



JEFFREY PINE journal

CARING FOR THE PUBLIC LANDS OF THE EASTERN SIERRA

FALL/21

IN THIS
ISSUE

| *Conservation Timeline*

| *Four Leaders' Perspectives*

| *Round Valley Mule Deer Herd*

OUR FIRST

Thirty-Five Years



REFLECTIONS

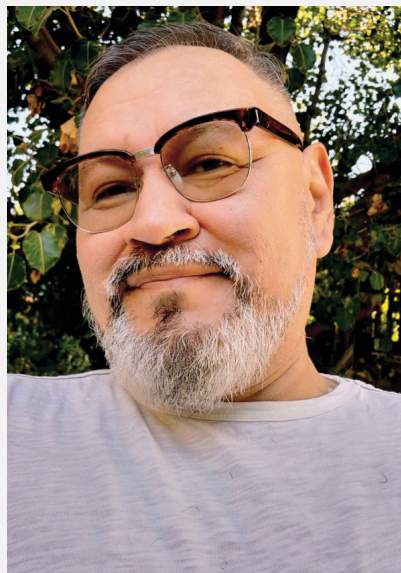
How We Got Here...Where We're Going

BIANNUAL MAGAZINE

FRIENDS OF THE INYO

VOLUME XIX, ISSUE II

NEW STAFF AND BOARD MEMBERS



Louis Medina, Communications Director

When I was younger, I was convinced I would always be an urban dweller. But as I grew tired of the stress of cities and more appreciative of the serenity of nature, I found myself drawn to big, wild, beautiful places where people are greatly outnumbered by trees and animals and rocks and stars.

I'm new to the Eastern Sierra, small town life, and the world of public lands conservation and advocacy, but fortunately not to nonprofit work, writing/editing, electronic communications and English-Spanish translation—the tools I need to ply my trade as Friends of the Inyo's new Communications Director.

I'm excited as I learn about the history of this organization and work with its leadership and staff to craft a vision to help guide us through FOI's next challenging 35 years, well into the middle of this most precarious of centuries.

The ancients named the Eastern Sierra Payahuunadü, "the land of flowing water." Now, as our planet burns, we need to restore this place to the truth they knew. How blessed our eyes will be to see what they once saw. Through my contributions, I hope to be a part of that restoration—for the land as well as for myself. With all of you, I'm very glad to be a "Friend of the Inyo."



Marjorie Shock, Board Member

Marjorie joined her husband, Treasurer Paul Shock, and began serving on FOI's Board of Directors in spring of this year as a member and the Chair of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee.

Marjorie was born in Washington, D.C., and grew up in Fairfax County, VA. She has a double major in Spanish and Sociology from Virginia Tech University, and a Master's Degree in Clinical Social Work from California State University, Sacramento. She worked as a psychotherapist at the University of California Davis Medical Center for over 25 years, as well as having a private practice for 30 years.

"I am delighted that I have recently retired so I can devote myself to the activities important to me," Marjorie said. "Being involved with FOI is one of those activities. I hope to create a more inclusive community while serving on the board."

Marjorie lives with Paul in Sacramento. She is a backpacker, back-country skier, rock climber, and improv jazz piano player.

THE JEFFREY PINE JOURNAL

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Alex Ertaud, Stewardship Director
Jora Fogg, Policy Director
Bryan Hatchell, Desert Policy Associate
Louis Medina, Communications Director

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Miranda, Martin Powell, Sydney Quinn,
Sam Roberts, Marjorie Shock.

Printed on Recycled Paper

COVER PHOTO:

Left to Right: Laura Beardsley, Wendy Schneider, Mono County Fifth District Supervisor Stacy Corless, Paul McFarland. Wendy is the current Executive Director of Friends of the Inyo. All others are former E.D.'s. PHOTO: Alex Ertaud.

FOR THE RECORD:

In our previous Spring 2021 Issue, in a two-page article titled "Waterways and Restoration in the Bodies," a map from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife showing Lahontan Cutthroat Trout habitat in California on page 17, was not referenced correctly in the accompanying caption that appeared on page 16.



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

At Friends of the Inyo, we work to protect and care for lands that have been, for over ten thousand years, and still very much are, inhabited by the Paiute (Nüümü), Shoshone (Newe) and Timbisha peoples. Many of these lands are now known by names recognizing people who never set foot here. These lands are called Payahuunadü or Panawe by the Nuumu and Newe peoples, respectively. This land acknowledgement is a recognition of the original inhabitants of the Eastern Sierra, and is intended as a show of respect for Native peoples and to surface the often-suppressed colonial history of our country.

PHOTO: Josh Wray

Introduction

Commemorating FOI's 35TH Anniversary

BY LOUIS MEDINA, COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR & SYDNEY QUINN, BOARD MEMBER

In 1986, a small grassroots group gathered to review and comment on the new Forest Plan for the 1.9-million-acre Inyo National Forest before the March 1987 deadline. The plan should ideally be updated every 15 years, but the process, which is akin to “zoning the land,” often gets delayed by years or even decades. There were lots of U.S. Forest Service goals and management areas to consider:

- **Downhill (alpine) ski development**
- **Riparian areas and watershed**
- **Off-road vehicle use**
- **Wilderness and roadless areas**
- **Energy and mineral development**
- **Timber harvesting**
- **Livestock grazing and range development**

The group prepared tips on commenting and provided printed information on where to mail (or hand deliver) comments in those pre-internet days.

Friends of the Inyo was born!

Frank Stewart, Lisa Jaeger, Sally Miller, James Wilson, Mike Prather, Hank Levine, Lynne Foster, and Betty and Don Goodrich were the initial leadership team. Betty and Don would later form the Range of Light /Toiyabe Chapter of the Sierra Club. These were dedicated, energetic folks to say the least.

One notable impact the group had was changing the designation of the San Joaquin Ridge in the Ansel Adams Wilderness from “existing” to “potential” ski area. Mammoth Mountain Ski Area thought the ridge would be open for development of a ski area from Mammoth to June Lake. The actions of this group prevented the expansion of the ski area, eventually laying the groundwork for permanent protection of the Owens River Headwaters Wilderness through the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act that would be signed 23 years later by President Barack Obama on March 31, 2009.

During those early days of Friends of the Inyo, meetings were held in people's homes while snacking on bowls of popcorn and apples, according to Mike Prather. Most volunteers were from the Bishop and Mammoth areas, but some, like Mike himself, came from as far away as Lone Pine, others even from Reno.

Articles of Incorporation were filed in 1996 and FOI continued as an all-volunteer organization until 2000, when Paul McFarland was hired to begin doing outreach; in 2003, thanks to a capacity building grant, he became FOI's first Executive Director.

Then-Board President Frank Stewart called the change “an exciting time” for Friends of the Inyo. “For many years,” he wrote in his “President's Message” column in the Spring/Summer 2004 issue of the Jeffrey Pine Journal, “local folks

have been carrying on advocacy work using our free time after work. Our files have resided in boxes stashed behind the couch in someone's extra room. News about what we were working on was spread by word of mouth. That has all changed for good.”

Indeed, having paid dedicated staff hastened the pace of the organization's work and increased its impact. Stacy Corless, Laura Beardsley and Wendy Schneider followed Paul at the helm of FOI.

Frank “retired” in 2010 after the 2009 Wilderness Omnibus Bill was passed. Friends of the Inyo went on to comment on the Inyo National Forest Plan again in 2016—prior to the first USFS update in 30 years!

It has, indeed, been an exciting first 35 years—and we're hoping for many more to come. FOI has evolved into a small but mighty organization, thanks to the support of members, grantors, sponsors and volunteers.

Beyond working to protect and care for the Inyo National Forest, which was a noble cause in and of itself, Friends of the Inyo's service footprint has expanded to include all of Mono and Inyo Counties, from the eastern slopes of Yosemite, all the way to Death Valley. In 2019, we began acknowledging “the land of flowing water,” Payahuunadü: the original name given to the Eastern Sierra by the Paiute and Shoshone people who have been protecting and caring for these lands for more than 10,000 years.

