

# Jeffrey Pine JOURNAL

SPRING 2015 | VOLUME XIII, ISSUE I

## Shorebirds

of the Eastern Sierra

## Get Out

Pat Keyes Trail

## The Season Ahead

Caring for special places



THE JEFFREY PINE JOURNAL  
VOLUME XIII, ISSUE I, SPRING 2015

NEWSLETTER OF  
**Friends of the Inyo**



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



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**COVER PHOTO**

Wildflowers and the Minarets by Sam Roberts. The Ritter Range in the Ansel Adams Wilderness is a familiar sight to travelers in Mono County. In spring and early summer the viewpoint at Minaret Vista is a reliable spot to view beautiful blooms of wildflowers, with the jagged crest of the Minarets as a backdrop.

PHOTO: Sam Roberts

*Inyo* is a Paiute word meaning "dwelling place of the Great Spirit." For us, this dwelling place extends from the bottom of Death Valley to the top of Mount Whitney, from Owens Lake to Topaz Lake, from the crest of the Sierra Nevada to the roof of the Great Basin atop the White Mountains. *The Jeffrey Pine Journal*, named after the Eastern Sierra's most aromatic conifer, is distributed free to all members of Friends of the Inyo and wherever great spirits tend to dwell.

# President's Message

March 2015

The Eastern Sierra backcountry beckons us with sparkling lakes, granite peaks, and the bluest of skies. There can be a sense of *merging* with the grand scheme of the Universe when engaged with our wild places. However, deep down we *know* that Mother Nature is indifferent to all creatures that inhabit Her. How suddenly the sense of well being can change. On February 6, 2015, the landscape many call home became a fire storm instantaneously raging through forest and village. In the aftermath of the Round Fire, our hearts ache for all of our friends and members who have lost so much to the merciless forces that are.

Not to forget this devastating event, we will again look to the mountains for solace as summer approaches. If you are seeking new adventures plan to explore in the White Mountains. Boundary Peak (13,140) on the northern end is the highest point in Nevada. Blanco Mountain (11,278) is in the middle of the southern portion of the White Mountains and can be hiked easily in a day. The views up and down the range include everything from White Mountain Peak in the north to the Inyo Mountains in the south. The view of the Sierra is incomparable. The White Inyo Bridge extends from Blanco to the south forming a critical bridge between the Great Basin and the Mojave Desert. This bridge provides an essential path for wildlife and plant species as they adapt to a changing climate.

Though I would like to keep these places secret, sharing them allows more folks to appreciate and preserve them for future generations. It doesn't matter where you travel, get outside to walk, bike, camp, explore, and enjoy our irreplaceable public lands. Tread lightly and be especially careful with camp fires.

Happy Trails, **Sydney**



Boundary Peak

Photo:  
Dennis Schumacher

# Executive Director's Update

by Laura Beardsley

It's been another interesting winter in the Eastern Sierra- another season of drought, and another year of praying for a March miracle. The lack of snow has brought spring on early in Inyo County. Fruit trees are blooming near Bishop and desert wildflowers are popping out for display. At Friends of the Inyo, we're gearing up for another busy spring and summer including the first-ever Owens Lake Bird Festival in April. At the same time, we're steadily working for the protection and responsible management of your public lands. With General Management Plan Revision in process on the Inyo National Forest and renewable energy development plans coursing through Inyo County, it's an important time to be involved.

We are proud of our work, but we couldn't do it without our members and supporters whose contributions make it possible. Thank you to everyone who helped us beat our fundraising goal in 2015 and to everyone who's considering joining our efforts now. There's lots of great work to be done and millions of acres of public lands to care for and protect in the Eastern Sierra. Thank you for being part of a vibrant future for this amazing place.

## Ruminations on Wilderness by James Wilson

My father first took me backpacking in Kings Canyon National Park in 1953. A five year old never had more fun, hiking, fishing, and camping with my dad. Since then it has been a summer tradition with my friends and family to spend time in the high country. A map of the range would be crisscrossed with our wanderings. We would note the days spent without seeing another human, apart from our party. And some of our trips, quite remote, were very fine and had abundant solitude.

In the last decade I have noted a change in my attitude towards seeing others in wild places. While still treasuring the days alone, I have taken new delight in meeting folks on the trails. It is clear that it is imperative that we have a substantial constituency for Wilderness if we expect it to survive the vicissitudes of modern politics and economics. Simply stated there cannot be too many supporters of wild places. Either we develop these supporters or the wild will not survive.

