

SUMMARY  
OF EFFORTS TO OBTAIN CUTTINGS FOR 1996 REVEGETATION ON RUSH CR.

By Gregory Reis

In a memo to Mr. Peter Kavounas from the stream scientists dated February 21, 1996, revegetation of disturbed areas on Channel 10 of Rush Creek was recommended for "immediate action". Their rough estimate was that 100 willow and 50 cottonwood cuttings were needed.

On March 15, 1996, the Mono Lake Committee initiated efforts to obtain cottonwood and willow cuttings in order to ensure that 1996 revegetation work could take place on Channel 10. This was necessary due to the fact that LADWP did not propose to do the work themselves, and the critical time during which the cuttings must be taken was waning (end of dormancy on Lower Lee Vining Creek is late March to early April).

On March 15, 1996, we spoke with Tim Messick, a consultant who had done previous work concerning riparian revegetation on Lee Vining Creek. He suggested convenient locations on Lee Vining Creek below Highway 395 where we could obtain the needed cuttings. He also gave us guidelines for identifying Coyote Willow (which we didn't want) and how to correctly take the cuttings. We spoke with Tim as needed during the next few days.

On March 16, 1996, I examined the areas that Tim had suggested, and familiarized myself with distinguishing species characteristics. The only buds that were breaking dormancy were in a localized group of aspens—all cottonwoods and willows were still dormant. I determined that it would be fairly easy to get the needed cuttings from the suggested areas.

On March 18, 1996, I gathered together the needed supplies, and enlisted the help of Joel Ellis, who volunteered his time to assist in obtaining the cuttings. We arranged to store the cuttings in the Forest Service cold storage at Crestview. The Forest Service also volunteered to transport the cuttings from the Lee Vining Ranger Station to Crestview.

On March 19, 1996, Joel and I went out to get the cuttings. We started with willows along the Lee Vining Creek Trail, collecting from the forested area near the stream. The cuttings looked pretty healthy, overall, and the process went smoothly. We collected 103 willow cuttings, which we transported to the Lee Vining Ranger Station and stored temporarily in a snowbank. Their bases were wrapped in burlap containing wet leaves and snow.

We then went down to the county road crossing of Lee Vining Creek, where we planned to collect black cottonwood cuttings. We made a special effort to avoid "White Cottonwoods", an introduced species, and worked upstream from the road crossing. The cottonwoods in this area didn't look as vigorous and healthy as they could have, but we did our best to avoid the worst looking stems. We collected about 60 black cottonwood cuttings from this area. These we transported to the Ranger Station, and placed next to the willows. We covered them with snow. They were transported to Crestview by truck, then by snowmobile, at around 2PM.