

Eli L. Dietsch
16 Kings Mills Road
Gansevoort, NY 12831
December 2, 2000

Dr. Reginald H. Barrett
151 Hilgard Hall
Berkeley, CA 94720-3110

Dear Dr. Barrett:

Enclosed are pictures of Sagehen Creek. I am sending them to you directly and they may remain with you or wherever appropriate for posterity.

I did not attempt reproductions. The slides may be like old movie film requiring very delicate handling to prevent any harm from coming to them. I believe you may have better facilities on campus for dealing with this sort of thing.

My quickly prepared recollections of Sagehen are also included. I wanted to get it done as Christmas time and its demands are upon me already. Also my wife will have major surgery in January and be "on the shelf" for three months.

I enjoyed meeting you and Dr. McCullough and our brief chat. I hope you enjoy the photos.

Best wishes to you for the Holidays.

Sincerely,

Eli L. Dietsch

TITLES FOR 35MM SLIDES DONATED BY ELI L. DIETSCH

1. Mulford Hall, 1953
2. View North up Highway 89 at Hobart Mills, February 1952; Glen Flittner, Bob Hoffman and I pulled toboggan while on snowshoes from here where snowplow stopped to Sagehen Field Station some 5 miles away.
3. Another view up Highway 89 from vicinity of Hobart Mills.
4. View west up Sagehen Creek basin from Highway 89, February 1952.
5. Along road from Highway 89 to Sagehen Field Station, February 1952.
6. Further along road from Highway 89 to Sagehen Field Station, February, 1952.
7. Even further along entrance road to Sagehen
8. Glen Flittner at entrance to tool shed, Sagehen Creek Field Station, February 1952.
9. Glen Flittner by washstand, Sagehen Creek Field Station, February 1952.
10. Glen Flittner shoveling out the privy, Sagehen Creek Field Station, February 1952.
11. Eli Dietsch sampling Sagehen Creek, February 1952.
12. Eli Dietsch again sampling Sagehen Creek, February 1952.
13. Glen Flittner sampling Sagehen Creek, February 1952.
14. Glen Flittner and Bob Hoffman set to pull toboggan home to Truckee from Sagehen Creek Field Station in snow storm when food supplies ran out, February 1952. Dietsch position was between the other two.
15. Glen Flittner and Bob Hoffman seining sculpins and other fish from Sagehen Creek, February 1952.
16. Snow plow used to clear Highway 89 from Truckee to Hobart Mills, March 1952.
17. Truckee, March 1952.
18. Truckee, March 1952.
19. Shoveling out our cars in Truckee, March 1952.
20. Truckee, March 1952.
21. Upper entrance to Bob Hoffman's apartment in Truckee, March 1952.
22. Lower entrance to Bob Hoffman's apartment in Truckee, March 1952.
23. A friendly rubber boa captured at Sagehen Creek Field Station, July 1952.
24. Sagehen Meadow across from Field Station, July 1952.
25. Sagehen Creek Field Station, July 1952.
26. Sagehen Creek, July 1952.

27. Sheep herd being driven through Sagehen Creek basin, July 1952.
28. Sagehen Creek, July 1952.
29. Pumping and draining fish census exercise on Sagehen Creek, July 1952.
30. More pumping and draining on Sagehen Creek, July, 1952.
31. Rhinichthys from Sagehen Creek fish census, July 1952.
32. More Rhinichthys from Sagehen Creek fish census, July 1952.
33. Sculpins from Sagehen Creek fish census, July 1952.
34. Independence Lake, June 1952.
35. Eli Dietsch holding two Lahontan cutthroat trout from Independence Creek spawning area just below the Lake, June 1952.
36. Cutthroat trout spawning in Independence Creek a little below the Lake, June 1952.
37. Independence Creek, June 1952.
38. Warren Freihofer at Independence Lake, June 1952.
39. Lahontan cutthroat trout collected at Independence Lake, June 1952.
40. Independence Creek, June 1952.
41. Meadow along Independence Creek below Lake, June 1952.

SOME RECOLLECTIONS OF SAGEHEN CREEK FIELD STATION BY ELI L. DIETSCH, DECEMBER 2000. ELI WAS A GRADUATE STUDENT OF DR. PAUL NEEDHAM 1951-1953.

Dr. Needham dropped me off at the site of the new Sagehen Creek Biological Research Station early in June 1951. Dr. Baily and his family arrived a day or so later. He was collecting White-crowned Sparrows for his own research project.