This last summer Kay and I went in the Onion Valley trailhead, over Kearsarge Pass, and down to the John Muir Trail through Rae Lakes. Eventually we came out Sawmill Pass. And we saw folks, lots of them. At times there was an abundance of them. But with my new eyes I saw them

as fellow backpackers in Kings Canyon National Park, and potential supporters of wild places. Many of these people were John Muir Trail hikers, thru-hikers. They start in Yosemite Valley, or Tuolumne Meadows, and walk to the summit of Mt. Whitney. It is a long journey, and by the time they get to the section we were walking, they have been out for two to three weeks. The Trail has sifted out the weak, the remaining ones are strong, tanned, with gear perhaps a little threadbare, especially shoes, and they almost without exception looked happy, sometimes very happy. As we passed, they going south, we going north, we talked to them. It was good to hear their stories, and see the euphoria on their faces. They were just a few days from their goal, and the trail had been good to them.

It is my hope that folks using the John Muir Trail will in the future be ardent supporters for our National Parks and the Wilderness Preservation System. I know some of them are supporters already, and hopefully some of those who started out on the Trail as an athletic challenge, will be converted to supporters of the wild.

So when you go hiking, be glad for company, they are potential defenders of our parks and our wilderness.

John Muir Trail approaching Forester Pass. Photo: Sydney Quinn



## PRESERVATION

# Forest Plan Revision: Developing Designation Recommendations and Species of Conservation Concern

by Jora Fogg

In the waning months of 2014, Friends of the Inyo was busy examining the Inyo National Forest's Wilderness Inventory and Evaluation maps with a special eye on the four major unprotected areas of the Forest: the Glass Mountains, the Sierra Escarpment, The White-Inyo Bridge and Excelsior. We refined these four geographic areas into specific wilderness recommendations, as well as alternative designation recommendations based on specific values of place.

Alternative designations offer a level of protection below that of wilderness, but allow a place to be managed for its particular values, such as a Non-motorized Backcountry Management Area or a Research Natural Area. In general Friends of the Inyo seeks to recommend alternative designations that will enhance the recreational experience while preserving the qualities of the landscape, ideally prohibiting the construction of new roads and logging activities. Current practice in determining new wilderness areas is to cherry-pick, or exclude, existing roads and motorized trails from the wilderness boundary.

In the process of our review, we also identified areas in need of special management such as Coyote Plateau with its high recreational use, the Mono Craters for its outstanding dry-forb meadow habitat, and Mount Olsen for its Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep wintering grounds. Although the Inyo National Forest and Region 5 have not identified a need for additional alternative designations through forest planning, we are optimistic that Forest leadership will examine

our recommendations and take them into consideration when announcing designation recommendations later this spring. If the Inyo National Forest and Friends of the Inyo's recommendations align, we can work together to protect these special places for future generations.

We are eagerly awaiting the results of the Wild and Scenic River evaluation process, where the Forest will identify

segments of streams eligible for Wild and Scenic River (WSR) Designation. To achieve a full picture of the evaluation process, the Forest should prioritize completing suitability studies as part of Forest Plan revisions. In 1993, the Inyo National Forest identified 19 streams as eligible for WSR designation, but suitability studies were never completed. Historically, suitability studies are key to the eventual congressional designation of a river or stream. During scoping, Friends of the Inyo submitted a list of recommended streams and rivers for the Forest to consider during their evaluation.

The Forest Service is also busy working on an updated Species of Conservation Concern (SCC) list that will be part of the Inyo's revised land management

plan. The final list is compiled by the Regional Forester in coordination with the Forest Supervisor and vital input from forest biologists. A potential list appeared in the 2013 Inyo Forest Assessment, and we can expect the updated SCC list to look much the same. An important addition to the new

Hiking Blanco Mountain adjacent to the 21,645 acre Blanco Roadless Area. Photo: Sydney Quinn



