

the sheet

News, Views & Culture of the Eastern Sierra



What do all these women have in common? See p. 18 to find out.

Saturday, March 28, 2026

FREE

Vol. 24, No. 13

NOT A WATERSHED MOMENT

By Fisher

For environmentalists, the results of the Tri-Valley Groundwater Modeling Project were supposed to be a stick-it-to-'em watershed moment that would finally force a historically reluctant board to accept that pumping restrictions are necessary.

That didn't happen Wednesday night at the Tri-Valley Groundwater Management District board meeting in Benton.

"This is as far as the research has gone... and this is as far as it's going to go?" one attendee asked, visibly stunned, after the consultant unveiled his findings.

Funded through a state grant secured by Mono County and administered by the Owens Valley Groundwater Authority (OVGA), the \$200,000 model

was designed to simulate groundwater conditions across the Tri-Valley basin under a range of management scenarios. For years, understanding of the basin has relied largely on limited monitoring and anecdotal evidence.

But the model wasn't the silver bullet many had imagined. As the consultant, Gus Tolley with DBS&A Geo-Logic, made clear, building a truly reliable groundwater model takes years and a lot more money. Even then, it's not a perfect science.

"All models are wrong, but some of them are useful," he said mid-presentation.

Based on the available data and the model it presented, the consultant concluded that uniform pumping reductions over the next 30 years would improve groundwater levels in

Benton and Hammil valleys, but would result in only modest improvements to spring discharge at Fish Slough. Land fallowing produced similar results.

"Modest results at Fish Slough" didn't sit well with many in the room.

Fish Slough is a high desert wetland, making it an ecological anomaly home to endangered pupfish, unique microfauna, and culturally significant artifacts like petroglyphs and obsidian flakes. It's also drying up, which is why so many people keep showing up to these meetings.

But Tolley stressed that the takeaway wasn't that pumping has no effect, but that the system is not fully understood.

more WATER, pg. 18

FOUR BLONDES IN DEATH VALLEY



Photo taken moments before disaster.

By Fisher

In 1850, during the California Gold Rush, a wagon train of pioneers set out for California, hoping to strike it rich. Trying to take a shortcut, they veered off the main trail and became hopelessly lost.

They wandered into the harsh, unfamiliar terrain of Death Valley, facing extreme heat, starvation, and a deadly lack of water. Wagons were abandoned, they killed oxen for food, and the group split into smaller parties in a desperate attempt to survive.

When one woman finally made it out, she looked back and said, "Goodbye, Death Valley."

One hundred seventy-six years later, I found myself making the same proclamation.

It started Friday evening. My boyfriend and I, plus another couple, arrived at the park at sundown, drove a couple of miles up a dirt road into a canyon, and set up a dispersed campsite. No one else in sight.

An hour in, hamburgers on the Coleman stove, conversation flowing, we rejoice in our packing skills. Twist-off wine? Genius.

Let's go over tomorrow's plan. More wine. How's work been? Open another beer. How's so-and-so? Maybe another drink.

Then, where are the keys?

Oh no. I think they're locked in the car.

The same car you were planning to sleep in?

more BLONDES, pg. 17

ENTERTAINING THE LOCALS



The '70s were a weird time... but they were especially weird for Bill Krebs, who spent over a year in Antarctica. To learn about the research he did during his time there, see p. 10

Masudistic candidate

Moore's moves on

Chatbot says go to Tahoe

Gift card, anyone?

Save the Sierra

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ANY AIR-PORT IN A STORM

By Libre

If you fly through the Bishop Airport, you'll interact with them. Transportation Security Administration (TSA) officers in blue uniforms, ushering guests through the metal detectors, scanning luggage, answering questions.

Federal funding for the Homeland Security Department, which includes TSA, has been shut down for nearly five weeks. Now, the eight TSA employees at the Eastern Sierra Regional Airport (BIH) are facing the repercussions.

"A lot of the national news has been about the incredibly long checkpoint lines," said Ashley Helms, the Inyo County public works deputy director of airports. "That's not an issue here for a number of reasons, being we only have two flights a day, and we are still fully staffed. We've had no impact on operations, despite [TSA] not having a paycheck."

Some of these local TSA officers have missed four paychecks. This is the second government shutdown of President Donald Trump's second term, which many local TSA employees are still reeling from.

"The small town has been good to us. Everyone's understanding as far as our landlords with rent and mortgages and things of that sort," said Grace Avila, a supervisor of the BIH TSA. "But there's still bigger things like credit scores and car insurance. You can only ask for so much. People are biking to work to avoid spending money."

As of Thursday, the Eastside community can help.

A small cardboard box for gift cards is available outside the BIH security checkpoint for locals and visitors alike to make donations to the local TSA employees. The gift cards can only be for named businesses (a blank Visa card is a no-go; Vons or Grocery Outlet is ideal). According to Avila, there is no limit on the amount donated in the form of gift cards, but the TSA cannot accept cash donations.

The initiative came from a call made by Mammoth local Emily McCue last week. She'd seen on ABC World News that gift cards in small denominations could be used as donations for TSA employees when these individuals were not getting paid by the federal government. McCue wondered if such a program would work in Bishop.

"The [TSA employees] have been very professional throughout the whole thing," McCue said. "They carry on and make our tourist population feel welcome. You wouldn't even know there was a problem. They don't want people to feel sorry for them."



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the sheet

News, Views & Culture of the Eastern Sierra

"In a time of deceit, telling the truth is a revolutionary act."

-Orwell

JACK LUNCH

PUBLISHER

McCue kickstarted the donations by doling out a \$5 gift card to each of the BIH TSA employees.

Her phone call spurred a conversation between Avila, Helms, and Joe Pollini from the Bishop Chamber of Commerce. Pollini then rallied to spread the word about the donation box on behalf of the local TSA employees.

The donation box will be available until the end of the shutdown.

Bluesapalooza

Mammoth Lakes Tourism (MLT) committed \$75,000 to Mammoth's Bluesapalooza festival this year, \$50,000 more than the \$25,000 the board threw towards the event last year.

The 2026 iteration of the festival marks its 30th anniversary. This year

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brings an upset in venues.

The concert series will move from "The Woodsite," on Minaret Road to a new location at Canyon Lodge.

The funding for the festival comes at a time when the music festival industry is in economic flux, as reported by Lunch in the Feb. 26 issue.

Bluesapalooza has lost money over the last few years. This year, with the change in venue, will be no different.

"There is no projection on our side in which we see a profit," said Rich Sherman of Omega Events, which owns Bluesapalooza, during Wednesday's MLT meeting.

The festival has not officially released its line-up, though Sherman expects that information will be available the first week of April.

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ASPEN ONE

OP/ED

A TOWN OF 7,500 - AND A LOT OF BEDS

By Dr. Arianne Weiner

Mammoth Lakes is a town of roughly 7,500 full-time residents. Across town, cranes, construction sites, and planning approvals are expanding visitor lodging at a pace that is hard to ignore.

Taken together, this is not incremental growth. It is a substantial expansion of visitor lodging capacity in a very small mountain town.

The question is whether the scale of new lodging now entering the system matches the demand we actually have — and whether we have fully considered who carries the risk if it does not.

The Regional Visitor Base

Mammoth has long depended on Southern California. Los Angeles families, ski teams, weekend drivers, and college students form the core of our visitor economy. They drive up, share condos, stay two to four nights, and look for value.

Most available visitor data suggests that roughly three-quarters of Mammoth's guests come from Southern California, particularly the Los Angeles basin. Another share arrives from Northern California, while a smaller portion comes from out of state or abroad. In other words, Mammoth's visitor economy remains overwhelmingly regional and largely dependent on drive-up travel.

Commercial flights into the Eastern

Sierra Regional Airport have improved access through hubs such as Denver and San Francisco. But the number of passengers arriving by air remains relatively small compared with the dominant drive market. That regional base has advantages. It creates reliable demand and strong repeat visitation. But it also means the visitor pool is not infinite.

Many of the new lodging options entering the market, whether branded hotels or upgraded condominiums, ultimately serve the same regional guests. The branding varies. The amenities differ. The finishes are newer. But the core demographic remains largely the same: families and groups from Southern California seeking a mountain weekend.

Are we attracting a fundamentally new visitor segment, or simply offering more versions of the same experience to the same pool of travelers? If hundreds of new hotel rooms and over a hundred new resort condominiums come online, layered on top of thousands of existing short-term rentals across platforms such as Airbnb and VRBO, we are making a collective wager that demand will grow quickly enough to absorb this supply without destabilizing occupancy or prices.

More inventory does not automatically attract more visitors. Often, it simply spreads the same visitors across more options.

The Sweet Spot Game

Anyone watching the short-term rental market can feel it. An influx of supply has saturated the system, making pricing a constant exercise in adjustment. Owners lower midweek rates, change minimum stay requirements, test pricing thresholds, and chase the "sweet spot."

This is what oversupply looks like. Not empty streets, but constant price competition.

Many properties sit vacant for large portions of the year, with only top performing units approaching consistent occupancy. When supply surpasses stable demand, price becomes the primary lever. And when price becomes the main lever, margins shrink.

Beyond the Village

Much of the visible growth has been centered near The Village. But another major project deserves more public awareness. The Mammoth Hotel redevelopment planned for the former Sierra Center Mall near Vons, often considered the everyday heart of town, would add more than 150 hotel rooms along Old Mammoth Road. At the same time, last week's confirmation of plans for the Mammoth Crossing development introduced another large-scale proposal to the conversation, including a proposed JW Marriott hotel and as-

sociated resort residences near Canyon Boulevard.

These projects are not occurring in isolation. They are arriving at the same time. They represent a broader expansion of visitor lodging across multiple areas of town.

What Happens If We've Overbuilt?

Ski towns are cyclical. They surge. Then they correct.

The pandemic years brought a wave of visitation and real estate demand across mountain communities. In response, both short-term rentals and development proposals expanded rapidly.

After the 2008 financial crisis, many resort towns saw rates fall, discounting accelerate, and tax revenues fluctuate as supply outpaced demand.

Mammoth is not immune to that pattern.

Many of the projects now rising across Mammoth were approved years ago. What may have made sense when those approvals were granted does not necessarily look the same today, yet the projects continue to move forward.

