

THE
JEFFREY PINE JOURNAL

Newsletter of Friends of the Inyo

FALL 2004

VOLUME II, ISSUE II



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*265 lbs. of trash,
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and more notes on
issues affecting the
Eastern Sierra*

Fall in Rock Creek Canyon

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

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Jeffrey Pine Journal

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Friends of the Inyo



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



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The Cover Photo



Once again our cover is graced with a photo from local Wilderness photographer, John Dittli. When not busy building one of Mono County's first straw bale homes, John and his wife, Leslie, are out wandering the backcountry.

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

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

President's Message

by Frank Stewart

Fall is a great time of year. It seems like the golden hues of the rabbitbrush, aspen trees, and willows will be around forever, but we all know how quickly their leaves can fall.

As we slip into fall, we welcome you to the first of our "quarterly" newsletters. With two more newsletters per year we expect to provide you with a consistent flow of timely information on Eastern Sierra public lands and conservation issues. It's been a busy summer on the Eastside. We have moved into our new office space on Main Street in Bishop. Stop by and check it out. We're located at 275 S. Main, Suite C one block south of Line Street. We have also hired a new conservation associate, Keith Glidewell. He was raised right here in the Owens Valley, and is rapidly proving to be a great asset to our organization. Believe me, between Paul and Keith we have a very talented and capable staff.

Our summer outings program was a big success. Paul has been telling me about the interesting folks that have been showing up for walks in proposed Eastern Sierra wilderness and how we have continued to develop important personal connections to folks who love the eastside. Looking back at our history, I can see how we are continuing to build on our successes. It may be taking some time, but our progress is steady and sustainable.

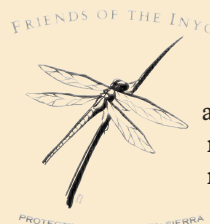
When I think about how quickly the golden fall leaves can be blown away by the brisk winds of October, I can't help but notice how the shifting political winds of the last 4 years have taken their toll on environmental regulations and legislation (Don't get me started on the changes we've seen on the social fronts). Rest assured, no matter who sits in the oval office, the halls of congress, or the county supervisor chambers, FOI will continue steadily on in our role of being a local voice for protection of our public lands and wildlife here on the Eastside. Thanks to your continued support, we're broadening and strengthening that voice and bringing even more voices to bear on the conservation challenges facing the Eastern Sierra.

Help us spread the word. Tell a friend about us.

– Frank Stewart is a General Building Contractor. Walking into the wild places of the Sierra is his favorite pastime

Show your Support

Proudly proclaim your support for preserving the Eastern Sierra (and help support FOI) with our new FOI bumper stickers and t-shirts!



Our 100% organic cotton T-shirt from Patagonia, Inc. is available for \$10 for members, \$20 for non-members, and is sent **FREE** to all those joining at \$35 or more.

Bumper stickers are \$2 a piece. Write to the address above, call or visit our website to place your order today!

Striking a Balance

Sometimes, even the most common sense decisions can become clouded by the hubbub surrounding the management of public lands.

One would think that closing a mere four miles of a unique desert stream to damaging off-road vehicle use would simply be the right thing to do. Especially, in light of the fact that protecting desert riparian areas (meadows and streams vital to wildlife) from unnecessary damage is mandated by numerous state and federal water quality, wildlife and recreation laws and regulations.

The Inyo National Forest and the Ridgecrest Office of the BLM are currently cutting through the rhetoric



3 of the 5 alternatives in the current EA propose cutting a motorized trail through the naturally restoring creekside forest of Furnace Creek. The pink ribbon above marks the proposed path of the motorized route.

in the case of Furnace Creek – a rare ribbon of cottonwoods, birches, cattails, songbirds, mule deer and pronghorn antelope on the eastside of the White Mountains. After years of work by conservationists, the Inyo and BLM finally moved last year to protect this unique oasis by banning damaging off-road vehicles from punching directly through the desert stream and its verdant forest. While the creek has recovered well over the last year, the future of this desert stream and its wildlife is up in the air once again.