We invite you to celebrate with us, in a COVID-safe way, the 35th Anniversary of Friends of the Inyo, as you read in these pages about our past and present, as well as our organizational hopes for the future. Whenever possible, we will point you to archived issues of this, our signature biannual publication, the Jeffrey Pine Journal—easily accessible at **friendsoftheinyo.org/publications**—so you can go online and make a “Time Travel Stop” at key moments in our history. Yes, this is meant to be an interactive read.

Some of these Time Travel Stops are bittersweet. Indeed, a number of JPJ issues begin with or feature loving tributes to local conservationists who gave of themselves to ensure the protection and care of the public lands of the Eastern Sierra continue in perpetuity—beyond their or anyone's lifetime.

Such is the case of one of our founders, James Wilson. He and his wife, Kay, were the original owners of (Wilson's) Eastside Sports in Bishop. His sudden passing on July 15, 2015, was a huge loss to the conservation community as well as friends and family (**Time Travel Stop: Fall 2015 Jeffrey Pine Journal**).

Take comfort in knowing that the lands of the Eastern Sierra are around for all of us to continue to enjoy because of people like him and others who have truly proven to be “Friends of the Inyo”—and all of Payahuunadü for that matter.

President's Message

CHRIS LIZZA



Welcome to our latest Jeffrey Pine Journal, celebrating the 35th Anniversary of Friends of the Inyo. Here we applaud the past and invigorate the future. I was elected to the post of Board President a couple of months ago, succeeding Sam Roberts who has deftly guided our little grassroots organization ever upward. Under Sam's leadership, we secured National Scenic Area designation for the Alabama Hills (**Time Travel Stop: Spring 2019 Jeffrey Pine Journal, pp. 8-10**) and preserved Solitude Canyon, assembled a diverse Board of committed activists, hired a dynamic Executive Director (**Time Travel Stop: Fall 2017 Jeffrey Pine Journal, pg. 3**) and professional staff, and expanded and broadened our funding resources. Sam is not going anywhere – I continue to bump into him at the bottom of spring skiing fields and he keeps feeding me thoughtful conservation writings about the great American West from his vast network of sources.

I am deeply humbled at assuming a leadership post of FOI, both because we have an impressive group of Board members, any of whom could lead our organization, and because of the exalted list of former Board Presidents. Our most effective local land preservation efforts have been successful due to the leadership of some of my heroes: Sally Miller, Frank Stewart, Sydney Quinn, Mike Prather, and James Wilson. James was a major inspiration to enter business – he demonstrated not just how a businessperson can be an effective conservation icon, but also how a progressive retailer can help to transform a community. One of my primary motives for joining the Board ten years ago was to watch the cutting banter between Prather and Wilson at our meetings.

I got to know Frank Stewart, 'Il Papa' (yes, he went to a Jesuit high school), when we attended Wilderness Week 2008 at the generous invitation of Sally Miller, then working for The

Wilderness Society. Along with China Ranch's Brian Brown, another Inyo County business conservationist, we observed committee hearings for the 2009 Omnibus Bill and met with House of Representatives and Senate staffers. That was my first trip to Washington, D.C., and I was awed at how open, young, and humid our nation's capital was. Together, with thousands of others, we got that wilderness bill passed!

An introduction might be in order. Many of you know me as the owner/operator of the Mono Market in Lee Vining. I sold that business after a 21-year run last year and am now committed to Friends of the Inyo and other conservation efforts in the Eastern Sierra. But I go back a bit further: This summer I celebrated 60 years on the blue planet, 50 years since moving to Mono County, and 30 years working on the Mammoth Mountain Ski Patrol. Patrolling has provided an athletic outdoor profession where I get to experience the most brutal winter storms and glorious spring snow that the High Sierra offers alongside a bunch of other like-minded revelers.

Back in 1979, I was the Ski Team Captain and Student Body President at Mammoth High School engaged in typical senior year shenanigans such as plagiarizing John Muir in letters to the Lakes District Review, the Mammoth newspaper of the era. That year, preparations were underway to widen Mammoth's Main Street to four lanes (and add Mono County's first traffic signals) and blue ribbons were wrapped around all the condemned old trees in the way. One night, my buddies and I charged around ripping off most of the ribbons and defiantly depositing them in a pile at the office of a prominent local condo developer. Stewardship, indeed!

I'll have much to say about what's going on around here in future editions, but for now, let's celebrate our organization, its people, and this spectacular place.

The Best Friends of Public Lands? PEOPLE!

BY PAUL MCFARLAND,
FORMER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



A visitor takes in the view from the Mobius Arch, Alabama Hills.
PHOTO: Krzysztof Wiktor

The morning dawned downright cold for late August, a welcome change from the heat this summer. While the days were hot, it was the nights many folks seemed to talk about. "It just doesn't cool down at night," they noted when passing in the street. By some trick of ethereal influence on perception, the cold morning air brightened the white hairs spiking off two-toned woolly bear caterpillars munching willow leaves outside my work shed.

After shooting the frass with the woolly bears, I sat down to open my email, and there it was again: the Forest Service announcing full closure of nine National Forests in California to protect public safety. (Later in the month, additional closures or use restrictions would end up affecting all National Forests in the state.) Millions of acres of public Forest land temporarily closed to public entry due to yet another summer of "historic" wildfires. Wasn't last summer

"historic" enough?

Times have definitely changed. A few decades ago, working to protect small chunks of fragile desert streams from off-road vehicle play took years. Today, millions of acres of public lands are closed to all public entry with the stroke of a pen. Desperate times call for desperate measures. I just wish we had never gotten here.

For three and a half decades, the people and organizational partners coming together under the banner of Friends of the Inyo have worked to foster preservation, exploration and stewardship of our public lands. Back in the day, we used to half-joke that, while at that time we were working to protect public lands, the future work would be to keep public lands in public hands.

Keeping public lands public isn't my biggest worry anymore.

The last few fumbled attempts to privatize America's public estate have fallen flat, defeated by a deafening roar of opposition from an ever-growing legion of those who have 'rediscovered' the rejuvenating peace and wonder hiding in plain sight in the out-of-doors.

This is good news! The millions of folks who, many for the first time, are heading into the hills to camp under the stars, drive through redwood groves, hike along wild rivers, cast for hidden fish, spy their first Scrub Jay, paint a sunrise, sniff a Jeffrey pine, loop through sagebrush flats and aspen groves on two wheels or four, are some of the best news our public lands and wild rivers could have hoped for.

It is good news that more and more people seem to be having wild experiences these days. While crowded trailheads and busy campgrounds may stir annoyance in some locals, perhaps wild places, and society in general, stand to benefit more from people 'crowding' onto the shore of a place like Convict Lake than the personal, individual benefit gained by one more day in our own private Idaho.

Every friend of wild places and wildlife starts to care because they got outside. Maybe it was your first view into the unending vastness of the Mono Basin from Tioga Pass or catching sight of a shooting star by the campfire with grandma. Perhaps it was the first tug on a line, a bobber dropping into darkness below the surface signaling "fish on!" or the time you sat on the sand with friends and realized the green flash was a real thing. Maybe it was the welcoming shade of the maple at the park down the street or the way your aunt noticeably perked up when she took you and the cousins down to the river.

Whatever it was, wherever it was, the immediate future of

nature (and human society, for that matter) depends on people not only experiencing the outdoors, but taking those breath-snatching moments deep into their heart and realizing they are part of keeping those moments going.

Shattering barriers to these moments now seems the real work for public lands. These moments need peace; they need clean air; they need trout and jays and old growth forests; they need flowing rivers and living shorelines; they need mule deer grazing at dawn; and they need accessible places where they can be experienced. Working for a world where you don't have to run for the hills for clean air, clean water, stars and leaf shade is what's before us.

As painful as megafires, drought and extinction are, in time, trees do grow back, rivers reach a new equilibrium, meadows turn to forests and grasslands fade into deserts, worms will turn the soil and jays will plant pines. Nature takes care of herself and her own in due time in her own way.