More rooms do not automatically create more prosperity. They create more participants competing for the same visitor.

In a town of 7,500 residents, that raises a basic planning question: how large should the visitor bed base actually become?



This winter, Eastern Sierra locals get unreal flight discounts. Save up to 40% off Advanced Air with service from MMH four days a week, starting November 26. Or save up to 10% on United with daily service from BIH to SFO starting December 11 and DEN starting December 18. And this season, United Airlines expands its Bishop schedule — with double weekend service to make your trip even smoother.

Learn more at VisitMammoth.com/FlyLocal



ADVANCED AIR



OP/ED

TIME FOR A DIFFERENT APPROACH TO HOUSING

By Matthew Lehman

Over the years, I've sold many of the major development parcels now facing final approvals in Mammoth Lakes, which has given me a close-up view of the practical realities of building in Mammoth Lakes.

The concerns about increased density, parking, and workforce housing are understandable in our mountain town. However, the workforce housing shortage is not new. Local committees were already discussing the issue in the late 1970s, with one Inyo Register article from 1978 noting a significant shortfall in housing stock. This was long before the Town incorporated in 1984 or created a dedicated housing bureaucracy.

Back then, despite the acknowledged challenges, employers and capital markets resolved the issue effectively. The Mountain, Hospital, Mammoth Community Water District, my business, Whiskey Creek, and many other smaller local businesses built or acquired employee housing as a sound business practice, helping them attract and retain a quality workforce. This market-driven response kept the local economy functioning without heavy government mandates.

Around 2000, as the town began introducing more formal housing regulations and mitigation requirements, the problem started to re-emerge and intensify. Today's approach relies heavily on government intervention: developer

impact fees, mandatory deed-restricted units, mitigation requirements, and large taxpayer subsidies. Workforce housing is currently costing \$617,000 to \$684,000-plus per unit through direct subsidies, soft loans, cost overruns, and deferred fees, often totaling millions in excess per project, as seen in "The Parcel" housing project. These efforts move slowly, cost far more than market-rate housing, and depend on a cash-strapped California facing multi-billion-dollar deficits. Qualification guidelines for tenancy are often unrealistic for the very workers who need the housing most.

Despite decades of intervention, results have not improved compared with the freer market of the past. Deed restrictions create lotteries and administrative headaches. Mandates and high fees discourage new construction, keeping supply tight and rents high.

It is time to try what worked efficiently before: a more laissez-faire, market-driven approach. Reduce excessive fees and mandates. Get government out of the way and let employers, capital markets, and private developers build more housing across all price points. Increased supply naturally moderates rents through filtering; newer units absorb demand and free up older stock for the local workforce.

Research shows that a 10% increase in housing supply correlates with roughly 5% slower rent growth, with even stronger

effects at the neighborhood level. Lower regulations also dramatically reduce building costs.

Many of the proposed projects, especially in the North Village Specific Plan -- a plan the Town adopted in 1991 with substantial community input and has been amended several times since -- will deliver hundreds of new residential units. Many of these units will not allow short-term rentals, and many owners will choose not to offer them. As more short-term rental inventory comes on the market, income per unit declines, making longer-term rentals more attractive to owners.

Additional redevelopment opportunities exist in the Sierra Valley Sites, zoned for higher-density multi-family residential use since the 1940s and now home to aging workforce housing. Straightforward density bonuses without heavy mandates could quickly replace outdated units with new market-rate housing.

For projects like "The Woodsite" and other North Village parcels, we should streamline approvals, offer flexible parking standards, including shared garages, priced parking, and reductions where transit helps, and remove mandatory deed restrictions and subsidies. Market-driven solutions, including public-private partnerships, can address parking far better than past unfulfilled promises.

Growth is coming! With Mammoth

Lakes Tourism spending millions annually on marketing, visitation and population pressure will continue. If we must grow, we should do it thoughtfully, upward and infill in already-planned areas like North Village and Sierra Valley Sites, rather than risk sprawling development on surrounding public lands. Proposals like Sen. Mike Lee's recent efforts to open targeted federal public lands for housing illustrate exactly the kind of sprawl we want to avoid, including open spaces between Mammoth and Bishop and even portions of the Lakes Basin that were once on the table for conversion into private land.

My experience selling these parcels has shown me what becomes possible when entitlements are aligned with economic reality. The market prior to 2000 adapted without a Housing Department. Decades of heavier government involvement have mostly complicated the problem.

Mammoth needs housing that supports our workforce and economy without bankrupting taxpayers or stifling private development. The solution is simple: less bureaucracy, fewer artificial burdens, and more quality supply. Let's approve the shovel-ready North Village projects and unlock the Sierra Valley Sites with lighter regulation. Trust what worked before and let employers and capital markets deliver.

Our workforce, our economy, and our community will all benefit.

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By Sandy Rustin

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CONGRESSIONAL CANDIDATE MASUDA VISITS EASTSIDE

By Lunch

Michael Masuda, Democratic challenger in the newly re-vamped 5th Congressional district, made three stops on the Eastside last weekend.

The Sheet caught him at the Bishop Senior Center on Sunday. He drew a decent crowd of approximately 60.

Masuda grew up in Amador County, graduated from Amador High School in 2007, and then went on to study electrical engineering at Cal Poly-San Luis Obispo.

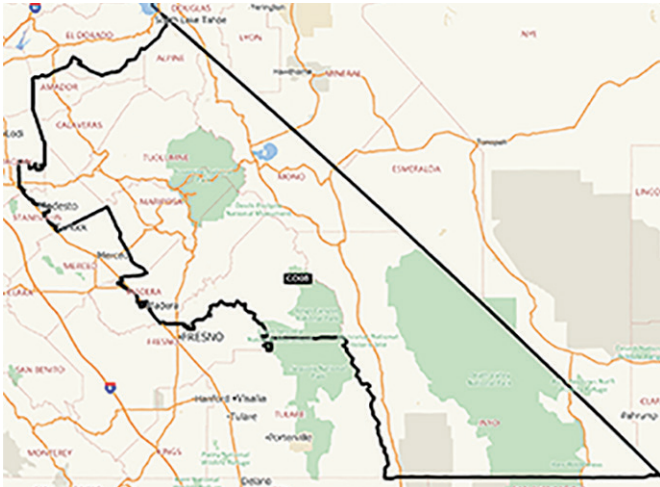
He met his wife of ten years during his college years. They have two children.

Masuda has spent most of his working career in Washington, D.C.

From his website: "Michael worked as an engineer at the Johns Hopkins



Michael Masuda
University Applied Physics Laboratory where he developed his appreciation for the role that technology plays in keeping American soldiers safe and ensuring the U.S. military remains the most capable in



The new District 5 boundaries

the world.

In 2021, he was selected for the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Science and Technology Policy Fellowship and joined the U.S. Department of State as a civil servant."

He departed Washington in 2025 following President Trump's election.

Redistricting has created a sprawling new district which

encompasses all or parts of 12 counties, including all of Inyo and Mono. The district runs as far east as Modesto (where Masuda now lives) and to the outskirts of Merced and Fresno.

The incumbent, Tom McClintock, is a Republican who has been serving in Congress since 2009.

Ballotpedia lists seven candidates in the field. Besides McClintock and Masuda, there are four other Democrats (Mike Barkley, Paul Danborn, Angelina Sigala and Kate Sills) and one Republican (Jason Weland).

Barkley was defeated in the last election (in the old District 5) by McClintock by a 62%-38% margin.

But Barkley is 79-years old. Masuda, whose paternal grandparents spent World War II at Topaz Internment Camp (he visited Manzanar on his drive north to Bishop), is less than half his age.

Masuda's parents are both Air Force veterans.

Overall, Masuda proved fairly adept on the stump. And he certainly knows his district and audience.

25% of District 5 is over 65 years of age. And Masuda is well aware that Medicare cuts included in Trump's Big Beautiful Bill are threatening the solvency of rural hospitals like Northern and Southern Inyo.

He gained his best reaction of the afternoon by reciting the five planks of the recently formed Take-BAC-Congress group, which he joined and which boasts 75 signatories.

The five planks include term limits, a five-year moratorium on lobbying once one leaves office, no stock trading while in office, a code of judicial ethics for the Supreme Court and a vow to overturn the Citizens United ruling and get unlimited corporate money out of politics.

While Masuda made a point of talking about how he's sick of the partisan griping in Washington, he couldn't help taking a few potshots at McClintock, whom he said hasn't held a single Town Hall meeting since 2017 and "he sure ain't showing up here."

Fun Fact: Masuda's campaign manager Leah Waters graduated in his same high school class.



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CONSULTA POR NUESTRAS BECAS

LOCAL BRIEFS

Minami's the keynote

The Manzanar Committee is honored to announce that noted Civil Rights Attorney Dale Minami will be the keynote speaker at the 57th annual Manzanar Pilgrimage on Saturday, April 25, 2026.

Minami is best known in the Nikkei community for coordinating the legal effort to reopen the wartime convictions of Fred Korematsu, Min Yasui, and Gordon Hirabayashi. His efforts led to their cases being vacated by the court and became a major milestone in the fight for redress and reparations.

Minami was also one of the founders of Asian Law Caucus, the first non-profit dedicated to offering legal services to Asian Americans. Over the years, he has represented many seeking justice, including activists fighting the evictions of elderly Filipinos at the I-Hotel in San Francisco, Chinese Americans fighting racial profiling against the San Francisco Police Department, and Don Nakanishi in his tenure struggle against UCLA. Following 9/11, Minami also challenged the government's unlimited power to imprison Muslims, South Asians, and Middle Easterners.

Manzanar Committee Chair Bruce Embrey observes that given this year's Pilgrimage theme "Lessons From Manzanar: Vigilance is the Price of Democracy," Minami is the perfect candidate to address the challenges that we face today.

We're melting ...

The incessant spring heat wave must have the Wicked Witch of the West feeling more secure. Less water to toss on her.

From Klusmire: A brief primer "by the numbers" about LADWP's daily water operations from the March 23 Inyo-LA Technical Group meeting in Bishop.