After resource personnel from both the Inyo and the BLM determined that “motorized vehicle use is causing significant adverse impacts to riparian habitat and water quality [and] the

need for agency action is of critical importance,” the agencies are now considering whether to continue to protect Furnace Creek or build a new motorized route right through this desert stream.

Unfortunately, while the idea of building a “roadbed in a floodplain that will likely wash out time and time again” was dismissed as a waste of “federal or state funds” nearly five years ago by the Inyo National Forest, the agencies are spending considerable time and resources studying the feasibility of permanently disturbing Furnace Creek with a costly and unnecessary new road.

Driven by the vitriolic opposition to closing any roads no matter what the resource impacts may be, motorized advocates have attempted to create the perception that closure of Furnace Creek to vehicles would destroy all vehicle access into the White Mountains. This claim is made despite the fact that the damaging route in Furnace Creek represents less than 3% of the total amount of roads accessing the eastern flank of the Whites. There is no place on the entire

Inyo National Forest that presents the level of damage by off-road vehicles as seen in this desert oasis. The claim that the common sense and lawful protection of Furnace Creek will lead to a slew of unjustified road closures is nothing more than irresponsible chickenlittle-ism.

A full Environmental Assessment to determine the future of Furnace Creek is due out in mid-November. With the help of people who value science-based land management and common sense, we can ensure that the Inyo National Forest and the BLM make the right, balanced decision and protect Furnace Creek from off-road vehicle abuse. Sometimes, a long look at the facts makes it easy to cut through the inflammatory hubbub.

Facts on Furnace Creek

-Less than 2% of the entire Inyo National Forest supports riparian (stream & meadow) vegetation, yet nearly every species on the Forest is depended on these habitats at some point in their lifetime.

- There are over 195 miles of road accessing the canyons of the eastern White Mountains. Protecting the fragile habitat of Furnace Creek would affect less than 3% of this total road network.

- The White Mountains contain nearly 700 miles of motorized road, but only about 6 miles of non-motorized hiking trail.

- OHV use alone affects more imperiled species than logging and logging roads combined. (FS Chief Dale Bosworth, Earth Day 2003)

For more information and photos of Furnace Creek, visit our website, friendsoftheinyo.org.

Experience Furnace Creek

Join Friends of the Inyo and the Center for Biological Diversity for a one-day hike or two-day backpack into the desert oasis of Furnace Creek on October 23rd and 24th.

We'll meet Saturday the 23rd at 8:30am at the intersection of Highways 395 and 168 just north of Big Pine under the big sequoia tree and carpool to the canyon mouth. From the gate, we will explore approximately 3.5 miles of the canyon. Day hikers will be led back to their cars, while backpackers will camp out in the canyon under a waxing moon and hike deeper into the Whites – America's largest desert mountain range - the next day. Both the day hike and the backpack are moderately strenuous.

Please call (760) 873-6400 or visit friendsoftheinyo.org for more information.

Preserving the Homefront

by Keith Glidewell

Greetings! As many of you probably have heard, Friends of the Inyo has recently hired a second staff person to assist Paul, the board and all the FOI members in their work of preserving the Eastside. Among the slew of hopeful applicants, I was fortunate enough to be chosen for the position and feel very fortunate for the opportunity to live and work in my hometown here in the Owens Valley.

Having grown up in Bishop, I always just assumed that everyone had a magnificent Sierra/White Mountain backdrop, clean water and beautiful high desert terrain to escape too. Needless to say, I took Bishop for granted and soon realized, having spent time in other places going to school, that my home valley of 20 years is a gem.

Now, when I ride my bike, go for runs or even just look up at any given moment I'm seeing the same things, only with a different perspective. As I mentioned, I never gave much thought to the fact that a majority of people do not have open wild space to escape too, places where there are no crowds, traffic, excessive pollution, areas of calm

and raw natural beauty. Growing up in Bishop limited me. I've come to expect the open spaces, good air, clean water and all of the natural amenities endemic to this area. How interesting that these simple earthly pillars are now regarded as treasures, commodities, gems, "resources," and in most peoples lives, simply asking for too much. I've been living on an island all these years and didn't know it.