As scary as it may seem, National Forests will keep on closing to protect public safety. National Forests can't take care of themselves. People care for National Forests. Our public lands can't wait for someone else to take care of them. We have to pick up the trash, keep the trails clear, clean fire rings, bury our poop, share the names of flowers and butterflies, take those moments of wonder and keep them going. We have to figure out a way where complete closure isn't the only tool that works. We have to figure out a way to keep those breath-snatching moments going. Without those moments, the land may not have as many friends going forward. We - the land, the earth and our community of life - all know we need as many friends as we can get these days.

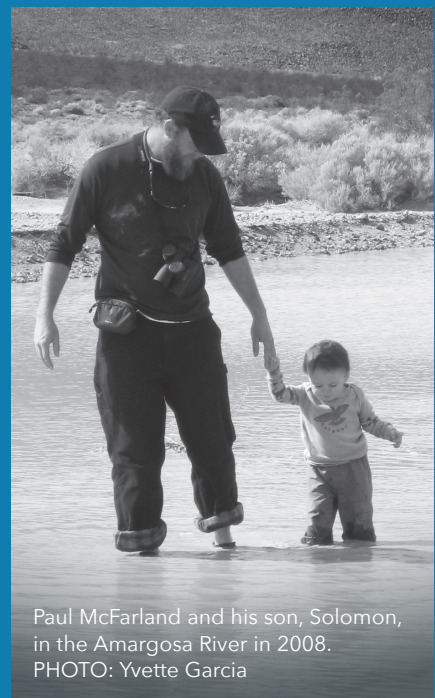
PAUL MCFARLAND

In the history of Friends of the Inyo, stay-at-home dad and volunteer firefighter for his community of Lee Vining, Paul McFarland, will always have the distinct honor of having been our organization's first paid employee and Executive Director.

Hired as a Conservation Associate in 2000, Paul worked from home and even out of a converted greenhouse while living out of his van, until FOI opened an office and promoted him to Executive Director in 2003. He worked closely with FOI's Board of Directors to expand membership, launch the friendsoftheinyo.org website and begin publishing the Jeffrey Pine Journal biannual newsletter (which has since grown into a magazine).

During his years with FOI till 2009, when he moved to Santa Cruz so that his wife, Yvette Garcia, could earn her teaching degree, Paul also oversaw the growth of our Stewardship Program, kicked off in 2005 with Owens River Headwater Days, a project to restore Deadman Creek, the river's mainstream creek (**Time Travel Stop: Spring/Summer 2005 Jeffrey Pine Journal, pp. 4-5**).

After his wife finished her studies on the coast, Paul came back to FOI as a part-time staff member in 2012 and stayed till 2015. The father of three, Paul is the Program Officer for DeChambeau Creek Foundation, which works to increase people's connection to the land through philanthropy, conservation and education efforts.



Paul McFarland and his son, Solomon, in the Amargosa River in 2008.
PHOTO: Yvette Garcia

Impact Through STEWARDSHIP



Restoring Wilderness by removing cattle exclosures at Cottonwood Creek in summer 2021. PHOTO: Ken Miller

Since 2005, when Friends of the Inyo established the Eastern Sierra Wilderness Stewardship Corps to address shrinking Forest Service land management budgets by engaging and empowering volunteers to help care for local public lands, FOI has accomplished the following:

Engaged more than **7,000 VOLUNTEERS**, with close to one-third of them, 2,400, being youth.

Procured more than **59,600 VOLUNTEER HOURS**—valued at upwards of \$2 Million!—in the care and restoration of public lands, as, in 2020 dollars, according to Independent Sector, a volunteer hour in

California is worth \$33.61. This is besides the upwards of 19,591 FOI staff hours—to say nothing of the many hours from our agency partners—devoted to stewardship projects.

Established contact with **13,517 VISITORS**.

Lovingly delivered the following care to local public lands infrastructure:

3,735 MILES OF TRAILS MONITORED

384 MILES OF TRAILS MAINTAINED

14.5 MILES OF ILLEGAL TRAILS RETURNED BACK TO THEIR NATURAL STATE

2,388 TRAIL STRUCTURES MAINTAINED

572 TRAIL STRUCTURES BUILT

1,281 LOGS REMOVED FROM TRAILS

797 CAMPSITES CLEANED

399 CAMPSITES RESTORED

825 FIRE RINGS REMOVED

24,673 POUNDS OF TRASH REMOVED

*Data compiled by
Alex Ertaud, Stewardship Director*



More than 8,000 feet of barbed wire from obsolete cattle exclosures were removed by our Backcountry Stewardship Week Crew in summer 2021. PHOTO: Lindsay Butcher



National Public Lands Day 2018 - Bodie Hills. PHOTO: Michael Baker



Bridgeport Trails Day 2018 - Trail Maintenance. PHOTO: Julia Runcie

Partner Profile:

Mono County District 5 Supervisor

STACY CORLESS

BY LOUIS MEDINA, COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR



Former Friends of the Inyo Executive Director Stacy Corless, who is now Mono County's Fifth District Supervisor. PHOTO: Courtesy S. Corless

Like promises, certain phrases jump out from Mono County Fifth District Supervisor Stacy Corless' bio on the county's website, monocounty.ca.gov: "taking a people-focused approach to policy...actively listening to residents...partnering with other local agencies to address regional issues."

These are things she believes in, Supervisor Corless says, along with inclusivity, transparency (she provides links to her Facebook page and LinkedIn profile from her online bio), and collaboration: good values to have if you are someone whose career path has always kept you in the public eye—as a teacher, writer/publisher, community organizer, nonprofit leader, and, since 2014, public servant.

At Friends of the Inyo, we are lucky to be able to count her as a friend and former fearless leader: That's right, Supervisor Corless served as FOI's Executive Director from 2010-2012, having started with our nonprofit as Communications Director in 2008.

She remembers one big takeaway from her FOI years: "Working with an environmental nonprofit you have to have thick skin." Unbeknownst to her at the time, the experience was preparing her for her current job as a County Supervisor, where a thick skin is definitely needed to get through the thorns and briars of constituents' and interest groups' opinions on the way to finding the pleasant meadows of common ground.

"Working for Friends of the Inyo had an enormous influence on me," she said. In her current role, she finds herself advocating "for some of the same conservation and stewardship values that Friends of the Inyo stands for." To quote from her bio again, these values include "caring for Mono County's beautiful public lands," and "protecting our unique rural environment."

FOI's current Executive Director, Wendy Schneider, said, "Stacy has a deep understanding of the public lands issues that face the Eastern Sierra in general, and Mono County in particular. I have many times sought her wise counsel before making a decision about FOI's engagement, especially regarding controversial matters."

Supervisor Corless feels fortunate to have witnessed some big

accomplishments during her tenure at FOI.

In March of 2009, President Barack Obama signed the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act, which included permanent protection for some 2 million acres of America's wild places, with close to half a million of those being in the Eastern Sierra, including the Hoover Wilderness, Ansel Adams Wilderness, Granite Mountain Wilderness, Owens River Headwaters Wilderness, White Mountain Wilderness, and John Muir Wilderness. This legislation also designated three new Wild & Scenic Rivers in the Eastern Sierra: the Owens River Headwaters Complex, Cottonwood Creek in the White Mountains, and sections of the Amargosa River east of Death Valley (**Time Travel Stop: Summer 2009 Jeffrey Pine Journal, pp. 8 - 11**).

She also remembers working to strengthen FOI's Stewardship Program, growing our volunteer base and building trust with the U.S. Forest Service "so they were okay with others doing the work."

She celebrated FOI's 25th anniversary in 2011 (**Time Travel Stop: Winter 2011 Jeffrey Pine Journal, pg. 14**).

When she thinks back on those years, Supervisor Corless is quick to give credit to some of her FOI contemporaries for these accomplishments: her predecessor in FOI's executive directorship Paul McFarland, Stewardship Director Todd Vogel, Board President James Wilson.