My job was to check in all the construction material being delivered to the site for the new buildings. I found it a lonely existence. All one could do is eat, sleep and fish. During this period I slept alone on the ground under the stars and cooked for myself on a Coleman stove. There are times now I would appreciate this existence given the complexities of today's life.

A week or so later, the remainder of the Needham crew arrived, which included Warren Freihofer, Glen Flittner, Tom Beland, Tom Haratani, Rus _____, and myself. The Korean War drafted Russ _____ and we never saw him again after that first summer.

Russ arrived with a pair of immature sparrow hawks. They were beautiful and friendly. The female suffered from a deficiency and succumbed. The male loved to perch on anyone he could find. His perching, however, demanded great agility and restraint. This became a problem when he took to roosting in the rafters over the dining room porch. He fledged when the female died and was seldom observed thereafter.

We students slept under a tarp in sleeping bags resting on a mound of pine needles. Bathing was a quick dunk in the stream, a soap job, and another quick dunk in the very cold stream. This life style continued until a tent frame was erected and a washstand, hot water and shower facilities were completed in a couple of weeks. The construction was done by students under the guidance of Dr. Needham's good friend, the carpenter, Gunar Sodar. Gunar was responsible for the construction of all the station facilities.

There was a large, flat rock that projected into the stream which we all used for morning cleanup. It was also the home of "Oscar", a 9-inch brook trout. Oscar always scooted out from under the rock when the soapy water hit his retreat. He eventually perceived we were not a threat and would remain just downstream until we were through with the dishes. I don't recall who got the idea to start feeding Oscar sour salmon eggs. Anyway, he readily accepted them. He kept coming closer to us each day as we continued to feed him. Eventually we were able to feed Oscar salmon eggs from our hand. News of Oscar's performance spread far and wide, and many people came to see him perform. With the arrival of fall, however, Oscar decided to march to a different drum. Apparently he went seeking a lady friend and we never saw him again.

I have a vivid memory of shingling the pump house roof. My foot slipped one day, I fell off the roof and landed on an upraised shingle you know where. I was very sore for several days. Another memory is getting stuck in a patch of *Ceanothus cordulatus* and having to nurse numerous wounds in my legs for a week.

Our bedding and cots were provided by Dr. Needham's good friend Ivan _____, who was the Supervisor of the Toyabii National Forest in Nevada. Glen Flittner and I accompanied Dr. Needham on his trip to pick up the equipment. It was a very hot day in Reno, and so we hit several "watering holes" enroute to Ivan's home. We arrived in fine spirits only to be offered many more libations. Somehow we made it back to Sagehen without incident with all the bedding in good order.

Construction of the station facilities next centered on a tool shed and a cook house with an open air porch for dining (since closed in). Prior to this, cooking and dining was open air, without refrigeration, and located next to the original pump house. Nearby was a yellow-jacket nest. We were attacked by them at every meal as they attempted to remove food scraps from our plates. Each of us was bitten several times until we decided enough was enough. We followed the wasps to their hole in the ground, then smoked them out and destroyed the nest. From then on dining was much more pleasant.

The kitchen required a permanent water supply, necessitating the digging of a long trench to the pump house. We were able to keep a fairly straight line until we encountered an exceptionally large boulder. It sent us all flying off the pry bar when we tried to budge it. Needless to say, we found a way to bend the pipe around the rock.

Many weirs were constructed for trapping trout. They were installed above and below a beaver dam the first summer. We did capture a few large brown trout, but mostly a lot of debris from the beaver dam. Some of the released brown trout spawned between the weir and the beaver dam. The spawning area was also home to a pesky male brook trout who wanted to get in on the action. He really made the male brown trout gulp air on several occasions. While the brook trout was never successful in getting the attention of the female brown trout, his behavior made me wonder if hybridization might ever occur in nature. While I never observed it at Sagehen I have seen evidence of it elsewhere.

We had a few animal visitors that summer. Deer tried to invade the original dining area, but bread heavily laden with hot mustard sent them packing and we never again had any trouble with them. Coyotes glared at us on occasion from the meadow but never ventured into camp. A black bear caught rummaging through our dump at the upper spring was shot by a visitor. We had no other bear problems. When the sheep herd passed through camp Dr. Needham purchased a lamb from the Basque sheep herder. We dressed it and strung it up from a high pine limb in camp. That night a mountain lion left pug marks all around the area below the lamb, but it was not taken. Our privy attracted an occasional porcupine; they liked to chew on the new wood. Marmots were common in the area and one was captured in a live trap. We named it Mary, although we were unable to authenticate the name's appropriateness, being we were all fisheries biologists. Mary was well fed and kept in her cage for several days in hopes of taming her. Mary remained downright nasty throughout the trial so we finally released her.

