# THE BODIE TIMES

## PROTECTING BODIE'S FUTURE BY PRESERVING ITS PAST

THE NEWS OF BODIE, MONO LAKE & GROVER HOT SPRINGS www.BodieFoundation.org

VOLUME IX FALL 2020 NUMBER 2

Executive Director's Report

# Rising To Meet Challenges In 2020

By Jessica Schneider Bodie Foundation Executive Director

As the 2020 summer draws to an end, we have been counting our successes despite the slew of challenges. Covid-19 caused delayed park openings, changed interpretive programs and events, impacted park attendance, affected museum bookstore and Bodie Mercantile sales, and halted HistoriCorps' work on the Railroad Office and buildings in town for the entire season. Late summer smoke from California and Nevada wildfires made the air in Bodie unsafe for staff and visitors to be outside for extended periods of time, impacting park attendance numbers further.

Despite these setbacks, the small Bodie Foundation staff stayed fully employed this year. The Bodie Foundation worked with California State Parks staff to meet all Covid-19



Lights, camera, action! The video production of Virtual FOB gets underway in early August. See more photos, pages 8-9. Photo by Chris Spiller

safety regulations to provide interpretive programs in Bodie when the State Parks staff could not. Public tours in Bodie were canceled for the entire year since the State Parks system couldn't require masks. The Foundation could, so we were able to offer private tours, two of the three scheduled Ghost Walks, and

continue photography workshops.

We are grateful to the state park staff who worked with us to provide these programs to improve the visitor experience and help fundraise for Bodie. A special thank you to everyone who attended our programs and adhered to the Covid-19 regulations that made each program possible.

Sadly, we were forced to cancel Friends of Bodie Days in the park and opted for a Virtual FOB Day. For those that have yet to enjoy our "Bodie in the 1920s" film, it's available to view on our website bodiefoundation.org or our Bodie Foundation YouTube channel. A huge thank you to all park staff, volunteers, and Foundation employees for your hard work filming in Bodie after hours. A special thank you to Foundation Interpreter Chris Spiller for organizing and writing scripts, and State Parks Senior Park

# **Explore Bodie From Home**

By Hillary Colyer California State Parks

In Spring 2020, the difficult decision to temporarily close Bodie State Historic Park to the public was made. Many people who might have been dreaming of visiting their favorite ghost town as soon as they were able were disappointed. Park staff, who love sharing the history of the town with visitors, was disappointed. Well, if people were unable to come to Bodie, we

would have to bring Bodie to them! Starting in late April, I began doing See Explore Bodie P. 11



Hillary Colyer

# New Staff At Bodie And Bodie Mercantile



Stephen Holle was born and raised on the warm beaches of Encinitas, California. He has a bachelor's degree from the University of Southern California in Environmental Studies. After college, Stephen went on to spend five years working for the Climate Action Reserve in Los Angeles, California. His work focused on the implementation, development, and quantification of greenhouse gas reduction projects across the country.

Since protection of the environment has been a driving factor in his career choices, he decided to take a more boots on the ground approach and applied to be a State Park Peace Officer. Stephen started the academy in October 2017 and has been with the state ever since. His first patrol area was his hometown in north San Diego County. However, the pull of the Sierra was always something in

the forefront of his mind. Coming to Bodie State Historic Park and Mono County in general is a dream come true. Before considering the transfer opportunity, Stephen came out to Bodie twice. After camping under the stars at Milk Ranch, he was sold. In his spare time Stephen enjoys exploring all the Eastern Sierra has to offer including rock climbing, fly fishing, mountain biking, photography, and backpacking.



Joseph Lent

The Bodie Foundation was grateful to find Joseph Lent, our Mercantile Clerk, this summer. A Bridgeport, California local, Joseph is an avid outdoorsman with a ton of local knowledge of Bridgeport and the surrounding Eastern Sierra. He previously worked for the Bridgeport

Indian Colony where he served as Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, and prior to that he worked at High Point Solar supervising solar panel installation in Mammoth Lakes. He is semi-active in Mono Basin Historical Society, the Mono County Historical Society, and the Wovoka Committee of Yerington NV. During his time at the Bodie Mercantile, he has endeared himself to locals, travelers, and Bodie Foundation staff and board members alike. Not only did he reorganize and deep clean every inch of the Mercantile, he also spent his downtime reading up on Bodie history to better enable him to answer visitor questions.

