

9th Annual Eastern Sierra History Conference

October 25-27, 2024



**9th Annual
EASTERN SIERRA HISTORY CONFERENCE
Cerro Coso Community College
Bishop, CA
October 25-27, 2024**

Friday, October 25

- 8:00 a.m.** **Registration - Continental Breakfast Provided**
- 8:30** ***Welcome, Land Acknowledgement, and
Announcements***
 Jeff Gabriel
 Executive Director, Sierra Forever
- 9:00** ***Burn Scars: A Documentary History of Fire
Suppression, From Colonial Origins to the Resurgence
of Cultural Burning***
 Char Miller, PhD
 Author & W.M. Keck Professor
 Pomona College
- 10:00** ***Death Valley Scotty and Bessie Johnson Chautauqua***
 David and Gayle Woodruff
 Authors and Historians
- 11:00** **Morning Break - Refreshments**
- 11:15** ***The History of the Pine Creek Mine: A World-class
Tungsten Deposit***
 Joseph Kurtak
 Author of *Mine in the Sky*
- 12:15 p.m.** **Lunch Provided (Presentation During Lunch)**

- 12:30** *Wood this burn? Quantifying woody fuels on the
Burger Sierra Bird and Animal Sanctuary*
Anna Elizabeth Huff
Scripps College
- 1:15** *BAAF: Bishop's Contribution to the Greatest
Generation*
Jack Fisher
Historian and Author
- 2:00** *Observations and Discoveries Found in Writing an
1890's Eastern Sierra Historical Novel*
Wayne Purcell
Historian and Author
- 2:45** **Afternoon Break - Refreshments**
- 3:00** *The Mule As...Working Animal, Teacher, Soldier,
Legend, Friend*
Louis Medina
Director of Outreach
Sierra Forever
- 3:45** *How Three UC Davis Classmates Made History at Mono
Lake*
David Carle – Moderator
Janet Carle
Sally Gaines
Nancy Upham (by Video)
- 4:30** **Closing Comments**
Dinner on your own

Saturday, October 26

- 8:00 a.m.** **Registration - Continental Breakfast Provided**
- 8:10** **Announcements (Field Trip Briefing)**

- 8:15** ***Alabama Gates 2024***
Kim Stringfellow
Andy Warhol Foundation Curatorial Fellow
- 9:15** ***Why is Grant Lake a Reservoir?***
Bob Marks, PhD
Professor Emeritus, Whittier College
- 10:15** **Morning Break – Refreshments**
- 10:30** ***Downtown Bishop: Restoring the Past to Catalyze a Vibrant Future***
Jennifer Whitney
Business Owner
- 11:15** ***The Forgotten Faces of Mammoth City’s Gold Rush Era***
Robert Joki
Storyteller
- 12:00 p.m.** **Lunch Provided**
- 1:00** ***Walking in the Wilderness***
Jamie Hinrichs
Public Affairs Specialist
USDA Forest Service
Pacific Southwest Region
- 1:45** ***Traditional Names and Places within Payahuunadu***
Brian Poncho
Amara Keller
Lavina Bengochia
Owens Valley Career Development Center Nüümü
Yadoha Language Program
- 2:45** **Afternoon Break - Refreshments**

3:00 *History of the Los Angeles Aqueduct*
Clarence Martin (retired)
Aqueduct Manager, LADWP

3:45 *Bobby Tanner Celebration – 20 Mule Team*

4:30 **Closing Comments**

Sunday October 27

History Tours:

Tour One – Manzanar National Historic Site Baseball Field Tour
12:00 – 2:00 p.m.



In 1942, the United States government ordered more than 110,000 men, women, and children to leave their homes and detained them in remote, military-style camps. Manzanar War Relocation Center was one of ten camps where the U.S.

government incarcerated Japanese immigrants ineligible for citizenship and Japanese American citizens during World War II. Baseball provided a welcome distraction from the grim reality of camp, with teams such as the Manzaknights and Dusty Chicks suiting up and playing on the field at Manzanar.

Dan Kwong is a community activist, performance artist and avid baseball player. He has been instrumental in restoring the baseball field as it would have been nearly 75 years ago. Dan's mother, famed artist Momo Nagano, was incarcerated in Manzanar and instilled a strong sense of social justice in her son.

