

# THE BODIE TIMES

PROTECTING BODIE'S FUTURE BY PRESERVING ITS PAST

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

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*Executive Director's Report*

## Stabilizing Of Bodie's Buildings Continues



Visitation at Bodie was down this year, but HistoriCorps was active installing new windows at the Railroad Office and getting the Standard Mine change room upright again. See the "after" photo of the change room on Page 11.

Photos by Ron Vilarino and Chris Spiller

**By Jessica Schneider**  
**Bodie Foundation**  
**Executive Director**

The streets of Bodie were quieter than we had anticipated this year. The staff at the Bodie Foundation was excited to get the summer rolling, but park attendance was down 34% from 2019, as was attendance for FOB Day and Ghost Walks. Sold-out Ghost Walks turned into only 70% of the registrants actually attending, and our Friends of Bodie Day evening member event had the same outcome. It's a strange world that we are in, and despite our best efforts, it was rough for many to get to Bodie. I have been looking at the past few years as a "bust," with the

reassurance that Bodie has had its booms and busts, but remains for the most part, standing. I am, however, proud that we put on events, hosted Photo Workshops, sold merchandise, and led private tours for those who wanted to learn and experience Bodie. A huge thank you to Benny Romero for donating his venue, Bridgeport Ranch Barns and Terrace, for the Friends of Bodie dinner.

I was blown away by the first seminar in our inaugural High Peak Patrons series, "History and Practice of Stabilization in Bodie" given by Dr. Dydia DeLyser, also the Bodie Foundation Board Secretary. The presentation reinvigorated my passion for stabilization, and I think

many members would also love the presentation, which touches on the history and creation of Bodie as a state park, the reasons behind "arrested decay" versus restoration, and the history of buildings in Bodie and why they are so remarkable. When you learn more about a topic, it's hard not to fall a little further in

*See ED Report, Page 11*

**FOB Day Fun! See pages 8-9**



# Meet New Bodie Foundation Staff



## Office Manager And Membership Coordinator

Ashley Wright is the Bodie Foundation's new Office Manager and Membership Coordinator. She oversees the Bodie Mercantile in the town of Bridgeport and manages the membership program.

She has spent the last ten summers in Bridgeport working with her husband and his family at the Hunewill Ranch. She lives in Smith Valley during the winter, where she worked as a teacher. She loved teaching but couldn't resist the opportunity to work for such a great cause. She enjoys exploring the Bodie Hills and surrounding areas on horseback and four wheelers.

"I am honored to get to be a part of an organization that preserves the history of an area that I love."

To contact Ashley about membership questions, email her at [Ashley@BodieFoundation.org](mailto:Ashley@BodieFoundation.org).

## Mercantile Clerks, Judith And Robert

Judith Way is excited to be helping at the Bodie Mercantile this summer in Bridgeport with sales and other projects.

She loves to be known as "The Rangers Wife," a title of which she's quite proud. Of the five State Parks where her husband Robert served, their favorite was, of course, Bodie State Historic Park. Judith's favorite ranger is retired now so they are able to help out at the Bodie Foundation.

Judith has worked in the health and fitness industry for 40 years and is the author of two books on the strengths of women. She and Robert also enjoy their 11 grandchildren.

Robert Peek started work at the Bodie Mercantile this past summer. He was born in Salt Lake City, Utah, and worked as a California State Parks Ranger for 12 years. He was assigned to Bodie from September 2014 to October 2016, living in the Donnelly House. He also served at Salton Sea, Mt. San Jacinto, Carlsbad Beaches and Lake Perris. He retired as a ranger in late 2019 and now lives in Reno with his wife of 20 years, Judith. He says being a Ranger was by far the best job he ever had.



Judith adds about their time in Bodie: "Yes, we got the Bodie Bug!"

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about the Bodie  
Foundation. Share  
our newsletter  
with them!*

## Busy Year For Photo Workshops And Private Tours

As 2021 started to feel a little more normal, Photo Workshops returned to Bodie with 29 workshops held between June and October. Seventeen workshop leaders welcomed 260 people to experience Bodie's magical light and learn the best techniques to photograph the town and its buildings.

Photo Workshop leaders interested in 2022 workshops in Bodie may now submit photo workshop date requests beginning Monday, November 1, 2021 by emailing [PhotoWorkshop@BodieFoundation.org](mailto:PhotoWorkshop@BodieFoundation.org). Requests are processed in the order received.