Joseph has been an exceptional addition to our summer retail program, and we wish him all the best this winter.

# Summer Adjustments

By Chris Spiller Bodie Foundation Staff

As the seriousness of the pandemic grew in Spring 2020, Bodie Foundation and State Parks staff had many questions and concerns about how to safely offer the public access to Bodie, Mono and Grover.

Plans came forward as the summer progressed. After the re-opening of Bodie in late May, it was decided in late June that Bodie Foundation could offer private tours with limited group size. However, public history talks, which draw large crowds, could not take place. On private tours, only six people were permitted, and all were required to wear masks.

At Grover Hot Springs, staff developed a reservation system for pool visitors. (See Page 5) And slowly,

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Membership

See A Summer, P. 6

## News Briefs

#### **Television Show Features Bodie**

A chance to see Bodie "rebuilt" digitally is part of a National Geographic television program scheduled for broadcast sometime next year.

The show, which does not have an official title yet, will be similar in theme to the "Drain the Oceans" series where the water is stripped away from an ocean to allow you to see details of the topography.

California State Parks Cultural Resources Division Supervisor Denise Jaffke showed the National Geographic crew around the town during a visit this past summer. A particular focus of the show will deal with archaeological features of Bodie's Chinatown. The Bodie Foundation was also consulted for information about the town's history.

## Holiday Gifts On Sale Now

Look for holiday gifts at our online store, <u>bodiefoundation.org/store</u>.

Among the items available are ornaments, snow globes, votive candle holders, and more.

Don't forget to buy extra 2021 Bodie Calendars to share the beauty of Bodie with friends and family.

#### 2019/2020 Parks Attendance

This pandemic year affected visitation in Bodie and the State Tufa Reserve at Mono Lake. Bodie was closed from Spring until late June 2020 but still saw 10,359 visitors for the month. Below are the summer totals for Bodie.

#### 2020:

June: 10,359 July: 19,649 August: 17,836 **2019:** 

June: 18,638 July: 28,984 August: 26,543

At the State Reserve's Old Marina site, 2020 summer totals from June through August showed 61,393 visitors; an increase of over 11,000

See Briefs, P. 11

# 2022 Calendar Contest Now Open For Entries

Enter your photo in the Bodie Foundation's 2022 Calendar Contest today. The submission page can be reached through our website, <u>bodiefoundation.org/bodie-calendar-contest</u>. Complete rules and information on how to submit photos are there, including instructions on how to write the webmaster for questions or assistance. All photos must be submitted in JPG format and entries must be photographs of and pertain to Bodie State Historic Park.

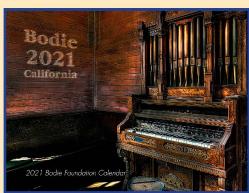
New this year is prize money for entrants whose photos are chosen for the calendar. Winners receive \$100 and five calendars; the entrant whose photo is chosen for the cover receives \$300 and five calendars.

## Calling all photographers!

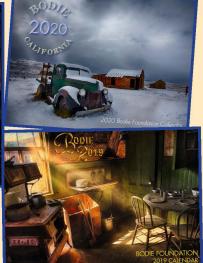
See your photo of Bodie State Historic Park in the 2022 edition of the Bodie Foundation calendar.



Entry deadline: February 7, 2021



The Bodie Foundation sponsors this competition and invites photographers to submit their favorite photos of Bodie State Historic Park. Complete information and requirements are available at bodiecalendarcontest.com.



All images must be submitted in JPG format. As in prior years, each photographer is limited to one winning entry, and entries must be photographs of, and pertain to Bodie State Historic Park. All photos must be horizontal. There is a limit of five entries per photographer. Winners will receive \$100 and five calendars. The entrant whose photo is chosen for the calendar cover receives \$300 and five calendars.

The Bodie Foundation is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit corporation dedicated to the preservation, interpretation, and public enjoyment of Bodie State Historic Park, Mono Lake Tufa State Natural Reserve, and Grover Hot Springs State Park. Learn more about us at <a href="mailto:bodiefoundation.org">bodiefoundation.org</a>.

