



A Saline Valley sunset. Photo: Todd Vogel

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Riding the Omnibus

THE NATIONAL
LANDSCAPE
CONSERVATION SYSTEM
IN THE EASTERN SIERRA

Signed into law by President Obama on the last day of March 2009, the Omnibus Public Lands Bill of 2009, not only designated more Wilderness for the Eastern Sierra, but also protected over 28 million acres of lesser known wild places managed by the Bureau of Land Management. The Omnibus Bill gave legal weight to one of the BLM's best ideas: the National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) – a network of over 850 units of BLM-managed lands encompassing 28 million acres of what BLM calls "landscapes of the American spirit."

Here in the Eastern Sierra, we have our fair share of NLCS units: 17 designated wilderness areas such as the Piper Mountain Wilderness and the new Granite Mountain Wilderness; 17 Wilderness Study Areas including Crater Mountain WSA, south of Big Pine, and the complex of the remaining three WSAs in the Bodie Hills; and two Wild & Scenic Rivers, Cottonwood Creek in the Whites and the Amargosa River.

As with any designation, it will

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2009 Reflections and 2010 Views

By PAUL MCFARLAND, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Welcome to our first *Pine Nuts* for 2010. For those new to Friends of the Inyo, *Pine Nuts* is our bi-annual publication intended solely for our members: those of you who support our work through donations of critical and precious resources, money and time. Each ~~winter~~/spring edition of *Pine Nuts* ~~also~~ includes our Annual Report – an accounting of the financial health of Friends of the Inyo. As a member, you are in no small part responsible for both our financial health, as well as the health of our public lands from Mt. Whitney to Badwater to the crest of the White Mountains.

All things considered, 2009 ended with a fairly strong prognosis for sustaining the Eastern Sierra. With three new wilderness areas (the Granite Mountain, Owens River Headwaters and White Mountain wildernesses) and additions to three more (Hoover, John Muir and Ansel Adams wildernesses) future generations have gained the legal protection and promise of nearly half a million more acres of American's wild, natural heritage. Over sixty miles of free-flowing desert and mountain streams now also enjoy a new measure of security as Wild & Scenic Rivers.

While ~~the~~ some of the wildest places left in the Eastern Sierra were preserved as wilderness, the fate of ~~rest~~ of the Inyo National Forest was not left aside. 2009 also saw the creation of the first ever legally compliant, system of roads and trails for motorized ~~us~~ in the Forest's 100 year history. Finally, folks can be assured of what is and isn't a road – a boon for all Forest visitors (and homeowners, like black-backed woodpeckers, pine marten and bighorn), no matter if you consider yourself a motorized or foot-bound explorer.

The long-term health of our lands and our ability to get out and enjoy them isn't just realized through laws and regulation, but through the active hands of thousands of people. In 2009, 716 volunteers gave a total of 6039 hours of work back to our public lands in the form of trail maintenance, road improvement, trash clean up, invasive species removal, picnic table painting, stream restoration and more. Their work represents a donation of over \$122,289 back to our public lands.

In addition to this volunteerism, Friends of the Inyo employed two professional stewardship crews, as well as three Basin Stewards in 2009. These folks proved you can make a living ~~living~~ with the land – restoring illegal OHV trespass in the Owens River Headwaters, protecting fragile aspen groves and springs in the Glass Mountains, and restoring a historic ranch in the Mono Basin with lodgepole logs hand-felled and skinned from a local fire break.

2009 was quite a year.

Looking out the window at the sun setting over the Anchorite Hills behind Mono Lake, I know 2010 will be as well. We'll get signs in ~~g~~round for the new wilderness areas and enhance our road network through restoring what was closed and improving what was designated by the Inyo's travel management decision. As we move forward in planning the always busy summer stewardship season, I see Friends of the Inyo caring for our public lands in more ways than ever before, from travel management implementation to engaging (and employing) local young people and an ever-expanding corps of volunteers.