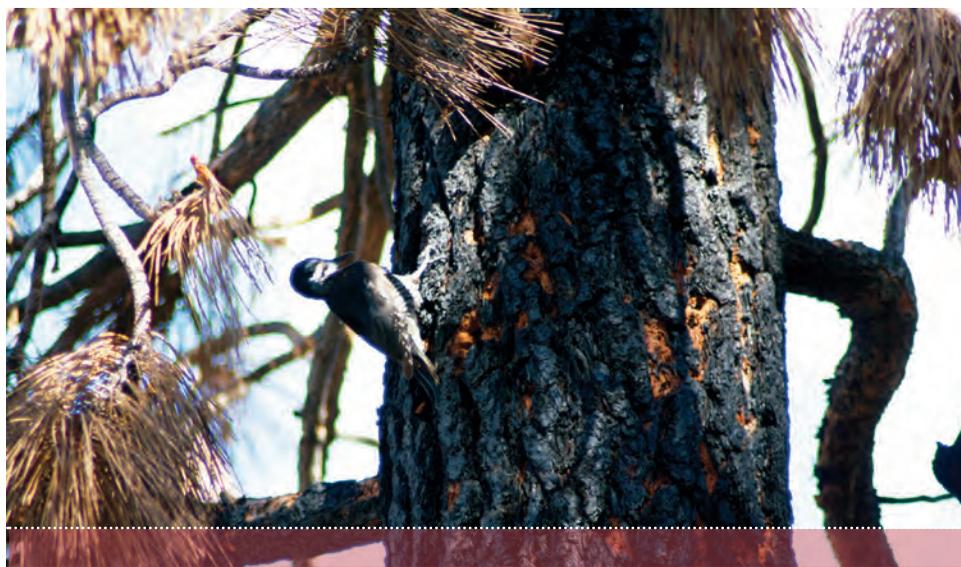
# PRESERVATION

## The Conservation Alliance

Since Forest Planning efforts first began over two years ago, the Conservation Alliance has graciously supported Friends of the Inyo's work to ensure a conservation-minded, scientifically robust Forest Plan for the Inyo National Forest. The Conservation Alliance is a group of outdoor industry companies who partner to fund conservation organizations working to protect wild places and the recreational values these places offer. Please join us in thanking the Alliance for their continued support to help us protect the nearly half a million acres of remaining unprotected roadless areas and over 100 miles of rivers and streams on the Inyo National Forest.



list will be the West Coast Distinct Population Segment of Fisher (*Martes pennant* pop. 1). During a population study conducted by the Pacific Southwest Research Station, a collared fisher was found utilizing the extreme southwest corner of the Inyo. Friends of the Inyo is advocating that several other species be added to the working list, including Black-backed Woodpecker and Sierra Nevada Red Fox, a very rare species recently documented in adjacent Yosemite National Park. The 2012 forest directives have very specific language on species viability and diversity requirements, and conservation organizations are working together to help the early adopter Forests follow



Black-backed Woodpecker forages on burned Jeffrey Pine. Photo: Drew Foster

these directives. Broad brushed ecosystem plan components may not provide for viability and persistence of a SCC, therefore species-specific plan components need to be written to help guide recovery and management of the species. The development of strong species plan components may be one of the most

fundamental aspects of ensuring a forest plan where the Eastern Sierra's wildlife and plants have a foundation to adapt to climate change and flourish for decades to come.

You can view our comment letters regarding forest plan revision on our website at: [www.friendsoftheinyo.org/foiD7/forest\\_planning](http://www.friendsoftheinyo.org/foiD7/forest_planning)

“The richest values of wilderness lie not in the days of Daniel Boone, nor even the present, but rather the future.” –Aldo Leopold

▶▶ FIELD GUIDE

# Just Passing Through Shorebirds of the Eastern Sierra

Words by Michael Prather, Images by Joel Such

Shorebirds are the marathon migrants of birds. They cover distances of hundreds of miles at a time and stop at specific traditional resting and foraging sites like Owens Lake. These sites are fewer than in the past due to destruction for agriculture and loss of water. At Owens Lake, diverse habitats such as muddy shorelines, shallow water, marsh, and ponds are all available for birds to feed heavily and to put on as much body fat as possible. Some species like Wilson's phalarope can double their body weight in two weeks and fly nonstop for 50 hours from North America to South America! Over 20 species of shorebirds stop at Owens Lake each spring and fall where they feed on brine and alkali flies as well as brine shrimp. Each species has a bill with a different shape and length. Using their bill as a tool the rich food resources of Owens Lake are divided up.



**SNOWY PLOVER**  
*Charadrius alexandrinus*  
(A CA Species of Special Concern)

Several hundred pairs nest at Owens Lake between March and August. Three eggs are laid in a simple 'scrape.' Ghost-like, they run, stop, and peck to feed on damp, muddy surfaces. Both male and female have dark patches on the side of the upper breast and a band across the forehead. The male's marks are black and the female's dark brown. They are short distance migrants found mainly in the American West.