Interested in photo workshops at Bodie? Check our website for information: <a href="mailto:bodiefoundation.org/photo-workshops">bodiefoundation.org/photo-workshops</a>.

# Research Continues On Mono Lake's Phalaropes

By Ryan Carle Science Manager Oikonos Ecosystem Knowledge

During 2020 a second consecutive year of phalarope surveys at Mono Lake were conducted by Oikonos (a non-profit conservation science organization) and California State Parks. Whole lake surveys were conducted every two weeks, and were coordinated with surveys at other major phalarope migratory stops at Great Salt Lake and elsewhere.

The Wilson's Phalarope high count at Mono Lake in 2020 was approximately 2,800 birds compared to 11,000 last year. 2020 Wilson's Phalarope numbers were also substantially lower at other sites than in 2019. Red-necked Phalarope numbers at Mono Lake in 2020 were higher than in 2019, with high counts of approximately 8,000 birds in both August and September, compared with a high of 5,500 during 2019. 2019 and 2020 numbers of both species were much lower than totals from the 1990s, when there were highs of 35,000



Wilsons' and 18,000 red-necked survevs using comparable methods to current surveys. Surveys are planned to continue for several more years with the goal of determining the status and trends of phalaropes at Mono Lake and worldwide. You can learn more about this project at oikonos.org/ shorebird-conservation. Financial support for its continuation is much needed and donations can be made at www.oikonos.org/donate, or by contacting project manager Ryan Carle at ryan@oikonos.org.

Editor's Note: Ryan Carle grew up in the Mono Basin, and is the son of retired Mono Lake State Park Rangers Janet and David Carle.



In top photo, Wilson's and Rednecked Phalaropes at Mono Lake, Directly above, Ryan Carle at work on the lake.

Photos courtesy of Ryan Carle



The "Beach Fire" was ignited by a lightning strike August 16 near Navy

Beach.

Photo by Courtney J. Rowe, CA State Parks

# Lightning-Caused Fire Chars 4,000 Acres

By Catherine Jones California State Parks

A lightning strike ignited a fire on the south shore of Mono Lake the evening of August 16. Crews quickly responded to the blaze, which was named "Beach Fire," after nearby Navy Beach, a popular launching point for kayaks and canoes. The fire would eventually grow to almost 4,000 acres before being contained.

Plans were put in place to protect the important resources in the area, such as sage grouse habitat and tufa, including the very rare and fragile

See Fire P. 11

# Reservation System In Place At Grover Pool

Grover Hot Springs State Park was required to shut down pool operations in Spring 2020 due to COVID-19, but thanks to development of a new reservation system to limit the number of swimmers, the pool was re-opened in late June.

Those wanting to swim now make reservations using the ReserveCalifornia.com website. Only 25 people are permitted in the pool at a time for a one and a half-hour session. Reservations must be made 48 hours in advance, and there are five sessions a day available, allowing for a total of 125 people. Tickets are non-refundable if a guest does not show up.

Putting together the reservation system entailed a lot of work, explained Supervising Ranger Joshua Heitzmann, but it was worth it, to see folks happily enjoying the pool again. The pool reservations sell out almost every day, and visitors have expressed appreciation that Grover is able to offer access to the pool in the middle of a pandemic. "It makes people really happy, " said Heitzmann.

Swimmers should arrive for their session already in bathing suits, as dressing rooms are not available. During the swim session, visitors are asked to social distance from those not in their household.

For detailed information on the park and the reservation, system, please see the state park website for Grover, <u>parks.ca.gov/?page\_id=508</u> or call (530) 694-2248.

A new pool reservation system to limit swimmers to 25 in a session was put in place this summer to allow for swimming ans social distancing.

File photo by Chris Spiller

## Grover ADA Trail Complete



Photo courtesy of Nathan Shasha

## By Nathan Shasha California State Parks

This past summer, work finished on the Grover Meadow Interpretive (ADA) trail. Besides bringing the trail up to American With Disabilities Act standards, the trail also protects wetlands in the meadow.

