

THE
JEFFREY PINE JOURNAL

Newsletter of Friends of the Inyo

SPRING-SUMMER 2008

VOLUME VI, ISSUE I



Eastern Sierra
Wildflowers

A few fair weather friends

Eastern Sierra
Water Watchers

*Local science informing
local stewardship*

On Board

*Coming full circle for
the Eastern Sierra*

Summer on the roof of the Great Basin, White Mountains Proposed Wilderness. photo: Andy Sellers

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

THE Jeffrey Pine Journal

VOLUME VI, ISSUE I

SPRING/SUMMER 2008

Newsletter of Friends of the Inyo



Post Office Box 64
Lee Vining, California 93541

699 West Line Street, Suite A
Bishop, California 93514
(760) 873-6500

www.friendsoftheinyo.org

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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



Check out more of
Andy's work at
andyselters.com

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

I have been a part of something that is pretty amazing over the last month. Many of you may know that the Inyo National Forest has been working on a "Route Designation / Travel Management Plan." Over the last few years, the Forest Service has inventoried and mapped 3,760 miles of routes and roads across forest with the goal of designating a sustainable and manageable system that provides motorized access for everyone. The Forest Service identified "legally designated" roads, as well as routes that have been "proliferated" by illegal off road use. They noted which routes have recreational value, like providing access to remote campsites or hunting grounds, "loop" routes, and "through" routes. They also identified routes that may cause habitat impacts, or present management concerns. With that info in hand, they will decide which ones to keep in the system, and which ones to remove from the system. Whew, that's a mouthful! You can see how monumental a task this is.

As you can imagine, not everybody is going to agree about how to sort this out. Many people have legitimate concerns about losing motorized access to public lands. By contrast, many of us have witnessed new routes showing up where none existed before, and we get a little uptight. We've all gotten lost in a maze of parallel routes in areas with very high density.

Let me get back to the "pretty amazing" part I started with. Initially, it seemed likely that different factions would draw their "lines in the sand." While we feared the whole Route Designation process getting bogged down in an endless tirade of rhetoric and philosophical posturing, we have always suspected that behind all of that talk, if everyone could just get down to the specifics, we might discover that we could agree on some stuff. Turns out, it's true.

For over a month, a diverse group of citizens got together twice a week to pore over maps and discuss routes in every part of the Inyo National Forest. We named ourselves the Collaborative Alternative Team (CAT), and once we managed to dispense with most of the speeches (I know that's hard to believe), we got down to the real business of finding out just what routes were actually present on the ground, why they were important, or why they were problematic, and we agreed on some stuff. We found that the motorized recreationists possess an incredible body of knowledge about the "places that roads go to" in the Inyo National Forest. Of course there's also a need to possess knowledge about important habitats, where resource damage is occurring, and what routes have been created by a few irresponsible users. Over the last five years FOI has done an extremely thorough job of mapping and documenting routes in the Inyo National Forest. That hard work has paid off. The CAT team delivered its recommendations to the Inyo Forest Supervisor, and we are hopeful that our input will be incorporated into what will be the final Inyo National Forest "Travel Management Plan."

I would like to welcome three new folks to the FOI Board of Directors. Margy Verba, who lives in Mono City, owns "Flow-Motion Pilates Studio" in Bishop, and has already helped start the new Eastern Sierra Stewardship Corp Business Sponsor Program. Chris Joseph of Santa Monica is founder and owner of a successful planning and consulting firm specializing in the preparation of environmental impact reports. You can find him out on the trails of the Sierra backcountry every chance he gets. Sara Steck is now a teacher in Bishop after wandering the mountains as a camp cook and trip leader for years. She has led numerous cleanup trips along the waterways and shorelines in the Owens Valley. We welcome all of you and appreciate your willingness to step forward and "give back."

Frank Stewart is a 26-year resident of the eastern Sierra. He's looking forward to "opening day" of trout season out on Lake Crowley.

Get Out!

Find Hidden Gems

Green & Brown lakes

by Todd Vogel

Overview

Summer is coming, and when the Valley heats up there's no better way to cool off than a hike to a mountain lake and maybe even a dip. A cul-de-sac of sorts, the trail to Brown & Green lake in the proposed John Muir Wilderness Additions is off the beaten path, but if you are willing to brave the initial switchbacks, the reward that awaits visitors to these lakes is a less-visited alpine basin, wide open vistas, and a stroll along an expansive Sierra shelf.

Logistics

From Bishop, find your way up Line Street (Highway 168) to Parcher's Resort, near South Lake. Park at the picnic and day use area just uphill from the resort and follow the use trail on the west side of the road heading over a rocky hill and down to the obvious main trail. Alternatively, one can walk into Parcher's driveway and down towards Rainbow Pack Station, and find the trail there. In either case, head up the main trail a third of a mile or so to the signed junction with the Green Lake Trail at 9,600'. It is easy to miss this turn so stay aware! The trail to Brown and Green lakes zig zags up this steep hill in a business-like way as the views into the basins above South Lake get better with each step and distract from the work of the climb. Brown Lake is about four miles round trip; if you continue on to Green Lake plan on an additional two miles to the trip. Numerous options exist, including even some options for an overnight trip.

The Grunion Run

From Green Lake the trail continues in a giant zig zag north onto the "Grunion Plateau." I have not been able to find anyone who can tell me the origin of the name. To the east of the Grunion Plateau is a neat little peak called The Hunchback on the map. It's an additional hour and half or so from Green Lake to this peak but the view is excellent, with vistas down to Bishop and the peaks of the Palisades and Mt. Humphreys area towering above.

An alternate start to the hike (shown in blue on the map), recommended only for the adventurous and fleet of foot, is to park at the main Bishop Pass Trailhead parking lot, by South Lake. (If only out for a day hike, please be sure to park in the day use spots and save the overnight spots for backpackers). At the highest end of the overnight parking lot is a green gate. Pass through the gate, past the gauging station and notice on your right a large brown pipe. It is possible to walk up the pipe, mostly on a trail but sometimes on the pipe, to the intersection of the Brown Lake Trail. This saves some 500' elevation but does require some tricky footing on the pipe.