Threatened and endangered wildlands are a fact of modern life, even here at home. The question as to whether the home I've always known will be the home your children or my children will know looms large. The plain reality is that the demands on our public lands are increasing. Off-roading concerns, water needs, the corollary impacts of commercial developments, not to mention the misinterpretations many have of basic conservation, are a few of the challenges facing our local environment.

As you can imagine, working with people who have differing ideologies, backgrounds, agendas and temperaments on any issue is a stern challenge.

Getting things done in conservation can be precarious, convoluted, very slow and difficult to maintain a graceful stride in light of it all.

I think this is why community grass-roots organizations like FOI are so important- to pull people together and help apply their collective abilities and passion toward maintaining a healthy environment for themselves and for their children's children. I am thankful for this opportunity to help pull people together and to represent the habitat and the creatures that live here who cannot speak up for themselves. Its good to be home!



Keith Glidewell, Paul McFarland and Andrew Kirk admire a Mojave mound cactus on the way to Black Mountain in the southern portion of the proposed White Mountains Wilderness

Forging Forest Gems

The story of a beautiful reckoning

Fall in the Eastern Sierra is a time of reckoning – the season when life must reckon itself with the harsh realities of the coming winter – freezing temperatures, little available food, blowing ice and snow. For the wildlife of the high country, preparing for the coming winter is a bit more complex than topping off the propane tank and waxing the skis. Pikas furiously gather grass for their “hay piles,” chickarees cache cones, bighorn migrate downslope from their alpine haunts, and many, like yellow warblers and orioles, simply leave the eastside altogether, heading south.

Amid this flurry of preparations and evacuations, the most dramatic reckoning may not be the frenetic drama of critters, but the explosion of light and color from the leaves of deciduous (DEE-sid-u-us) broadleaf trees (aspens, cottonwoods, willows, birches) gracing the creeks and sidehill seeps of the Eastern Sierra.

How the fleeting beauty of autumn leaves comes about is a fairly simple story of supply and demand and what happens when the lines of transportation are cut off.

During the halcyon days of summer, the flat green leaves of our trees act as the tree’s energy supply green pigment in the leaves called the energy of the sun to produce food from water and carbon dioxide in photosynthesis (“putting together produced in the leaves travels back into the trunk, branches and roots of the tree along small tubes in the leaf’s petiole – the small stalk which attaches the leaf to the branch. Likewise, the water and nutrients needed to produce food also travel from the tree to the leaf through these tubes in the petiole.

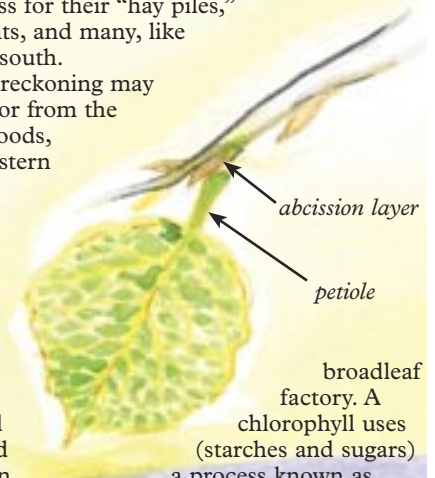
As summer fades into fall, the shorter days, decreased intensity of the sun and dropping temperatures lead to chemical changes within the leaf which trigger the growth of a corky layer of cells at the point where the petiole is connected to the branch of the tree. This corky layer of cells, known as the abscission layer, soon cuts the leaf off from the rest of the tree by blocking the transportation tubes in the petiole.

Choked off from a fresh supply of nutrients and water, the leaf is unable to replace its supply of chlorophyll. Ironically, the sun easily breaks down this green pigment, and as the chlorophyll is broken down, the colors of other pigments that have been masked all summer behind the green chlorophyll begin to show through. These yellow and orange pigments, called carotenoids (the same pigment makes carrots orange), turn the leaf into the gold of fall.