With your continued support, we can get these things ~~a~~ and more ~~a~~ done.



STEVE MAKES SEVEN: A NEW BOARD MEMBER

Friends of the Inyo is happy to have a seventh board member. Steve McLaughlin is a botanist and retired Professor of Arid Lands Studies from the University of Arizona. Steve's research and teaching focused on economic botany, plant taxonomy, ecology, and biogeography. He worked extensively on the plant life of southeastern Arizona, and also taught and did research in Argentina, Chile, and Honduras. Steve and his wife, Janice Bowers, also a botanist, moved to the Owens Valley from Tucson in early 2007. They had been vacationing in the Eastern Sierra since the early 1980s, and are now enjoying the great hiking, botanizing, birding and occasionally some fishing that the area has to offer. Steve is also president of the Bristlecone Chapter of the California Native Plant Society.

Staff & Board News

This winter has been a season of transition. We've got some new faces at Friends of the Inyo, and some familiar faces in new places.

Oustanding Operations – Meet Brooke!

Brooke McKenna knows she has at least another decade before she can consider herself an Eastside local. She and her husband moved to California in 2003 from New Hampshire where Brooke worked as the Director of Operations for

the Environmental Hazards Management Institute, a nonprofit education organization. Since moving here, she has been very involved with the Eastern Sierra nonprofit community, serving as a Board Member for the Mammoth Lakes Chamber of Commerce, Mammoth Community Foundation, Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access and Mono Council for the Arts. Brooke is dedicated to volunteerism and has been an ac-

tive volunteer for several Eastern Sierra nonprofit organizations, including Disabled Sports Eastern Sierra, High Sierra Energy Foundation and Mammoth Lakes Jazz Jubilee.

Brooke received her B.A. in Environmental Studies with an emphasis in Human Ecology from Prescott College in Prescott, Arizona. Brooke's statistical analysis experience in college led to work as a Research Analyst for a market research company and as a Project Manager on a multi-year Department of the Interior Environmental Occupation Research grant. Upon moving to Mammoth Lakes, Brooke took a hiatus from nonprofit employment to work for Mammoth Brewing Company for a few years, where she learned that the beer industry has a lot in common with the nonprofit world: a whole lot of passion without a whole lot of resources!

Her background in social, academic, and governmental research along with management in both private industry and nonprofits helped Brooke start her own business doing grant writing, book-keeping and event production

for area businesses and nonprofit organizations in 2007. She and her husband joined forces with a few local friends to start Eastside Magazine in 2008, a publication doing its best to capture the essence of life in the Eastern Sierra. In the middle of all that, Brooke and her husband Mike somehow found time to start a family. Having recently relocated to Bishop with Mike, son Jack, their old dog Amelia and very energetic kitten Dory, Brooke is enjoying the more relaxed pace of life in Inyo County and is very excited to have joined the team at Friends of the Inyo. She'll be manning the office at 699 West Line Street and encourages everyone to drop in and say hi.

Americorps Again



Andrew Schurr returns to FOI for another year of stewardship

During his first year with FOI, Andrew got a taste for the challenges that face the Eastern Sierra. He's signed up for a second year as an Americorps member, continuing to address those challenges. This year he will ~~be continuing to~~ focus on wilderness stewardship and working with diverse volunteer groups in sensitive wilderness areas.

Andrew will also work to create and implement several front country programs based around reducing recreational impacts at places such as the Buttermilk region west of Bishop and the Volcanic Tablelands. He'll be

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PINE NUTS

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 1

SPRING 2010

Biannual Update from Friends of the Inyo

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Wano Urbonas, *Conservation Director*



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



Left to Right Brooke and Jack McKenna, Drew Foster, Wano Urbanas

working with other FOI staff and partners to inventory road systems on BLM lands and to help implement travel management plans and new wilderness area survey and signage. This summer, he will be continuing the Volunteer Wilderness Campsite inventory program and hopefully expanding it to other wilderness areas on the Eastside (if anyone is interested please contact andrew@friendsoftheinyo.org). Andrew will continue to administer the Fish Slough Volunteer Patrol program and looks to expand the program. "I am very excited to serve a second year in the Eastern Sierra and to continue to explore and work in this spectacular area," Andrew says.