Revelry on the summit of the Hunchback.

photo: Todd Vogel

CALENDAR

Spring–Summer Outings/Projects

All outings are free and open to all. Help us plan for food and tools by RSVPing for any multi-day projects. Sorry, no dogs allowed on trips. Please visit friendsoftheinyo.org or call 760.873.6500 for more information on any specific trip (including maps and recommended gear lists), as well as up to date trip information (including new listings!).

May 31

DISCOVERING WILDFLOWERS: BIRCH LAKE TRAIL

Take a walk with local botanists, Stephen McLaughlin and Jan Bowers, up the escarpment of the Eastern Sierra to Birch Lake. Explore the slopes where the desert becomes the mountains, search for truly unique plants and experience the natural regeneration of recently burned areas. Moderate. Meet at 7:30 am at the junction of Highways 395 and 168 just north of Big Pine.

June 7-8

SOUTH FORK LAKE TRAIL WORK: NATIONAL TRAILS DAY IN THE GOLDEN TROUT WILDERNESS

Kick off the summer with this trail improvement and restoration project

along a moderate and scenic trail in the magnificent Southern Sierra above Lone Pine. Based out of the Cottonwood Lakes Walk-in Campground, Friends of the Inyo will provide the dinner on the 7th, breakfast on the 8th, and tools. Carpools

leaving from Bishop & Lone Pine will meet at 9am Saturday morning.

June 7

MONO BASIN WEED ERADICATION: NATIONAL TRAILS DAY IN THE MONO BASIN

Join Friends of the Inyo, the Mono Lake Committee, Inyo National Forest and California State Parks removing invasive weeds along the shore of Mono Lake in preparation for the construction of the new trail from Old Marina to the Visitors Center. Meet at 9 am in the Visitors Center parking lot. Drinks, gloves, tools and a good time provided.



Photo: Todd Vogel

Enjoying the view, North Fork of Big Pine Canyon.

June 14

BUTTERMILK WILDLIFE PRESERVE WORK DAY

Become a part of the ongoing stewardship of the diverse habitats of the Buttermilk Wildlife Preserve located between Grouse and Basin mountains. Join Friends of the Inyo and the Eastern Sierra Audubon Society in this joint project to repair and maintain Preserve fencing and infrastructure. Meet at 9am at the junction of Buttermilk Road and West Line Street (Highway 168).

June 14-15

ROBINSON LAKE TRAIL MAINTENANCE

Robinson Lake, near Kearsarge Pass, is a seldom visited gem just under the nose of one of the Eastside's busiest trailheads at Onion Valley. This project will re-establish currently eroded and overgrown sections of the trail. Basecamp at the Onion Valley Trailhead with dinner on the 14th and breakfast on the 15th provided for those who RSVP.

Mammoth Lakes Basin Stewardship Days

Every Second Thursday & Saturday

Few places have captured as many hearts as the Mammoth Lakes Basin. Come out and help preserve the majesty of this alpine basin right out Mammoth's backdoor. Join one of Friends of the Inyo's Stewardship Rangers for a half-day project every second Thursday and full-day projects every second Saturday from June through September. Visit the Forest Service Visitor Center for more information on these projects and other interpretive hikes throughout the summer.

CALENDAR

June 22-28

MT. WHITNEY TRAIL WORK AND PEAK ASCENT

Working out of a basecamp near Bighorn Park at 10,500', this project combines work restoring rock structures along the Whitney Trial near Muir Lake with a summit attempt of America's highest continental peak. Perspective volunteers should visit our website and must RSVP as the trip is limited to 8 people.

July 5

4TH ANNUAL PROTECT OUR HEADWATERS DAY

Come out and celebrate the freedom of public lands by helping restore the headwaters of the Eastern Sierra's most important river system. This year's project will focus on restoring unauthorized off-road vehicle damage and enhancing recreation opportunities along Deadman Creek. Morning coffee and lunch will be provided. Meet at 9 am at the junction of Owens River Road and Highway 395.

July 6-11

NORTH FORK BIG PINE CREEK TRAIL PROJECT

Help repair and reroute a muddy section along the trail to Fourth Lake in the shadow of the Palisade's rugged fourteen thousand foot peaks. Food, tools and pack animal support provided.

August 5-6

OUTDOORS IN MAMMOTH: SUMMIT TO THE SEA — EVERYTHING IS CONNECTED

From clean, local energy production to the lifeways of local Paiute Indians, to an open air diner conversation with environmental ambassador, Jean-Michel Cousteau, learn how we are all connected to the land the future. Visit outdoorsinmammoth.com for more information.

August 10

BLANCO MOUNTAIN EXPLORATION, WHITE MOUNTAINS PROPOSED WILDERNESS

Dance on the roof of the Great Basin with this walk through ancient bristlecone pines to the top of aptly-named Blanco Mountain. At 11,280', Blanco is one large pile of 600 million year old dolomite! Meet at 8 am at the junction of Highways 168 and 395 just north of Big Pine or 9 am at the entrance to Grandview Campground for this strenuous hike along the crest of America's highest desert mountain range.

September 20

FRIENDS OF THE INYO MEMBER PICNIC

Our second annual gathering of members and friends promises to be another great day out celebrating our collective love of the Eastern Sierra. Location TBA, but be assured it will be somewhere with sagebrush!

September 27

NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS DAY COMMUNITY STEWARDSHIP PROJECT

Join Friends of the Inyo and the Advocates for Access to Public Land as we all get our hands dirty taking care of our local public lands. Location to be determined.



photo: Paul McFarland

Cottonwood Basin, White Mountain Proposed Wilderness.

Mono Basin Stewardship Days

Every Third Saturday

Looking to lend a hand along the shore of one of California's oldest lakes? Join Justin Hite, Mono Basin Stewardship Ranger, for half-to full-day projects around Mono Lake every third Saturday from June to September (June 28th, July 19th, August 16th, September 20th). From restoring off-road vehicle damage, to light trail maintenance to removal of invasive weeds, visit the Mono Basin Forest Service Visitor Center or Mono Lake Committee Bookstore for project specifics. Steward Hite will also be leading natural history walks around the Basin all summer long.