**LEAST SANDPIPER**  
*Charadrius mauri*

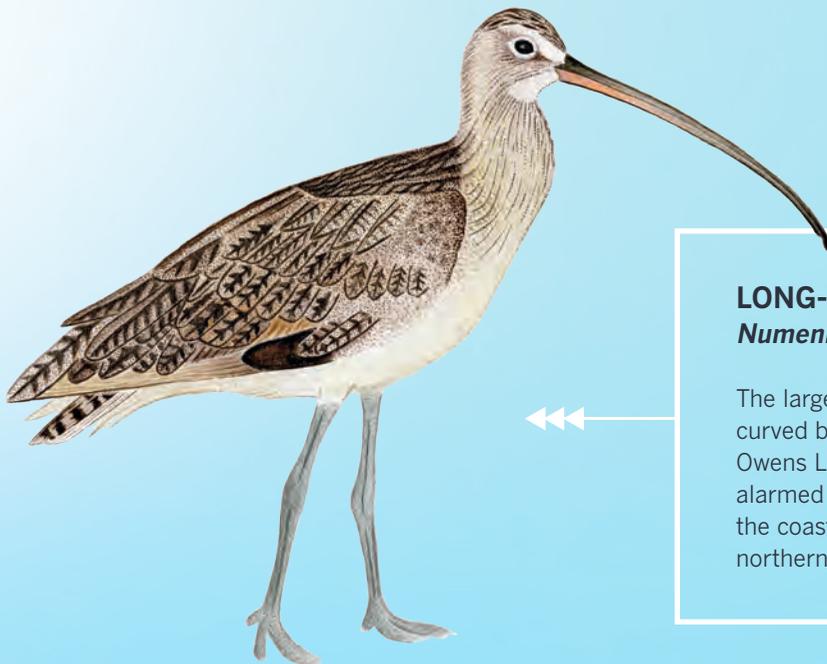
A small sandpiper that migrates through Owens Lake each spring and fall heading to nest on tundra in the far north along the Arctic Alaska and NE Siberia. Western sandpipers winter as far south as northern Peru. They probe for food more than pick at it in shoreline mud and even into shallow water.

**FIELD GUIDE** ◀◀



**AMERICAN AVOCET**  
*Recurvirostra Americana*

Tall, majestic the Avocet swishes its bill back and forth in the water to catch small invertebrates. Tens of thousands of American Avocets migrate through Owens Lake and hundreds nest. Adults have a rich soft brown colored head, neck, and breast. Both male and female have long slender, curved bills. The female's bill is more severely curved than the male's for turning eggs in the nest. Their long pale blue legs allow them to wade in deeper water. Four eggs are laid on the ground in loose colonies.



**LONG-BILLED CURLEW**  
*Numenius americanus*

The largest shorebird at Owens Lake. It has a long, down-curved bill for probing for food. Curlews nest north of Owens Lake in grasslands and prairies. Their call when alarmed or flying is loud and distinctive. Many winter along the coast and in farmlands and grasslands as far south as northern Mexico.

**JOEL SUCH** is a 16-year-old naturalist and artist who lives in the foothills near Lyons, Colorado. In 2008, he was named American Birding Association's Young Birder of the Year based on his field journals, illustrations, and photography. He regularly volunteers his time surveying and banding birds in his local community. Once in college, he plans to study wildlife biology and ecology.

# GET OUT

## Pat Keyes Trail

### Inyo National Forest and Bureau of Land Management Inyo Mountains Wilderness

The trail starts at 3840' and steeply climbs 3.5 miles to the spring at 7,000'. Another two miles will take you to Pat Keyes Pass at about 9,500'. There are many rewards along the way, but the exhilarating view of the Sierra Nevada to the west is stupendous and well worth the 11 miles out and back.



Photo: Sydney Quinn

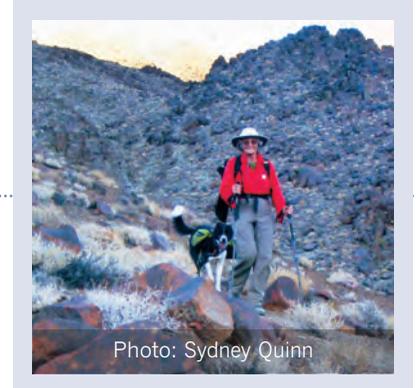
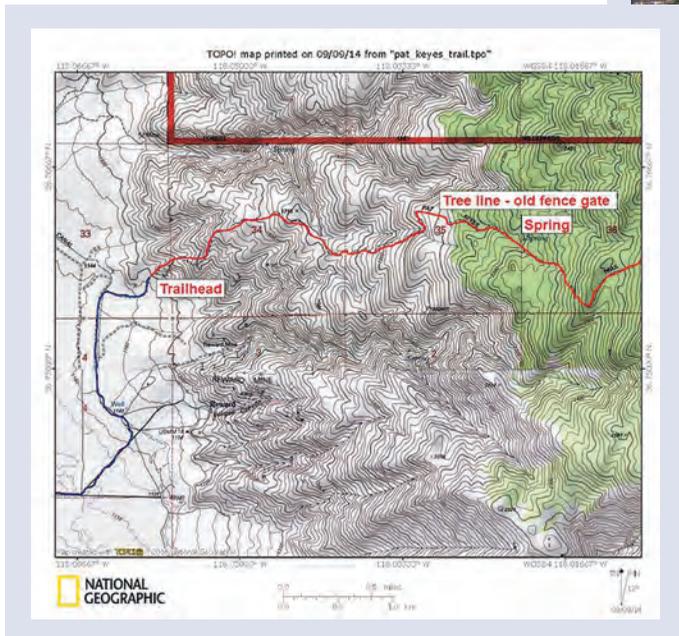


