



MONO LAKE



N E W S L E T T E R

Summer 2007

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Eastern Sierra Watershed Project reaches Walker watershed

by Elin Ljung

This spring, the air on three different Eastern Sierra creeks was filled with the calls of birds, the scent of blooming plants, and the voices of students calling out “tree!,” “shrub!,” and “herbaceous!” These students were studying their local creeks through the Mono County Eastern Sierra Watershed Program (ESWP), now in its third year.

With the help of a grant from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Mono Lake Committee was able to expand the ESWP to include a monitoring day on Bridgeport Creek with Bridgeport Elementary 6th grade students. ESWP days continued on Mammoth Creek with Mammoth Elementary students, and on Mill Creek with students from Lee Vining Elementary. The program now monitors streams in each of Mono County’s three major watersheds: Upper Owens, Mono Basin, and Walker.

ESWP keeps students busy with fast-paced stations and hands-on investigation. They measure the health of their local creeks using a series of tests that indicate the water’s

temperature, acidity, turbidity, and hardness, as well as the amount of dissolved oxygen, nitrates, and total dissolved solids. After determining the overall health of the creek, students learn about how macroinvertebrates, streamflow, and riparian vegetation can further indicate and influence a creek’s health.

After recording data points in their notebooks, they return to their classrooms and upload that data to a permanent website. With two previous years of monitoring on Mill Creek and Mammoth Creek, the students are beginning to build a data set that can be used to track the health of their creeks from year to year.

ESWP is made possible through a partnership between the Committee and the Mono County Office of Education, with additional funding from the EPA and support from Mono Lake Volunteers. If you would like to help with ESWP this fall, please contact Bartshé Miller (bartshe@monolake.org) at (760) 647-6595.



Investigation of in-stream macroinvertebrates is part of the ESWP.

BARTSHE MILLER