I will always remember the early summer blooming of the Mariposa lilies, devil's paintbrush and other colorful wildflowers in the meadows, stumbling over a fawn while surveying the property line around the station, listening to the coyotes singing at night, and the excellent fly fishing in Sagehen Creek.

The weather that summer was generally sunny and rain was infrequent. A stray thunder-shower sent a bolt of lightning to a tall tree high in the upper basin. Glen Flittner and I went with a forest ranger to check it out. It proved to be a minor problem and went out on it's own, however, the ride up the basin in a Dodge power wagon was quite an experience to say the least.

Fall was heralded by stiff breezes bearing an abundance of yellow pine pollen. There was also a chill in the air, a myriad of migrating monarch butterflies, and the return of the Clark's nutcrackers from the high country.

Tom Haratani and I stayed as late as possible into the winter, which proved to be late October. A foot of snow on Columbus Day convinced us it was finally time to leave. The snow gradually melted, but it left the road wet and soft in spots. We had to place sticks and branches in these holes to get Tom's car across.

Some of us revisited the station in late December, 1951. All went well until the exodus, which proved to be quite an ordeal for Ken Carney, Bob Hoffman and myself. Departure morning we awoke to find a foot of fluff on the ground and snow falling heavily. We had no stock of food stored at the station so we made haste to depart. We made it the two miles to Highway 89 very tired and disheartened that no snow had been removed from the Highway. We ditched our knapsacks and skis in a showbank. I continued down the Highway breaking trail with my snowshoes. At one point I developed severe cramps in my thigh muscles. It became very tough going as the snow was rapidly getting deeper. We found the road had been plowed to Hobart Mills where we met a forest ranger who kindly gave us a ride in his pickup back to Truckee. In Truckee we realized we were snowed in with no money or a place to stay the

night. Donner Pass was closed and the snow continued to fall. The City of San Francisco train was snowbound at Emigrant Gap and several rotary plows had been abandoned on Donner summit. We were stuck in Truckee for three days and nights. We survived by sleeping and eating here and there wherever we could get work shoveling snow off roofs and washing dishes. I remember being envious of the skiers living it up at the Donner Lake Lodge while we washed their dishes.

We had obviously gone into the station quite unprepared for what was to become a record snowfall. We probably should not have even attempted the trip. It took us 11 hours to travel the 7 miles from the station to Hobart Mills. A total of over 5 feet of snow fell in this period and we had only one pair of snowshoes. Skis are useless in such snow. We eventually reclaimed our abandoned gear the next spring when the highway crew discovered it.

The following spring Glen Flittner, Bob Hoffman and I returned to the station on Valentine's Day to sample the stream again. This time we were better prepared. All our gear was stowed in duffle bags and lashed to a toboggan. The three of us served as the dogs, and we all had snowshoes. While we took off in a snowstorm, the deep snow pack and our advanced preparations resulted in a much easier trip than our exit in December. The highlight of the February visit was collecting a new species of stone fly (Plecoptera) crawling on the snow by Sagehen Creek by the thousands. We were amazed that it was not previously described despite its abundance.

Bob Hoffman and I attempted to get to the station again in March 1952, but were turned away by another severe and lengthy snow storm. By then Bob had rented an apartment in Truckee where we could wait out the weather.

Dr. Needham made it to the station in April, 1951, but found that Sagehen Creek had become a torrent, broken its banks, and nearly filled the entire valley with water. The deep snow pack was melting rapidly causing massive flooding. It was impossible to carry out the standard stream sampling protocol.

I do not have a lot of recollections of our second summer at Sagehen. The crew of students included Warren Freihofer, Glen Flittner, George Burger, Jim Heckman and myself. Things became more routine with the stream sampling. The hardest work involved pumping and draining the many sections of Sagehen Creek to census all the fish populations. I believe all these data became part of Glen Flittner's thesis. We did make an interesting visit to Independence Lake to sample the spawning Lahontan cutthroat trout.

All in all it was a great two years.