But if you were to ask James, he would say Supervisor Corless is also an important part of what he referred to as his "metaphorical river" on page 2 of the Summer 2009 JPJ issue referenced above: "A stream of individuals who come together to create a strong current. These are the people who have worked for years, sometimes for decades, to help preserve and conserve the creatures and landscapes that are important to this place and to our souls. There are hundreds of such people who make phone calls, write letters, and do the good work."

Some even legislate.

Eddie on, Supervisor Corless!

Timeline of Achievements for Friends of the Inyo and the Public Lands of the Eastern Sierra in the Last...

35 YEARS*

*This timeline is not intended to be all-inclusive, but rather representative of some of the highlights of Friends of the Inyo's work over our first 35 years, against the backdrop of major conservation milestones for public lands in Inyo and Mono Counties during the same timeframe.

Friends of the Inyo is Founded

At first, the purpose of this all-volunteer, grassroots organization is to comment on the Inyo National Forest planning process (finalized in 1988). FOI fights to: limit downhill ski development in environmentally sensitive areas such as the San Joaquin Roadless Area; protect riparian areas from livestock grazing, illegal off-road vehicle trespass and other potentially harmful uses; and stop timbering west of U.S. 395 to protect old-growth red fir and Jeffrey pine, among other conservation goals.

Friends of the Inyo, "Inc."

FOI files Articles of Incorporation in California and applies for determination as a federal 501(c)(3) nonprofit.

1986 1980's & '90's 1994 1996 2000

The Work Continues

For more than a decade, the organization continues as an all-volunteer group, working out of people's homes to advocate for public lands in the Eastern Sierra.

Passage of the California Desert Protection Act

Death Valley National Park and multiple Wilderness Areas are established.

First Employee Hired

Friends of the Inyo hires its first paid staff, Paul McFarland (see pg. 7), as a Conservation Associate.



Deepen your knowledge on subjects where the "Time Travel Stop" icon or reference appear. Read more in the Jeffrey Pine Journal issue indicated by visiting [friendsoftheinyo.org/publications](https://www.friendsoftheinyo.org/publications).



California Wild Heritage Campaign

Staff and board begin work on the eastern portion of the California Wild Heritage Campaign (finalized in 2009).

Stewardship Efforts Expanded

FOI establishes the Eastern Sierra Wilderness Stewardship Corps to address shrinking Forest Service land management budgets by engaging and empowering volunteers to help care for local public lands.



TIME TRAVEL STOP:
Spring/Summer 2005
Jeffrey Pine Journal



Inyo National Forest Centennial

The Inyo National Forest celebrates its Centennial. While on an FOI stewardship field trip, a fifth grader from Bishop discovers a new species of web-toed salamander in Pine Creek Canyon.



TIME TRAVEL STOP:
Spring 2007
Jeffrey Pine Journal

2001 2003 2005 2006 2007 2008

FOI's First Executive Director/Office/Website

Paul McFarland becomes FOI's first Executive Director, a position he will hold until 2009; FOI expands its membership, sets up its first office on Main Street in Bishop, launches the friendsoftheinyo.org website, and begins publishing the Jeffrey Pine Journal Biannual Magazine.

TIME TRAVEL STOP:
Spring/Summer 2004
Jeffrey Pine Journal



The Owens River Runs Again

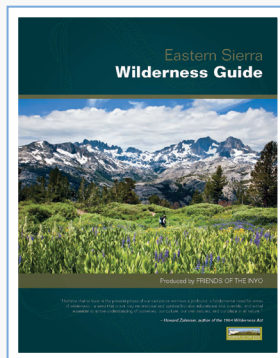
The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power returns water to a 62-mile stretch of the Owens River, from north of Independence to Lone Pine, representing 5 percent of the L.A. Aqueduct flow to the river. With lots of help from the local community, FOI installs a handicapped-accessible fishing platform on the eastern shore of Convict Lake.

TIME TRAVEL STOP:
Fall 2006
Jeffrey Pine Journal



A Year of Awards & Fighting for Conglomerate Mesa

Friends of the Inyo provides its first public comments on gold mining exploration at Conglomerate Mesa and begins hosting public field trips. The Inyo National Forest recognizes Friends of the Inyo as Partner of the Year; the U.S. Department of Interior bestows upon it its Cooperative Conservation Award; and the Andrea Lawrence Institute for Mountains and Rivers lauds FOI's Passionate Engagement in the Community and the Land.



Public Lands Management Act

President Barack Obama signs the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act for the permanent protection of nearly a half million acres of Wilderness in the Eastern Sierra, and the designation of Cottonwood Creek and Owens River Headwaters as Wild and Scenic Rivers. This victory follows FOI's years-long work to obtain these designations. The Inyo National Forest lauds FOI with its Spirit of the Inyo Award.

TIME TRAVEL STOP:

Summer 2009 Jeffrey Pine Journal

FOI's Third Executive Director/ Wilderness Guide/ DRECP

Laura Beardsley becomes FOI's third Executive Director, a position she will hold until early 2017. Former Executive Director, Paul McFarland, returns as part-time Stewardship Manager, a position he will hold till 2017. FOI begins local work on the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP), to be finalized in 2016. With help from Mono County and other partners, FOI publishes the Eastern Sierra Wilderness Guide, a 32-page booklet with information about both designated Wilderness and other wild lands in Eastern California.

TIME TRAVEL STOP:

Winter 2012 Jeffrey Pine Journal, Eastern Sierra Wilderness Guide



The Wilderness Act Turns 50!

TIME TRAVEL STOP:

Winter 2013/2014 Jeffrey Pine Journal

2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015

FOI's Second Executive Director

Stacy Corless (now Mono County Fifth District Supervisor) becomes FOI's second Executive Director, a position she will hold till 2012, after having started with our nonprofit as Communications Director in 2008 (see pg. 9).

Celebrating a Quarter Century of Caring for the Eastern Sierra

FOI celebrates its 25th anniversary. FOI contributes to the Owens Lake Comprehensive Master Plan to protect and enhance habitat, control dust and conserve water.

TIME TRAVEL STOP:

Summer 2011 Jeffrey Pine Journal, Winter 2011 Jeffrey Pine Journal

New Management Planning Process for INF Begins

Starting with a Forest Assessment, the Inyo National Forest begins an overhaul of its National Forest Land Management Plan, guided by a newly established 2012 Planning Rule. Between 2013 and 2019, FOI works on all aspects of the plan revision process.

TIME TRAVEL STOP:

Summer 2013 Jeffrey Pine Journal

Owens Lake Bird Festival Takes Flight

FOI launches the Owens Lake Bird Festival to educate the public and celebrate the migration of thousands of birds to the lake. The Alabama Hills Stewardship Group bestows its Stewardship Award on Friends of the Inyo.

TIME TRAVEL STOP:

Spring 2015 Jeffrey Pine Journal



California Desert National Conservation Lands Established

The DRECP is finalized, which establishes the California Desert National Conservation Lands, as well as areas for Renewable Energy Development. FOI submits comments on the Inyo National Forest's Draft Land Management Plan; comments focus on recreation, species conservation, aquatics and meadow health, timber, fire management, invasive species, land and waterway protection, and the future of partnerships.



New Logo

Friends of the Inyo adopts its new logo, which features the stately Sierra Juniper and proudly asserts its longevity as an organization: "Since 1986."

COVID Forces FOI to Harness Online Resources

FOI leads the Conglomerate Mesa Coalition in fighting another foreign company with drilling interests. In response to the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, FOI pivots to continue delivering services remotely, in a technologically smarter, COVID-safe way



Greater Commitment to Diversity & Water Justice

FOI engages strongly in the leadership of Keep Long Valley Green Coalition, and helps launch the Coalition's Every Last Drop e-mail newsletter. FOI begins Spanish-language outreach to Inyo and Mono Counties' growing Hispanic community and launches its Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee to involve as many underrepresented communities as possible in its mission. While we take a moment as part of our 35th Anniversary to celebrate the fact that, thanks to our work, and with help from our partners and supporters, Conglomerate Mesa, the Bodie Hills and Solitude Canyon continue to be protected from intrusive development, and much Wilderness has been preserved or restored, we cannot relax too much, knowing that the mission of Friends of the Inyo, to protect and care for the public lands of the Eastern Sierra, must propel us ever forward. Here's to another 35 years!