First, the big numbers about projected runoff totals for the upcoming 2026-27 water year. The initial forecast made months ago guessed the Eastern Sierra snowpack would hit about 92% of normal. The latest snow surveys show a slightly shrinking snowpack. Snow levels were at 100% of normal on March 1, but the recent warm weather and no new snow has dented the snowpack.

Recent snow pillow readings have shown a drop of between 2 to 7 inches of water equivalent at least four snow courses. Now the best guess is by April 1 the snow load will be at about 86% of normal. That would translate into runoff hitting roughly 350,000 acre feet coursing through the Eastern Sierra from the Mono Basin to Cottonwood Creek. The April 1 readings are used to predict the coming year's runoff.

Groundwater pumping has been on the low end of LADWP's 2025-26 pumping range of between 60,000 and 80,000 acre feet. On Feb. 1, about 53,000 af have been pumped, with two months of pumping to go.

Mule Days Cowboy BBQ Kickoff

Bishop Mule Days Celebration invites the community to Saddle Up for a Cowboy BBQ on Saturday, April 11, 2026, from 11 a.m. 'til 2 p.m. at the Elks Park in Bishop. This lively kickoff event sets the tone for Mule Days, bringing together great food, music, and family-friendly fun in true Eastern Sierra style.

Guests can enjoy hearty barbecue, live music from Eastern Sierra Now, raffle prizes, and activities for kids, all in a relaxed outdoor setting. Proceeds from the event support local non-profits that help make Mule Days possible each year, adding even more meaning to an already memorable afternoon.

Tickets are \$25 for adults and \$15 for children 12 and under. Purchase tickets at the Mule Days office, visit MuleDays.org, or call (760) 872-4263.

Mule Days takes place this year from May 19-24.

Save the Sierra

Sierra, the same bear which caused a stir last summer as she evaded traps set by CDFW, including one set on the Mammoth Mayor's property, is out and about.

Other bears were caught in her stead. But Sierra proved elusive.

Former Mammoth Wildlife Specialist Steve Searles posted this week asking the public to do its part in keeping Sierra amongst the living.

"Folks and Friends of Mammoth.

Please join me in an effort to coexist with Sierra the bear. It will take all of us to keep her alive and well," he wrote.

The post generated almost a thousand responses in the first few hours. "For such a low yield post, that's a crazy response," said Searles. "Shows how much people care."

Searles anticipates Sierra will revisit all her old haunts, so, if you saw her before in your neighborhood, you're gonna see her again.

Bishop Paiutes hit it down the middle

Next Thursday, April 2, the Bishop Paiute Tribe and California's Department of Technology (CDT) will celebrate their collaboration which promises to bring lightning-fast internet to the reservation.

The event is scheduled for 11 a.m. at the Barlow Gym. That's when the switch will be turned on for approximately 130 households.

The Tribe represents CDT's very first customer.

CDT purchased the 423 miles of high speed fiberoptic cable laid from Barstow to Reno for the Digital 395 project.

It is now partnering with entities like the Tribe to provide "middle mile" access from the main cable to individual residences.

The cost to the Tribe for such access? Zero. All it has to do is dig the trenches.



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\$3,850,000

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Fully outfitted mountain home at Starwood overlooking Fairway 14 at Sierra Star. Open floor plan, large windows, refined finishes, cook's gourmet kitchen. Upstairs grand primary suite with gas-log fireplace, travertine stone bathroom, soaking tub, dressing room, walk-in his/her closets, bonus loft. An entertainer's dream!



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YOU'RE KRILLIN' ME

By Fisher

While most people spent the 1970s roller skating and listening to disco in bell bottom jeans, Bishop homeowner Bill Krebs was in Antarctica.

As a geology graduate student at UC Davis, Krebs spent 14 months at Palmer Station studying diatoms, which are microscopic, single-celled algae that form the base of the marine food web. His research, conducted in one of the most remote laboratories on Earth, helped shape scientific understanding of these organisms across past, present, and future ecosystems.

Krebs presented his findings Tuesday evening at the White Mountain Research Center in Bishop, where he spends his time when he's not living in a tiny Texas town with a population of 87 people.

Diatoms, sometimes called the "grass of the sea," are encased in glass-like shells made of silica and are responsible for absorbing roughly 20-25% of the world's atmospheric carbon dioxide. In Antarctica, they appear as a brown stain in sea ice and shallow coastal waters.

"This brown stain right here?" Krebs said, pointing to a photograph from his time in Antarctica. "That's not from a seal's busy bowels. It's diatom growth."

Because diatoms sit at the base of the food chain, Antarctic life depends on them. Krill eat them, and everything else eats the krill.

But before Krebs' expedition in the early 1970s, scientists knew very little about how diatoms behaved throughout the year. Few were willing and able to brave the cold, dark winter to study them.

Krebs was.

In November 1970, he traveled from Sacramento to Santiago, Chile, then onward through southern South America before boarding a World War II-era icebreaker to cross the Drake Passage. After that lengthy journey, he arrived at Palmer Station, which at the time was little more than a few buildings and some fuel tanks.

The station sits along the Antarctic Peninsula, sometimes called the "banana belt" of Antarctica for its relatively mild conditions.

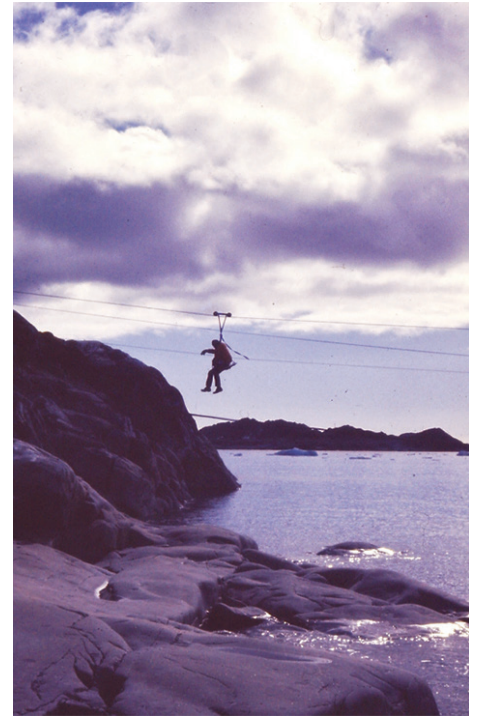
But mild is relative.

Winds still whip at speeds up to 90 miles per hour on the peninsula, and for roughly 40 days each winter, the sun never rises.

Krebs' communication with the outside world was limited to short-wave radio. Traveling between nearby points sometimes meant riding a cable across icy terrain, where you "better as hell put your feet up in time otherwise you'll do a Wile E. Coyote into the rock," he said.

Still, Krebs and his colleagues carved out moments of normalcy, barbecuing outside on calm summer days and celebrating Midwinter Day with elaborate meals and decorations.

When not playing clarinet for penguins or indulging in Argentinian wine, much of Krebs' work involved collecting seawater samples from Arthur Harbor in a small boat. Back



High-wired transportation in Antarctica

in the lab, he analyzed temperature, salinity, carbon dioxide levels, pH, and silica.

What he discovered reshaped scientist's understanding of Antarctic ecosystems.

During the dark winter months, diatom populations nearly vanished. But as spring arrived and sea ice began to melt, trapped diatoms were released back into the water, seeding explosive blooms. These blooms didn't occur just once, as scientists had assumed, but multiple times throughout the year.

The reason for this isn't all that different from something familiar to the Eastern Sierra – lots and lots of wind.

Strong Antarctic winds regularly disrupted the water column, dispersing concentrated diatom populations and ending each bloom. As conditions stabilized, new blooms would form, creating a repeating, or "trimodal," pattern of growth.

Krebs' work was among the first to document this full seasonal cycle.

His research also showed that diatoms embedded in sea ice can accelerate melting by absorbing solar radiation, weakening the ice structure and contributing to its breakup.

By analyzing how diatom remains accumulate in ocean sediments, Krebs demonstrated that about 70% of living diatom communities are preserved after death. This high preservation rate allows scientists to use fossilized diatoms to reconstruct ancient ocean conditions and climate changes.

Later studies built on his work, using sediment cores from the Antarctic seafloor to trace environmental shifts over the past 13,000 years, from the end of the last Ice Age to modern warming trends.

What began as an "esoteric" study, as Krebs said, has since become foundational. His findings have been validated by satellite data and expanded upon with modern technology, confirming that the seasonal patterns he observed are widespread across Antarctic waters.

Not bad for a year spent staring at brown ice.

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PHIL GETS OFF THE BUS

By Libre

Phil Moores is looking for more. More time with his family, more opportunities for travel, more reps on his golf swing.

After 34 years in the public transit industry, seven of which were spent as the Executive Director of Eastern Sierra Transit Authority (ESTA), 62-year-old Moores is retiring. His last day in the role will be April 14th.

"It's something I planned for 44 years, basically," Moores said. "I haven't had more than two weeks of vacation in 44 years."

Over the course of his career, Moores has worked for five different transit authorities.

But he didn't always want to work in the industry. He fell into the role unexpectedly, when his wife was pregnant. Moores needed a substantial job to take care of his young family. His neighbor in Orange County got a gig as a bus driver. The pay was good, with a clear career-track and benefits. Moores was in.

"I've really bought into the tortoise and the hare analogy," he said. "I'm the tortoise. I never stopped moving forward until I could take a vacation. Permanently."

Like the animal in the fable, Moores slowly inched his way up the transit industry ladder. He started off as a bus driver, then became the Operations Supervisor and the Transportation Planner for the Orange County Transportation Authority. He then transitioned to Assistant

Transportation Manager for Los Angeles Metro. After that, he worked as the Operations Manager for Riverside Transit Agency, and, most recently, as Operations Manager for San Luis Obispo Regional Transit Authority.

Moores made the move to ESTA in the fall of 2018, stepping into the top role of Executive Director.

"I love [ESTA]. It's been fantastic," Moores reflected. "Where I live, the communities I've been a part of, it's just been wonderful."

Over the past seven years, he led his team of 70 employees with intention. Training his staff is expensive and labor intensive, he explained. Becoming a bus driver takes weeks and \$10,000 per employee from ESTA's pocket. Investing in his staff has paid off.

"My goal was to make ESTA a premier employer in the region," Moores said. "I feel like we're there. We've got so much talent right now."