Check out local flyers for more information.

Eastern Sierra Water Watchers

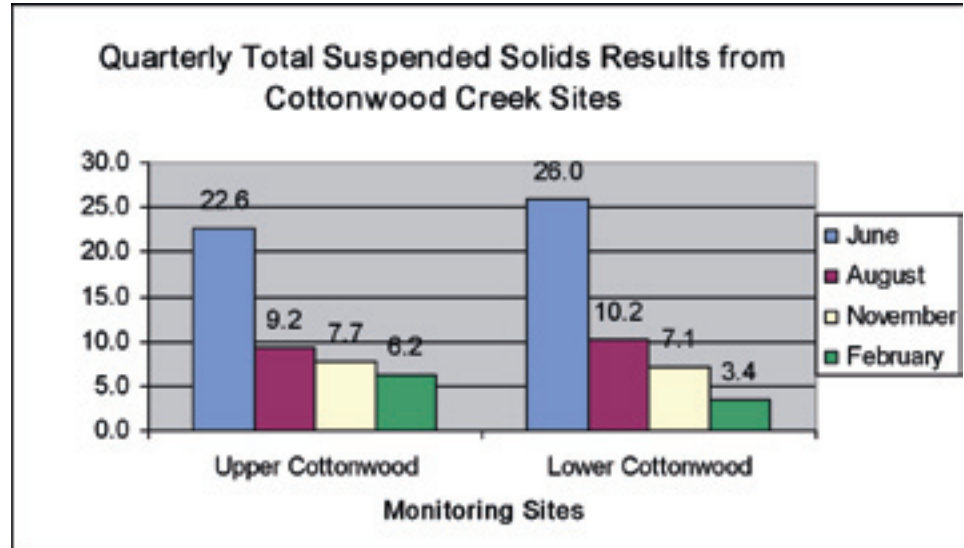
Local Science Informs Local Stewardship

by Laura Chamberlin

With the first year of monitoring under their belts, the eighteen volunteers with the Eastern Sierra Water Watchers (ESWW) have pushed their way through roses and willows to complete a streamwalk survey, beared icy water for many hours in order to collect macroinvertebrates, and completed three full sampling sessions. All this they have done with smiles, patience, and enthusiasm. The scientific data they gather directly contributes to the health of their (and our) public lands.

This volunteer effort monitors the efficacy of restoration; assesses impacts of various land uses, such as recreation and grazing; and helps inform land management policy.

This last year's monitoring locations include three sites in the Mono Basin, three in the Owens River Headwaters, and



two sites on Cottonwood Creek on the eastside of the White Mountains. ESWW volunteers measured basic chemical parameters, collected water samples to test for fecal bacteria and total suspended solids (TSS), and completed a streamwalk survey assessing habitat quality. A bioassessment including benthic macroinvertebrate (aka water bugs) sampling was also completed in September.

To give an example of the data collected, let's look a little more closely at Cottonwood Creek, the largest stream draining America's highest desert mountain range. The dominant land use near the monitoring sites is cattle grazing. To help relieve grazing pressure on this fragile desert stream, Friends of the Inyo is currently building a fence to remove cattle from a portion of the creek. Additionally, Cottonwood is a popular recreational area for horseback riding, hiking, fishing and camping.

The results for total suspended solids (TSS) results show that there are high levels of suspended sediment in these waters as a result of streamside vegeta-

tion loss and increased erosion due to grazing (see Figure 1). The highest results were found in June, with TSS declining by more than half through August. This may be related to the level of grazing. With one monitoring site within the fence and one outside, we hope to monitor both the impacts of grazing, as well as the recovery of water quality and habitat with the exclusion of cattle.

While it is still too early to make broad statements about the condition of the monitored streams or watersheds with such a small amount of data, continued monitoring may reveal trends and changes over time with special attention paid to sites in need of, or currently receiving, active restoration and enhancement.

This summer, the ESWW program will expand to sites on Lee Vining Creek, Mammoth Creek, and Lone Pine Creek. Working with the Inyo National Forest, the ESWW will begin an assessment of the Upper San Joaquin Watershed by monitoring alpine meadow health in the Ansel Adams Wilderness.



Photo: Emily Prud'homme, Mono Lake Committee

Brigitte Berman completes the dissolved oxygen test for her site on Lower Mill Creek in the Mono Basin.

Funding for the Eastern Sierra Water Watchers is made possible by a generous grant from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, as well as the Sierra Nevada Alliance and the State Water Resources Control Board. To learn more or get involved, please visit the website www.friendsoftheinyo.org/foi/waterwatchers.

On Board

Coming Full Circle in the Sierra

by Bill Mitchel



Bill at Lamarck Col on the Sierra Crest near Kings Canyon National Park.

photo: xxxxxx xxxxxxx

My earliest memory of the Eastern Sierra is when I was 8 years old and my dad took me camping for a weekend at Lake Sabrina above Bishop. I was so excited when I got out of my sleeping bag in the morning, but there was ice in a pan of water, it was freezing, and the sun was still behind the mountains. I was cold and miserable. After a breakfast of hot cereal, we hiked up to Blue Lake, enjoyed the warm sun and the natural beauty, caught some fish and brought them back for dinner. I was feeling a lot better about camping by the end of the day. That was the beginning of my ever growing appreciation and love for the Eastern Sierra.

We had many more trips to Lake Sabrina and a few horseback trips over the Sierra crest into the westside drainage. Memories grew with trips to places like Vidette Meadows, the recesses of Mono Creek, Pioneer Basin, South Lake, North Lake and Paiute Pass.

Even though I was more than fully employed in Southern California while my wife, Vivian, and I were raising our children, we managed to get away for a week or two each summer to visit the Eastern Sierra. It was wonderful to see each year, the places that were special to me as a child. After the children were grown, we continued to return to the area for vacations, always in awe of the beauty of our lands.