Fieldtrip leader: Don Kwong, Artist and Project Director

Tour Two – Tungsten Mine Tour **1:00 – 5:00 p.m.**

The ground lay dormant until 1916, when Billie Vaughan and Arch Beauregard discovered outcrops with Molybdenum and the tungsten-bearing mineral scheelite while prospecting near the headwaters of Pine Creek. The mill went into operation in December 1918 but was forced to close two months later due to plummeting tungsten prices. The National Soda Products Company purchase the Pine Creek Mine in 1922. By 1942, the mine had become the largest producer of tungsten in the country. They closed permanently in 2001.



A unique opportunity to visit the historic world-class Pine Creek Tungsten Mine. Meet at the Round Valley Elementary School parking lot, on the west side of Round Valley Road. Plan to carpool from there. Fieldtrip meeting time 1:00 p.m. Tour is limited to 25 people.

Fieldtrip leader: Joe Kurtak, author of *Mine in the Sky*

Speaker Bios

Lavina Bengochia

Manahuu i-na-nia-na-ii Lavina Bengochia Banning, I am Nüümü, I am an Indigenous person to this land. I work for the Owens Valley Career Development Center Nüümü Yadoha Language program. I am a Paiute Language facilitator; I have been teaching the language for the past 14 year and have been learning the language for the past 16 years. I was born and raised on the Bishop Paiute Indian Reservation. I am a wife and a mother of three children.

David Carle

David Carle is the author of 15 books of natural and cultural history, focused on both California and the Mono Lake region. He was a California State Park

ranger for 27 years, finishing that career at the Mono Lake Tufa State Reserve (for 19 years), where he still lives. David grew up in Orange County, California, received a bachelor's degree at University of California Davis, in Wildlife and Fisheries Biology, and a master's degree from California State University Sacramento in Recreation and Parks Administration. He taught biology and natural history courses at Cerro Coso Community College in Mammoth Lakes. He is the past President of the Mono Basin Historical Society.

Janet Carle

Janet Carle worked for many years at the Mono Lake Tufa State Reserve. She and her husband Dave were the first permanent ranger staff in the Mono Basin. She has been coordinating the Mono Lake Volunteers since 2004 and started 350 Mono Climate Action in 2015.

Jack Fisher

Jack C. Fisher MD is Prof. Emeritus of Surgery, UC San Diego and former Head of its Division of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery. Following retirement, he earned an MA in U. S. Political and Economic History from UCSD. *Stopping the Road: The Campaign Against Another Trans-Sierra Highway* is his third historical narrative, a labor of love for the Eastern Sierra.

Sally Gaines

Sally Gaines, a fourth generation Californian, was raised in Menlo Park and was graduated from University of California Davis. She then migrated to Lee Vining to help start the Mono Lake Committee (MLC) with David Gaines. They had two kids and after David's death she was single mom for a decade before marrying Rick Kattelman, a snow hydrologist. She still lives in the Eastern Sierra and remains on the MLC board of directors. Her time is spent with grandkids, gardening, triathlons, hiking and reading.

Jamie Hinrichs

Jamie has a PhD in environmental history from the University of St Andrews (Scotland). Her dissertation examined the intersection of walking and preservation in England and Scotland, c. 1850-1950. This presentation continues her previous research, by examining how walking has shaped wilderness ethic in the United States. Jamie works for the U.S. Forest Service as a public affairs specialist.

Anna Huff

Anna Huff is a senior studying Environmental Science at Scripps College. Growing up in Seattle and the mountains of the Pacific Northwest has given her a deep love for hiking, backpacking, and all things outdoors. At Scripps, she is involved in advocating for more sustainable practices by the college, working at the Pomona Farm, and archiving student organizing. Anna has been involved in sustainable building, field research, and organizing nonprofit work over the past few summers and hopes to connect her interest in environmental science and addressing the climate crisis with work rooted in community, justice, and policy.

Joe Kurtak

Joe Kurtak was introduced to mining at an early age when his father took a job at the Pine Creek Tungsten Mine, moving his family to the company housing at Rovana in 1954. While growing up at that site he and brother Dan entertained themselves by following trails to the many old mines in the nearby Sierra. The geologic setting of the mine and the surrounding Owens Valley influenced Kurtak who went on to earn a master's degree in geology at the Mackay School of Mines in Reno, Nevada.

While working at the mine during his college years, Joe heard many intriguing accounts of the mine's early days as related by the old timers. Finally in 1995 he decided it was time to record this fascinating history before those who experienced it firsthand were gone. This resulted in the publication of "Mine in the Sky" a history of the Pine Creek Tungsten Mine in 1998. Joe Currently resides in Anchorage, Alaska, but often visits the Owens Valley.