Moores worked tirelessly to implement ESTA's values of safety, customer service, and timeliness.

He encouraged his staff to weigh any issues they came across against those values. If safety was the issue, forget about customer service. Or if an individual wanted more time to discuss the bus schedule with a driver, it's okay to be a few minutes late.

"We treat people like ladies and gents. Not because they are, but because we



Phil and Lisa

are," Moores said. "With those kinds of values and ideas, we give the best service possible."

Under Moores' leadership, ESTA partnered with Eastside organizations, including Inyo Mono Advocates for Community Action (IMACA), to provide services to the broader community.

During the pandemic, ESTA partnered with IMACA to deliver food and other goods like heaters to keep people warm. When the buses retire, ESTA will often put them in the hands of the Eastside Student Center and local churches.

"People often call ESTA and ask us what we do with our older vehicles," he said. "I've taken to giving them to nonprofits and supporting the local community when they can't afford to buy one themselves."

Last year, ESTA ran Moores' favorite partnership program with daycares and kindergartens in Mono and Inyo County. An ESTA employee (often Moores himself, he noted) read the class a book, and gave each child a backpack stuffed with transit related goodies. Afterwards, everyone went on a bus ride.

"It was a blast," he remembered.

Moores recognized some of the organization's shortcomings, including mechanical issues within the fleet of vehicles. The majority of ESTA's buses are 14 years old, which impacts the organization's general dependability. Moores was able to secure an \$8 million grant from Caltrans to replace 14 buses with new vehicles for the free bus routes in Mammoth, effective within the next 18 months.

Even with Moores stepping away from the role, ESTA is continuing to expand. The company is looking to run services in June Lake, implement general express transportation between the airports in Bishop and Mammoth, and build a new ESTA administrative building at the Bishop airport.

Moores and his wife, Lisa, currently live in Aspendell. After Moores' retirement, the couple will relocate to Tehachapi, away from the snow and towards their future.

As for what Moores plans to do when he hangs up his hat as ESTA Executive Director?

Travel.

"I've always wanted to go somewhere and not know when I'm coming back."

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SIERRA WANTS TO TALK TO YOU

By Libre

“Where is the smoke coming from in Mammoth Lakes? Are there mountain hikes with good views? Are snow tires required?”

These are some of the key questions asked on “Sierra,” the artificial intelligence (AI) chatbot Mammoth Lakes Tourism (MLT) launched last August.

Since its debut, the chatbot has had 960 users, a number MLT Senior Marketing Manager Samantha Lindberg assured would increase during a presentation last Wednesday to the MLT board.

“We just assume this number will continue to grow and grow,” she said.

The chatbot, generated by the AI company Guide Geek, has the added benefit of increasing social media responses by 87% and reducing operational staff workload by handling repetitive questions.

“Sierra” comes alongside a push from MLT to integrate AI into its governing and marketing strategies. It’s an effort that stems from the fear of being left behind.

“AI isn’t coming, it’s already here,” said Amanda Moul, vice president of the advertising agency Shipyard. “The stakes are high. If someone looks up what ski destination in California I should go to and Tahoe pops up, we certainly don’t want that to happen.”

When The Sheet asked ChatGPT Thursday morning if someone should visit Mammoth or Tahoe, the bot said Mammoth has better snow, but Tahoe

has a better overall experience. That’s because AI tools like Claude and ChatGPT pull from a multitude of online sources,

including Trip Advisor, Reddit, and Substack, then summarize the information. This can mean that fewer people turn to MLT’s website for local information.

“Fifty-eight percent of searches and AI overviews are no longer clicking through to a website,” Moul said. “We want to be the one discovered when AI is referencing a source, so users do come through and click to us.”

Her suggestion was to structure online content so a chatbot could extract clear, stand alone answers about activities, seasons, and logistics for its users. Creating additional Substacks and Reddit posts about Mammoth to go alongside the official website would also help generate online traffic, she noted.

“The audience is already there,” she said. “They’re already asking questions that could make Mammoth Lakes show up [on a chatbot]. For us, the task is to make changes to be there. It’s an opportunity for us to look at how we make content now and bring it into

the future.” The meeting then transitioned to MLT’s own AI policy, drafted in November.

At the time, MLT was among the first in the destination marketing industry to take the step of establishing such a policy.

The policy was presented as a framework, not a formula, to account for technology constantly advancing and

changing. The policy outlines both MLT’s approved uses of AI (summarizing survey results, idea generation, and meeting note-taking) and the prohibited uses (legal advice, uploading confidential contracts, sharing login credentials).

“As the technology and associated risks continue to change, this framework will adapt alongside it,” an MLT staff member explained. “Without a clear framework, we introduce real risk around data exposure, inaccurate information, brand misalignment, and ultimately loss of trust, potentially with our community and partners.”

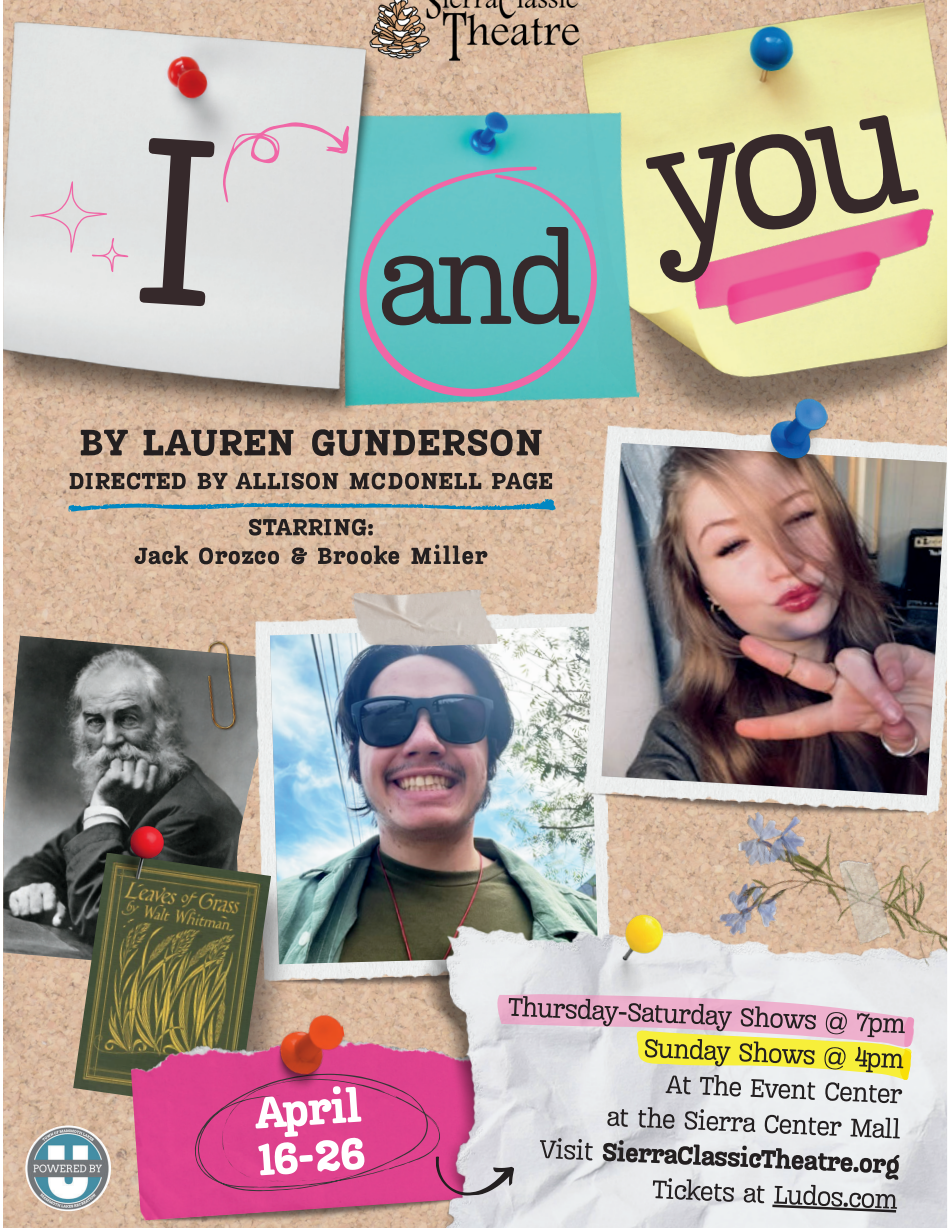
“Mammoth has better snow, but Tahoe has a better overall experience”

-ChatGPT

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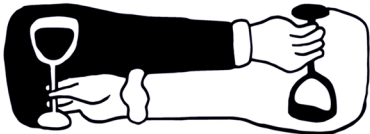
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Outlaw Saloon Happy Hour Monday through Friday from 4-6 p.m. *More info: See ad p. 17*
The Mogul happy hour 5:30-6:30 p.m. in the bar. Food and drink specials.
Main St. Pizza - *See ad this page for deets.*

Distant Brewing happy hour Monday-Thursday from 3-5 p.m. \$1/off beer/wine/cider/seltzer/kombucha
Bar Sierra happy hour from 4-5:30 p.m. Thursday through Monday.
Minaret Club happy hour daily 'til 6:30 p.m. Weekend wine bottle specials.

March 27-28/
Chuck Briseno (Red Dirt Country) plays **Liberty**. Starts 9:30 p.m. No cover.
Weekend apres parties @ Canyon Lodge. DJ. 21+. Starts 2:30 p.m.
Honky Tonk on the Hill apres parties @ The Mill (MMSA) from 12-3 p.m. And this week they've got live country music and a Mechanical Bull! So fun! What could possibly go wrong?

Sunday, March 29/
Sunday Apres Series @ Limelight Mammoth. Time: 3-6 p.m. Linger in the lounge with Live DJs, tiny 'tinis and more.

Monday, March 30/
Open mic night @ Distant Brewing. Time: 6-9 p.m.

Wednesday, April 1/
Karaoke @ Mammoth Rock 'n Bowl with MC Maurice. Discounted bowling! Starts 8 p.m.

TOWN STUFF

Friday, March 27/
MAC Gallery artist reception and opening for the inaugural Sierra 7 regional touring exhibition. Also for Tim Aston's "Branches in Time" and Cathy Enright's "Mountain Stories." Time: 5-7 p.m. Location: 500 Old Mammoth Rd., Suite #5.

