

# Fire Ecology of the Eastern Sierra



Marina Fire

Santiago Escruceria

## September 14–15, 2019 • Malcolm North

\$172 per person / \$157 for Mono Lake Committee members  
enrollment limited to 15 participants

We live in a pyrogenic landscape, where most forests are born and shaped by fire. Fires are inevitable in much of the western United States, but many modern fires burn differently than what forests evolved with. What is the current wildfire problem and what is it doing to forest ecosystems? Are there ways of getting the “right kind” of fire back into the forest and can we better control the smoke they produce? How does climate change and drought affect fire, forests, and their large stores of carbon? This seminar will visit several of the recent fires in the Mono Basin, show fire effects on forest ecosystems, and discuss the good, bad, and ugly of current fire management and policy. If you’ve ever wanted to know more about the role of fire in California forests, this is a place to jump in.

Malcolm North is a research scientist in the Forest Service’s Pacific Southwest Research Station and a professor in the Department of Plant Sciences, UC Davis. He has a master’s degree (Yale University) and a PhD (University of Washington) in forest ecology. Malcolm has studied Sierra Nevada forests for more than 20 years, authored or co-authored over 150 papers, and worked extensively with forest managers to apply research findings.

## ITINERARY

**Saturday, September 14 at 8:00am:** Meet at the Mono Lake Committee Information Center & Bookstore in Lee Vining. We'll introduce ourselves, distribute course materials, and enjoy a slideshow and discussion of fire ecology. We will then carpool to Bald Mountain Lookout to see fire effects across the landscape, followed by a walking tour of the Indiana Summit Research Natural Area, which burned in 2016. The day's activities will conclude around 4:00pm.

**Sunday, September 15 at 8:30am:** We will meet at the Mono Lake Committee and have a brief slideshow and discussion before carpooling to the Marina Fire burn area (2016). We will then travel to the Walker burn area (2015) and the June Lake burn area (2007) to view and discuss fire behavior in different forest types. The seminar will conclude around 4:00pm.

**Altitude and Dehydration Cautions:** Remember to bring (and drink!) lots of water because your body loses more water at the higher altitudes of the Mono Basin. Experts recommend that you begin drinking extra water as you drive to higher elevation in order to prevent dehydration and headaches. Also, the sun is rather fierce at high elevations, capable of burning even on cool and cloudy days, so be sure to protect yourself thoroughly using sunscreen, sunglasses, and hat.

**Four-wheel Drive:** More than half of our travels will be on dirt roads where there are potential sandy patches or parking areas. Four-wheel drive is recommended, but not mandatory; *high clearance vehicles are mandatory*. Carpooling is encouraged, and will be arranged once the field seminar meets, so don't despair if you don't have a high-clearance vehicle.

## TO BRING

- \_\_\_ appropriate field clothing: sturdy walking shoes, hat, sunglasses, warm layers, raingear
- \_\_\_ day pack including plenty of water, sunscreen, insect repellent, etc.
- \_\_\_ plenty of drinking water
- \_\_\_ packed lunch for each day
- \_\_\_ notebook and pen/pencil
- \_\_\_ camera (optional)
- \_\_\_ binoculars (optional)
- \_\_\_ trekking poles (optional)

## RECOMMENDED BOOKS

- Pyne, Stephen J. 1997. *Fire in America: A Cultural History of Wildland and Rural Fire*. University of Washington Press, Seattle, WA. 680pp.
- Egan, Timothy. 2010. *The Big Burn: Teddy Roosevelt and the Fire that Saved America*. Mariner Books, 352pp.
- Stephens, S. and L. Ruth. 2005. Federal forest-fire policy in the United States. *Ecological Applications* 15: 532-542. (<https://nature.berkeley.edu/stephenslab/publications/>)



## Mono Lake Committee Field Seminars

P.O. Box 29 • Lee Vining, CA 93541 • (760) 647-6595 • [monolake.org/seminars](http://monolake.org/seminars)