About 6 years before retiring, we decided we wanted to live in Bishop. When the time came we bought a home in Bishop, packed up and moved. We had roots where we had lived and hated to part with friends and neighbors, but after arriving here, we never looked back. There was something really special about living on the Eastside.

Soon the reality that our public lands were threatened and were in need of help began to present itself. Having always been interested in birds, I joined the local Audubon Society chapter and then the Native Plant Society chapter. The people were warm and friendly, and I began to learn about the challenges facing our public lands.

At a meeting in Independence, I listened to a presentation by a representative of Friends of the Inyo, Paul McFarland, and learned more about the needs of our public lands and how Friends of the Inyo was working to preserve them. One of the hottest issues was the Forest Service's effort to define a sustainable route system. With my interest in hiking and being outdoors, supporting Friends of the Inyo's work on this project was made to order. It provided an opportunity to get out and really get to know the land, and the creatures and vegetation that inhabit it. It also allowed me to see first hand, how fragile our public lands are and how quickly unrestrained use of motorized vehicles can scar and diminish the health of our lands. While this is a long and enduring project, it has allowed me to connect with the land in places I had never visited before such as the upper reaches of Black and Redding canyons in the White Mountains, Grunion Plateau, Upper McGee Creek and Horse Creek.

During the hiking season, I make long treks into the backcountry to explore and revisit some of the most breathtaking scenery ever. One can never get enough of a hike over Paiute Pass to Desolation Lake, visiting the Granite Table behind Pine Creek, taking the High Trail to Agnew Pass, or climbing to Echo Lake in the Sabrina basin. Living in Bishop allows me to enjoy the beauty of the Eastern Sierra, and at the same time give back to the land and work for its protection and preservation.

Field Guide to Ea

A Brief Introduction to a Few Fair Weather Friends

By Paul McFarland



Alpine Gold

Hulsea algida

SUNFLOWER FAMILY

A PLEASANT REWARD FOR THOSE WHO CLIMB HIGH ABOVE TIMBERLINE, ALPINE GOLD LIVES UP TO ITS NAME. WITH GOLDEN SUNFLOWER-LIKE FLOWERS INDIVIDUALLY PERCHED ON HAIRY, STICKY STEMS SPROUTING FROM A BASAL ROSETTE (BUNCH) OF STICKY, NARROW LEAVES, ALPINE GOLD IS A FAVORITE NECTAR PLANT OF RIDGE-RIDING MOUNTAIN BUTTERFLIES.



Desert Paintbrush

Castilleja angustifolia

SNAPDRAGON FAMILY

WHETHER PEEKING ABOVE THE GRAY BRANCHES OF A SAGEBRUSH OR LIGHTING UP A ROCKY DESERT WASH, THE STARTLING RED OF DESERT PAINTBRUSH IS HARD TO MISS. WHILE THIS FLAMING DESERT VARIETY IS COMMON FROM THE SHORES OF MONO LAKE TO OWENS LAKE, IT IS ONLY ONE OF A HANDFUL OF PAINTBRUSH SPECIES ENCOUNTERED AROUND THE EASTERN SIERRA.



Mule's Ears

Wyethia mollis

SUNFLOWER FAMILY

UNMISTAKABLE WITH IT'S LARGE (UP TO 1' LONG), WHITELY HAIRY LEAVES FLAPPING LIKE MULE'S EARS, THIS BEAUTIFUL SUNFLOWER IS COMMON IN SAGEBRUSH FLATS AND JEFFREY PINE FORESTS. TO DIFFERENTIATE MULE'S EARS FROM THEIR EASTSIDE LOOK-ALIKE, ARROWLEAF BALSAMROOT, JUST LOOK TO THE NAMES. BALSAMROOT'S DEEP GREEN LEAVES ARE SHAPED LIKE AN ARROW WITH A DEEP NOTCH AT THE BASE, WHILE MULE'S EAR LEAVES ARE FUZZY WITHOUT A BASAL NOTCH.



Rosy Penstemon

Penstemon floridus

SNAPDRAGON FAMILY

ROSY PENSTEMON IS COMMON ALONG WESTGARD PASS AND THE BRISTLECONE PINE ROAD IN THE WHITE MOUNTAINS. THIS PENSTEMON'S VIBRANTLY PINK FLOWERS STAND OUT ALONG A TALL STALK RISING FROM A BASE OF FLESHY, TOOTHED, GREY GREEN LEAVES. WHEN ENCOUNTERING A PENSTEMON, TAKE A LOOK INSIDE THEIR SLEEPING BAG-LIKE TUBULAR FLOWERS; MAYBE YOU'LL FIND A SNORING BEE.



Rabbitbrush

Chrysothamnus nauseosus

SUNFLOWER FAMILY

RELATIVELY INCONSPICUOUS FOR MUCH OF THE YEAR, THE YELLOW BLOOMS OF RABBITBRUSH BRIGHTEN FALL ACROSS THE GREAT BASIN. THE TUFTS OF YELLOW FLOWERS STUCK ON THE END OF DRAB GREEN, NARROW-LEAVED STEMS CREATE PROBLEMS FOR FALL ALLERGY SUFFERERS AND NECTAR FOR LATE SEASON INSECTS.



Pennyroyal

Monardella odoratissima

MINT FAMILY

NEXT TIME YOU'RE HUFFING AND PUFFING UP A SIERRA TRAIL, KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR THIS TUFTED PURPLE-FLOWERED MINT. A DEEP SNIFF WILL TAKE YOUR MIND OFF YOUR HEAVING LUNGS AND GET YOU MOVING AGAIN. LIKE ALL MINTS, PENNYROYAL HAS SQUARE STEMS AND OPPOSITE (GROWING DIRECTLY ACROSS FROM ONE ANOTHER IN PAIRS OF TWO) LEAVES.

all photos: Paul McFarland

Eastside Wildflowers



Mariposa Lily

Calochortus leichtlinii

LILY FAMILY

THE GENUS NAME *CALOCHORTUS* IS GREEK FOR "BEAUTIFUL GRASS," AND ANYONE COMING UPON A MARIPOSA LILY KNOWS THIS IS TRULY ONE BEAUTIFUL GRASS. NOT REALLY A TRUE "GRASS," MEMBERS OF THE LILY FAMILY ARE GROUPED, ALONG WITH GRASSES, AS MONOCOTS – A LARGE GROUPING OF PLANTS CHARACTERIZED BY, AMONG OTHER THINGS, FLOWERS WITH PETALS AND OTHER PARTS IN GROUPS OF THREE AND PARALLEL (AS OPPOSED TO NET-LIKE) LEAF VEINS.



