



the Owens Valley Committee

the RAINSHADOW

THE OWENS VALLEY COMMITTEE • VOL. 8 NO. 1 • SPRING/SUMMER 2013 • WWW.OVCWEB.ORG

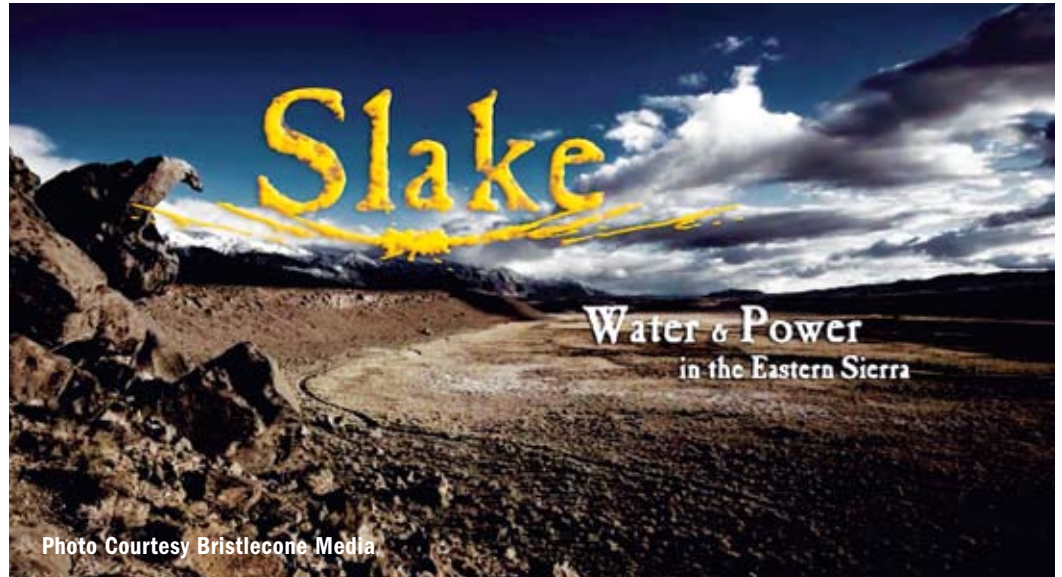
w e w a t c h t h e w a t e r

Aqueduct Centennial 2013 100 Years of Injustice

In February 1913, the City of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (DWP) closed the "gates," which they had constructed on Owens River, and completely diverted all of the river's flow into their newly-constructed aqueduct. Many miles of scenic river, vast meadows, and an entire inland lake were thus deprived of water. This act forever altered the socio-economic and ecological landscape of Owens Valley. Those of us who live here experience the repercussions of this event on a daily basis.

Donate for a Strong Voice for the Owens Valley

With the deadline for the Metabolic Studio matching grant coming up on June 30 (page 3), there has never been a better time to help OVC protect the Eastern Sierra. OVC has a Slake video series funding campaign at www.indiegogo.com until June 18 (see adjacent story) and there are great donor incentives. To earmark your donation for Slake, Google Indiegogo, type "Slake" in the search box, and click on the picture that comes up. If you choose not to donate online, just write "Slake" on your check to OVC to earmark it for that and use the enclosed envelope. And you can always donate through the OVC website. All donations will be matched by the Metabolic Studio until June 30!



Help Launch An Exciting New Video Series Called Slake

By Nina Weisman

The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power continues its disregard for the Owens Valley. LADWP has sued to avoid finishing dust mitigation; is attempting to get permission to pump groundwater from under Owens Lake; has sued the Mammoth Community Water District claiming water rights to Mammoth Creek; reduced water going to pasturelands in the Owens Valley; and continues to fail to complete mitigation projects ordered years ago. Meanwhile media outlets are flooded with press releases from the LADWP justifying their actions. The Owens Valley needs a voice!

OVC is partnering with Bristlecone Media to create a video series that will educate audiences about the uniqueness of the Eastern Sierra, the effects of LADWP's destructive water policies, and the struggle for ecological health and environmental justice in the Owens Valley, but we need your help!