The abscission layer also traps all remaining sugars inside the leaf. The clear, bright fall sun then breaks these trapped sugars down into a red pigment called anthocyanin (the pigment that makes apples red).

-The interplay of these factors – formation of the abscission layer stimulated by the change in seasons, break down of chlorophyll to reveal the carotenoids, and the conversion of sugars to anthocyanin – all lead to the mosaic of green, yellow, orange, and red throughout each tree and even in the same leaf.

All to soon, however, the winds of winter will knock these forest gems back to the earth for recycling into next years green leaves.



Painting by Michael Valadez

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

by Paul McFarland

There's trash in them 'thar hills

Two hundred and seventy two pounds of trash, to be exact. That's what the folks who turned out to clean up the Bishop Creek drainage found around Intake II and North Lake on Saturday, September 11th, 2004.

Sponsored by Friends of the Inyo, Eastern Sierra Audubon Society, the Inyo National Forest and Southern California Edison, the Bishop Creek cleanup was part of the 20th anniversary celebration of the California Coastal Cleanup. While the streams of the Eastern Sierra haven't run into the Pacific Ocean for quite some time now, everyone who came out agreed that trash is trash no matter what water body its polluting.

We found everything from a steel door to broken bottles, cans,

lots of snack wrappers, Styrofoam worm containers, gobs of fishing line dangerously tangled up in willows and through the sagebrush and a couple of broken fishing poles. From snagging songbirds in fishing line to clogging the digestive system of mammals big and small, careless waste has a very real and very negative impact on our local wildlife.

Thanks to all 57 volunteers who turned out on a beautiful, sunny day to fulfill the mission of the Coastal Cleanup: to encourage Californians to clean their local beaches, shorelines, and inland waterways while raising awareness about the connection between personal responsibility for one's trash and the health of our waterways and wildlife.

Thanks also to the Great Basin Bakery, Starbuck's, Von's, Wilson's Eastside Sports, Mountain Light Gallery, Companion Press, Nancy Overholtz, and

Crystal Geysers for providing sustenance and raffle prizes, as well as Third District Inyo County Supervisor Ted Williams for deftly pulling the raffle winners.

Roadless rollback

In an exercise in Orwellian Newspeak, the current Administration announced it's rolling back the Roadless Area Conservation Rule in order to truly protect "roadless values." One of the most popular conservation initiatives in history, the Roadless Rule would have prevented road building into America's last remaining Forest Service roadless areas.

The proposed new rule would take the 'National' out of National Forest by granting state governors the ability to petition to have public forest lands in their state protected or not protected under the new proposed rule. In an odd twist on state's rights, the Secretary

continued on next page

The following wonderful letter to the Editor appeared in the Inyo Register, 7 September 2004

Come See for Yourself

The Eastern Sierra Citizens' Wilderness Proposals are just that - wilderness proposals designed by individuals from all walks of life coming together to preserve the wildlands at the end of the road as Wilderness while respecting current, legal uses of our public lands.

To learn more about Wilderness and the Eastern Sierra Wilderness Proposals, please visit our website www.friendsoftheinyo.org or call Paul at (760) 873-6400. To take a look at detailed maps of the proposals, please stop by our office in Bishop, one block south of Line Street.

Pinedrops (continued)

continued from page 6

of Agriculture would still maintain the ability to approve or deny any governor's petition.

To learn more and send a comment on the Proposed Rule by November 15th, go to earthjustice.org.

1 bighorn, 2 bighorn

A small herd of three ewes and a lamb, along with Yosemite toads, some arctic willow, American parsley fern, a Darwin's Green (a little pale green moth), Rufos & Costa's Hummingbirds, a Great Basin snaketail (a dragonfly), shaggy cap mushrooms, an Acmon blue (a little blue butterfly) and 309 other species came out to be counted this July 4th for the first ever Friends of the Inyo Ecothon – an all day census of everything that breathes inside an Eastern Sierra Citizen's Wilderness Proposal.