Lemmon's Paintbrush

Castilleja lemmonii

SNAPDRAGON FAMILY

PART OF A GROUP OF DIMINUTIVE FLOWERS JOKINGLY CALLED BELLY-FLOWERS (GUESS WHY!), LEMMON'S PAINTBRUSH MAKES UP WHAT IT MAY LACK IN HEIGHT WITH ELECTRIC PURPLE COLOR. STANDING OUT AGAINST THE GREEN GRASSES AND SEDGES IT SHARES HIGH SIERRA WET MEADOWS WITH, THE BRIGHT BEAUTY OF THIS PAINTBRUSH MAKES YOU FORGET YOUR WET KNEES AS YOU BEND DOWN FOR A CLOSER LOOK.



Spiny Hopsage

Grayia spinosa

GOOSEFOOT FAMILY

THE CURIOUS FLOWERS OF SPINY HOPSAGE PROVE YOU DON'T NEED FLASHY PETALS TO BE EYE-CATCHING. WITH SMALL MALE FLOWERS ON ONE PLANT AND FLATTENED GREEN FEMALE FLOWERS TURNING RED WITH AGE ON ANOTHER SEPARATE PLANT, HOPSAGE EXEMPLIFIES WHAT BOTANISTS TERM A DIOECIOUS (GREEK FOR "TWO HOUSES") PLANT. RATHER THAN RELYING ON INSECTS ATTRACTED BY SHOWY FLOWERS, HOPSAGE AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GOOSEFOOT FAMILY RELY ON WIND TO SPREAD POLLEN FROM THE MALE TO FEMALE PLANTS.



Sulfur Buckwheat

Eriogonum umbellatum

BUCKWHEAT FAMILY

A FAVORITE OF LITTLE BUTTERFLIES, THIS YELLOW-FLOWERED SHRUB IS JUST ONE OF THE MANY BUCKWHEATS GRACING THE EASTERN SIERRA. THE YELLOW POM POMS OF FLOWERS ARE HELD ON THE ENDS OF THIN STALKS RISING IN A BUNCH FROM A WHORL OF SCOOP-SHAPPED, HAIRY LEAVES.



Rayless Daisy

Erigeron aphanactis

SUNFLOWER FAMILY

RIISING ONLY A FEW INCHES FROM THE GROUND, THIS LITTLE SUNFLOWER COMPLETELY LACKS THE RAY FLOWERS CHARACTERISTIC OF MOST SUNFLOWERS. FOUND FROM THE OWENS VALLEY TO THE SLOPES OF TIOGA PASS, TIME SPENT NEAR THIS BALD LITTLE DAISY USUALLY YIELDS A NICE DIVERSITY OF VISITING INSECTS.

More Resources

Wildflowers of the Eastern Sierra by Laird R. Blackwell, Lone Pine Press – A great, easy to use flower guide for our side of the mountain and adjoining deserts.

A Sierra Nevada Flora by Norman F. Wheeden, Wilderness Press – A fairly comprehensive guide and good tool to learn how to key out flowers.

The Jepson Manual - Higher Plants of California edited by James C. Hickman, UC Press – Known as the California botanist's bible for good reason.

Calphotos.berkeley.edu – A great searchable photo database to check plant or animal identifications.

Calflora.org – A wonderfully informative source for quality information on California's native flora.

The Eastern Sierra

SIMPLY PUT, STEWARDSHIP STARTS WITH PEOPLE. Without the hundreds of people who have picked up everything from a candy wrapper to a shovel across our public lands, stewardship is just a word. Friends of the Inyo Americorps member, Maria Dzul, interviewed three volunteer Corps members to provide a brief glimpse into the people who make citizen stewardship a reality.

Name: Paul Landsberg

FOI Involvement: Intern for a month in June of '07 plus GIS work for classes the past two semesters at Bowdoin College

Interests: Ultimate Frisbee, backpacking and environmental history

Favorite snack: Butterfinger bars

Description of Work: I used ArcGIS mapping software to analyze the density of roads in the Inventoried Roadless Areas in the Inyo National Forest for a fall semester ArcGIS class. Now I'm building an interface for people to easily post pictures with comments using Google Maps.

Motivation for Work: As a California ex-patriot spending time in Maine, it is nice for me to do service learning work on places I care about through an organization I support. Working on the issues in the Inyo National Forest allows me to stay connected to a place I love and intend to return to after college.



Name: Tom Budlong

FOI Stewardship Involvement: Saline Tamarisk Removal trip and leading Congressional tours to desert haunts.

Interests: Most of all, backpacking and day hiking in remote desert areas. After that, public lands management, volunteering, and desert preservation issues.

Favorite Snack while working out in the field: Land Cruiser Stew. Two cans of whatever I can find in the back of



the Land Cruiser, mixed and heated on the propane stove set up on the tailgate.

Favorite task while out in the field: Discovering lost trails in the desert mountains.

And, yes, chainsawing and poisoning Tamarisk. Also, installing ORV control signing.

Most memorable experience: Being mooned by 14 Bighorn. They had scampered across the Surprise Canyon wash in front of me. They slowed to a walk when they decided I was not a threat after all, of course walking away from me, showing 14 white rumps.

Name: Jean Dillingham

FOI stewardship involvement: Fence removal on the moraine east of Parker Creek, restoration/delineation of campsites along upper and lower Deadman Creek, Saline Valley tamarisk removal.

