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Partnerships, Volunteers a “Win for the Mono Basin” Help Wetland Restoration at DeChambeau Ponds

The Inyo National Forest, working with partner agencies and volunteers, has restored water flow to the DeChambeau Ponds, in what is a “win for the Mono Basin,” said Thomas Torres, Inyo National Forest Wildlife Biologist and coordinator for this project.

“The DeChambeau Ponds wetland restoration project showcases the power of public and private partners coming together to work toward common interests and find solutions to land management issues. I am proud of the important work we were able to accomplish and it wouldn’t have been possible without the dedication of our partner organizations and volunteers,” said Lesley Yen, Inyo National Forest Supervisor.

The DeChambeau Ponds are ecologically valuable wetlands restored and managed by the US Forest Service with the help of partners since 1993. These wetlands are critical to numerous migratory birds and to the biodiversity of Mono Basin plants and animals. These ponds re-create wetlands that were far more extensive before water diversions.

The waterpipe that fed the ponds extending from a thermal artesian well was broken in numerous locations. Nearly 2000 feet of new CPVC pipe with three new specialty valves were put in place with more than 390 hours of volunteer time in the past three months.

There is hot water running to the ponds for the first time in over a decade.

The partnership was facilitated by the DeChambeau Creek Foundation. Other partners included Mono County, Mono Lake Committee, Beavers Sporting Goods/ Beaver Family, the Lakeview Lodge/Banta Family, and Friends of the Inyo.

DeChambeau Creek Foundation, the Mono Lake Committee, and Lee Vining local Chris Lizza secured \$51,000 to purchase supplies for the project.

Specialized expertise of Inyo National Forest staff was crucial to implementation. “On behalf of all the volunteers who worked out at the DeChambeau Ponds, I wanted to thank you for making this project happen,” said Paul McFarland of the DeChambeau Foundation. “From providing NEPA research, to checking for invasive plants, to reviewing cultural resources, to crafting agreements, to moving cinders and pipe, your role in returning hot water to each of the DeChambeau Ponds was important and appreciated.”

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