

## Executive Director's Report

by Julie Bear

With this edition of SierraScapes, we celebrate several exciting milestones, which could not have been achieved without all of you. We are thrilled to announce that we have more than doubled our membership in the past year and are now over 700 strong. Together we have helped to protect over 4,500 acres of land in three of our four program areas, which are:



1. Wildlife and Plant Communities
2. Working Farms and Ranches
3. The Scenic Mono Basin
4. Mono/Los Angeles Watershed

In addition, we have just been awarded a grant to work on the preservation of more farms and ranches.

This is great news but what does this really mean for all of us? The Eastern Sierra's scenic vistas, diverse and abundant wildlife, and unsurpassed recreational opportunities draw millions to visit and experience its restorative and rejuvenating strength and beauty. Our farms and ranches add to our rural quality of life, our scenic and cultural landscapes, our economy, while supporting local jobs and businesses. Preserving farms and ranchlands means protecting land that is productive not only due to geologic and climactic factors, but also because of the stewardship connection of the farmer or rancher to the land. This connection can be

*continued on back*



## Partnerships Protect Mono Lake Scenic Viewsheds

by Karen Ferrell-Ingram

The message is loud and clear: unless you are one of the elite listed in Forbes magazine, you need partners to achieve significant land conservation. Through a productive partnership with two other nonprofits and a federal agency, the ESLT has assisted with the permanent protection of the largest tract of private land in the Mono Basin.

3748 acres in the northeast corner of the Mono Basin, tucked up against the Nevada border, is now in the hands of the Bureau of Land Management to be managed to protect its numerous wild and historic features. This area, known as Cedar Hills, due to the abundance of Utah junipers (See *On the Wildside*, page 2), is home to pronghorn antelope, sage grouse, mule deer, mountain lions, and many other species of wildlife. It is a vast area, adjacent to the Bodie Hills, that is mostly free of roads or other fragmentation. Native Americans used the land in centuries past and left behind many artifacts.

In 2005, The Wilderness Land Trust with funding from Resources Legacy Fund Foundation purchased the land from an out-of-state developer and recently donated it to the BLM. The ESLT was deeded the mineral rights to ensure that mining will never take place on the land. The deed restrictions that were placed on the property will make certain that the property is managed for its natural habitats and the ESLT is charged with monitoring for compliance of those restrictions.

The ESLT is grateful for our partners, those organizations and individuals alike, who understand the unique and fragile quality of the wild open spaces that make the Eastern Sierra an irreplaceable treasure. Our supportive members are also part of a critical partnership that is key to our continued success. ■

# Junipers of the Eastern Sierra *by Stephen Ingram*

The Eastern Sierra Land Trust works in a region that is home to two special junipers—Sierra juniper and Utah juniper. The varied topography of the Eastern Sierra region encompasses scenic lands from Sierra peaks to the western valleys of the Great Basin Desert, and each of these two extremes has its own juniper. Sierra juniper (*Juniperus occidentalis* ssp. *australis*) occupies the mountain ridges and rocky slopes from 10,500 down to 6500 feet. Utah juniper (*J. osteosperma*) grows from the lower Sierra foothills, mostly between 8,000 and 5,000 feet, east into Nevada and Utah.



*Utah junipers below Cedar Hills, Mono Basin*

Sierra juniper, with its stout, cinnamon red trunk and clumps of dark green foliage, is one of the most stately, picturesque trees of North America. In *A Natural History of Western Trees*, Donald Culross Peattie described Sierra juniper as “a tree that seems positively to rejoice in the most inhospitable situations and, with a flair for the dramatic, to fix itself upon isolated pinnacles of rock, or overhanging giddy chasms, there to outlive the generations of men.”

Utah juniper inhabits drier, often sandy sites and is a shorter, more shrub-like tree than its taller cousin. It has shaggy, grayish bark, and low-growing branches that provide crucial shade to coyotes, jackrabbits, rodents, and birds of the high desert. Although not related to true cedars, Utah juniper often goes by the common name of cedar, and lends that name to many locations, such as Cedar Breaks in Utah and Cedar Hills in the Mono Basin (See article on pg. 1).