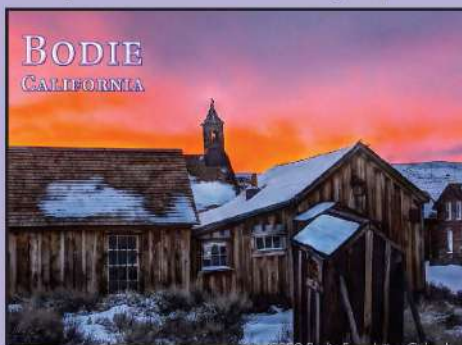
Bodie Foundation's Private Tours were fairly busy with 127 people touring and learning the history of Bodie between late May and mid-October on 26 different tours. Of that total, 18 opted for the four-hour Mines, Mills and Rails Tour, a driving tour of Bodie's Mining District. There were 70 people who took two-hour town tours, which have the option of a stamp mill tour or a walk through the cemetery for the second hour. Our other two-hour tour, Twilight Tour, saw 13 visitors enjoying not only the history but also the quiet of the park from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Private Tours resume in mid-May 2022, weather-permitting. Contact [Chris@BodieFoundation.org](mailto:Chris@BodieFoundation.org) at least two weeks before the tour date.

## Calling all photographers!

See your photo of Bodie State Historic Park in the 2023 edition of the Bodie Foundation calendar.

Entry deadline: February 6, 2022.



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](http://bodiecalendarcontest.com).

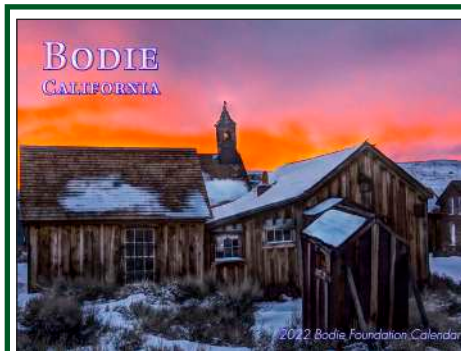
All images must be submitted in JPG format. As in prior years, each photographer is limited to one winning entry, and entries must be photographs of, and pertain to Bodie State Historic Park. All photos must be horizontal. There is a limit of five entries per photographer. Winners will receive \$100 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 [bodiefoundation.org](http://bodiefoundation.org).

Interested in photo workshops at Bodie? Check our website for information: [bodiefoundation.org/photo-workshops](http://bodiefoundation.org/photo-workshops).

## 2023 Bodie Calendar Contest Now Open

Get your photos of Bodie ready as the 2023 Bodie Calendar Contest is now open for entries! Go to [bodiefoundation.org/bodie-calendar-contest](http://bodiefoundation.org/bodie-calendar-contest) then click on the "Calendar Contest" button to go to the entry website. You will find complete rules and image requirements there. Cash rewards are offered for winning entries. For questions about uploading images, scroll to the bottom of the calendar contest website and use the "Contact Us" section.



### Need A Special Holiday Gift?

Don't forget to shop at Bodie Foundation's online store for Bodie books and gift items that will please everyone on your list.

[bodiefoundation.org/store](http://bodiefoundation.org/store)



# Most Mono Lake Activities Return in 2021

By Catherine Jones  
State Park Interpreter I  
Mono Lake Tufa SNR

Despite still being in the midst of a global pandemic, things at Mono Lake seemed a little more back to normal, including re-openings, in-person visitor services, and tourism. Although some things remained in the state of our new normal, such as virtual offerings and closures. Despite the changes, some things will always remain; Mono Lake and the avian species it attracts.

The Mono Basin Scenic Area Visitor Center re-opened its doors after being closed for the entire 2020 season. With enhanced safety measures, visitors could ask questions, get permits, purchase souvenirs, and enjoy the exhibits in person. On days when the Visitor Center was closed, Mono Lake volunteers staffed an outdoor information table to provide information to the public.

In-person South Tufa interpretive tours resumed this year, thanks to the Mono Lake Committee, US Forest Service and State Parks staff, and dedicated Mono Lake volunteers. Tours were conducted twice a day from mid-June through Labor Day weekend. South Tufa tours will continue throughout the winter on Saturday and Sunday at 1 p.m.

We hope the 2022 Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua will be an in-person event.

In early September, we saw the closure of the Inyo National Forest due to fire danger and decreased staff and resources. The State Parks sites around Mono Lake remained open to visitors which naturally led to increased visitation at sites such as Old Marina, with visitors desiring access to the lakeshore since the main visitor site of South Tufa was closed. The closure lasted for just over two



**Dedicated Mono Lake Volunteers helped with tours and answering questions from visitors during 2021.**

Photo by Catherine Jones

weeks, during which time the Mono Basin Scenic Area Visitor Center remained open, to assist visitors and direct them to available recreation, such as Bodie State Historic Park.