Bueno Wano – FOI's First-Ever Conservation Director

Wayne "Wano" Urbanas drifts west to FOI from the Rocky Mountain region, where he has been entrenched in environmental health programming for Montana and Colorado communities over the past 14 years. Serving constituents in tourist-based economies including Steamboat Springs, Durango and Bozeman, Wano introduced aggressive environmental pro-

gramming that minimized the negative impacts of coal-fired power plants, coal-fired locomotives and coalbed methane production (notice a trend here?). In terms of "significance levels" (a term used constantly by the regulating community), Wano poses the question "How much is too much?"—in terms of pollutant thresholds, visibility impacts, watershed degradation, soil contamination and, ultimately, quality of life.

Working at both the county and state levels, Wano's creative approaches to pollution prevention (P2) have included Developing Remedial Sewage Utilization Systems (DrSus), drafting Air Quality Management Plans, developing watershed "liquid linkages," enabling citizens to take responsibility and providing stewardship potential for local and regional air, land and water resources.

A brief stint with the Hawaii Army National Guard's Environmental Division honed Wano's environmental assessment/NEPA skills and gave him a deeper appreciation of biodiversity and ecosystem protection. Yet he and his wife Linda yearned for a return to four-season normalcy that includes snow, fall foliage and wildlife viewing (without a snorkel). Having been a frequent recreational visitor to the Eastern Sierra as well as being an avid trail runner, Wano jumped at the opportunity to apply what he re-

fers to as his "environmental leadership, fellowship and followship skills" in the nonprofit arena for Friends of the Inyo.

Wano's favorite Chinese fortune cookie message: "The intent is not to see through people, but to see people through."

His least favorite: "Look over your shoulder when walking alone at night!" (Seriously, he said that the dinner was great, until he cracked open dessert!)

From his former Peace Corps Congo daze, Wano can sing One Hundred Bottles of Beer on the Wall in Lingala dialect. Wano and Linda plan on calling the Bishop area their new home.

Drew Foster – Beyond the Basin

Excited to kick off the new year, Drew has many projects in store for public land enthusiasts of the Eastern Sierra! Starting off as a new Americorps member for Friends of the Inyo, he is proud to be a representative of a great program, and expand his opportunities to work on public lands. The project he's most looking forward to is: a new trail to be built around Gull Lake on the June Lake loop, kicking off the summer for National Trails Day, Saturday, June 5; and he's also looking forward to all new Summer of Stewardship events in

the Mammoth area for 2010. Large snowfall gets Drew out backcountry skiing as often as possible, exploring the Jeffrey pines with a whole new perspective, and has him eagerly awaiting floral blooms from the desert to alpine peaks beginning in a couple months. Drew is also excited to explore and share the new Wilderness Additions recently enacted into law. Look out 2010, it's a whole new year for Friends of the Inyo, and we're ready and rearin' to go!

For those of you who didn't meet Drew when he worked seasonally as FOI's Mammoth Lakes Basin Steward in 2008 and 2009, here's some background. Hailing from the beaches of Malibu, the redwood forest, the city by the bay, and the Eastern Sierra, Drew has a broad and holistic view of California. He is a lumberjack, a floral enthusiast, professional rock skipper, balloon aficionado, and an avid climber of trees. He has worked on sustainability issues and ecological restoration for several years, and is committed to teaching others about the natural world, and fostering a deeper respect and excitement about the land. His power animal is the pika; favorite color: slate gray; favorite food: strawberries; favorite plant family: Polygonaceae (Buckwheat); favorite plant family to eat: Brassicaceae (Mustard); favorite activity: the deep and profound activity of nothing. So now you know.