The video series, *Slake: Water and Power in the Eastern Sierra*, will inform audiences about complex issues through a rich tapestry of images and dialogue, motivating people to join the battle for the Owens Valley. At least \$30,000 will be needed for the first two videos, so we have set up a campaign on a crowd-funding website called Indiegogo. Please visit our 60-day campaign at

www.indiegogo.com, then search for Slake. The campaign will run until June 18. We will receive matching funds from Metabolic Studio until June 30, so it is critical that you send us a donation before then.

Our goal is to produce two episodes by November, which is the centenary of the first LA Aqueduct water deliveries to LA. We will tour with the videos, showing them in the Owens Valley and in the LA area. We will counteract the propaganda that LADWP is spreading, educate Angelenos about where their water comes from, and get support from LA residents to enforce existing regulations that LADWP has been ignoring.

There is a time deadline for this fundraising effort, so please help. If you choose not to donate online, you can always send the OVC a check, and mark "Slake" in the notes box. The address to send checks is: OVC, Slake, PO Box 77, Bishop, CA 93515.

We have posted a fantastic short 'teaser' video. It can be seen at www.slaketheseries.com.

Join us in this remarkable effort to educate people about water in the Owens Valley, and to engage them in advocacy to help prevent more damage to this unique area. Thank you!

Current Owens Valley Water Issues

By the OVC Team

The year 2012 was busy as ever with water issues, and with the addition of this being the LA Aqueduct Centennial, 2013 is shaping up to be very busy as well.

Owens Lake: DWP Loses in Court (Again)

In November, DWP filed an aggressive Federal lawsuit against Great Basin Unified Air Pollution Control District and other state and federal agencies. This was an effort to evade some of its responsibilities for controlling the major dust problem caused by DWP's drying of Owens Lake. On May 2, the entire case was dismissed, some portions on substantive grounds, some on grounds the issues are already in State proceedings. DWP has filed a State lawsuit challenging the California Air Resources Board decision to uphold Great Basin's 2011 order for DWP to control dust on an additional 2.9 square miles of lake bed. DWP had refused to pay Great Basin's fees related to that challenge as required by law. Great Basin sued and in December Kern County Superior Court ordered DWP to pay more than \$1 million in fees. The court set a penalty trial for October where DWP faces nearly \$8 million in penalties for its refusal to pay Great Basin.

DWP vs. the Town of Mammoth Lakes

In DWP's lawsuit against the Mammoth Community Water District, DWP claims senior rights to the town's water supply. It is uncertain if DWP wishes the Town of Mammoth Lakes to disappear or if they simply want to extract a heavy price for the town's use of the water. Of course, the town has documentation showing it may legitimately use local waters. The judge has set a court date for this fall.

DWP Ignores Adaptive Management on the Lower Owens River

Problems persist in the Lower Owens River Project with too many cattails and tules, very little recruitment of native trees, and problems with water quality during high seasonal habitat flows. DWP has refused to agree with adaptive management recommendations for changes in flow management made in the past few years

by the MOU Consultants and supported by OVC.

Crystal Geysers Cabin Bar Ranch Project

OVC is currently working to make sure that Crystal Geysers Roxane does not damage Cartago's seeps, springs and wells by groundwater pumping to supply a new facility. The company proposes to take 360 more acre-feet of water per year from its Cabin Bar Ranch property near Olancho. In March, OVC filed suit against Inyo County for approving the project with an inadequate EIR that did not address potential pumping impacts on neighbors wells and on biological resources in springs and wetland areas.

Long Term Water Agreement and EIR Mitigations Dragging

Mitigation projects promised as a result of the Long Term Water Agreement (LTWA) and speci-

Still Too Much DWP Pumping

Ensuring Owens Valley is managed according to the goals of the water agreement remains a top priority of OVC. That means managing pumping to avoid significant declines in groundwater dependent vegetation. We are disappointed that pumping impacts in the Blackrock area have not been resolved after many years. The Blackrock 94 parcel dispute was not resolved by the Standing Committee last year and is just now going to arbitration. It's been two years since Inyo County's preliminary report concluded that DWP pumping had a significant impact there. Also, there are still too many areas where groundwater levels in DWP wellfields are below baseline levels.

New Supervisors – A Cause For Hope?