Photo: Sydney Quinn



South of Independence, CA, leave Hwy. 395 and turn east on Manzanar Reward Mine Road 4.7 miles to a junction. Turn left and drive 1.1 miles north to a road junction. An old corral may be visible at the base of the mountains. Turn right and drive east .5 mi. to the trailhead. This follows the blue line on the map. A high clearance vehicle is likely required as the road is not normally maintained.

This hike is usually most comfortable in spring and fall though winter or summer can be quite pleasant.

**AREA DESCRIPTION:** Managed by the Bureau of Land Management and Inyo National Forest, the Inyo Mountain Wilderness encompasses a large portion of the Inyo Mountains, which rise to 11,000 feet at Keynot Peak and separates the Owens Valley on the west and Saline Valley on the east. These mountains have maintained most of their pristine character due to the sheer ruggedness of the terrain. Evidence of historic and prehistoric man's use of the area has been found. Vegetation includes creosote, shadscale scrub, big sagebrush, lush riparian areas in most of the canyons on the eastern slope and pinyon-juniper woodland, bristlecone and limber pine on the higher reaches. Wildlife include desert bighorn sheep and the Inyo Mountain salamander.



Photo: Dennis Vance

# EXPLORATION

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Welcome spring and summer with a variety of outings and events throughout the Eastern Sierra and Great Basin. Come celebrate a new season exploring and caring for public lands with Friends of the Inyo.

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| <b>25</b> APRIL     | Owens Lake Bird Festival in Lone Pine                          |
| <b>9</b> MAY        | International Migratory Bird Day in the Glass Mountains        |
| <b>16</b> MAY       | Excelsior Roadless Area Tour                                   |
| <b>28</b> MAY       | Stewardship, Conservation & Community reception in Los Angeles |
| <b>6</b> JUNE       | National Trails Day at Convict Lake                            |
| <b>13</b> JUNE      | Glass Mountain Summit Hike                                     |
| <b>18</b> JUNE      | Mono Basin Stewardship Day                                     |
| <b>19-20</b> JUNE   | Mono Basin Chautauqua  |
| <b>27</b> JUNE      | 6 <sup>TH</sup> Annual June Lake Trails Day                    |
| <b>18</b> JULY      | Coyote Plateau Outing  |
| <b>1</b> AUGUST     | Bodie Hills Exploration  |
| <b>29</b> AUGUST    | Convict Lake Trail Volunteer Day                               |
| <b>26</b> SEPTEMBER | National Public Lands Day & Members' Rendezvous                |

Please check our website [friendsoftheinyo.org](http://friendsoftheinyo.org) or like us on Facebook to learn more about these and other upcoming events throughout the year. We hope to see you out there.

### Mammoth Lakes Trail System Summer of Stewardship

Along with Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access Foundation and the Inyo National Forest, Friends of the Inyo plans to host the annual Summer of Stewardship in Mammoth Lakes for the 8th year. Each year, six trails days and ongoing free interpretive tours connect visitors and residents to the beautiful public lands within the Mammoth Lakes Trail System, while making a valuable contribution to keep the trails safe, clean, and well maintained during the busy summer season. We're still working out the details, so stay tuned for dates and project descriptions.



Photo: Ursula Esser

# STEWARDSHIP

## News from the Bodie Hills Conservation Partnership By Jeff Hunter

After a productive 2014 that saw us joining with Friends of the Inyo for three successful stewardship projects, the Bodie Hills Conservation Partnership has started off 2015 on a strong note. We recently opened an office in Bridgeport, and are planning to host an open house event on Saturday, May 2 from 11am - 3pm. We'll have live music from Bodie 601, and free food and drink. So mark your calendar and join us! In addition to having some fun, you will learn how you can support our efforts to permanently protect the Bodie Hills.