March 27-29/
Mammoth Lakes Repertory Theater production of "**The Cottage**" continues at the Mammoth High School MPR. Showtimes 7 p.m. Friday and Saturday and 4 p.m. Sunday. *For tix/info, see ad p. 4*

Saturday, March 28/
Eastern Sierra Cancer Alliance Colorectal Cancer Awareness run/walk fundraiser at Millpond Recreation Area. 8:30 a.m. registration and 9 a.m. event. \$\$ *Info: escanceralliance.org.*
The latest No Kings protests in Mammoth (Main & Minaret) 3:30 p.m. and Bishop (City Park) and Indy (courthouse) 11 a.m.
Woolly's After Hours at Woolly's Adventure Summit. Time: 5-8 p.m. Snowcat tours. coaster rides, food & drink specials. *More info: See ad p. 5*
"Bugs and Blooms" nature walk - an Alabama Hills Ranger Program sponsored by Sierra Forever. Time: 10-12:30. Location: Mobius Arch trailhead. Info: 760.872.1220

TOWN STUFF

Monday, March 30/
TOML Summer Recreation Expo at the Community Rec Center on Old Mammoth Rd. Time: 4-7 p.m. *More info: see ad p. 3*

March 30-April 1/
Youth wrestling clinics for elementary (10:30-11:30 a.m.) & middle school (12-1 p.m.) students @ the BUHS Gym. Limited to 20 wrestlers per session. Info: Rosie Graves at 760.920.0167/ rosiegraves122@gmail.com

Tuesday, March 31/
Inyo County Board of Supervisors meets. Public session starts around 10 a.m. Location: 224 No. Edwards in Indy or online via inyocounty.us

Wednesday, April 1/
Mammoth Lakes Town Council meets. Time: 4 p.m. Location: Suite Z, Minaret Mall or online via townofmammothlakes.ca.gov.
June Lake Citizens Advisory Committee meets. Time: 6 p.m. Location: June Lake Community Center or remotely via https://zoom.us/join and enter Meeting ID: 815 5165 7524 Passcode: 98765.
Salsa's Taqueria invites **Chess players to enjoy tacos and tactics** on Wednesday evenings from 5-8 p.m. in the Marshalls mall.

Thursday, April 2/
Plein Air Watercolor Series kicks off @ **Blue Heron Farm** in Wilkerson, courtesy of C5. Time: 5:30-7:30 p.m.

TOWN STUFF

Location: 475 Sierra Grande St. *Info/register: c5studios.org*

April 2-4/
Mammoth Lakes Repertory Theater/ MHS Drama Club present **The Complete Works of William Shakespeare Abridged** at the MHS MPR. *More info: See ad p. 2*

UPCOMING

April 3 & 6: Tickets for the Museum of Western Film History's "**Concert in the Rocks**" go on sale - on the 3rd for members and on the 6th for the general public. This year's show takes place on June 13th and features Dean Torrence (of Jan and Dean fame) and the Surf City All-Stars.

April 3-5: Patagonia climbing weekend in Bishop. To find out more, stop into Eastside Sports on Main St.

April 4: Sage Grouse lek viewing with CDFW Biologist Dan Taylor. Meet EARLY at the Mono Basin Visitor Center in Lee Vining. Info/RSVP to fieldtrips@easternsierrabirds.org.

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Yard Laborer/Bin Technician (Bishop)
Hands-on role supporting yard operations, equipment upkeep, and facility maintenance. Skills include pressure washing, painting, and welding.
Application details for these positions can be found at the Waste Connections Careers Webpage <https://careers.wasteconnections.com/us/en/search-results?keywords=&p=ChIJnxzeV8MloARbY3uD9fZFPE&location=Mammoth%20Lakes,%20CA,%20USA>
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Help Wanted

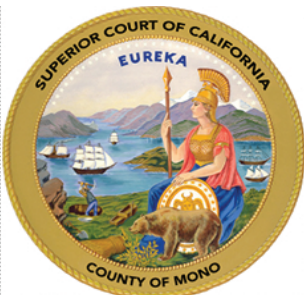


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Application and job description available at: <https://mono.courts.ca.gov> or call the court at (760) 923-2321 or email hr@mono.courts.ca.gov
Open Until Filled
The Mono County Superior Court is an equal opportunity employer

PRIVATE OFFICES FOR LEASE

Direct street access, perfect for professionals looking for an accessible, high-visibility location in Mammoth Lakes.
Call Stephanie for availability & details: **(760) 914-1500**

Notice of Fictitious Business Name Statement:

All-Temp Heating and Air Conditioning

J&C Eighty-Three Enterprises, Inc.
123 Commerce Dr., Unit B5
P.O. Box 100, PMB 169
Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546

This business is conducted by a corporation. The registrant began to transact business under the fictitious business name listed herein on January 1, 2026. This statement was filed with the Mono County Clerk on February 25, 2026

File Number 2026-0018
TS #2026-0025
(3/7/26, 3/14/26, 3/21/26, 3/28/26)

Help Wanted



Reservations Desk Clerk immediate opening at the Double Eagle Resort and Spa in June Lake CA (20 min from mammoth). Must have excellent customer service and computer skills. Full or part time, health benefits, fitness membership and PTO. Great place to work! Email Lodging@doubleeagle.com

Creskide Spa and Fitness Desk at the Double Eagle Resort and Spa, immediate opening for enthusiast team member. Help in creating a wonderful experience for our spa and fitness center guests. Customer service, computer, cleaning, food service. Full or part time, health benefits, fitness membership and PTO. Great place to work! Email Lodging@doubleeagle.com



Crowley Lake Fish Camp is looking for a **seasonal dock worker.** Our season is from late April till the end of October. This job requires great customer service skills, teamwork, self-motivation, and long days out in the elements. Normal work week consists of four, ten-hour shifts. We also have a PT position available for weekend afternoons. Interested? Please send us an email @ crowleylakefishcamp@gmail.com.

We are also looking for a new team member to **cook** at our Pelican Point Grill, a concession-style grill that feeds hungry fisherman Fridays through Sundays. Job includes cooking, teamwork and customer service in an outdoor environment with great co-workers and beautiful views. Please email crowleylakefishcamp@gmail.com to learn more or apply. Pay starts \$18 plus tips.



Friends of the Inyo is now accepting applications for 2026 Trail Ambassadors! Pay is \$21/hour plus a \$200 gear stipend. Trail Ambassadors get paid to hike the Eastern Sierra all summer long while taking care of trails, stewarding the land, and educating visitors. Benefits include Wilderness First Aid training, 4/10 schedule, outdoor industry pro-deals, and 3% retirement match during employment. Visit friendsoftheinyo.org/professionalsoportunities to view the full job description. Applications due April 10th, 2026. To apply, email a resume and cover letter to izzy@friendsoftheinyo.org.



EASTERN SIERRA COMMUNITY HOUSING

Seeking an Executive Director
Reports to Board of Directors
FLSA Status: Exempt
Full-Time with competitive benefits package

The Board of Directors of Eastern Sierra Community Housing is seeking an Executive Director to lead the strategic vision, community outreach, financial management, fundraising, and daily operations of the organization. Key responsibilities include serving as a face and voice of the organization, securing grants, managing board relations, ensuring regulatory compliance (HUD/local), and overseeing property management, affordable housing development, and community services. The Executive Director serves as the organization's visionary

Help Wanted

Restaurant Server for Eagles Landing Restaurant at the popular Double Eagle Resort and Spa in June Lake CA. Experience in restaurant service, computers and working as team member are essential. Full and part time available, health benefits, fitness membership and PTO. Great place to work. Email Lodging@doubleeagle.com

Restaurant Bartender for Eagle's Landing Restaurant at the popular Double Eagle Resort and Spa. Experience in restaurant bartending, computers and working as a team member are essential. FT and PT work available. Health benefits, fitness membership, PTO. Great place to work. Email Lodging@doubleeagle.com

Cooks and Prep Cooks jobs available at the famous Eagles Landing Restaurant in June Lake. We offer health benefits, fitness membership and PTO. A great place to work! Email lodging@doubleeagle.com

Shilo Inn is accepting applications for FT housekeepers, FT maintenance worker and Front desk/night auditor. Immediate Front Desk opportunity starting at \$18/hour. Please call Human Resources (Sarina Quintero) at 925.813.2331 or email your resume to squintero@marquishotelsgroup.com.

Sweetwater Plumbing Inc. FT position for Journeyman Plumber and/or Apprentice Plumber. Full Benefits. Job is located in Mammoth Lakes. Contact 760-914-1266 info@sweetwaterplumbing.com



Whitebark Institute, a nonprofit advancing wildfire resilience and environmental adaptation in the Eastern Sierra, is hiring a **Communications Manager**. This full-time role will lead organizational storytelling and communications strategy, translating complex environmental work into clear, engaging content for diverse audiences. Salary \$70K-\$80K/year, benefits, hybrid work. Apply at whitebarkinstitute.org/careers.

Whitebark is also hiring an **Environmental Planner** to prepare environmental compliance documents and lead resilience projects for communities and ecosystems. Salary \$80K-\$110K/year, benefits, hybrid work. Apply: whitebarkinstitute.org/careers.

Hilton Creek Community Services District in Crowley Lake is seeking a **Full-Time Wastewater Treatment Plan Operator II**. Hourly Range: \$33.43 to \$40.64 with benefits. For more information visit <https://www.hiltoncreekcsd.com/employment> or email info@hiltoncreekcsd.com

leader and chief operational officer, bridging the gap between strategic board governance and day-to-day community impact. This role is multifaceted, requiring expertise in real estate finance, public policy, and community development.

If you're an experienced leader, committed to affordable housing and social justice, apply now!

Position open until filled. Salary Range \$120,000 - \$165,000 commensurate with experience.