Robert Joki

President of the Southern Mono Historical Society - and the owner of both "The Gallery at Twin Lakes" and "The Mammoth City Mining Museum.

Amara Keller

Amara Keller is the Nüümü Yadoha Language Program Specialist for the Owens Valley Career Development Center, specializing in teaching the Paiute language through cultural activities and workshops within the Tribal Communities within Inyo and Mono Counties. As an enrolled member of the Bishop Paiute Tribe, Amara has deepened her understanding of traditions

and strengthened the connection to her roots through her work with the Paiute Language and supporting cultural activities and gatherings within community. Amara will always find joy in the language and culture and strives to help keep it alive for future generations, especially her daughter Eibanüwü.

Robert Marks

Robert (Bob) Marks is Emeritus Professor of History and Environmental Studies and is the author of numerous books and articles on Chinese and world environmental history. Since retiring after 41 years on the faculty of Whittier College, he has been working on book on the environmental history of the Mono Basin. His most recent publications include "Dispossessed Again: Paiute Land Allotments in the Mono Basin, 1907-1929," Eastern Sierra History Journal (2023), and "Before Mulholland: Land, Water, and Power in the Mono Basin, 1872-1923," Southern California Quarterly (Summer 2023). He lives in June Lake with Joyce Kaufman and their black lab Seger and serves as Historian of the Mono Basin Historical Society.

Clarence Martin

Clarence has a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering and a master's in business administration. He was a private engineer in New Mexico for 10 years before joining the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP). During his tenure with LADWP, he worked in Land and Resource Management, Engineering, and Real Estate. Before his retirement, Clarence was the assistant aqueduct manager and the aqueduct manager. He worked 31 years for LADWP with 28 years in the Eastern Sierra.

Louis Medina

Louis (Lou) Medina was born in El Salvador and came to the U.S. at age 10. A lover of languages and the world's cultures, he has a double Bachelor of Arts degree in East Asian Languages and Cultures (with emphasis on Japanese) and International Relations from the University of Southern California, and a master's degree in applied Linguistics from the Universidad Complutense in Madrid, Spain. As a working adult, Lou has lived in Japan, China, Spain and England, and traveled extensively overseas. He found a calling in charitable work in early 2000 and, except for a stint as a reporter for daily newspaper The Bakersfield Californian from 2006 to 2009, has worked in the nonprofit sector since, in areas as diverse as suicide

prevention, homelessness/hunger prevention, grant making and philanthropy, and most recently, conservation, towards which he naturally gravitated out of a deep concern over the planet's climate crisis. Lou became aware of ESIA when he attended the 2022 Eastern Sierra History Conference and feels fortunate to have come on board as a staff member this July. He lives in West Bishop with his four cats.

Char Miller

Dr. Char Miller is the W. M. Keck Professor of Environmental Analysis at Pomona College. His most recent books include *Gifford Pinchot: Selected Writings* (2017), *Not So Golden State: Sustainability vs. the California Dream* (2016) and *America's Great National Forests, Wilderness, and Grasslands* (2016). Other works include the award-winning *Gifford Pinchot and the Making of Modern Environmentalism* (2004), *On the Edge: Water, Immigration, and Politics in the Southwest* (2013) and *Seeking the Greatest Good: The Conservation Legacy of Gifford Pinchot* (2013). Co-author of *Death Valley National Park: A History* (2013) and co-editor of *Forest Conservation in the Anthropocene: Science, Policy, and Practice* (2016), Miller is a Senior Fellow at the Pinchot Institute for Conservation and a Fellow of the Forest History Society.

Brian Poncho

Brian Poncho is the Nüümü Yadoha Language Program Coordinator for the Owens Valley Career Development Center, specializing in teaching the Paiute language and culture to the Tribal Communities within Inyo and Mono Counties. Brian has previously served as a Tribal Council Member and the Chief Operations Officer for the Bishop Paiute Tribe. Brian has a long-standing investment in the cultural revitalization of his Paiute culture. Brian is supported by his wife Jodi and son's Frank and Aspen and they live within the Bishop Paiute Indian Reservation.