The trail is approximately one mile long and connects the campground with the hot springs and pool facility. It includes a boardwalk section, which has two benches and an interpretive panel. The new trail crosses Hot Springs Creek on a 70-foot bridge and crosses Buck Creek on a 40-foot bridge. Approximately 75 percent of the trail is constructed from rock causeway and accessible parking pads are located at each end of the trail.

California State Parks partnered with the Alpine Watershed Group, a local non-profit, which received a grant to help with the interpretive panel planning, design and purchasing, and funding for informal trail removal.



# — A Summer Of Adjustments continued from P. 2

hikers and day use visitors returned. At Mono Lake and Bodie, staff used social media and a You Tube channel to let those at home see what was going on at the lake and in their favorite ghost town.

As the summer started, visitors arrived, and Mono Lake Tufa State Reserve's Old Marina site saw especially heavy visitation after a fire southeast of Mono Lake shut down the South Tufa recreation area.

Bodie Foundation had 34 people join us on 10 private tours, two of them four-hour Mines, Mills, Rails and Ruins tours. There were 14 photo workshops attended by about 122 people.

After our June Ghost Walk was canceled, State Parks staff and the Bodie Foundation worked together to revise the two remaining Ghost Walks to meet group size and social distancing protocols required by Mono County and the State of California. (See Page 7). Our popular annual event, Friends of Bodie Day, was turned into a Virtual Event (see Pages 8-9).



Photo by Chris Spiller

Because indoor access was not allowed, visitors could not tour the museum but were able to support the Bodie Foundation by purchasing items just inside the open doorway of the museum.

Late in the summer, fires across the west brought more impacts to the Eastern Sierra as hazardous air quality led to cancelations of visits, some tours and workshops.

It was a summer of changes and adjustments, but we appreciated the days with blue skies and still had fun meeting our visitors and welcoming them to tours and other events. We thank those of you who helped the Bodie Foundation help our parks, either in person or from your home. Here's hoping we see all of you next year in person.

If you are able to help the Bodie Foundation in its mission to support our three state parks, please consider donating or becoming a member at our website <u>bodiefoundation.org</u> or, mail a check to us at P.O. Box 278, Bridgeport, CA 93517.

Enjoy tours of Bodie from home! Check out Bodie Foundation's You Tube Channel:

bodiefoundation.org/news-1

## Bill Asks For Recognition Of Mono Lake Kutzadika'a Tribe

By Rose Nelson Education Director Mono Lake Committee

"The Mono Lake Kutzadika'a
Tribe have existed for time
immemorial in the Mono Basin,"
wrote Representative Paul Cook in
the opening statement of a new bill
recently introduced in the House of
Representatives, which seeks federal
recognition of the Mono Lake
Kutzadika'a Tribe.

The bill reflects decades of work and centuries of resilience by members of the Tribe. Charlotte Lange, Chairperson of the Mono Lake Kutzadika'a Tribe, said, "the Mono Lake Kutzadika'a Tribe has been enduring the process of recognition for decades. It saddens my heart to hear our elders say, 'I won't see it in my lifetime.' My grandfather fought for the tribe and his strength keeps my dedication to follow in his path." With the introduction of the bill, however, the ongoing work by many may finally be met with success.

As the press release states, "The Kutzadika'a remained landless and without federal protection in the wake of the California Gold Rush and other encroachments into their ancestral lands. Despite these challenges, the Mono Lake Kutzadika'a people have remained politically and culturally distinct, living continuously near Mono Lake since time immemorial. The tribe has maintained and revitalized their

cultural practices and advocated for the preservation on Mono Lake, which is central to its culture and history."

The Mono Lake Committee supports tribal recognition for the Mono Lake Kutzadika'a. Following a meeting with the Kutzadika'a Tribe and Mr. Cook's staff in October 2019, the Committee wrote a letter of support for federal recognition. Our letter joined those from Mono County and others, showing broad support for the bill. The Tribe and the Committee's shared passion for preserving Mono Lake continues to bring us together and we are looking forward to continuing to work with the Mono Lake Kutzadika'a Tribe here in the Mono Basin.