We've also been busy building on our stewardship efforts from 2014. This summer, we will be hosting two weeklong service-learning projects (July 13-17 and 20-24) specifically designed for college students. These crews will focus on restoring sage-grouse habitat in the Bodie Hills. Recruiting is currently underway, and thus far, the response has been strong. Participants will camp in a Forest Service campground near Virginia Lake. Each day, we'll tackle a different project that provides tangible benefits for sage-grouse. Food and transportation will be provided. Local college students from both Mono and Inyo Counties are strongly encouraged to apply by sending a resume and cover letter to [info@BodieHills.org](mailto:info@BodieHills.org).

We have also started planning for the 1st Annual Bridgeport & Bodie Hills Fall Festival set for October 2-4, 2015, and want to acknowledge Friend of the Inyo's Jora Fogg for assisting with this project. This new outdoor festival hopes to draw visitors to Bridgeport, both from the local area, and from outside the Eastern Sierra. Field trips and workshops on photography, birding, wildlife illustration, fly fishing, agricultural tours, and historically-focused 4x4 tours of

the Bodie Hills will be available. There should be a little something for everybody! This is an opportunity to connect the dots to demonstrate that conservation and economic development are not mutually exclusive. In fact, they go hand in glove. We'll be planning a pre-festival stewardship project focused on public lands surrounding Bridgeport, so that's one more way you can engage and make a difference. We hope you'll save the dates and join us for this fun festival and celebration of the Bodie Hills.

Volunteers remove dangerous fencing from Sage Grouse habitat courtesy of Bodie Hills Conservation Partnership.



## STEWARDSHIP

### Ongoing Stewardship & The Season Ahead By Andrew Schurr

Following another amazingly successful year for the Friends of the Inyo stewardship team we have been resting up, sharpening our tools, and planning our upcoming season. Last year we ran the length of the Eastern Sierra from the Bodie Hills all the way down to Kennedy Meadows working hard to care for the public lands we all hold dear. From improving the trail around Convict Lake and clearing fallen logs off the Pacific Crest Trail to removing thousands of pounds of trash from the Mammoth Lakes Trail System, maintaining hundreds of miles of trail, and installing new and improved signage, Friends of the Inyo did it all. Throughout the season, our dedicated team of stewardship professionals was there every step of the way to help visitors and volunteers enjoy their experience. However, we couldn't have done it alone, and an amazing crop of volunteers and partners supported us at every turn. Bishop BLM staff, Inyo National Forest personnel, the Humboldt Toiyabe National Forest, partners like the Bodie Hills Conservation Partnership, Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access Foundation, Patagonia, and of course all the volunteers really made it possible. In total we had more than 1,200 volunteers and participants who gave more than 4,500 volunteer stewardship hours. What an amazing season! Thank you all.

Looking to the year ahead, we have already hit the ground running. We have facilitated native plantings and clean ups in popular recreation areas, helped with a successful Alabama Hills Day, brought yet another great Earth Day Celebration to Round Valley School, and organized and led a successful series of educational and fun exploration walks and hikes. This summer will be our eighth year of the Summer of Stewardship in the Mammoth Lakes Trail System. Following our most successful year to date in 2014, we hope to see you all out there again this summer. Also on the MLTS, our Stewards will be out walking the trails, working hard to keep them in good shape, and providing a valuable resource to visitors and locals alike. As always, the Stewards will offer a great series of interpretive activities for the whole family, stay tuned for more details soon.

Our crews will be maintaining trails, helping to clean campsites, working in the wilderness, and restoring impacted areas throughout the Eastern Sierra. We are working hard to secure funding to finish the great work we started at Convict Lake to complete a sustainable, walkable trail to facilitate access for all in a spectacular place. In addition, we will be helping the Bishop

BLM clean up an old shooting area near Travertine Hot Springs, and in July, will be working with the Sierra National Forest to clean campsites in the 4th Recess. We will also once again be helping to keep the Inyo National Forest's Travel Management work effective and sustainable.

Please stay tuned to our website and Facebook to learn how you can be involved. As always please give us a call if you ever want to volunteer or need a suggestion for a great hike.

Photo: Andrew Schurr



Volunteers help out during the Fall Highball in the Buttermilks.