Solar Park for Owens Valley?

BY MIKE PRATHER

Square miles of solar panels, or mirrors, would have huge impacts on the visual landscape of the Owens Valley. At the same time it would be reducing carbon emissions for the benefit of our planet. ~~More and more~~ many environmental groups like Friends of the Inyo are facing this dilemma across the country. Can an acceptable balance be found?

The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) is proposing large scale solar for areas on Owens Lake and also off the lakebed east of the Owens River opposite Lone Pine and Independence. At Owens Lake the technology would be photovoltaic (PV) while off the lake the form might include solar thermal. Los Angeles has committed to stopping the use of

coal for power generation and it is looking for alternative energy sources. At Owens Lake, Los Angeles is seeking permission to build a pilot solar project of 80 acres which, if shown to produce power as well as control dust, might expand to 20 square miles or more. The prospect of saving water from dust control while producing revenue is very appealing. In addition LADWP has publicly committed to protection of significant wetland habitat at Owens Lake plus some revenue sharing as part of the project as a whole. This possibility has huge appeal to environmental groups. Fewer impacts are present at Owens Lake than at sites away from the lake.

Los Angeles has stated that it could use up to 500 megawatts of

solar energy added to its power grid, but the size of its proposed Owens Valley 'solar park' is between 3 and 5 gigawatts (each gigawatt is equal to 1,000 megawatts). Why such a difference? The explanation is that Los Angeles hopes to lease out some of its land on the east side of the Owens River to other energy producers such as Edison and Pacific Gas & Electric for them to produce their own solar energy. This could include solar thermal as well as photovoltaic (PV).

While the possibility of large ~~tracks~~ of wildlife habitat gaining protection at Owens Lake make solar projects there seem more interesting, the prospect of large scale solar covering much of the southern Owens Valley's east side is troubling. Undis-

turbed habitat that supports Le Conte's thrasher, possibly Mojave ground squirrel and sensitive plant species should not be ~~scraped~~ in order to cover it with square miles of solar. Other more disturbed sites exist in the Owens Valley and they should be studied as well. Los Angeles has capacity for only 500 MW of solar power which it can have at Owens Lake along with more for its solar partners. Should the ~~rest~~ Owens Valley become an energy colony for the rest of California and the Southwest?

Solar power at Owens Lake and elsewhere in the Owens Valley will take months, if not years, to be studied before final decisions are made. Expect more updates as the story develops.



LADWP's proposal would have solar panels covering the southeastern Owens Valley. Photo: Mike Prather

Riding the Omnibus continued from page 1

take people on the ground to actually implement the goal of the NLCS: to conserve, protect, and restore nationally significant landscapes that have outstanding cultural, ecological, and scientific values for the benefit of current and future generations."

With a grant from the newly formed National Conservation System Alliance (ourconservationlegacy.org), Friends of the Inyo will help bring ~~on~~ spirit of the NLCS alive this year through a strategic program designed to improve the health of NLCS units on the ground, improve local and regional knowledge of this system of protected landscapes, and highlight some of the remarkable places preserved by this national conservation network.

HERE ARE A FEW WAYS WE'LL ACCOMPLISH THOSE GOALS:

Road inventories: Building on our successful route inventories that help assure a sound system of designated roads on the Inyo National Forest, Friends of the Inyo staff and volunteers will be heading out to inventory all roads in and around NLCS units in

the Eastern Sierra, as well as checking to ensure new Wilderness boundaries are signed appropriately. These inventories will form the foundation of our work to ensure the local BLM finally designates an appropriate and legally compliant system of roads in the coming few years.

Stewardship projects: We'll be organizing a number of volunteer projects to benefit NLCS units, such as tamarisk removal from desert springs in the Argus Mountains Wilderness (see the events page for details) and ongoing patrols in the Fish Slough WSA.

Exploration trips: From Granite Mountain to the Bodie Hills to the Volcanic Tableland, ~~on~~ of the best ways to ~~get to~~ protect an area is to get people out into them.