Wayne Purcell

Wayne grew up in Orange County, with a great interest in Nature and all wild critters. Thinking he would become a National Park Ranger or schoolteacher; he got a bachelor's in biology from University of California-Berkeley. He and his bride went to the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont for a three-month honeymoon and ended up staying three years. During that time his career aspirations changed, and he became a minister, serving in two

large churches in southern California, working with Jr. High students, then children, then adults before retiring. His interest in history came about through doing themed camps with youth. He and his wife have three married daughters and twelve grandchildren. His faith, family, nature, writing, and photography continue to be strong interests in his life. He and his wife Patty reside in Yucaipa, California.

Kim Stringfellow

Kim Stringfellow is an artist, educator, writer and independent curator based in Joshua Tree, California. Her work bridges cultural geography, public practice and experimental documentary into creative, socially engaged transmedia experiences. She is a 2016 Andy Warhol for the Visual Arts Curatorial Fellow and a 2015 Guggenheim Fellow in Photography. She was awarded an honorary doctorate from Claremont Graduate University in 2018. Stringfellow is a Professor at San Diego State University's School of Art + Design.

Nancy Upham

Nancy is a fourth generation Californian who grew up north of San Francisco, at the base of Mt. Tamalpais. She grew up in an outdoorsy, hiking family and had a strong passion for spending time in the great outdoors from a very young age. She got a degree in Environmental Interpretation and Education from UC Davis and right after graduation got a job as a naturalist at the Mendocino National Forest. After working on the Shasta Trinity and Los Padres National Forests, in 1985 she moved to Mono Lake with her husband John to be the first manager of the newly designated Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area. She relished that ground-breaking job for 8 years before moving to Bishop to be the Public Affairs Officer of the Inyo National Forest for the last 20 years of her career.

Jennifer Whitney

Jennifer Whitney has 15 years of experience in national media & marketing, creating sophisticated narrative visuals for such clients as the New York Times, ProPublica, National Geographic Traveler, Nature Conservancy, The Pearl, and Food Network. She is a child of the south with a love of nurturing through food and community and worked in hospitality for many years as a server and trainer. She carries a lineage with a penchant for real estate,

interior design, and historic preservation. In 2021, she founded River Queen Holdings, a rural impact Opportunity Zone Fund, to catalyze the revitalization of downtown Bishop, CA. She is helping to regenerate the culinary, agricultural, and manufacturing economy in the Eastern Sierra with the launch of River Queen Provisions, a regionally and sustainably sourced general store, farm to table cafe, community event space, and hotel. Learn more about the project at riverqueenbishop.com

David & Gayle Woodruff

David & Gayle Woodruff have lived in the Eastern Sierra and Death Valley area for most of their lives. They are the authors of eight books on Eastern Sierra/Eastern California history and are also presenters of a variety of local and regional history programs. When not researching or working on a new history project, you'll probably find them out hiking in their beloved Sierra Nevada Mountains.

Sierra Forever (formerly Eastern Sierra Interpretive Association), founded in 1970, is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that partners with local, tribal, state and federal governments and fellow nonprofit organizations to provide interpretive education about the Sierra Nevada and Great Basin landscapes. We help translate the beauty and uniqueness of public lands for people to develop a deeper understanding of these places, and in turn, become better stewards of these places.

Sierra Forever as an education/interpretive organization provides programs, events, and operates nature stores in visitor centers and ranger stations in collaboration with agency partners. Our partnerships include Inyo National Forest, Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, Tahoe National Forest, Klamath National Forest, Death Valley National Park, Devils Postpile National Monument, Manzanar National Historic Site, and the Bureau of Land Management-Bishop Field Office.

Land Acknowledgement

Public lands in the United States hold the creation stories, burial grounds, and ceremonies of Indigenous people who were killed or forcibly removed from their ancestral homes during territorial acquisition.

Many tribes, comprised of different bands, live in the Eastern Sierra region, caring for their native lands as they coexist with the ongoing impacts of colonization. Past or present tribes and bands associated with the region that this effort is aware of include, but are not limited to, the Miwok, Mono Lake Kutzadika'a, Mono/Monache, Nüümü (Paiute), Newe (Shoshone), Timbi-Sha, Utu Utu Gwaitu Paiute, and Washoe.

Two Nüümü terms describe the region and provide important context. The first is Pamidu Toiyabe (Western Mountains), and the other, more widely known, place name is Payahuunadü (The Place Where Water Flows). This acknowledgement is an invitation to all organizations, residents, and visitors to recognize the way this history has shaped the present as all parties work together in anticipation of a better future.