Photo: Andrew Schurr

# PINE DROPS

## NEWS AND NOTES FROM THE EASTERN SIERRA'S PUBLIC LANDS

By Laura Beardsley, Andrew Schurr and Jora Fogg

### RECENT EVENTS

It's been a busy fall and winter here at Friends of the Inyo. Since our last issue we have been getting boots on the ground to care for the Eastern Sierra's public lands. We hosted six successful clean ups and plantings in popular recreation areas near Bishop for over 120 volunteers. The Wild and Scenic Film Festival inspired audiences in Lone Pine, Mammoth, and Bishop with another year of great films. In addition, Friends of Inyo helped out with another exceptional Alabama Hills Day, and as always, to keep things interesting, we hosted a series of wonderful educational walks and hikes. Highlights include, a well-attended archeological hike with BLM Archeologist Greg Haverstock, a wildflower walk to Short Canyon at the height of the spring bloom, our annual Chocolate Peak hike, and many others. We hope that you will join us for a project or outing soon.

### COMMUNITY, STEWARDSHIP & CONSERVATION

Over the past year, Friends of the Inyo has extended our work to connect people, residents and visitors alike, with the importance of conservation and stewardship along the Owens River Watershed. This includes a moonlit hike to the headwaters and stewardship projects at popular sites like Convict Lake and lesser known gems like Fish Slough. This April, we will host the first-ever Owens Lake Bird Festival as a capstone of this project. The festival will highlight the spring migration of

thousands of shorebirds at Owens Lake and showcase the community of Lone Pine as a gem in the Owens Valley as well as its hydrologic ties to the city of Los Angeles. We are extremely grateful to the Metabolic Studio for their support of our work along the Owens River Watershed and to Inyo County for joining them in supporting the Owens Lake Bird Festival. We hope this year will be the first in a series of annual events.

### HONORING THE ALABAMA HILLS

Earlier this year, Congressman Paul Cook and Senator Diane Feinstein introduced bills in the House and the Senate respectively calling for the designation of a National Scenic Area in the Alabama Hills. The proposed designation would

add the Alabama Hills to the collection of special places managed by the Bureau of Land Management known as the National Conservation Lands. As such, a national scenic area in the Alabama Hills would protect this amazing place while preserving existing recreation opportunities and providing opportunities for economic development to neighboring communities. We congratulate the Alabama Hills Stewardship Group for their efforts to protect the Hills, and look forward to celebrating the new designation with them at some point in the future.

### RENEWABLE ENERGY & THE DESERT

Under the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP), the



Wildflower bloom in Short Canyon ACEC. Photo: Jora Fogg

BLM did a good job of recommending many important lands for conservation, effectively taking them off the renewable energy development table. The DRECP's preferred alternative slates the Amargosa region including California and Chicago Valleys and the Middle Amargosa Basin, Conglomerate Mesa, Upper Centennial Flat, Eastern slopes of the White and Inyo Mountains, Silurian Valley, Trona Pinnacles, Areas of the Panamint Valley, including Wildrose Wash and Knight, Osborne, and Snow Canyons as National Conservation Lands, and establishes two new Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) to protect cultural resources near Manzanar and along the southern boundary of Owens Lake. Although these designations are administrative,

they set the stage for future congressional designations such as Wilderness Study Areas or National Monuments. In our comments submitted to the California Energy Committee in February, we asked the BLM to add the overlooked desert gems of Lower Centennial Flat, Malpais Mesa, and areas of the Rose Valley and McCloud Flat. These areas contain some of the most important habitat in Inyo County for the Mohave Ground Squirrel (*Spermophilus mohavensis*), a

state threatened species. Friends of the Inyo will continue to follow the future of the Mojave Desert through the implementation phases of the DRECP and Inyo County's Renewable Energy General Plan Amendment (REGPA).



**Owens Lake**  
**BIRD FESTIVAL**  
*A Celebration of Shorebirds Migrating Between Hemispheres*

**LONE PINE, CA April 24 & 25, 2015**  
 Join us for a day of birding and discovery at Owens Lake Important Bird Area.  
**Tours, Speakers, Inspiration**  
**Tickets: \$35; \$20 for students; children under 12 - free with an adult**  
 Registration includes evening receptions, continental breakfast, lunch with inspiring speakers, and in-depth morning and afternoon tours with expert guides.

Details and registration at [friendsoftheinyo.org/foiD7/owenslakefestival](http://friendsoftheinyo.org/foiD7/owenslakefestival)  
 For more information call 760-873-6500 or email [owenslakefestival@friendsoftheinyo.org](mailto:owenslakefestival@friendsoftheinyo.org)



Eureka Valley. Photo: Sydney Quinn

## MEMBER PROFILE

### ←← Bill Mitchel →→

#### What brought you to Bishop and the Owens Valley?

It was a no-brainer. My wife and I had vacationed here for years. There is a certain magnetism about the Eastern Sierra. Six years before retiring, we decided that we wanted to live here so we started making plans and upon retirement made the move. Good decision.