Favorite task while out in the field: I'm listing two: exotic plant removal and campsite delineation/restoration.

I have been a "weed warrior" for more than 25 years.

Favorite snack while working out in the field: A combination of string cheese, dried fruit, and almonds.

Most memorable experience: I think that the Saline Valley trip was spectacular, with different viewpoints on getting rid of the Tamarisk. Some felt that the weed wrenches worked best, while others cut and painted stems with herbicide. Only time will tell which technique worked best. The most memorable part of the trip was when we all headed for the hot springs, and jumped in without benefit of swimsuits. Had we worn suits, we probably would have been asked to leave by the other "soakers."

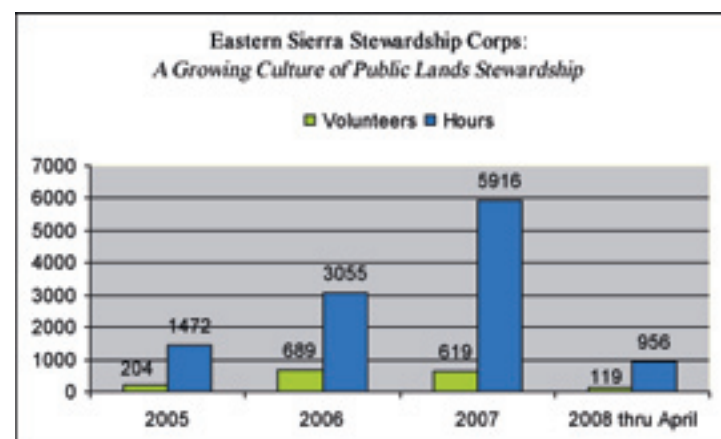


Become a Site Steward

ARE YOU A MEMBER OF THE EASTERN SIERRA STEWARDSHIP CORPS? If you have been a part of a Friends of the Inyo restoration project or monitoring team, then you are a Member! The only requirement is giving a few hours of your time to help protect and restore public lands.

Have you wanted to volunteer, but can't fit our scheduled work projects into your busy life? Is there a corner of the Eastern Sierra you love and visit once or twice a year? A place you know of in need of some TLC? If so, consider becoming a Site Steward with the Eastern Sierra Stewardship Corps.

Our Site Stewardship program allows you the freedom work on your own time and at your own pace on a place you love. Site Stewardship can include everything from invasive plant removal to monitoring of your favorite trail and even fence monitoring and tuning. We provide the tools, a repository for the data you collect and any other know-how you may need, while you provide your love of the land and willingness to give back. From the crest of the White Mountains to the shaded hollows of the Upper Owens River, there are thousands of pockets of public lands that will benefit from your attention. By becoming a site steward, you can pledge



to volunteer your chosen amount of hours and help the Stewardship Corps reach its goal of 1000 pledged citizen hours in 2008.

Adopt a site and become a Site Steward today. To Become a Site Steward, Contact Laura, 760-873-6500 or laura@friendsoftheinyo.org. Visit friendsoftheinyo.org and click on "Stewardship" to learn more about how you can give back to your public lands.

Stewardship Corps

Adventure Awaits

by Maria Dzul

It was your classic epic adventure, starring myself (as the hero of course), my coworker Darren (as the wise old sage), and my trusty steed (a two-wheel drive, government-owned pickup truck). We were about to embark on a journey full of enchantment, suspense, disappointment, brutality, sorrow, and enlightenment; we were going out on the Fish Slough Patrol.

It was one of the few sunny days in late January, and the golden grasses seemed to be reaching up to the clear blue sky. I gazed out the window at the gnarled boulders, half expecting to see a dinosaur

wonder how the loggerhead shrike developed this cruel behavior.

Our last few stops are checking for vandalism at different petroglyph sites. As I gaze at the Paiute rock etchings, I realize that I will never fully be able to understand the rich cultural history of Fish Slough, but that this mystery only adds to the appeal of the area.

I have since made many more visits to Fish Slough, and, the more I learn about the region, the more fascinating the area becomes. As a rare place where water is found in the desert, it is an ecological

**I never cease to be amazed at gross things
and start to wonder how the loggerhead shrike developed this cruel behavior.**

skeleton hidden between the rocks.

We stop at BLM spring, home to the endangered Owens pupfish. Though this pupfish was once ubiquitous in the Owens Valley, water diversion and introduction of non-native bass almost caused its extinction. As we brush the slimy algae off of the fish gate, I peer into the clear water, squinting for something that I imagine to look like an adorable, puppy-like fish. Then, crushing my hopes, Darren says, "I think they burrow under the mud during the winter."

We continue our drive along Eastside Road, when suddenly a bird darts in front of us and lands on a fence post.

"Darren, what is that?" I ask.

"Probably a Say's phoebe." He says as he pulls out his binoculars. "Wait, no, that's a loggerhead shrike," he says as he points out to the bird. "Though I've never seen them actually do it, they sometimes impale their prey on fence posts."

"Whoa, sweet!" I reply. I never cease to be amazed at gross things and start to

treasure. Its alkali meadows are home to threatened plants, it provides a resting point for migratory birds, and it is home to an endangered desert pupfish. In addition, I have had the privilege of organizing the Fish Slough Volunteer Patrol, a group of volunteers that conducts weekly monitoring on a rotating schedule. It has been fun getting to know them and hear about their own epic adventures.

To learn more about the Fish Slough Volunteer Patrol, please contact Maria (maria@friendsoftheinyo.org).



Recognizing the strong connection between the health of our public lands and the health of our local economy, the following businesses have stepped up and become founding members of the newly formed Eastern Sierra Stewardship Corps Business Support Program. When shopping around the Sierra, support those who support caring for your public lands.

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Hanz On Massage and Yoga

To learn more about how your business can help support active stewardship of our public lands, contact Darren at darren@friendsoftheinyo.org.