TIME TRAVEL STOP:
Fall 2016 Jeffrey Pine Journal

2016

2017

2018

2019

2020

2021

FOI's Fourth Executive Director/ Conglomerate Mesa Coalition

Wendy Schneider becomes FOI's fourth (and still current) Executive Director. FOI introduces Snow School, a program of Winter Wildlands Alliance, to teach primarily underprivileged local fifth graders about watershed health, snow science, winter survival and play. Friends of the Inyo establishes the Conglomerate Mesa Coalition in response to renewed gold mining threats from a foreign company.

TIME TRAVEL STOP:
Fall 2017 Jeffrey Pine Journal

Year of Accomplishments in Payahuunadü

The Inyo National Forest Land Management Plan is finalized; key accomplishments include: some 60,000 acres of new recommended wilderness and close to 290 new eligible miles of Wild and Scenic Rivers. The Alabama Hills receive National Scenic Area designation. FOI is strongly engaged in both processes, fighting hard for conservation goals. FOI promotes and supports legislation (H.R.8208) to recognize the tribal sovereignty of the Mono Lake Kutzadika'a Tribe. FOI assumes facilitation of the Bodie Hills Conservation Partnership. The Climbing Rangers program is launched in partnership with the Bishop Area Climbers Coalition and the Eastern Sierra Interpretive Association to help land management agencies in response to climbing's rise in popularity. FOI begins showcasing its Land Acknowledgement to recognize Payahuunadü ("the land of flowing water") as the original Paiute name of the Eastern Sierra.

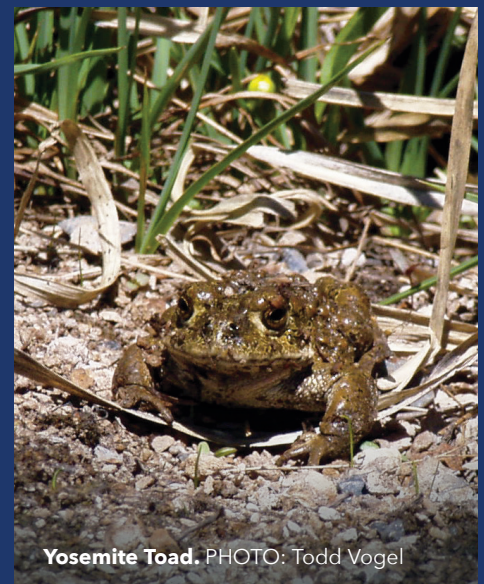
TIME TRAVEL STOP:
Spring 2019 Jeffrey Pine Journal,
Fall 2019 Jeffrey Pine Journal



Taking a
Multifaceted
Approach to
Protecting the

CRITTERS of the Eastern Sierra

It is possible to advocate on behalf of the animals of the Eastern Sierra without taking a cookie-cutter approach with regard to their protection: Some species can be preserved without listing them as threatened, thus avoiding regulatory burdens to the public; others may need to be listed under the Endangered Species Act; still others may need to have an age-old migration corridor protected. Here are some photos of just some of the animals that are receiving greater protection thanks to the work of Friends of the Inyo over the decades.





Former FOI Executive Director Laura Beardsley (front row, right) U.S. Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell (back row, third from left), and (to her left and right in the photo, respectively) then Mono County District 4 Supervisor Tim Fesko, and California Bureau of Land Management Director Jim Kenna, during a 2015 visit to Reno, NV, with others working on the Bi-State Action Plan, a long-term collaborative conservation strategy aiming to protect the bi-state sage grouse without listing it as an endangered species (**Time Travel Stop: Fall 2015 Jeffrey Pine Journal, pg. 13**). PHOTO: FOI Archive

FRIENDS OF THE INYO: 'A Gift...A Great Way to Find My Place in This Place'

BY LOUIS MEDINA, COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

A lone, a strand is easy to break. But when woven together with other threads, united they can become as strong as a mooring line that is able to keep a many-ton ship from drifting away and crashing into dangerous shoals.

In talking to former Friends of the Inyo Executive Director Laura Beardsley—about her tenure, how she came to FOI, the people she worked with, those she helped and those who helped her along the way, the successes she savored and the challenges she faced while at the helm—the powerful “weave” of Friends of the Inyo becomes apparent. Indeed, as an old Biblical proverb from Ecclesiastes says, “an attacker may defeat someone who is alone, but two can resist him; and a three-stranded cord is not easily broken.”

Laura served as Executive Director from October 2012 till January 2017, after now-Mono County Fifth District

Supervisor Stacy Corless, and before FOI’s current Executive Director Wendy Schneider—although she did not overlap with either of them (**Time Travel Stop: Winter 2012 Jeffrey Pine Journal, pg. 3**).

She was new to the Eastern Sierra. She had been living in El Portal and working in Yosemite with the WildLink program, helping underserved youth from the Central Valley to engage with National Parks in their backyard. But her boyfriend, now husband, Jon Crowley, was living in Mammoth.

Laura wanted to be near him, she knew about fundraising, and Friends of the Inyo needed help with its finances—having been impacted, like other nonprofits had, in the years that followed the economic crisis of 2008.

One thing led to another.



Much professional growth, husband Jon, and beloved rescue dog Clyde – all gifts Laura Beardsley received while she served as FOI's third Executive Director from 2012 to 2017. PHOTO: Kerry Baker/Portraits35

"It was an opportunity to get to know this place," said Laura, who now lives in Crowley with Jon (no relation between his family name and that of their home town) and their dog Clyde, who they rescued from the Inyo County Shelter. During her time at FOI, Laura would bring Clyde to work with her. "There was a whole crew of office dogs at Friends of the Inyo," she said.

The dogs were a comfort during challenging times.

"We had to do some work to improve internal systems and fiscal management to be able to continue to expand and to support conservation and stewardship throughout the Eastern Sierra," Laura said. Staff furloughs happened. "I worked a lot with the board and staff to get through that period."

Then, a crushing blow in mid-2015: Founder and long-time board member James Wilson, who had been Board President when Laura started, passed away. "He was a guiding light for so many in the community. It was a challenging time for the organization."

But there were joys and successes, too, during Laura's tenure.

Former Executive Director Paul McFarland helped her get up to speed as Executive Director. Paul had come back as Stewardship Manager in 2012, Laura said, thanks to a grant through the State of California to help develop an Off-Highway Vehicle Management Plan for the Forest Service.

Laura hired FOI's current Policy Director, Jora Fogg, as Preservation Coordinator in 2014. "I'm really excited that Jora is still on the staff," Laura said. "She really helped guide us through the [Inyo National] Forest management planning process (**Time Travel Stop: Fall 2014 Jeffrey Pine Journal, pp. 5 & 17**) and did a lot of advocacy work around the Bodie Hills Conservation Partnership." Jora's passion for advocacy remains in every FOI policy effort to this day.

A grant from Patagonia helped establish the Eastern Sierra Stewardship Crew, a precursor to FOI's current Trail Ambassador Program.

"Our stewardship crews did extensive work rebuilding and repairing the trail at Convict Lake. We supported Mammoth Lakes Trail Days and worked with the Bishop and Round Valley Elementary Schools to support outdoor education experiences in Devils Postpile National Monument and at the Horton Creek Campground (Bishop Bureau of Land Management). We also began and hosted a few annual walks and talks, like 'Breakfast with a Botanist' in McGee Creek, that engaged a variety of people every year."

In 2015, with tremendous help and dedication from Board Member Mike Prather of Lone Pine, "We started the Owens Lake Bird Festival," Laura said. "It was so great to put that together. We worked with Metabolic Studio to build that festival. I'm really proud that it has become an annual event that brings people to Owens Lake and the lower Owens Valley."