# Bodie Ghosts Return For A "Distant" Walk



After the cancelation of the June 2020 ghost walk due to Covid-19, a new plan was proposed to meet county and state protocols for numbers of people in a group. Rather than leading large groups as before, small groups were taken to stations where Bodie Foundation and State Parks interpreters told stories of life in Bodie. All participants were required to wear masks. Telling Bodie stories were, counterclockwise from top left, Chris Spiller, Catherine Jones, Claire DesBaillets, Charles DesBaillets, Betty McCunniff and Hillary Colyer (not pictured). Thank you to all who joined us in July and September.

Photos by Jeff Dean









# Behind The Scenes At "Virtual FOB"



# Return to the 1920s in Bodie!

Friends of Bodie Day 2020

JOIN US FOR A VIRTUAL FOB DAY COMING TO YOUR HOME **AUGUST 8, 2020** 

We may not get to see you in person, but we still need your help to protect Bodie!





It was strange to contemplate a Friends of Bodie Day without our members and supporters joining us. Since we couldn't be together, Bodie Foundation and State Park staff along with State Parks Volunteers worked together to offer a look at the 1920s in Bodie, while maintaining social distance with each other and you, our fans! And special thanks to the Sagebrush Model A Club of Nevada members who brought two of their beautiful cars and acting talents to our event.

> Photos by Jessica Schneider, Betty McCunniff and Chris Spiller









We couldn't have done it without you:

## California State Parks

Hillary Colyer Catherine Jones Claire DesBaillets

## **Bodie State Historic Park Volunteers**

Dave James
Wanda Nenstiel
Merv Nenstiel
Charles Spiller
Bret Sanborn
Norm Stump
Dave Swisher
Lucinda Traughber

## **Bodie Foundation Staff**

Jessica Schneider Betty McCunniff Christine Spiller Sagebrush Chapter

## Model A Ford Club of Nevada

Scott Brenneke Rick Jensen Roger Sandefur Leland Miller







# — Executive Director's Report

continued from P. 1

Aide Hillary Colyer for volunteering her time filming and editing. We missed seeing everyone in the park this year and look forward to an extra-special FOB Day 2021!

## **Making Lemonade**

The Bodie Foundation took a financial hit along with every other non-profit this year, and there is no way around that. Our staff worked hard to make lemonade out of lemons. However, your support is still needed to help us make ends meet in the year to follow. At the beginning of this calendar year, the Bodie Foundation gave over \$150,000 to State Parks for roofing materials and labor, financing for the HistoriCorps contract to finish the Railroad Office project, HistoriCorps' stabilization of the D.V. Cain barn and Fouke Residence, and support for interpretive programs. Because of the Covid-19 restrictions, HistoriCorps was unable to send any volunteers and staff to Bodie. The contract is now ready to go for 2021, and come Thanksgiving, we will be on their schedule for spring. The funding for 2021's HistoriCorps is already set aside since it was intended for use in 2020.

However, as you all know, Mother Nature does not halt because the State Parks visitation numbers are down. The stabilization projects that are moving up the "critical" list are increasing and Park Maintenance Chief for the Alpine Mono sector, John Campbell, has priorities set for several multi-year projects. In addition to general repairs throughout the park (including roofing repairs that we funded this year, and will continue to fund as we can), the list is as follows:

- Hoover house multi-year
- Outhouses
- Fouke residence multi-year
- Swazey Hotel



Jessica Schneider

- Sawmill
- Cemetery
- Stamp Mill 10 year project

## **How You Can Help**

If you would like to donate to a specific project, we welcome your passion for a particular structure or project. Every little bit makes a difference. What will help us support State Parks the most in the coming year is donations to our General Fund or our Stabilization Fund. These donations give us the most flexibility when State Parks staff comes to us with emergency stabilization projects, or to fill in the gaps where targeted fundraising for specific projects falls short. If you have been to Bodie, you know that what looks stable one year can be in danger of collapse following a rough winter or a harsh summer. Emergency funds in our stabilization account are what allows us to act quickly to support John and his team when needed to save Bodie.