Pinedrops

Notes on issues affecting Eastern Sierra Public Lands

by Laura Chamberlin & Paul McFarland

Please, Fence Me Out

FOR THE PAST YEAR, Friends of the Inyo staff and volunteers worked hard to complete a nearly 100 acre cattle exclusion fence around the lower reach of Cottonwood Creek in the southeastern White Moun-

of the BLM contracted with Friends of the Inyo to fence a portion of Cottonwood to allow the riparian habitat to return to health. In addition to building the fence, the Eastern Sierra Water Watchers are monitoring water quality to track improvement of stream



photo: Paul McFarland

A female leopard lizard waiting for the completion of the Cottonwood fence.

tains. Cottonwood Creek, proposed for Wild and Scenic River designation, is the largest stream draining America's largest desert mountain range. Many people are familiar with the upper reaches of this wonderful and unique stream - the Paiute cutthroat trout and giant granite boulders are certainly something to remember. This habitat restoration project, however, has been downstream, out where the Mojave Desert greets the Great Basin in southern Fish Lake Valley.

Over the years, cattle on the surrounding public lands grazing allotment have degraded the stream through the loss of vegetation and increased erosion along fragile creekbanks. The Ridgcrest Field Office

health with the exclusion of cattle. (See page 6 for more information about the Eastern Sierra Water Watchers).

For anyone who has worked on barb wire fence, you know this is no easy task. Add in granite rocks; hard, dry soil; deep washes; and glaring sun, and you have yourself a very difficult job. But volunteers have come out - some with reasons for a tetanus shot, but all with smiles. Some have even come back for a second, third, and even fourth trip. It has taken nearly 1200 work hours to build over 3000 meters (nearly 10,000 feet) of fence. Hopefully, by the time you read this, we will have strung the last wire and will be enjoying the sounds of this year's

breeding birds. This restoration project not only benefits the great diversity of migrating birds and other wildlife along Cottonwood, but also the many people who visit this wonderful place on the Eastside of the White Mountains.

The CAT and the Maps

AS OUR PRESIDENT FRANK STEWART wrote about in his biannual President's Message (see page 2), March was a month of CATs and maps. As readers of the *Journal* know, one of the most critical (and to some, controversial) happenings around the Inyo National Forest has been the Forest's Travel Management process.

Also known as Route Designation, the Inyo and all other National Forest's across the Nation are working to "designate a stable, sustainable system of roads, trails and areas for people using motorized wheeled vehicles on National Forest lands and curtail cross-country use which leads

to route proliferation and resource damage."

Despite years of animosity, what many would consider traditionally opposing factions — "motorized" on one side and "conservationists" on the other — sat down this spring to "determine if there are mutually acceptable options for trail routes on the Inyo National Forest that provide for safe and environmentally responsible use."

Dubbed the CAT or Collaborative Alternative Team, dozens of people met in open meetings to pour over the Inyo's Route Inventory Maps and see if we could find some agreement. By committing ourselves to focus on site-specific issues and operate in an atmosphere of good faith and mutual respect, we were able to move beyond traditional philosophy and work together to craft a community driven alternative for the current Route Designation process.

At the end of the month, we were able to agree on over 130 route specific suggestions. We identified roads for closure,



photo: Bryce Wheeler

Smiling CAT members.

Pinedrops...continued from page 13

roads that should be added to the Inyo National Forest System, routes that need maintenance, and for a small handful of routes, we simply agreed to disagree.

In the end, members of the CAT "did not agree on every route nor bridge every philosophical gap, but we [did] agree that the best route to preserving what we love on the Inyo National Forest is to figure out how to work together to create and sustain real change on the ground." To read the full CAT statement and specific route suggestions, visit friendsoftheinyo.org and click on *Preservation*.

Huge thanks to our outstanding facilitators Austin McInerny, Allan Pietrasanta, and Danna Stroud, as well as Marty Hornick of the Inyo National Forest who provided the information needed for an informed discussion. We also extend our appreciation to the Desert Mountain Resource Conservation and Development District for pulling us all

together.

Plan on joining us all on September 27th for a collaborative project in celebration of National Public Lands Day and keep an eye out for opportunities to comment on the Inyo's Travel Management Plan.

National Landscape Conservation System moves closer to permanence

A HEAPING HANDFUL OF BLM lands in the Eastern Sierra moved a bit closer to lasting protection this Spring with the passage of the National Landscape Conservation System Act by the U.S. House of Representatives.

First established in 2000, the National Landscape Conservation System's (NLCS) mission is to conserve, protect and restore nationally significant landscapes managed by the Bureau of Land Management. A Congressional designation will impart the permanence

necessary for the NLCS to fully realize its goal of preserving some of America's wildest public lands.

In addition to containing designated Wilderness and Wild & Scenic Rivers, the NLCS provides dedicated funding and recognition to tracts of land known as Wilderness Study Areas - parcels of public land generally 5000 acres or greater containing outstanding wilderness characteristics (naturalness, solitude and unique ecological, geological or cultural attributes). Once identified, Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) are managed by the BLM to maintain and conserve their individual wild character.

Here on the western edge of the Great Basin, the Eastern Sierra is blessed with 19 WSAs totaling nearly 236,000 acres. As always, the numbers don't tell the story, but names can help. WSA status and the NLCS provide an important layer of preservation for many amazing places such as Granite Mountain, the Bodie Hills, Volcanic Tablelands, and Crater Mountain to name a few.

The next steps for the NLCS include passage of companion legislation in the Senate and reconciliation of any differences between the House and Senate Bill. Friends of the Inyo hopes the Senate version of the NLCS legislation contains the California Desert Conservation Area which was inadvertently left out of the House version. Huge thanks to the NLCS Congressional champions, including California's own Representative Mary

Bono Mack of Palm Springs.

To learn more about the Wilderness Study Areas hiding out around the Eastern Sierra visit friendsoftheinyo.org and click on *preservation*. To learn more about the National Landscape Conservation System visit conservationssystem.org.