Check our web calendar and our monthly emails for dates. If you'd like to help breathe some real life into the local units of the National Conservation System, please contact Andrew at Andrew@friends-of-the-ino.org or 760-873-6500. 



Photo: Mike Prather

Spring Events

April 1–3

Saline Valley Stewardship

Join an intrepid team of invasive species fighters for strenuous but rewarding work in the canyons of the Inyo Mountains. Email todd@friendsoftheinyo.org for more information.

April 2–3

Banff Mountain Film Festival

Join Friends of the Inyo for two nights of the famous festival, hosted by Wilson's Eastside Sports, with different film programs each night. 7 PM at the Tri-County Fairgrounds in Bishop. Tickets \$10. More info at www.wilsonseastside-sports.com

April 17

Mammoth Mountain Earth Day Celebration

Slide on spring snow, then come to Canyon Lodge for a festival

celebrating 40 years of Earth Day. Friends of the Inyo will be part of the fun.

April 24

Grouse Mountain Hike

Slouching beneath Humphreys and Basin, Grouse Mountain is a teeny hill in the Buttermilk area, out of Bishop, barely worth climbing. Or is it? See for yourself on this all day adventure through the Upper Buttermilk, with Todd Vogel as your guide. It should be a fine early spring walk with lots of migrant birds recently arrived.

Meet at 9AM at the junction of the Buttermilk Road and West Line Street (Hwy 168). Bring food/water for the day. Due to thick brush, long pants are recommended.

May 1

Owens Lake Big Day Bird Census

Help us census the migrating

shorebirds and waterfowl at Owens Lake. We will create a one-day snapshot of the lake's bird populations that will help with management and protection. Be an active part of this unique event at the Owens Lake Important Bird Area. At the day's end there will be a tally and lots of food and socializing. Plan to spend the weekend in Lone Pine for more birding as well as the exploring of such places as the Manzanar National Historic Site, the Lone Pine Film History Museum and the Lower Owens River Project.

Sign up by contacting Mike Prather (mprather@lonepinetv.com) and 760.876.5807.

June 8

Black Canyon Hike/ International Migratory Bird Day

Celebrate International Migratory Bird Day with this strenuous and stunning hike from the bristlecone pines to the dark defile of Black Canyon in the White Mountains.

Save the Dates!

It's not too early to start making summer plans. Consider making Friends of the Inyo part of your vacation, and give back while you get out and enjoy the Sierra's summer glory. Check the calendar at www.FriendsoftheInyo.org for single-day stewardship events around Mammoth, or join us for a new EVOLVE volunteer vacation to the Ansel Adams and John Muir Wilderness areas. Friends of the Inyo members receive a discount!

August 1-7

EVOLVE at Thousand Island Lake

August 19-21

EVOLVE at Steelhead Lake (McGee Creek Canyon)

September 25

Member Party/National Public Lands Day

Meet at the Schulman Grove Visitors Center (off Highway 168) at 8AM or at the corner of Highways 395 and 168, just north of Big Pine, at 7AM. No dogs, please. Email paulmc@friendsoftheinyo.org for more information.

June 5

National Trails Day Projects

We'll kick off another summer of stewardship and celebrate National Trails Day with the construction of the Gull Lake Trail, in June Lake. For more stewardship adventure, head to the Golden Trout Wilderness for a trail project with the Backcountry Horsemen of California. Stay tuned for details on both.