Read the full job description here: <https://eschousing.org/blog/>

For more information contact Patricia Robertson at (760) 934-4740

Eastern Sierra Community Housing, whose mission is to support affordable housing for a viable economy and sustainable community, is a 501(c)3, certified Community Housing Development Organization ("CHDO") serving the rural, frontier region of the Sierra Nevada including the counties of Alpine, Mono, and Inyo, California. Our vision is that communities in the Eastern Sierra thrive because everyone has access to safe, affordable, quality housing. Eastern Sierra Community Housing is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

PUBLIC NOTICES

Notice of Ordinance

ORD 26-003

AN URGENCY ORDINANCE OF THE MONO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ESTABLISHING AND AMENDING REQUIREMENTS FOR REMOVAL OF FIRE DAMAGED DEBRIS FROM PRIVATE PROPERTY FOLLOWING THE PACK FIRE: 4/5 VOTE REQUIRED

WHEREAS, on November 13, 2025, the Pack Fire ravaged the community of McGee Creek in Mono County and destroyed approximately 30 structures, including 15 homes; and

WHEREAS, on November 18, 2025 the Mono County Board of Supervisors ratified both a declaration of local emergency and the Mono County Health Officer's declaration a local health emergency due to conditions of extreme peril caused by the Pack Fire; and

WHEREAS, on December 9, 2025 the Governor issued a Proclamation of a State of Emergency pursuant to Government Code section 8625 for the Pack Fire; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Article XI, section 7 of the California Constitution, Mono County may adopt and enforce ordinances and regulations not in conflict with general laws to protect and promote the public health, safety, and welfare of its residents; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Government Code section 25123(d), to protect against an immediate threat to the public safety, health, and welfare, the County may adopt an urgency ordinance that takes effect immediately where there is a declaration of the facts constituting the urgency and the ordinance is adopted by a four-fifths vote of the Board; and

WHEREAS, in destroying private structures, the Pack Fire has created an accumulation of Fire Debris, much of which has been determined to be contaminated with heavy metals and asbestos; and

WHEREAS, the potential for widespread toxic exposures and threats to public health and the environment exists in the aftermath of a major fire disaster. Debris and ash from residential structure fires contain hazardous substances that may lead to acute and chronic health problems and may have serious environmental impacts; and

WHEREAS, the combustion of building materials such as siding, roofing tiles, and insulation results in dangerous ash that may contain asbestos, heavy metals, and other hazardous materials, and household hazardous waste such as paint, gasoline, cleaning products, pesticides, and other chemicals that may have burned in the fire also produces hazardous materials; and

WHEREAS, exposure to hazardous substances may lead to acute and chronic health effects, and may cause long-term public health and environmental impacts; and

WHEREAS, Uncontrolled hazardous materials and debris pose significant threats to public health through inhalation of dust particles and contamination of drinking water supplies, and improper handling of hazardous materials can expose workers to toxic materials and improper transport and disposal of Fire Debris can spread hazardous substances throughout the community; and

WHEREAS, dead and dying trees damaged by the Pack Fire and at risk of falling may threaten the health, safety and welfare of workers conducting debris removal and residents of the affected properties, as well as the general public if the trees are at risk of falling onto a public right of way or public infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, the onset of the winter season offers little time to mitigate further environmental contamination resulting from the Pack Fire, including contamination of the watershed, and, therefore, time is of the essence in removing hazardous waste, Fire Debris and Hazard Trees from affected properties; and

WHEREAS, there is an urgent need to mitigate the harm to public health and the environment form the improper disturbance, removal, transport and/or disposal of hazardous waste, Fire Debris and Hazard Trees resulting from the Fire, to create and implement clear standards and procedures for removal of Fire Debris and Hazard Trees, and to facilitate coordinated, timely, and effective mitigation of the risks to public health and the environment from the health hazards generated by the Pack Fire; and

WHEREAS, an urgency ordinance was previously adopted as of December 16, 2025, establishing the cleanup requirements and program laid out below, but requires amendments to comply with Cal OES requirements.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF MONO ORDAINS that the previous urgency ordinance, ORD25-006, is hereby repealed and replaced with the following:

SECTION ONE: Definitions.

- A. "Alternative Program." For purposes of this Article, the term "Alternative Program" shall mean the requirements for inspections, clean up and disposal established by the County for property owners that opt out of or are ineligible for a Consolidated Program.
- B. "Board." The term "Board" means the Mono County Board of Supervisors.
- C. "Consolidated Debris and Hazard Tree Removal Program" or "Consolidated Program" means the Fire Debris and Hazard Trees removal program operated by Mono County for the Pack Fire area in conjunction with the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services ("Cal OES") and other State and Federal

agencies and involving the removal and disposal of Fire Debris and Hazard Trees on eligible private property at no cost to the property owner.

D. "County." The term "County" shall be defined as the County of Mono.

E. "County Building Official." The term "County Building Official" means the Building Official of Mono County.

F. "County Health Officer." The term "County Health Officer" means the Mono County Public Health Officer.

G. "Designated Department." The term "Designated Department" means the Environmental Health Department.

H. "Director." The term "Director" shall be defined as the Director of Environmental Health, or any person as designated by the Chief Administrative Officer of the County.

I. "Fire Debris." The term "Fire Debris" means ash or other debris, resulting from the Pack Fire that is intended to be discarded but does not include undamaged or partially damaged structures.

J. "Hazard Trees." The term "Hazard Trees" means wildfire-damaged trees that have been so damaged by the fires that their structural integrity is compromised, and they pose an immediate threat of falling onto work crews or obstructing their access to the debris clearance site, or of falling onto a public right of way or a public improved property.

K. "Public Works Director" means the Mono County Director of Public Works, or his or her designee(s). Such designee(s) may be a County employee(s) or third-party provider(s).

L. "Removal of Fire Debris and Hazard Tree." The term "Removal of Fire Debris and Hazard Trees" as used in this article includes all cleanup of debris from structures and Hazard Trees resulting from the Pack Fire, including removal, transport and disposal of Fire Debris and Hazard Trees, but it does not include the removal of personal property from residential sites unless such removal of personal property involves cleanup and the removal of ash from the property.

M. "Right of Entry Permit." The term "Right of Entry Permit" means the Debris and Hazard Tree Removal Right-of-Entry Permit (For Providing Fire Debris and Hazard Trees Removal on Private Property under the State Debris and Hazard Tree Removal Program) approved by the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services for use in the cleanup after the Pack Fire.

SECTION TWO: Effective Date.

This Ordinance shall take effect immediately upon its approval by at least four-fifths vote of the Board of Supervisors pursuant to Government Code section 25123(d), and shall remain in effect until the later of the cleanup of all Fire Debris on all fire-damaged properties from the Pack Fire or the completion of all enforcement matters related to this Ordinance, if any.

SECTION THREE: Prohibition on Removal of Fire Debris from Private Property.

No Removal of Fire Debris and Hazard Trees shall occur unless and until a hazardous materials inspection meeting applicable Department of Toxic Substances Control guidelines has been conducted. Notwithstanding the foregoing, Hazard Trees may be removed from vacant properties or properties on which no structures were damaged without a hazardous materials inspection, subject to the other requirements of this Ordinance.

SECTION FOUR: Removal of Fire Debris and Hazard Trees.

Consolidated State Program. Property owners that, pursuant to the rules established by the State Program that will be set forth in guidelines provided by the Director, are eligible for the removal of some or all of the Fire Debris and Hazard Trees on their properties through the State Program, may elect to use the State Program by submitting a Right of Entry Permit to the Director, which includes an assignment of any insurance proceeds covering the costs of the Fire Debris and Hazard Trees removal. Such Right of Entry Permit must be submitted to the Director by the deadline as provided by the Director. The Director may extend this deadline as necessary and appropriate to facilitate the cleanup, avoid undue hardship, and to protect public health and

safety, and to the extent any such extensions are approved by the State Program.

A. Alternative Program.

i. Administration. The Director shall administer the Alternative Program. The Director shall utilize applicable state and/or federal standards for the safe removal and disposal of Fire Debris and Hazard Trees, consistent with the cleanup goals of the Consolidated Program, and incorporate additional requirements as necessary to address changes in conditions, needs, or technologies in order to effectively remove Fire Debris and Hazard Trees from the community. The Director shall prepare procedures and requirements for the Removal of Fire Debris and Hazard Trees and make such procedures and requirements available to the public. The Director shall also adopt an application that discloses the appropriate licensed contractors and appropriate plans to meet such procedures and requirements.

ii. Participation. Property owners that are not eligible for the Consolidated Program, or who elect not to participate in the Consolidated Program for the removal of the Fire Debris and Hazard Trees on their properties, must comply with the requirements of the Alternative Program. Under the Alternative Program, before any Fire Debris and Hazard Trees are removed from a property, the owner shall submit the application to the Director. Work shall not begin until the Director approves the application, and the property owner obtains all applicable permits from the County Building Official.

iii. Completion. The Director shall establish an end date or deadline by which properties in the Alternative Program must be cleaned up. Upon the completion of the Removal of Fire Debris and Hazard Trees under the Alternative Program, the property owner shall submit to the Director documentation that demonstrates the removal of Fire Debris and Hazard Trees was completed in compliance with applicable standards and requirements as established by the Director.

iv. Deadline. The Director shall establish an end date or deadline by which property owners who are not participating in the Consolidated Program must submit an Alternative Program application to the Director in accordance with Section 4.B.ii of this Ordinance. Such properties that have Fire Debris from structures damaged or destroyed in the Pack Fire or Hazard Trees damaged or destroyed in the Pack Fire that have not submitted an application for the Alternative Program by that date are hereby declared a public nuisance and health hazard and shall be subject to nuisance abatement pursuant to Section D of this Ordinance. Properties that only contain hazard trees are not required by the County

v. Extensions. The Director may extend deadlines under the Alternative Program as necessary and appropriate to facilitate the cleanup, avoid undue hardship, and to protect public health and safety.

B. Restrictions on Building Permits. No building permit from the County to demolish, repair, or reconstruct a structure that has been damaged or destroyed by the Pack Fire shall be issued until Fire Debris and Hazard Trees cleanup is completed on the affected property in accordance with the Alternative Program or the Consolidated Program. Any permit for the demolition, repair, or reconstruction of a structure that has been damaged or destroyed by the Pack Fire shall be held in abeyance and not acted upon until Fire Debris and Hazard Trees cleanup is completed on the affected property and completion is confirmed to the County Building Official, either through the Alternative Program or the Consolidated Program. Notwithstanding the foregoing, a demolition or miscellaneous permit issued by the County Building Official may be required for Removal of Fire Debris and Hazard Trees for work involving the removal of buildings, structures, or portions thereof, as determined by the Director. Furthermore, this section shall not apply to permits relating to wells or septic systems through the Designated Department.