One thing that we hope will never change at Mono Lake is the birds. Although the population of California Gulls at the lake seems to be decreasing, the other notable species of birds were doing very well this summer. In July, 18 osprey chicks were banded in several nests atop offshore tufa towers. Several

Phalarope censuses were conducted on the lake, both from shore and from the water. One census in July yielded a count of more than 40,000 Phalaropes. A vast majority of those birds were Wilson's Phalaropes which could be easily seen in the South Tufa area.

Despite the changes and those things that may be the new normal, Mono Lake's beauty and wildlife make it an amazing place to experience, now and in the future.

## *Two Summers At Mono Lake*

Claire DesBaillets became the Park Aide for Mono Lake Tufa State Reserve after graduating in 2020 from Lee Vining High School. Working as the only park aide at Mono meant that she was able to experience several aspects of parks life.

She performed duties such as patrolling, guiding tours, welcoming visitors, and assisted with projects to help restore Mono Lake's natural resources. In addition, she helped plan special events such as Bio-Blitz for California Biodiversity Day and



created media for Mono Lake SNR social media accounts.

Claire grew up in the Basin and is proud to call herself a Mono Lake Local.

See Summers, Page 10

# Tamarack Fire Has Lasting Impact on Grover

By Jennifer McCallan  
State Parks Ranger

What started out as just another busy summer Friday evening ended with a major wildfire whose repercussions will last for years. On July 16, 2021, the campground and pools at Grover Hot Springs were fully booked, and many of the campers were planning to cycle in Alpine County's Death Ride the next day.

As the afternoon hours passed, the line of campers arriving to check-in asked us about the increasing plume of smoke visible to the south. We told them the information that we had been told: "that's a lightning strike fire that has been burning since July 4, and it's being monitored. It's not a threat to us right now, and we'll let you know if anything changes." In pretty rapid succession the situation went from "it's not a threat", to "we might have to evacuate", to "evacuate now!"

At that point every single employee and volunteer who was on duty sprang into action. As I drove one loop of the campground alerting the campers, the camp hosts walked their loop to inform the campers, all while preparing their own trailer to evacuate themselves. After the lifeguards evacuated and closed up the pool, and the park aides closed up the kiosk, they asked me on the radio "how can we help?" With all the staff working together, we cleared the other areas of the park, closed gates, put up signs, and made continuous loops of the campground encouraging campers to hurry up. Due to this teamwork, every single visitor safely and quickly evacuated the park.

Over the next couple days, we learned the devastating news that our maintenance shop and four

*See Grover, Page 7*



Photos from top:

1. A burned state park vehicle parked in front of the remnants of the maintenance shop.

2. A portion of the recently completed ADA trail was damaged. This photo shows a burned footbridge along the Burnside Trail along with many potential hazard trees along both side of the trail.

3. Some campsites were scorched, but most of the campground was untouched by flames.

Photos by Jennifer McCallan





## A Marvelous Night For A Ghost Walk

A great time was had by all who attended the Bodie Foundation Ghost Walks, held in June, July and September. One family attending the July event had special shirts made for the occasion. Tickets go on sale for the 2022 walks in March.

Photos by Kieran Silva and Virginia Maloney



## — Grover

continued from Page 5

employee residences had burned to the ground. The fate of the rest of the park was uncertain for a few days as the fire shifted in direction and intensity. As Supervising Ranger Josh Heitzmann and I bounced back and forth between the park, the incident command post, and helping Alpine County Sheriff's deputies with additional evacuations and escorts, we were heartened to see many fire engines and hand crews from myriad agencies tirelessly working in and around Grover and keeping vigil 24 hours a day. The water plant supervisor and engineer put in long hours to keep our water plant functioning on generator power. Superintendents came from headquarter for added support. As the ash settled, we could see how the fire had encircled the park and how very, very close it had come to many of the public areas of the park.

Although the fire is over, much work remains. Because of the loss of the shop and residences, and because



The view from the "sunset bench" looking west across the meadow is nearly unchanged, except for burned mountain slopes in the background.

Photo by Jennifer McCallan

of major damage to trees along the Burnside Lake trail, the most popular trail in the park, Grover remains closed for a while. Our Sierra District forestry crew has marked hundreds of hazard trees which will be felled and removed; temporary structures will be put in place to serve as a maintenance shop; crews will make some needed repairs to the pool complex; and eventually employee housing will be replaced.

Speaking of our forestry crew, the survival of so much of the park is due to the crew's hard work year after year, creating defensible space and hazard tree removal around the park structures, campground, and water tank. We are grateful for the efforts of the forestry crew and of the firefighters that have preserved this California State Parks gem for future visitors.



Bodie SHP Maintenance Worker I Kevin Russell works at the Tracy House in the north end of town. The front porch was shored up with a new beam to help stabilize the structure.