Three new Inyo County Supervisors were installed on the five-member board in January. OVC is hopeful that a fresh vision might alter the course with regard to the LTWA and bring justice to Owens Valley. Keith Bright was an Inyo County Supervisor involved in negotiating the LTWA. He had a vision for Inyo County parity with DWP in managing DWP's water operations in Owens Valley. We hope the new supervisors will embrace that vision.

Meadows to Midnight Building Destruction

The OVC also wrestles with dying meadows and



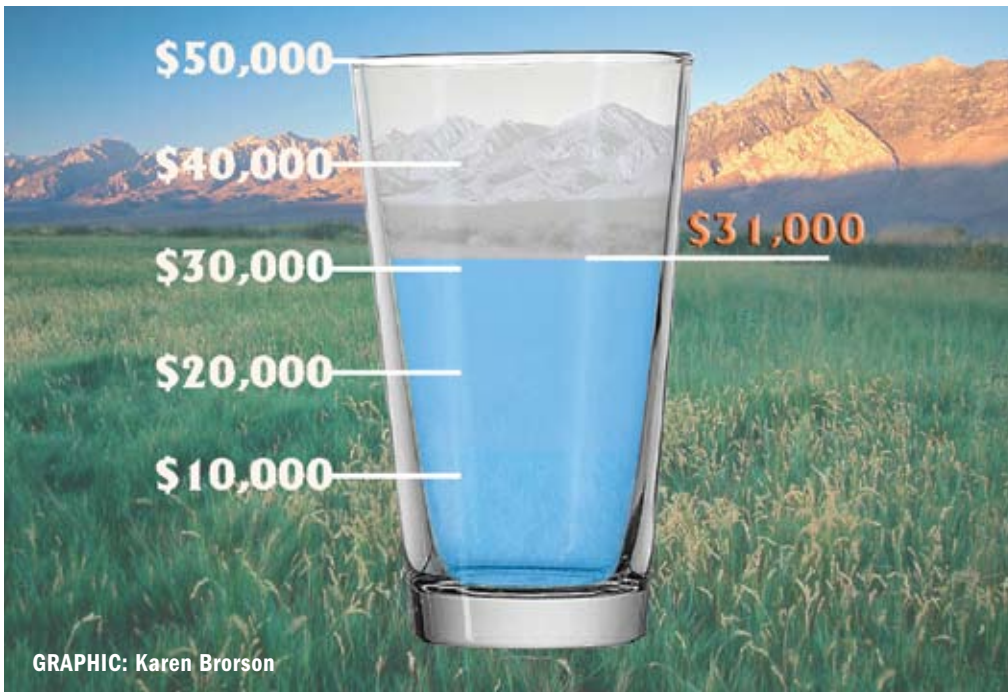
DWP is trying to convince courts that it has done enough dust mitigation at Owens Lake.

fied in the 1991 Environmental Impact Report and elsewhere, have not been fully, nor in some cases, successfully implemented. More than 20 years have now passed without the valley receiving mitigation as promised for past environmental wrongs.

Pumping Protocols Flawed

Despite agreement between DWP and Inyo County that experimental groundwater pumping management protocols are flawed and thus insufficient to protect the valley, the two parties have made little progress in finding solutions over the past 6 years. At issue is the so-called Green Book, the manual for monitoring, and procedures for operating — or not — groundwater wells.

rare plant populations; excessive pumping in the name of state fish hatcheries; wells which have been designated exempt from the LTWA; cutbacks in irrigation water throughout the valley — affecting wildlife habitat, and the valley's economy and scenery, not to mention being in violation of the LTWA — changes in surface water operations; “flexible” pumping programs and other novel means of water extraction dreamed up by DWP; destruction of historical buildings (sometimes in the middle of the night!); simmering plans to pump under the now-dry Owens Lake, at the expense of people's domestic wells and healthy spring and seep habitats; buying of more land and water rights while releasing very little.



Matching Grant Deadline Nears

Still Time to Double Your Dollars

By the OVC Team

Metabolic Studio, a direct charitable activity of the Annenberg Foundation led by artist Lauren Bon, has generously provided a \$50,000 grant to the OVC. The Studio is in the process of matching funds up to \$50,000 additional dollars donated to OVC until midnight, June 30, 2013. Funds that will be matched include contributions over the basic \$25 annual membership and any other cash donations or grants.