C. Exigent Circumstances. The Board's intent is to facilitate an orderly remediation of large scale disasters. Nothing in the deadlines as set forth by this Ordinance shall limit the authority of the County or any County official to abate hazards more quickly where required by exigent circumstances. Nothing in this Ordinance shall limit the authority of the County or any County official to take any enforcement action or pursue any available remedies, including, without limitation, requiring preventive measures as defined in Health and Safety Code section 101040.

D. Enforcement and Abatement.

i. General Enforcement Action. When the Enforcement Officer determines that an activity is being performed in violation of this article, the Enforcement Officer may initiate an enforcement action using any process set forth in California law and/or in the Mono County Code and may seek the imposition of costs and civil penalties pursuant to California law and/or the Mono County Code. Nothing in this provision is intended to prevent alternate enforcement mechanisms, including but not limited to, health officer orders pursuant to California Health and Safety Code Section 101040.

ii. Summary Abatement. Pursuant to the authority of Cal. Const., art. XI, Section 7; California Health and Safety Code Section 101040, California Government Code Section 25845, and the Mono County Code, if the Enforcement Officer determines that a violation of this Article has created an emergency condition which seriously endangers the public health or safety, the County may abate the condition within the unincorporated territory of the County of Mono. The costs shall be charged to the property owners(s) and the County may, at its option, recover the same in an administrative action as described below or a civil action. Such charges shall be in addition to any penalty for a violation of this article.

SECTION FIVE: Environmental Determination.

Adoption of this ordinance is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") pursuant to California Public Resources Code section 21080(b)(3), which applies to projects undertaken, carried out by, or approved by a public agency to maintain, repair, restore, demolish, or replace property or facilities damaged or destroyed as a result of a disaster in a disaster-stricken area in which a state of emergency has been proclaimed by the Governor pursuant to the California Emergency Services Act, Government Code sections 8550 et seq., and Government Code section 21080(b)(4) regarding specific actions necessary to prevent or mitigate an emergency. These exemptions are also reflected in State CEQA Guidelines section 15269(a) and (c). The Pack Fire and their aftermath constitute a sudden unexpected occurrence, involving clear and imminent danger, demanding immediate action to prevent or mitigate loss of, or damage to, life, health, property, or essential public services under California Public Resources Code section 21060.3 and State CEQA Guidelines section 15359.

SECTION SIX: Authority.

The County Administrative Officer and County Counsel are authorized and directed to take all further actions necessary and appropriate to implement this Ordinance and effectuate the purposes of the Program

SECTION SEVEN: Severability.

If any provision of this Ordinance or the application thereof to any person, property, or circumstance is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications of this Ordinance that can be given effect without the invalid provisions or application thereof, and to this end, the provisions of this interim Ordinance are hereby declared to be severable.

Following introduction and reading, the foregoing Urgency Ordinance was PASSED, APPROVED and ADOPTED this 17th day of March, 2026, by the following four-fifths vote, to wit:

AYES: Supervisors Duggan, Kreitz, McFarland, Peters and Salcido.
NOES: None.
ABSENT: None.
ABSTAIN: None.
Jennifer Kreitz, Chair Mono County Board of Supervisors
ATTEST: Queenie Barnard, Clerk of the Board\
APPROVED AS TO FORM: Dave Beck, County Counsel

TS #2026-0030

Notice of Ordinance

Notice is hereby given that on March 18, 2026 the Mammoth Lakes Town Council adopted an Ordinance entitled:

ORDINANCE NO. 26-02

AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF MAMMOTH LAKES, STATE OF CALIFORNIA, AMENDING MUNICIPAL CODE SECTIONS 3.12.060, 3.12.070, AND 5.32.060 REGARDING TRANSIENT OCCUPANCY TAX AND TRANSIENT RENTAL OF RESIDENTIAL UNITS.

by the following vote:
AYES: Councilmembers Bubser, Sauser, Wentworth, Mayor Pro-Tem Truax, and Mayor Rice
NOES: None
ABSENT: None
ABSTAIN: None
DISQUALIFICATION: None

A certified copy of the complete text of the Ordinance is posted and may be read at the Town Offices, Minaret Mall, Old Mammoth Road, Mammoth Lakes, and / or a copy may be obtained from the office of the Town Clerk at a nominal charge.
Dated: March 19, 2026

JAMIE GRAY, Town Clerk
Town of Mammoth Lakes

TS #2026-0029

	No structure on burned property	Non-qualifying structures (structures less than 120 square feet only on burned property)	Qualifying structures (structures 120 square feet and over on burned property)
Prior to completion of Phase I cleanup	Owner may remove debris	Debris removal prohibited	Debris removal prohibited
Prior to completion of Phase II cleanup	Owner may remove debris	Owner may remove debris with approval of the Designated Department	Government or alternative program contractors only may remove debris
Following Phase II cleanup	Owner may remove debris	Owner may remove debris with approval of the Designated Department	Owner may remove remaining debris not removed during Phase II with certificate from the Designated Department

BLONDES

continued from page 1

Yeah.

Oh, God.

One bar of service. AAA might come... except they won't service a dirt road. A tow company could... for \$1,100.

Cue alcohol-fueled ingenuity. I found duct tape – luckily, my boyfriend had recently watched a YouTube Short where someone used a ton of duct tape on a window to pull the glass down. We're on it.

Unfortunately, the duct tape is terrible quality. It snaps the moment we try to pull. On to Plan B.

My boyfriend uses a pocket knife to break the seal on the passenger-side door. I fashioned a tent stake tied to a string (from bundles of *The Sheet*), reinforcing it with the last of the duct tape we salvaged. Once he's broken the seal, he wedges a tire iron into the slot of the door and yanks. I try to hook the manual lock with the stake, dangling the end downward. No luck. Reaching the lock feels like playing a claw machine. Stake out.

Enter the tent poles. We bend the stake at an angle, attach more tape, and try again. Twenty minutes of jabbing later, we admit defeat. We can't pry the door open enough to get proper leverage, even with me perched on the roof holding another wrench while he yanks from the other side.

Then, how could we have missed it? There's an unlock button. Push. Shove. Pull. The stake is now a hindrance. We smack the contraption against the door,

hanging by a thread, hit the button...
nothing.

Wait. The unlock button doesn't work?
It's a 2010 Chevy Suburban.

Whatever. We don't have \$1,100 plus tip. Pocket knife, tire iron, tent pole. Still nothing. Back to the manual lock. Out of duct tape, but I do have a first aid kit. Medical tape?

Why not. Push, pull, shove, yank. Almost there. Not quite. There it is.

Huzzah!!!

Hello, Death Valley.

The next day goes almost without incident. We start at Zabriskie Point, meander through the Artist's Palette, and gasp at waves of pink, purple, yellow and white wildflowers spilling across the desert floor. We ooh and aah at canyons, sheer rock walls climbing impossibly high, and wilt in the heat. North to Ubehebe Crater we go, marveling at the scale of it all.

"Alright, now we're done with the touristy stuff. Let's go to the cool part of the park," says the same person who locked the keys in the car the night before.

We believe him.

Ten minutes later, we realized our mistake. The dirt road branching from Scotty's Castle Road near Ubehebe Crater is washed out at the start. My sweet, ten-year-old Honda CRV struggles. The Suburban, by some miracle, powers through at 40 miles per hour while our little car creeps along at ten. Dust swallows us.

Eventually, they pull over, grinning ear to ear, desert stretching behind them.

"Just for team vibes, it gets better from here," they reassure us.

My boyfriend white-knuckles the wheel, bracing for the ruts. Seventy-five miles to Big Pine. Not better. Not one other car passes. No service.

Finally, we reach the Eureka Dunes. Sunset hits. The dunes are massive, remote, and... totally worth it. Beers in hand, we climb to the top, watch the sun spill into the desert, laugh as the wind sweeps our footprints away. Sliding down, reveling in the freedom, the exhaustion, the sheer ridiculousness of it all, we feel exuberant.

Until 20 minutes after sundown, when a whisper from my rear left tire reminds us that Death Valley isn't done with us yet. A slow hiss, then a little whine, letting us know we are absolutely, com-

pletely screwed.

Back to our resourcefulness. We try to chew gum to squish atop the hole. That doesn't work. We try tape, to no avail. We ultimately resolve to stop to refill the tire with my portable air compressor every five minutes. For hours. In the interim, my boyfriend is back to white-knuckling the wheel, bracing for every rut, every pebble, every imagined catastrophe.

Then my check engine light comes on. We can't even begin to deal with that.

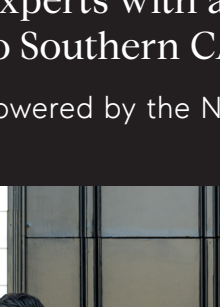
The miles crawl by. I think about the pioneers wandering this same desert, hopeless and desperate, and marvel that they survived.

Then, finally, in the distance, the warm glow of 395 appears. Relief hits like a tidal wave. I exhale, laugh, cry, and laugh again.

Good bye, Death Valley.

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SUPER LOOPERS

By Lunch

The Iron Lady, the late British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, famously said, “If you want a speech made you should ask a man, but if you want something done you should ask a woman.”

Or women. Or specifically, a board of nine women in June Lake, who run Little Loopers, a community non-profit.

The Sheet met with Board Chair Kirstie Butler this week to talk about the organization and its latest challenge - replacing Amanda Spencer, who’s been the face of June Lake daycare for the past nine years.

Like most non-profits, Little Loopers

raises money for the purpose of subsidizing needed services and programs.

Spencer has run a popular and vital in-home daycare. Unfortunately, she and her husband are moving back to the beach - her daycare will close in August. The Loopers are offering subsidized rent as part of the package to lure a replacement.

Mono County will also likely step in with some form of financial support.

In addition to the daycare, the Loopers raise money for the Little Shredders ski program for 3-5 year-olds, Lee Vining Ski P.E., Sierra Stem for summer camps and more.