This summer a dozen local naturalists scrambled up and down the canyons, ridges and high meadows of the Proposed Bighorn Additions to the Hoover Wilderness. From Tioga Pass north to Lundy Canyon, we counted 188 plant species, 44 bird species, 58 insect species, 1 lizard, 1 amphibian, 9 mammal species, 4 lichen species, 6 fungi species, and 2 different species of fish.

Thanks to all the participants and sponsors. Thanks also to Latte Da Coffee Shop, Great Basin Bakery, Spellbinder Books, Nancy Overholtz Watercolor art, and the Mono Market for donating prizes for the sponsor raffle!

Hope you'll join us next year as

we head out to count critters and plants in the southwestern portion of the Proposed White Mountains Wilderness.

Ahead of the game

As this issue of the *Journal* heads to the printer, the Inyo National Forest is preparing two public field trips to review the Forest's recently completed route inventory.

This inventory is the first step in the 5-step RIDE process (Route Inventory and Designation) (see *JPF* 1.1). After inventorying existing routes and trails, the Forest plans to work with members of the public to create an officially designated network of motorized roads.

Unlike the indiscriminate spaghetti

bowl of roads criss-crossing much of the Forest today, the RIDE process is a long-overdue opportunity to finally put in place a designated system of roads that provides motorized access while minimizing damage to wildlife, fragile habitats, such as meadows and streams and reduces conflicts between recreational

users of public lands.

If done correctly, the RIDE process will be a boon to all users of our public Forest lands. No matter what combination of boot, tire, or pedal you use to explore the Inyo, we will all benefit from finally having a defined legal, manageable and sustainable system of roads that is in accord with current law. To learn more or get involved call Keith at (760) 873-6500.

We're seeing more erosion, water degradation, and habitat destruction. We're seeing more and more conflicts between users. We're seeing more damage to cultural sites and more violation of sites sacred to American Indians. And those are just some of the impacts. We're going to have to manage that by restricting OHV use to designated roads, trails, and areas.

-Dale Bosworth, Chief of the Forest Service

In Appreciation

We would like to thank all those who helped FOI establish our first office space:
Todd Vogel and Sierra Mountain Center for the stereo and computer equipment
Frank Stewart and Lisa Jaeger for their elbow grease
Linda Emerson for her office scouting
Roberta McIntosh, Marilyn Hayden, and Skandar Reid for their works of art
Yvette Garcia for the tables and appliances
Lee McFarland for the drafting desk
Scott Justham for the refrigerator
Bob and Peg Schotz for their wonderful building
And Robert Spertus for the diverse collection of natural history books
Great Basin Bakery for their tasty sustenance

Thanks also to:

Chris Joseph & Family of Los Angeles for their generous donation of a brand new Dell computer system.
Jo Bacon of Mammoth Lakes for updating our website
All the businesses in the Eastern Sierra and beyond that display the Jeffery Pine Journal
Designs Unlimited of Mammoth for waving the screen fee for our T-shirts
Patagonia for donating 7 dozen organic cotton T's.
Norman Heteriech for his photographs of Wilderness Proposals in the Eastern Sierra
Nils Davis Graphic Design for all his professional layout work
Elizabeth Quinn of Santa Cruz for her ambassadorship
Michael Valadez and Ode Bernstein for their artwork
Sara Steck for organizing the successful Bishop Creek Cleanup
John Dittli and Andy Selters for their images of Eastern Sierra Wildlands
Resources Legacy Fund Foundation – Preserving Wild California
California Wild Heritage Campaign
Peradam Foundation
Kenny Watershed Protection Foundation
Campaign for America's Wilderness
Haynes Foundation

As always, our deepest gratitude to our Members, both recent and renewing. Without you, sustaining and succeeding in our work would be impossible!

In memory of bother Lindal Williams and his wife, Wilma, of St. Louis from Helen Kennedy of Oxnard.

In memory of Ed Zombro of Mammoth Lakes from Holly Ottiger of Dana Point and Emily McCue of Crowley Lake. Mr. Zombro's love for the outdoors and his compassionate demeanor touched many lives.

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biannual newsletter, as well as
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