Laura married Jon in 2016, while she was Executive Director.

When she was getting ready to leave FOI and move into her current role as Executive Director of Disabled Sports Eastern Sierra, she encouraged Wendy, whom she had met when Wendy was an FOI volunteer, to apply for her job. "She had the passion and dedication to take FOI to the next level. Once I left and she stepped in, we got together a few times and talked through things. I tried to hand off as much as possible to give her as much as I could going forward," she said.

Building connections—like weaving together the strands that make a cord unbreakable—is the best way Laura found to give back.

"I think the ways that Friends of the Inyo connects people to the Eastern Sierra, the wild lands, the environment, the flora and fauna, is one of the things I value most about FOI and my time there."

Her experience at Friends of the Inyo is an integral part of who she is now, she said.

"I look back on it as such a gift. It was a great way for me to get to find my place in this place."



102 JOBS CREATED

Numerous Local Businesses Supported

Former Friends of the Inyo Communications Director Kyle Hamada planning a tour to Conglomerate Mesa with social media influencer Clare Gallagher. PHOTO: Alex Ertaud

Since Friends of the Inyo made the transition from an all-volunteer organization to one with **a staff of 1 in the year 2000** (“Don’t despise the day of small beginnings,” an old proverb says), it has stimulated Inyo and Mono Counties’ economies with full-time, part-time and seasonal employment opportunities for **102 individuals**—to say nothing of the revenue it has generated over the years for our reliable network of suppliers, and the well-deserved tax exemptions it has made possible for generous in-kind donors looking to give back by supporting a charitable organization.

It takes an economic village to protect and care for the public lands of the Eastern Sierra!

Data compiled by Michael Cleaver, Operations and Philanthropy Director



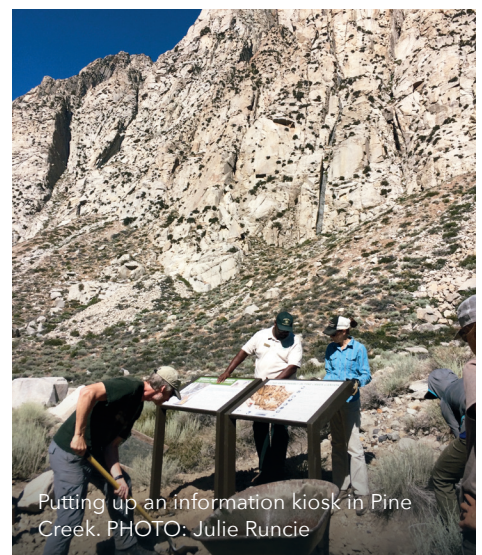
FOI Desert Policy Associate Bryan Hatchell (back row, left), at U.S. Sen. Dianne Feinstein’s office during the 2019 Conservation Lands Foundation (CLF) Friends Grassroots Fly-In to Washington, D.C. PHOTO: CLF



Joint meeting of the FOI Board of Directors and Staff in 2019. PHOTO: Michael Cleaver



Removing vehicle tracks from the playa in Death Valley in 2020. PHOTO: Lindsay Butcher



Putting up an information kiosk in Pine Creek. PHOTO: Julie Runcie

A full-page photograph of a woman, Wendy Schneider, standing on a snowy mountain slope. She is wearing a grey long-sleeved shirt, blue ski pants, a red backpack, and a grey cap. She is holding two ski poles. The background features a large, rugged mountain with patches of snow and a clear blue sky. The word "FUTURE" is overlaid in large, light blue letters across the middle of the image.

Looking Back,
Looking Forward,
and Ready for the

FUTURE

BY WENDY SCHNEIDER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Skiing provides much-needed opportunities for relaxation and reflection for FOI's current Executive Director Wendy Schneider.
PHOTO: Joe Lackey

Author's Note: On a handful of occasions as I worked on this piece, I thought to myself: You should make sure this JPJ includes a note of gratitude to the staff members who are really responsible for our successful programs and the health of the organization. I'd like to just go ahead and do that here, paired with this essay that offers some thoughts on where we are now at FOI, and on our direction for the future.

To Jora Fogg, Michael Cleaver, Alex Ertaud, Bryan Hatchell, and Louis Medina: Thanks so much for letting me lead you, for your energy and intelligence in executing initiatives (even if at moments you thought they were not a good idea). I really appreciate you.

As I write this, the air of the Eastern Sierra is sullied by thick smoke, and our lives are still affected by these new pathogens that have taken too many lives. Severe weather has recently delivered surprise blows, and steadfast political polarization continues to divide our people. The lands of Payahuunadū face multiple threats, including destructive extraction projects, extreme fire conditions, and a wily predator of a hundred years that stalks our water. Milestones invite reflection and planning, and I will engage here in a little of both. In this 35th anniversary year, assessing successes and challenges yields a hazy picture of the future, but one thing I am certain of is Friends of the Inyo's commitment to facing whatever challenges come our way. We are committed to seeing new challenges as opportunities, with fresh eyes, working in partnership with others, being motivated by love of the land, and always ready to do the hard work to protect and care for Payahuunadū.

Keeping at It

Over the last four years, I have led FOI to engage in a number of initiatives that have yielded positive results, and that we will likely continue. Two of these include:

Greater collaboration with tribes. In all of our policy work, we now make it a top priority to coordinate closely with local tribes. We do our best to gain an understanding of their priorities, and, with humility, seek to elevate their voices with respect to decisions made by the land managers that affect their ancestral lands. This initiative, which at its heart is really just the simple act of listening, I hope will lead to increasing integration between the agendas of the tribes and the environmentalists, which I believe will be beneficial for the long-term health of Payahuunadū. Two examples of this initiative in action include our engagement on the campaigns to protect the Bodie Hills and Conglomerate Mesa. In both cases, the areas are culturally important to local tribes and

we are working to include their top priorities in our proposals for protection and management of these lands.

Representation of more communities on our staff and board.

In addition to incorporating tribal priorities in our protection campaigns, FOI is making efforts to reflect the diverse communities of Inyo and Mono Counties, as well as the communities of Southern California and the Bay Area (where many of our supporters reside), in our staff and board. We recently hired our first English-Spanish bilingual staff member, and began publication of a monthly column in the Eastern Sierra's only Spanish language newspaper, *El Sol de la Sierra*. We are also meeting with Hispanic and Native community leaders to make sure the priorities of these communities are integrated into FOI's programs and initiatives. We believe that the long-term health of our organization requires this work. Today's young people are tomorrow's leaders and philanthropists, and while it seems conservation is a strong priority for them, we have seen that inclusiveness and social justice are as well. We want to create an environment at FOI that invites today's young people to engage in protecting and caring for the Eastern Sierra.

New Initiatives

One thing that FOI's work will likely include in the coming decades is a greater focus on mitigating the effects of climate change on our Eastern Sierra landscape. To do this, we are likely to focus on protecting climate refugia: that is, places to which species of plants and animals will migrate as temperatures continue to rise and weather patterns continue to change. One place this is

already happening is Conglomerate Mesa. While scientists have predicted that Joshua Trees may not survive the next 50 years in Joshua Tree National Park, they are thriving and reproducing on Conglomerate Mesa. We believe the work of protecting places where species can thrive will become critical in the coming decades.

Another aspect of our work that is likely to get greater attention in the coming years is protection of our water from extraction. As the air becomes hotter and drier, it will be more and more critical for more of our water to remain in Payahuunadū, instead of being exported for consumption to the south. The good news is that over the last 24 months, FOI has been strongly engaged with a diverse group of concerned stakeholders, the Keep Long Valley Green Coalition, that is focused on finding solutions to the water-sharing problem we face.

Our Approach

Friends of the Inyo's approach to the challenges ahead will include at least two tried-and-true characteristics:

"At FOI we recognize that we need the collective wisdom of our community and partners to make good decisions, as well as to wield the influence necessary to successfully protect the land."