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Foundation Donors

California Wilderness Coalition
Mammoth Lakes Trails & Public Access [Mono County](#)
National Forest Foundation
Patagonia
Sierra Nevada Conservancy
Town of Mammoth Lakes
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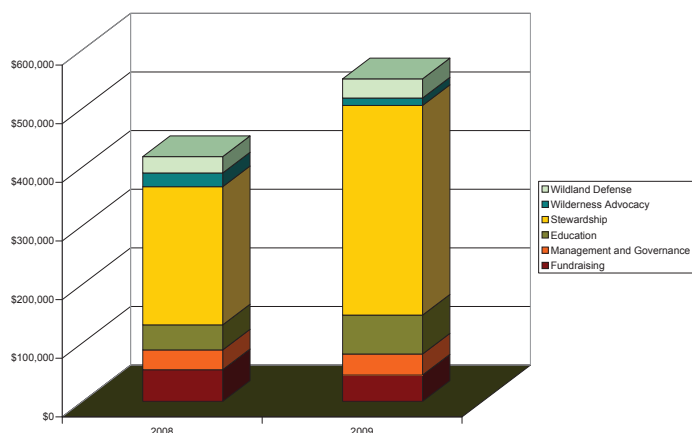
Memorial List

Robert & Carol Bergquist, in memory of Bob Durkee
David and Carlene Callahan, in memory of Bob Durkee
Candice and Ken Craig, in memory of Bob Durkee
Naomi Cridebring, in memory of Bob Durkee
Dan Dufek, in memory of Bob Durkee
Martha Durkee, in memory of Bob Durkee
Bonnie Ford, in memory of Bob Durkee
L Gates, in memory of Bob Durkee
Gary & Kimberly Lee, in memory of Bob Durkee
Donna McAndrews, in memory of Scott McAndrews
Maynard Morvay, in memory of Bob Durkee
Carlyn Pheil, in memory of Bob Durkee
Larry and Linda Smock, in memory of Bob Durkee

2009 Financials

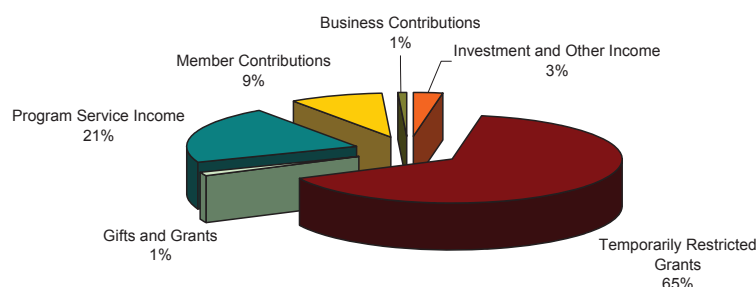
PROGRAM EXPENSES

	2008	2009
Fundraising	\$53,957	\$44,878
Management and Governance	\$33,705	\$35,845
<i>Total Supporting Services</i>	\$87,662	\$80,723
Education	\$42,742	\$66,381
Stewardship	\$235,743	\$357,537
Wilderness Advocacy	\$23,388	\$12,689
Wildland Defense	\$27,866	\$32,709
<i>Total Program Expenses</i>	\$329,739	\$469,316
Total Expenses	\$417,402	\$550,040



SUPPORT AND REVENUE

	2008	2009
Temporarily Restricted Grants	\$144,100	\$402,800
Gifts and Grants	\$25,000	\$8,500
Program Service Income	\$77,808	\$132,230
Member Contributions	\$47,165	\$54,030
Business Contributions	\$9,105	\$5,328
Investment and Other Income	\$12,115	\$17,556
Total Support and Revenue	\$315,293	\$620,443



BALANCE SHEET

	Jan 1, 2009	Dec 31, 2009
Assets		
Cash and Temporary Investments	\$329,411	\$391,490
Other Current Assets	\$10,910	\$18,547
Fixed Assets Less Depreciation	\$11,037	\$11,037
Total Assets	\$351,358	\$421,074
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities	\$6,142	\$6,158
Equity		
Unrestricted Assets	\$179,961	\$221,805
Temporarily Restricted Assets	\$165,254	\$193,111
Total Liabilities and Equity	\$351,358	\$421,074

In-Kind Contributions

Volunteer Hours	639	\$122,290
Board Hours	1649.25	\$37,580
Total In-Kind Hours Contributed	2288.25	\$159,870

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