Furnace Creek runs out of gas

WE'RE SURE WE HEARD mule deer, sage grouse and a bunch of resident bushtits heave a huge sigh of relief earlier this winter when the Ridgecrest Field Office of the BLM agreed with the numerous protests filed by conservation organizations and withdrew their Environmental Assessment and proposed Plan Amendment which would have paved the way to building a new off-road vehicle trail into this fragile desert oasis.

Long time readers of the *Journal* are no doubt familiar with the ongoing saga of Furnace Creek — a unique desert wetland draining the eastern slope of the White Mountains. Friends of the Inyo, along with the Center for Biological Diversity, Sierra Club, California Native Plant Society and Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility have been working to keep damaging off-road vehicle recreation out of the White Mountains' Furnace Creek for over a decade.

While we bet the Furnace Creek issue will rise again, we're hoping the wildlife who make this oasis home rest soundly knowing they have good friends locally and across the country.



photo: Paul McFarland

Welcome to Granite Mountain WSA.

Stewardship Journal

Pulling Weeds

by Todd Vogel

What is a weed? That's the question I asked my group of high school students as we started a five day service learning program in Death Valley National Park's Eureka Dunes. Our work that week ranged from restoring illegal roads, helping tune a barbed wire fence, campsite maintenance, and, yes, pulling weeds.

I often wonder what kids are expecting when they come on these trips. While the work done is what I think of as the "what" on stewardship trips, the "why" is as important as any work done on the ground. Why do we care about weeds? Why do we care about illegal tracks, why do we want the cows over there but not over here? Why did we come on this trip?

Trudging up the sand, I question my choice of short pants as a sand storm shows how these dunes are formed. Indian rice grass and other spring plants are everywhere but subtle, and if you don't pay attention, you'll squash dozens with each step. Soon the kids are walking on their tip-toes, carefully avoiding stepping on the new growth. I help them learn to distinguish our enemy of the day, Russian thistle (aka tumbleweed), and with the help of the Park botanist, show them plants that occur nowhere else in the world. Another question: how might the presence of these introduced plants affect these plants that only live here? Later that day we've cleared six acres of Russian thistle, easy but tedious work.

We do other work, too: part of the Park's mission is to protect its resources for us and future generations of us, as well as for

non-human inhabitants. There are many challenges in fulfilling this mission, only one of which is people driving vehicles where they're not supposed to. The tracks they leave are not only unsightly but fragment habitat, disturb and damage wildlife, and, if untreated, lead to more tracks and less and less vegetation. To break

a potentially expanding cycle of damage, we use rakes and brooms to remove illegal tracks before more people follow, and place signs, boulders and other gathered materials to delineate boundaries.

Fast forward a day and fifty miles, and we're out in the Butter-milk Country, east of Bishop. "How many of you eat beef?" I ask (I do). I'm doubtful that they've thought much about what goes into cattle production. I've asked the kids to help remove brush from along an exclusion fence so we can maintain it. We're basically clear-cutting brush along the fence, and the contrast between this work and the tip toeing out at the dunes is not lost on the students. The cows, I explain, like to be down near the creeks out here, where there's lots of grass and it's cooler, but in being there they erode the stream banks, degrade water quality and damage streamside habitat. Soon the kids are tuning fence like pros; a few more days practice and they'd be a lean, mean, fencing tuning machine.

Now it's the last day and time to head home. A few students lag behind, gathered in a group, kneeling over some object that I can't see. As I approach I see they're pulling weeds. Russian Thistle.



Four million down, 2 billion left to go.

photo: Todd Vogel

Special thanks and words from our Sponsors

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Stickers, canvas shopping bags and embroidered patches featuring Friends of the Inyo's beautiful new logo available now. Visit friendsoftheinyo.org to order yours today.



Thanks & Acknowledgements

National Forest Foundation for their support of the Eastern Sierra Stewardship Corps work in Wilderness through the Wilderness Stewardship Challenge program.

The newly formed **Sierra Nevada Conservancy** whose support funds the Water Watchers program and helped establish the Mono Basin Resource Stewardship program — a partnership between the Forest Service, Mono Lake Committee, California State Parks and Friends of the Inyo.

Patagonia Corporation, Eastern Sierra Audubon Society and the Sierra Club National Grazing Committee for contributing to the protection of the Buttermilk Wildlife Preserve and the riparian habitat of lower Cottonwood Creek on the east side of the White Mountains.

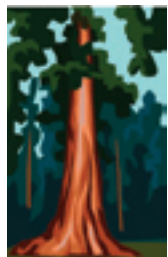
Dee Booth of Bishop for generously donating her Subaru Outback — our new workhorse to take staff, volunteers and supplies wherever work needs to be done. And it's even green!

Alpine Signs of Bishop for their help in producing the bronze Convict Lake Accessible fishing platform plaque and producing out new bumper stickers.

Mountain Light Gallery in Bishop for helping us host our first annual successful Wild and Scenic Film Festival this winter.

Our friends in Mammoth, **InTouch Microspa** and **Daylight's Healing Touch**, for using their businesses to raise money for conservation groups on the Eastside this Earth Day.

Get primed for Summer with Flowmotion Pilates Mat Classes each Wednesday from 5:30-6:30. Your \$10 donation supports Friends of the Inyo and Inyo Council of the Arts. Call Margy at 920-2332 for more info.



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Keri French made a donation in memory and celebration of Clem and Ruth Nelson.

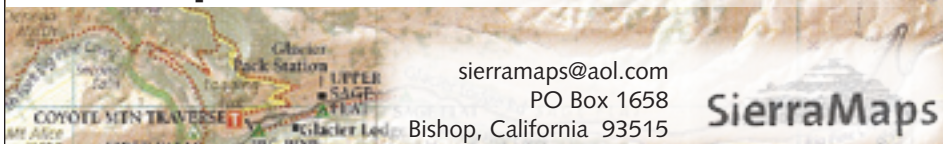
Vivian Mitchel donated in memory of Vivian M. Davis.

Joane E. Powell was remembered with a donation from Denise Waterbury, who was inspired last year by Ms. Powell's hike to the top of White Mountain Peak in her late 70s

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