Donations to our General Fund are the most flexible and can be used for staff time, interpretation in the parks, to keep our lights on at the office, seed money for special events, stabilization projects, emergency maintenance projects, etc. While these things are often less exciting, it's how we keep the Foundation running and keep money flowing to the State Parks where it's needed the most

Additionally, State **Parks** is predicting a difficult time funding a full staff in the coming year. While Bodie Foundation focuses the mainly on stabilization projects, our mission is to support the State Parks financially any way we see necessary. This year saw an increase in vandalism at Bodie, which means there is more need for Park Aides to be roving throughout the park. Boots on the ground and eyes in the field are what we need most. In this way, funding the park staff is key to stabilization and preservation of the precious resource that is Bodie, and we support that!

## Thank you

I'd like to personally thank each and every one of you who has found a way to support us, whether financially, with volunteer time, attending interpretive programs, photo workshops and private tours, shopping on our online store or the Bodie Mercantile, or sending kind emails and letters. It has been an interesting year to say the least, and I'm certain that making it through this year just means we will come out the other end stronger as an organization.

Thank you for your support, no matter in what form it may come. Long live Bodie!

#### Reminder:

If you are unable to renew your membership due to financial reasons, please let our Membership Coordinator Tamara Woollard know that you would like to put your membership on hold. We will continue to send you information on the Foundation's work but won't ask you for further donations until a year from now.

tamara@bodiefoundation.org

# Stabilization Work Ongoing



Even while Bodie was closed in the early months of the pandemic, stabilization work on Bodie's fragile buildings continued. funded by the Bodie Foundation. The Sturgeon House was one of the summer projects undertaken in August. Work was completed on the roof and exterior southwest wall, which takes a beating from winds and winter weather. Inside, seen here, new rafters and wall work were completed.

Photo by Chris Spiller

## - Fire continued from P. 4

sand tufa. The main tufa grove was spared from damage, although the fire crept very close, scorching brush on the east side of the South Tufa trail. Much of the tufa that burned in the Navy Beach area was hidden by thick brush and is now exposed. Salt grass has already begun to regrow in the burn area closest to the lakeshore. The old growth sagebrush that was lost will take much longer to reestablish itself.

The fire prompted closure of Navy Beach and South Tufa Area recreation sites. That closure remains in place as of early October.

## —Briefs continued from P. 3

people from the 2019 total of 49,812. Many factors influenced the numbers, including closures early in the year and a late summer fire southeast of Mono Lake that closed South Tufa. The closure funneled more people to the state's Old Marina site.

## — Explore Bodie From Home

continued from P. 1

history talks via Facebook Live on the park's page. Of course, I started at the beginning with the story of W.S. Bodey, his famous discovery, and his sad fate. Using a variety of written sources, I presented both the myths and the confirmable facts around the story to give Bodie lovers, many of whom might only know one version of the tale, the truest presentation I could.

In the following weeks, in the same fashion, I presented other stories, choosing the topics based on viewer requests or my own interest. Prominent historical figures like Rosa May and William Billy" "Uncle O'Hara were discussed. Sensational events such as stagecoach robberies and mining investment fraud were covered. Glimpses of life in Bodie in the past were shown

through stories of entertainment and celebrations. Gradually, virtual tours of parts of the town were included as well. Many viewers were thrilled at the chance to get peeks at parts of Bodie they were not normally able to see, while at the same time hearing new sides to old stories, learning about people or events they had limited knowledge of previously, and getting suggestions to expand their Bodie history library.

At the end of May, with little fanfare, the park mostly reopened to visitors. I continued my Facebook Live History Talks though, because some regular viewers had already requested I do so. Many Bodie lovers were still choosing to stay at home or at least stay local. Visitors from abroad were unable to come here. Even people who could visit Bodie at that time would not have been

able to hear an in-park history talk. Not to mention that there was still so much Bodie history that had not been covered! And so, June, July, and August were still filled with weekly remote explorations of Bodie.

Even now, as Bodie begins to change to its fall coloring (and fall chill!), I continue my Facebook Live sessions with expanded topics, such as nature. All the videos are saved on the park's Facebook page, so even if Bodie fans could not watch them live, they are still available to view the stories at their convenience. And, since hundreds of people continue to tune in on Saturdays, I will carry on providing deep, remote explorations of Bodie as it is and as it was. If you have not already tuned in, you can find us at facebook.com/SaveBodie. Feel free to request a topic and I will see what I can do to bring it to life!