Fresh eyes. Over the years we have learned that it is impossible to formulate hard-and-fast rules with general applicability that will result in good decisions and effective action. Instead, we evaluate every new situation on its own merits. Before we make decisions or take action, we listen to our members and supporters, the community, our partners, and scientists (to name a few sources of wisdom) so that our campaigns and initiatives are grounded in fact and science. This exercise is time consuming, but invariably results in well-thought-out campaigns that lead to positive results. One place where this dynamic is playing out today is in the realm of renewable energy projects. We are keenly aware that the shift away from fossil fuels is critical to long-term environmental health in the Eastern Sierra and that some impacts to species and habitat will need to be tolerated to permit construction of renewable energy sources. With fresh eyes, we have incorporated the overarching need for non-fossil-fuel energy production into our decision-making process regarding these proposals.

Stronger together. A mentor, Eastern Sierra conservation expert Fran Hunt, told me early in my tenure at FOI that in our efforts to protect the land we are stronger together. And of course she was, and is, correct. At FOI we recognize that we need the collective wisdom of our community and partners to make good decisions, as well as to wield the influence necessary to successfully protect the land. Indeed, our efforts to hear more voices in the formulation of our initiatives, and our efforts toward diversification of our board and staff, are also based on this tenet. Hearing more voices, including voices from communities with whom we have historically experienced tension, can help us align interests and find creative solutions, instead of drawing battle lines.

Love and Hard Work

As a parent, right now I am grappling with a personal transition: the new separation from my oldest kid. Sending him off to college, to be independent, has been difficult for me; but as I hope for the best for him, this life change has presented me with the opportunity to look ahead with more focus.

I think that history will show that the period of my tenure as ED of FOI was part of a period of transition for environmental concerns in Payahuunadü. I believe history will show that during this period, concerns shifted from a strong focus on recreation and recreation management, to protection of the land from the extraction of minerals and water, and of plants and animals from devastation due to climate change.

Like all transitions, this one is a place of pain and opportunity. While the increasingly apparent effects of 100 years of water extraction and rapid climate change are painful, the fact that all of us are being forced to experience them creates an opportunity. Experiencing these effects reveals the connectedness of all things in ecosystems, and the connectedness of our actions to the health of the land. And this in turn creates an opportunity to inspire people to action.

My son will be beginning his career at about the time I am finishing mine. What can I do to make the world he will experience better? A wise person recently told me that action rooted in anger is not likely to lead to success, and I believe she is right. Instead, we need action rooted in love and commitment to doing the hard work. We have both here at FOI. Hopefully it will be enough.

WENDY SCHNEIDER

Friends of the Inyo's current Executive Director, Wendy Schneider, is a native of East Tennessee and a resident of Crowley. Wendy came out west 30 years ago to run the Los Angeles fundraising office for Environment California (then known as CalPIRG). She passed the California Bar exam in 1995, then founded and ran the nonprofit A Child's New Life Foundation, to benefit a school for street children in India.

Her political work dates back to 1990, when, in Washington, D.C., she participated in campaigns and lobbying efforts on behalf of Al Gore, Handgun Control and U.S. PIRG (Public Interest Research Group).

Wendy's journey with FOI began as a volunteer in the summer of 2016, when she spent many hours recording plant data as a citizen scientist to help the National Park Service assess the effects of climate change in Devils Postpile National Monument. Wendy got to know Ben Wickham, then FOI's Membership & Communications Manager, and learned more about our organization. On a backcountry ski tour with Ben, Wendy learned that the Executive Director position would soon open up. This news came at an auspicious time, as Wendy was just turning 50 and had made a commitment to a career change, to use her professional efforts in service of a cause she really cared about. The stars aligned, and in mid-2017 she was selected to lead our organization.

An avid hiker, rock climber and backcountry skier, Wendy is the mother of three and married to Rudy DeFelice.



Rock climbing - reaching new heights. A good metaphor for Executive Director Wendy Schneider's desire for Friends of the Inyo. PHOTO: Joe Lackey

IS THIS YOUR

legacy?

Photo by Ken Miller



FRIENDS
OF THE INYO
SINCE 1986

MAKE A LASTING DIFFERENCE THROUGH YOUR WILL OR TRUST

"Friends of the Inyo has been the prime non-profit to protect our public lands through leadership, policy and stewardship. It is important for us to keep that legacy going through time by including it in our trust to ensure sustainability for the organization and the land."

- Sydney Quinn, FOI Board Member, and husband Dennis Schumacher

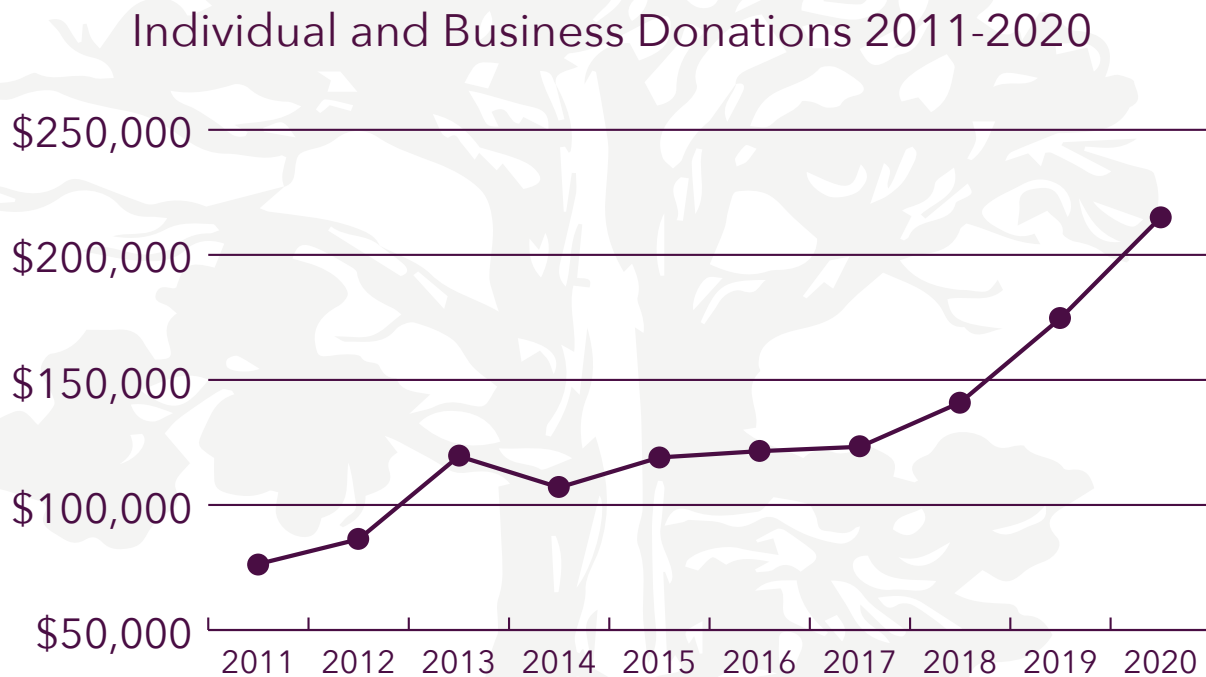
"I can think of nothing better to do with my estate than to ensure that the vast landscapes and wild denizens of the Eastern Sierra are protected and nurtured for the enjoyment and admiration of all."

- Chris Lizza, FOI Board President

Take your first steps toward protecting the Eastern Sierra at
SierraLegacy.org

DONATIONS

More than Dollars, a Measure of Our Community's Engagement and Generosity



Over the last **10 full fiscal years**, Friends of the Inyo's individual and business donors have increased from **658 in 2011, to 1,164 in 2020**—representing **77% growth**. The donations they have provided have seen an even larger percentage **increase of 181%**, from **\$76,400 in 2011, to \$215,000 in 2020**.

Cumulatively, these donations amount to more than **\$1.28 million!**

While FOI also relies on generous grant funding and income from ticket sales and sponsorships

of special events, donations from individuals and businesses are a ready indicator of community engagement and support of our work—from policy to stewardship to education.

We are humbled for the loyalty and generosity of everyone who has chosen to be a funding partner with us in the important work of protecting and caring for the public lands of the Eastern Sierra.

*Data compiled by Michael Cleaver,
Operations and Philanthropy Director*



GRANTS

Relationships and Trust from Foundations and Government Agency Partners

FOI speaking before the Inyo County Board of Supervisors about the importance of Conglomerate Mesa. PHOTO: FOI Archive

Over the last decade, Friends of the Inyo's funding support has included over \$4.2 million in grants on top of our members' generous contributions.

While recent high-profile grants from government agencies helped fund boots-on-the-ground projects, Friends of the Inyo's history is a story of generous and flexible foundation grants that transformed our organization from an all-volunteer effort to a professionally staffed nonprofit. Dedicated staff have been key to managing and growing our Policy, Stewardship and Education programs, allowing us to spread our mission and even partnering with other conservation efforts around the country to bring expertise to the Eastern Sierra.

Funders with an organization-wide focus like the Paradam Foundation were essential to the hiring of FOI's first staff, while long-time partnerships with the Conservation Lands Foundation and private family foundations continue to provide broad support for our policy programs and overhead costs.

Other grant support helped monitor long-term management decisions on important areas like Conglomerate Mesa. Our advocacy work was sustained by The Wyss Foundation, which funded a dedicated Desert Lands Organizer who eventually became a permanent staff member.

Our communications program was made possible by grants from the Sierra Nevada Alliance, which helped fund an intern position that evolved into our first full-time Communications Manager. And that individual helped with the design of our Trail Ambassadors

Program, whose flame continues to burn brightly every year thanks to funding from foundations and business sponsors.

Just as the Trail Ambassadors has become one of our flagship programs, our Owens Lake Bird Festival also could not have been possible without grant funding.

These are just some examples where our Grantors have propelled growth. Their giving inspires more giving, helping our programs and services to expand. It's a "virtuous" cycle.

Besides foundation funding, our programs also enjoy sustainability through grants from the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, and other agency partners.

It truly takes a funding village.

Policy. Stewardship. Education. Events. Our various initiatives that are thriving and blooming today, were once planted, then watered and grown thanks to the many foundations listed in this and past issues of the Jeffrey Pine Journal.

We are inspired by the trust and generosity – counted in millions of dollars but measured in the priceless conservation of our public lands – that has been bestowed on Friends of the Inyo by our many grant funders. They are true partners in the important work of protecting and caring for the public lands of the Eastern Sierra. To see our comprehensive list of supporting foundations and business supporters please visit friendsoftheinyo.org/supporters.

By Michael Cleaver, Operations and Philanthropy Director



2017 Trail Ambassador Interpreter Training. PHOTO: Ben Wickham



Owens Lake Bird Festival 2017. PHOTO: Ben Wickham

GET OUT

And You're Bound to See 'Muley' and the Round Valley Deer Herd

BY LOUIS MEDINA, COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

Hi, there. My name is Muley. I'm a mule deer. You two-legged ones named us so because of our large ears, which to you resemble a mule's. But I don't know about that. You may be biased: I hear you like mules and even have a festival in Bishop that's all about them. Whatever.

I am not going to tell you if I'm male or female. I'll let you use your imagination in picturing me. Our does can weigh up to 200 pounds, our bucks up to more than 300. They have antlers that fork as they grow, instead of sprouting from one main trunk. That antler configuration, the black tip of our tails, our ears, and our bigger size differentiate us from our white-tailed cousins.

I belong to the Round Valley herd, about 3,000 strong and named after the area near Mount Tom and the Buttermilks where we winter. We're a migrating kind and love to get out, and while we rarely venture east of your big migration corridor in these parts—Highway 395 is what I think you call it—our route overlaps with it and another one called 203. So please keep an eye out for us. I hear there is another herd that stays on the other side of your dangerous 395, ambling between there and the White Mountains. There are other herds among us, too—even desert dwellers that you might see around Conglomerate Mesa. Heed the deer signs, please.

Anyway, back to our herd. About half of us spend our summers just south of Mammoth on the sunrise side of the Sierra; the rest of us go over the crest to the sunset side looking for food. Less competition that way. We're pretty smart. Our migration corridor is up to 50 miles long and its path forces us to encounter obstacles like fences, your homes (more always being built) with their yards, your fast-gliding metal machines on round legs, and predators—mountain lions, coyotes, bobcats and black bears. These usually attack our fawns or sick deer. You two-leggeds, on the other hand, often prey upon our bucks during the golden leaf season with your thunder sticks that split the air as they make us fall to the ground as if by magic.

And it is right around golden leaf season when you'll see some of us heading back through Solitude Canyon on our

way to the valley before the harsh winter weather sets in. Solitude Canyon is an important migration route for us. But among you there has been controversy over development in the canyon since 1986—as long as Friends of the Inyo has existed. That year, a conservation coalition stopped the development of a ski resort.

More recently, about a full change of seasons ago, some of you wanted to build a trail right in the canyon so you could ride those two-wheel things that go super-fast and kick up dirt and mud when you pedal them hard and do jumps on them. They're scary to us. Good thing your development project included various trails, and some were built out of the canyon while our migration corridor was left alone. Both your (people's) and our (wildlife's) needs were met then, and that's a good thing. FOI thinks so, too.

As I said earlier, we like to get out, so you're bound to see us: foraging for food amid the grasses, bitterbrush and sagebrush; teaching the little ones how to be cautious and grow up to be proper deer; stotting, also called pronking or pronging, which means springing into the air with all four of our feet off the ground simultaneously. Bet a mule can't do that. You should have called us gazelle deer.

Oh, well, if you get out like we do in that 40-to-50-mile stretch of the Eastern Sierra between Round Valley and Mammoth Lakes, whether you choose to stay on the sunrise side of the crest or go over to the sunset side like some of us do, you're bound to come upon us. Some of us will have a band around our neck. I understand it's a device you use to track us for our protection. We need protection. As your numbers have increased, ours have decreased. Remember: We were here long before you all were, and we want to be around for a long time—just as much as you do.

Special thanks to Justin Augustine, an attorney with the Center for Biological Diversity, for providing much information on mule deer for this story. Justin worked in Bishop as a wildlife biologist for the California Department of Fish and Wildlife from 2001 to 2003, helping to track mule deer on the western and eastern sides of the Sierra Nevada crest.



From Round Valley to Mammoth Lakes and even to the western side of the Sierra crest, you can easily find mule deer if you just do like them and "Get Out" and about. PHOTO: Wayne Williams



PHOTO: S.W. Krull Imaging



PHOTO: Lothar Kuhlmann

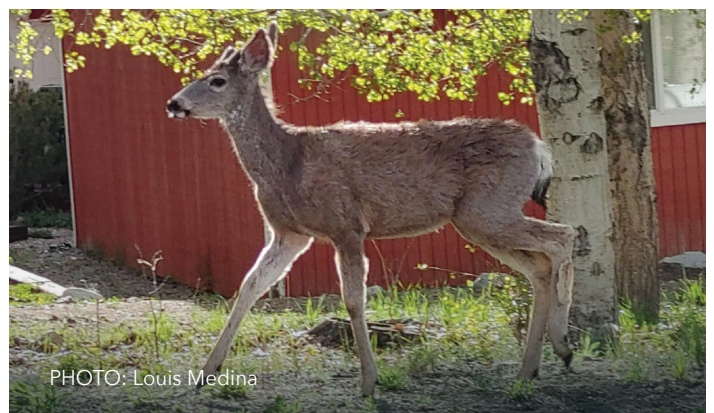


PHOTO: Louis Medina

thank you

MEMBERS & SUPPORTERS

Friends of the Inyo succeeds thanks to the generous support of members and donors who help us care for public lands in the Eastern Sierra. We are pleased to acknowledge the following individuals and organizations who made contributions between March 16 and September 15, 2021.

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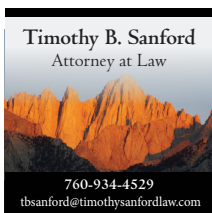
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