#### What are the biggest changes you've observed on public lands in the Eastern Sierra since you've been here?

Implementation of the designated route system on the forest where Friends of the Inyo played a key role. There seems to be a greater awareness of the need to stay on the road. That is not to say that there isn't route proliferation, there is, but much of it is due to dirt bikes now which poses a different challenge in managing the health of the forest.

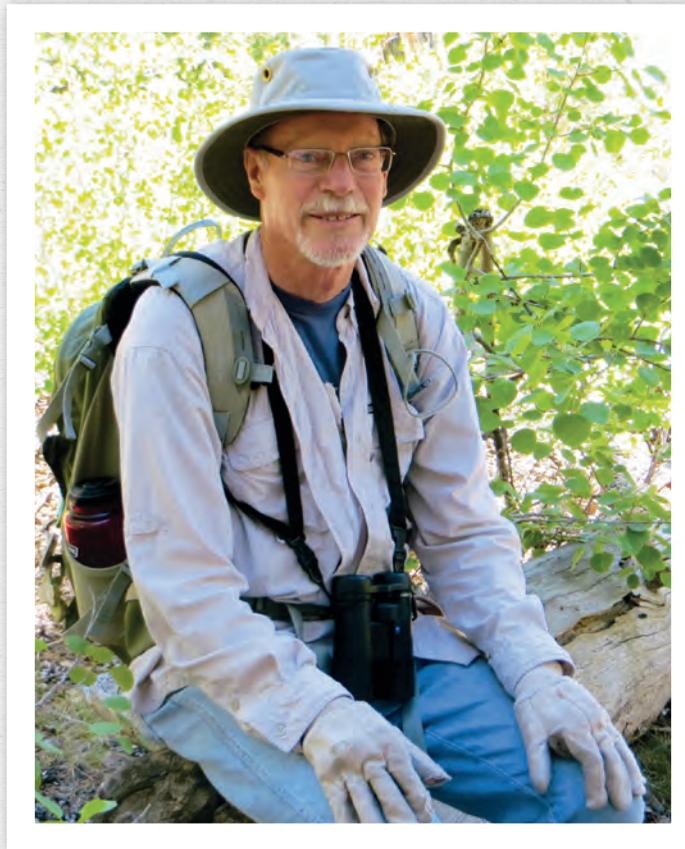
#### How did you get involved with Friends of the Inyo?

Having become aware of the challenges facing the forest service in taking care of the land I attended a meeting in Big Pine hosted by Friends of the Inyo. There I learned about the mission of the organization and the work being done to help the forest define its road system, and volunteered to help.

#### As you move off the Board and into an advisory role, what are your proudest moments for Friends of the Inyo so far?

Being a major player in helping the forest service define its legal road system is a huge accomplishment. We have also

become a vehicle by which people can connect with our public lands and get involved to protect the health of the land. I have watched Friends of the Inyo grow from being a fledgling organization in a tiny office on south Main Street into a mature organization with hundreds of members and a visible presence on the Eastside. That says that we have made a difference, and I am very proud of it.



#### Are there any books that stand out as favorites?

Never read a more captivating book than *The Monkey Wrench Gang*.

#### What do you see as the top three challenges facing wild places and public lands in the Eastern Sierra today?

Population growth, adequate funding for

our public land management agencies and the need to protect the land to provide a suitable home for wildlife.

#### What do you hope to see in the future?

I hope the divide that exists between various factions can be closed to reach a united effort toward accomplishing what we all want - sustainable public lands management.

#### As an avid hiker and explorer, what are your favorite destinations? Is there anywhere you'd still like to visit for the first time?

They are all beautiful and each is unique but a few favorites are Sunset Lake, Mills Lake and the High Trail. I'm doing a pretty good job of exploring the east side but I still haven't been to Golden Trout Lake, Finger Lake or the Cottonwood Lakes basin.

#### What do you like to do most in your free time when you aren't exploring public lands in the Eastern Sierra?

Much of my time is spent working in the yard, reading, and birding. Those are my favorites. My wife and I have plans to do some extensive travel this year as there is

much to see. I'm pretty excited about that and plans are in the works.

*Note: Bill is retiring from the Board of Friends of the Inyo this month after serving for 8 years. He was Board Secretary for 2 years and Board Treasurer for 4 years. He was inordinately dedicated and will leave a huge vacuum in the organization and our hearts. Thanks for everything Bill!*

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