The scale-like leaves and small, bluish berry-like cones distinguish our two native junipers from other conifers, such as the firs and pines. (Juniper berries are used to flavor gin, and are the only spice derived from conifers). Juniper “berries” are actually small cones with fleshy scales that have coalesced to form a berry-like fruit, which contain 1 (or rarely 2) seeds per cone in Utah juniper and 2-3 seeds per cone in Sierra juniper. The ripe cones of Sierra juniper are relied on during the winter by Townsend’s solitaires, who will defend all other birds from their territories. Many birds, coyotes, and jackrabbits eat Utah juniper cones, and mule deer will browse the foliage during times of drought. ■

*The mission of the Eastern Sierra Land Trust is to protect and enhance vital lands in the Eastern Sierra for their scenic, recreational, agricultural, historical, botanic and wildlife values.*

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

- Tony Taylor, *President*
- Rick Kattelmann, *Vice President*
- Mary Pipersky, *Treasurer*
- Herb Benham
- Stan Hunewill
- Stephen Ingram
- Orrin Sage

**ADVISORS**

- Dave Doonan
- Jacques Etchegoyhen
- Steve Frisch
- Nate Greenberg
- Linda Hess
- Byng Hunt
- Geoff McQuilkin
- George Milovich
- Tim Sanford
- Brian Stange
- Ann Wong

**STAFF**

- Julie Bear, *Executive Director*
- Karen Ferrell-Ingram, *Lands Director*
- Cheryl Chipman, *Investment Opportunities Coordinator*
- Katie Hergenrather, *AmeriCorps Member*

P. O. Box 755  
 621 W. Line Street  
 Bishop, California 93515  
 Phone (760) 873-4554  
 Fax (760) 873-9277  
[www.easternsierralandtrust.org](http://www.easternsierralandtrust.org)  
[info@eslt.org](mailto:info@eslt.org)



## ESLT Launches Migration Corridor Awareness Campaign *by Katie Hergenrather*

In celebration of the ESLT’s permanent protection of critical wildlife habitat on a fourth property in the narrow Wheeler Ridge wildlife migration corridor, we have planned a fun and informative event for people interested in learning more about local wildlife. With a special appeal to the human residents of the migration corridor, we will provide information about the needs and habits of local wildlife, how to create

a fire safe home and landscape, and how the ESLT is working to preserve and enhance wildlife habitat. We’ll even be giving away living deer food—otherwise known as “Bitterbrush for Bambi!” Some of our event partners will be the California Department of Fish and Game and the Wheeler Crest Fire Department.

In conjunction with the educational event, the ESLT will be distributing a “Living with Wildlife” brochure, produced in partnership with the California Deer Association. This brochure illustrates the routes of

migrating wildlife and provides tips on co-habiting with our local furred and feathered friends.

Please check our website for more information about this campaign for wildlife. We hope to see you at the event! ■

**WHAT:** Living with Wildlife Festival  
**WHEN:** Saturday, September 29, 9:00-Noon  
**WHERE:** Crowley Community Park, Crowley Lake Drive  
**MORE INFO:** Call the ESLT at (760) 873-4554

The Eastern Sierra Land Trust is proud of the varied backgrounds and perspectives of its Board of Directors. One Board member who we are thrilled to have as a part of the leadership team is Stan Hunewill of Bridgeport. The Hunewill family first came to the US from the Alsace Lorraine region of France in the 1600s, and have lived in the Bridgeport Valley since the 1860s.

Stan and his wife, Jan, along with other family members, own and operate the Hunewill Guest Ranch, which also keeps close to 200 horses and 600 to 800 head of cattle. The full service ranch can host up to 50 guests at one time during the summer months. Activities include horseback riding (of course!), fishing, hiking, and enjoying the excellent cuisine of George, the ranch chef, and Denise Elliott, whose baked goods are exquisite. The Hunewills spend the winter months in the Smith Valley when the guest ranch is not in operation, but winters are not a vacation since they are managing their cattle operation. A



*Stan and Jan Hunewill of the historic Hunewill Ranch.*

highlight of this aspect of their business is the fall cattle drive from Bridgeport to the Smith Valley. Up to 25 guests can accompany the herd for the five days that it takes to ride over the terrain. Lunch is served from a chuck wagon drawn by Percheron draft horses, which also makes a noticeable appearance in the Bridgeport 4th of July parade.

Stan began implementing Holistic Resource Management on the ranch about 15 years ago. This practice rotates cattle into fresh grazing areas to

preserve fragile meadow resources. There are several environmental benefits to this application, such as the protection of riparian areas and even distribution of grazing areas, but another benefit is the increase of beef production. Definitely a win/win situation!