Thanks to all our supporters, we have currently raised more than \$31,000, which have been matched by Metabolic Studio, and are seeking an additional \$19,000 before the grant deadline. These funds shall be used to further the mission of OVC to the long-

term protection, restoration, and sustainable management of lands and water-dependent ecosystems in the Owens Valley.

Please consider a tax-deductible donation before June 30 to assist us in meeting our current \$19,000 goal for matching funds. Your support helps us to be a strong voice for water solutions that are beneficial for the people, plants and animals throughout the beautiful Owens Valley. OVC can receive funds through checks in the enclosed envelope or by donating on the OVC website, ovcweb.org or the Indiegogo Slake campaign website (see page 1).



Several OVC members joined with local Native American tribal members and the Idle No More movement to peacefully protest outside a DWP LA Aqueduct commemoration at the Eastern California Museum in Independence. Despite little direct dialogue, our presence was felt by DWP and their friends.

Reaching Out to Audiences Near and Far - OVC in the Community

In 2012, OVC revived a long dormant outreach program. Although still modest, we had meetings and programs in Bishop, Lone Pine and Ridgecrest. We held a series of seven Water Roundtable meetings, informal gatherings to discuss water issues, in Bishop and Lone Pine. In February 2012, we held our first annual winter fundraiser at the Mountain Light Gallery in Bishop. John Walton, UC Davis professor and author of *Western Times and Water Wars* was our featured speaker for the gathering of about 115 people. In September, Professor Walton returned to make presentations for OVC programs in Lone Pine and Ridgecrest. Five other OVC programs were held in Bishop and Lone Pine in 2012 and 2013 along with presentations to the Independence Civic Club and Bishop Lions Club and tabling at several public events.

There it is – Take It, an Audio tour

This year's featured speaker at the second annual winter fundraiser, Kim Stringfellow, is an artist and educator who focuses on challenging environmental issues. She received a Cal Humanities/National Endowment for the Humanities grant to prepare an audio tour containing personal stories relevant to Los Angeles' 100-year occupation and dewatering of Owens Valley. Her final product, "There It Is – Take It", may be accessed in its entirety at <http://thereitistakeit.org/>. Please take some time to listen to this oral history of the valley as told by people, including several OVC members, who have lived it first hand.

Eastern Sierra Birding Trail Maps & our OVC Membership brochures are available. Email outreach@ovcweb.org.

OVC Mission

OVC is a non-profit citizen action group dedicated to the protection, restoration and sustainable management of water and land resources affecting the Owens Valley. The Committee oversees compliance with the implementation of appropriate water management policy, educates the public, encourages participation in local government, and advocates an inclusive and open decision-making process.

OVC Goals

1. "Watchdog" the 1991 LTWA (Water Agreement) between Inyo County and L.A.
2. Oversee the implementation and management of the Lower Owens River Project (LORP).
3. Educate the public and promote its involvement with water issues.
4. Seek a dual use designation for dust control water at Owens Lake for wildlife as well as dust.



The OVC Board recognizes the importance of tapping into the latest means of communication. Receive regular updates and keep current on water issues by taking a moment to friend the OVC on **Facebook!**

the RAINSHADOW

The Rainshadow is the newsletter of the Owens Valley Committee. OVC is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit citizen's action group dedicated to the protection, restoration and sustainable management of water and land resources affecting the Owens Valley. The biannual report edition of The Rainshadow is produced in the Spring and Fall of each year. Send suggestions and corrections to the editor.

CONSTANCE SPENGER EDITOR
info@ovcweb.org

ALAN BACOCK PRESIDENT
president@ovcweb.org

MARK BAGLEY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
execdir@ovcweb.org

NILS DAVIS DESIGN & PRODUCTION
DESIGN- keri@nilsdavisdesign.com

CONTRIBUTORS:

NINA WEISMAN, CO-CHAIR INDIEGOGO
NinaW@ovcweb.org

NONPROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
BISHOP, CA
PERMIT NO. 37

OWENS VALLEY COMMITTEE
PO Box 77
Bishop, CA 93515
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED