness protection!



Access, Anything Goes Catering, AV Sierra Club, Jo Bacon, Bardini Foundation, Bear With Us,
 Bardini Foundation, Cardinal Investments, Erica Chapin and Robin Roberts, Cheryl Bretton
 Appraisal, Coldwell Banker Mammoth Real Estate/Patty Schwartzkopf, Nils Davis Design,
 Daylight's Healing Touch, Eastside Magazine, Flowmotion Pilates, Focused Fitness,
 The Green Thread/Tim and Leslie Willoughby, Hardy and Place, InTouch Microspa,
 John Dittli Photography, Richard Kauffmann, Randall and Mary Kauffmann,
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 Mammoth Lakes, Patti Milliron/Hanz On Massage and Yoga, Mono Market, Muhka,
 Mammoth Lakes Sunrise Rotary, Nils Davis Design & Production, Sierra Conservation Project,
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