The Hunewill children-Jeff, Betsy, and Megan-and grandchildren are indispensable to running the ranch. Each has their own duties, right down to the 10 year-old grandson who mops up the kitchen floor each day! The Hunewills feel very fortunate to be able to work with family members on a day-to-day basis. It is obvious that Stan and Jan have a real love for the land, and enjoy sharing the ranching experience and their stewardship message with their guests.

“We believe it is particularly important to preserve open space in the Eastern Sierra for future generations. People come from all over to renew themselves by hiking, fishing, or riding here and we are passionate about providing and sharing this experience with them.” ■

## Save the Date!

Mark September 23rd on your calendars for the 2007 Lands and Legacy event which will be held at the Mountain Light Gallery in Bishop from 5-8 pm. Featured at this year's event will be festive music, scrumptious food from Anything Goes Catering, fine wines from the Sonoma Wine Company, and a live auctioneer. A silent auction and raffle will also be held with items generously donated from local merchants. Sponsors for the event include **Mammoth Mountain Ski Area, Sage Associates, and Patty Schwartzkopf-Mammoth Coldwell Banker.** Contributors include many supporters in our service area including restaurants, sports stores, and lodging. Some of the raffle/auctions items include:

- Stay at Sorenson's Resort in beautiful Hope Valley
- Massage from A Kneaded Bodyworks
- Special tour of Valentine Reserve, Mammoth Lakes
- Print by Vern Clevenger
- Dell Inspiron Computer
- Canoe Trip on Mono Lake from the Mono Lake Committee
- 2-hr plane ride over the Owens Valley
- Bike tune up from Aerohead Bicycles
- Posters from Claude Fiddler/Wilderness Light
- Scenic photo by Beverly Schroeder
- Soothing body products from InTouch Microspa
- Gift Certificates from Value Sports and Spellbinder Books
- Lodgepole pine bench from Drake Wood Milling

Other contributions are from Wilson's Eastside Sports, Stephen Ingram Nature Photography, Bishop Nursery, and Convict Lake Resort. Tickets will be available at the door: \$10 for members, \$15 for non-members. New memberships include the price of a ticket.

Sponsorships are still available. If you have a special skill or something unique you would like to offer for an auction or raffle item, please call Cheryl at 760-873-4554. ■

## Federal Legislation Encourages Tax-free IRA Contributions

It's not too early to start planning for tax year 2007! If you are thinking of making a charitable gift to the ESLT from your retirement assets, you may save being taxed on the withdrawals through the Pension Protection Act of 2006. Effective for the 2006 and 2007 tax years, donors age 70 1/2 or older may designate IRA withdrawals directly to the ESLT by using our tax ID number. The donation will count towards your Required Minimum distribution, and is not subject to the charitable deduction ceiling of half of your adjusted gross income. Gifts may be made up to \$100,000 each for a single taxpayer. If you are currently contributing to the ESLT after making withdrawals—you may save some tax dollars by doing it beforehand. If you receive the withdrawal first, the same rules do not apply. Your contribution will help conserve the special lands in the Eastern Sierra that we all value. All contributions are meaningful and appreciated. As always, please check with your tax advisor and IRA account manager before taking action. ■

### Has Your E-mail Changed?

From time to time we like to keep our members informed of important news from the ESLT. Many of you have submitted your email addresses over the years to stay apprised of what we are doing. However, as wireless technology changes, so do email addresses. If your email address has changed within the last couple of years, please keep us informed so that you will continue to receive our latest news. You may email [info@eslt.org](mailto:info@eslt.org) if you haven't been receiving emails from us, or would like to. Or, log on to [www.easternsierralandtrust.org](http://www.easternsierralandtrust.org) and sign up for email alerts there. ■

Executive Director's Report — continued from page 1

enhanced through land trust conservation efforts.

Land conservation means a better quality of life for all of us, near and far; cleaner air and water, regionally grown food, recreation, and places to explore and grow in our humanity. As a colleague so succinctly and directly pointed out recently, "Our mission is about land, but our work is about people, now and forever." ■



The ESLT has produced an assortment of logo hats and shirts which are available for sale. Look for them soon on our website and at the Lands and Legacy event. I'm sure we have a style and size for you!



P. O. Box 755  
Bishop, California 93515  
(760) 873-4554  
[www.easternsierralandtrust.org](http://www.easternsierralandtrust.org)

NONPROFIT ORG  
US POSTAGE PAID  
PERMIT NO. 6  
BISHOP, CA

