

midway from either starting point, visitors can still get a sense of the area by walking the sections of the trail on either side of the closure. The Committee has been working with partners on a plan to rehabilitate the trail, which will most likely occur by next spring.

### **Sage grouse relocated to Parker Meadow**

A collaborative project to enhance the population size and genetic diversity of the Parker Meadow sub-population of Bi-State Greater Sage Grouse was conducted this past spring. Fifteen female and two male grouse from the Bodie Hills were released to the meadow to supplement the four male grouse that return each year to their mating ground, or lek. As part of the relocation process, the

females were inseminated before being released—a practice that increases the likelihood that the birds will nest in their new location.

The Parker group is one of six sub-populations of Bi-State Greater Sage Grouse, and according to scientists, is at the greatest risk of going extinct. One challenge for this sub-population is abandoned barbed-wire fencing, which is an issue for these low-flying birds. Additionally, power lines and encroaching conifers can serve as perches for predators, which can be problematic when in close proximity to the exposed lek sites. The most significant issue is maintaining sufficient genetic diversity, without which infertility and lower nesting success can become serious issues.

Because the species is not currently listed under the Endangered Species

Act, conservation management actions are not mandatory. This voluntary, multi-agency project is one of almost 80 projects that have been implemented to help protect Bi-State Greater Sage Grouse; it includes staff from the California Department of Fish & Wildlife, Bureau of Land Management, US Geological Survey, US Fish & Wildlife Service, and the land owner, the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power.

### **High-speed internet for Lee Vining**

Residents and visitors will be able to experience internet service at speeds of up to 1,000 megabits per second as early as this fall. The last phase that will connect Lee Vining and other areas of the Mono Basin to the “middle mile” Digital

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## Mill Creek return ditch tested successfully



**T**he Mill Creek return ditch delivered water to diversion-damaged Mill Creek for the first time in 12 years this September. Southern California Edison was testing the ditch to evaluate its capacity and reliability as part of an effort to comply with a longstanding hydropower settlement agreement with the Mono Lake Committee and five other agencies and stakeholders. Although the ditch by itself is not large enough to solve the problem of excessive Mill Creek water diversions (see Fall 2015 *Mono Lake Newsletter*), the test was an important step toward a long-term solution. —Geoffrey McQuilkin