Board members include Butler, Lienne Anderton-Smith-Carter, Lindsey King, Alisa Brook, Lauren Dore, Jora Fogg, Carson Roberts, Lydia March and Mary Beth Kramer.

The group’s biggest annual fundraising event is the Autumn Beer Festival.

It also does a locals’ night out at the Community Center which is catered by Butler’s parents (Greg and Laura Smith of Hometown Catering).

All in all, a great opportunity to start your own business in June Lake with community support behind you. For more info, see ad p. 12.



The Little Loopers (above) and the Little Shredders (below)

Liberty Sports Bar & Grill

FREE LIVE MUSIC 9-30

3&4

The Crooked Stuff

10&11

GROOVE SESSION

DJ LIVE BAND MASHUP

THE ROAD TO JAM FEST SERIES

17&18

TRACORUM

24&25

E.N. YOUNG IMPERIAL SOUND

JAM/NOLA GROOVES!

TOP NOTCH REGGAE

WATER

continued from page 1

Fish Slough, he said, “appears to be controlled by more complex hydrogeologic processes.”

Nick Buckmaster, an off-duty CDFW employee, wasn’t convinced.

The model for the two monitoring stations at Fish Slough do reproduce much of the last 30 years with reasonable accuracy, but break down during wetter periods in the mid-2000s and overestimate the wet year of 2023, something the consultant described as “a real head scratcher.”

“If the model isn’t representing that system correctly,” Buckmaster said, “then conclusions about how pumping affects it should be treated carefully.”

Part of the problem is data. Until recently, there were no deep monitoring wells in the Fish Slough area, making it difficult to understand what’s happening beneath the surface. New wells have since been installed, but incorporating that data would require additional modeling work, and additional funding.

That limitation is not unique to Fish Slough.

Across the Tri-Valley, large areas lack reliable monitoring data, leaving what are effectively blind spots in the model. In some cases, the consultants had to add “synthetic” wells to account for irrigation demand that couldn’t otherwise be explained.

“It tells us the water has to be coming from somewhere,” Tolley said.

More accurate modeling would require detailed information from local growers, specifically, which wells irrigate which fields, and how much water is being used. That data is largely not publicly available, and only one land-

owner responded to a request for input during the study. That one landowner ultimately didn’t submit any data.

There are also limits to what the district can control.

Notably, the model did not include reductions to pumping by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP), which operates wells in the basin but falls outside the district’s authority.

Even with these shortfalls, however, the model still offers a clear big-picture takeaway that groundwater levels in the Tri-Valley are declining. Over the 30-year simulation period, the basin shows a net loss of roughly 200,000 acre-feet of stored groundwater.

If nothing changes, groundwater levels are expected to continue declining across much of the basin.

Water levels could drop roughly 9 to 10 feet in the Benton and Chalfant areas, and as much as 35 to 40 feet in Hammil Valley. Further south, the model projects more modest declines around 10 feet, where conditions are more strongly influenced by model boundary assumptions and external pumping. In Fish Slough, the model estimates declines of about 2.5 feet.

As a state-recognized groundwater sustainability agency, the Tri-Valley Groundwater Monitoring District has the authority to implement management measures, but the board members remained largely silent throughout the presentation and discussion.

Tolley is required submit a report to Mono County by June 30, but the submission is not expected to carry any required action.

MONO COUNTY

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COLLEGE? IT'S FREE!

By Libre

College decision day is approaching rapidly. It's an anxiety-riddled time for parents and students alike.

Where should I go? How will I pay?

Luckily, for those looking to stay on the Eastside and continue their education at Cerro Coso Community College in either Bishop or Mammoth, scholarship opportunities exist.

Made available through funds from Eastern Sierra Foundation (ESF) in Bishop, and the Mammoth Lakes Foundation (MLF) in Mammoth, these scholarship programs cover full tuition and \$500 for books.

It's the type of scholarship that makes higher education feasible for everyone on the Eastside.

The hitch? Applicants must be residents of Inyo or Mono county (depending on which campus they'd want to attend) for one year.

For the scholarship through MLF at the Mammoth campus, recipients must also be graduates of an Inyo or Mono county high school.

Students funded by ESF are required to take nine units (the equivalent of three classes).

The MLF program, conversely, is flexible with the courseload volume, but mandates that scholarship recipients complete ten hours per month of community service hours in Mammoth.

Recipients also must re-apply for either the ESF or MLF program each semester to secure their aid.

"Our scholarship program has really developed to meet the needs of the community," said MLF Scholarship Director Elizabeth Root. "We are willing to work with any student that has a pathway they've worked out with a counselor, if they're taking one class at a time because they're working full time, or caring for their parents, or have other obligations."

Currently, 19 students receive a scholarship from the MLF and 71 receive funding from ESF.

The students range in age from recent high school grads to those in their 30s, 40s, and 50s. Last year, ESF funded a scholarship for an 80-year-old individual.

"That was super special," reflected Julie Faber, the president of ESF. "They

didn't get to complete their AA when they were younger. It was their lifetime goal, and they did it."

Both ESF and MLF also offer transfer scholarships if a student wishes to continue their education past the Associates degrees they earn through Cerro Coso. ESF dolls out two annual transfer scholarships of \$10,000 to complete the final two years of higher education at any accredited university.

Similarly, MLF awards one student per year a \$10,000 scholarship to attend any California State University (CSU), the University of Nevada Reno (UNR), or a University of California (UC), called the Dave Scholarship to honor Dave McCoy. The organization also awards the same financial support for a student pursuing a degree in healthcare, dubbed the Roma scholarship, in memory of McCoy's late wife.

Separate from ESF, the Inyo County Office of Education also offers scholarships for students wishing to finish their Bachelor's degree at UNR through the Inyo Promise program. If a student obtains a minimum 3.0 GPA from Cerro Coso in Bishop, they would be eligible to receive around \$7,524.25 per semester. If they earn between a 2.75-2.99 GPA, this scholarship covers roughly \$5,248 per semester. Each year, the office also takes 8th and 10th graders to UNR's campus to look at the dorms and sit-in on classes.

"Part of the goal is trying to get more students involved," said Barry Simpson, Inyo County Office of Education superintendent.

Despite accomplishing similar goals for students on the Eastside, funding for MLF and ESF is wildly different. MLF's scholarship programs are funded entirely by large, individual donations, and the organization is run by a paid staff. On the flip side, ESF operates as an entirely volunteer board.

"We do as much as we possibly can with as little expenditure," Faber said, "We try to fund everything back into the community."

The scholarships from ESF are funded instead by a million-dollar-endowment donated by the Inyo County Office of Education in 2019. The endowment came from the office's general fund, and enables the program to continue in perpetuity.

Mono County Child Care Council



CHILD CARE EXPERTS WANTED



Seeking collaborative parents, providers, and community advocates to serve on the Mono County Child Care Council to help guide the future of child care in our communities.

WE ARE WATCHING



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Questions? Contact Kevin Lian kliau@monocoe.org

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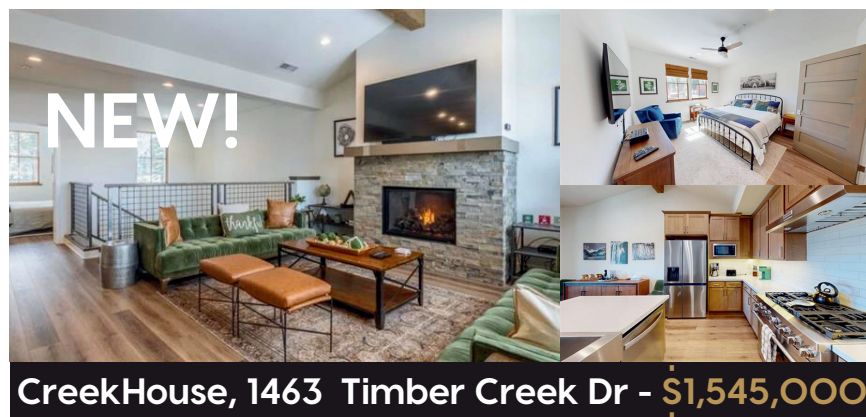


REDUCED!

Ski Trails #90 - \$265,000

Beautifully updated 2-bedroom plus home in quiet Ski Trail Mobile Park. Perched on a hill with Sherwin views & privacy, featuring new paint, flooring, remodeled kitchen, perfect full-time or vacation retreat.

MOBILE
BEDS: 2
BATHS: 2
SQ FT: 1160



NEW!

CreekHouse, 1463 Timber Creek Dr - \$1,545,000

Stunning view town home in the popular CreekHouse community! This home boasts modern construction complete with 2 large decks, a gourmet kitchen, open floorplan and more!! Move in before summer!

CONDO
BEDS: 3
BATHS: 2.5
SQ FT: 1696



IN ESCROW!

Swall Meadows Lot, 569 Rimrock Dr - \$179,000

Prime 2-acre Swall Meadows equestrian lot with approved plans for a 3-bed, 2-bath home. Enjoy sweeping views, underground utilities, community water, and easy access to Mammoth Lakes & Bishop.

LOT
SQ FT: 85,378



The Cabins #13 - \$869,000

Charming 2BD/2BA mountain retreat overlooking the 4th fairway of Sierra Star Golf Course. Features open-concept living, a sunny deck with views, underground parking, hot tub, ski locker, and bike room. Close to Little Eagle

CONDO
BEDS: 2
BATHS: 2
SQFT: 1143



Hidden Valley #113,153 Lake Mary Rd - \$499,000

Cozy 1 bdrm/2 bath in serene setting! This ideal mountain retreat gives one the feeling of being in a tree house! Located in a well-kept project with amenities, this turnkey property is a must-see!! Great Rental, washer/dryer, close to The Village!

CONDO
BEDS: 1
BATHS: 1
SQ FT: 712



IN ESCROW!

The Pointe #2, 3600 Chateau Rd - \$1,249,000

Sun-drenched 2 bdrm loft 3 ba townhome w/attached 2 car garage and additional storage. Updated kitchen, heated floors, and picturesque Mammoth Rock views. Close to town, meadow, and shuttle.

CONDO
BEDS: 2/LOFT
BATHS: 3
SQ FT: 2037



LISTING DETAILS! CA DRE #01812140

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