Photo by Chris Spiller

## Summer Stabilization

It was a big season of stabilization for Bodie's crews in 2021. Projects included the Tracy house, at left, a residence in Chinatown and Rosie McDonald Moose/Indian House on the west side of the park.

Eric Draper, Park Maintenance Assistant/Skilled Laborer re-roofed several houses in town, including the Johl House, Durham House, Chinese residence, and the Rosie McDonald Moose/Indian House. Eric also replaced windows at the Stamp Mill, and the Kirkwood House, which was also stabilized. Other stabilization projects included a number of porches and outhouses.

# *Bodie Supporters Enjoy Dinner and FOB Day*



Bodie Foundation members had dinner and visited with fellow members and Foundation staff at Bridgeport Ranch Barns and Terrace on Friday, August 13. After dinner, cowboy singer Brenn Hill entertained the crowd. The next day, it was off to Bodie where the old west came alive in the streets. Visitors enjoyed shopping at booths, and children participated in archeology programs and Junior Ranger activities.



Thank you to Bodie SHP staff, State Park Volunteers and Bodie Foundation staff for a spectacular after-hours presentation that introduced members to Bodie residents from the 1860s to the 1940s.

Photos by Betty McCuniff, Chris Spiller, Pat Patterson, and Ken Beck



Ashli Lewis of California State Parks holds a Black-crowned night heron on an island in Mono Lake during a banding project this summer. The pink flag on the bush behind her shows scientists where they have located herons previously.

Photo by Pete Bloom

## Heron Banding Project Underway

*Editor's Note: Thank you to Ashli Lewis, State Parks Biologist for providing information for this article.*

This past summer, a five-year bird banding project of Black-crowned night herons began at Mono Lake. According to Ashli Lewis, State Parks biologist, very little is known of movements of any heron species in California, particularly natal dispersal. "Our objective with this project is to learn of the importance and role that Mono Lake plays in the dispersal of young herons to their future breeding localities and points in between."

While heron breeding colonies in California are usually in tall trees, the Mono Lake Black-crowned night heron colony, located on an island, presents a unique opportunity in that the birds nest in bushes only one meter off the ground. Lewis and Bloom Research Inc. (BRI) Raptor Ecologist, Pete Bloom, conducted the banding during two visits this summer to Twain Island.

The timing of egg-laying and development varies between nests, so while many of the birds were of bandable age (about 4-5 weeks) during the first visit in June, there were still nests with eggs at this time, requiring a second visit in July. Bandable age refers to when the young develop enough that their leg diameter can support a band without slipping off, and while they are still unable to fly.

Thirty-three nestlings total were adorned with a U. S. Geological Survey metal band on the right leg and a project specific, black-numbered color band on the left leg during this year's banding.

Lewis added that anyone who sees a Black-crowned night heron with this type of band can report the sighting to [pwrc.usgs.gov/BBL/bblretrv/](http://pwrc.usgs.gov/BBL/bblretrv/).

## — Two Summers

*Continued From Page 4*

"In working for Mono Lake Tufa SNR, I was able to discover so much more about the natural history of the lake. Working for State Parks helped me discover a new appreciation for the area my family has lived (and worked) in for so long. My grandmother worked for Bodie, my mom worked for the Forest Service, and my brother, Charles, is currently working for Bodie as well, so the opportunity to follow in my family's footsteps to learn about and protect the area we love is incredible. And my favorite part of the job: I was able to learn more about my own backyard. And I got the chance to do some things that were slightly out of the ordinary."

Claire also helped the Bodie Foundation with special events. In 2020, she portrayed a character at Ghost Walks in 2020 and again in 2021. She also played characters at FOB Days both years.

Claire is now attending the University of California, Davis where she's majoring in International Relations. "In the future, I hope to be able to travel and learn about as many cultures and places as possible."

### HistoriCorps Volunteer Stats

This past summer, 31 HistoriCorps volunteers contributed 788 hours, valued at \$24,829.88 while working on HistoriCorps projects at Bodie SHP. HistoriCorps volunteers contributed approx. 394 hours valued at \$12,414.94 per Work Order (50% of the total contribution).

Volunteers came from American Samoa, Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, Pennsylvania, and Virginia.

"The whole team worked well together, and everyone felt appreciated," said one volunteer.



Dr. Dydia DeLyser spoke about the history of stabilization at Bodie to the High Peak Patrons and guests on October 10.

Photo by Chris Spiller

## — Executive Director's Report

*Continued from Page 1*

love. As a reminder, the High Peak Patrons is a new giving level for members who donate at least \$1000 in a year. Giving at this level allows one to join in on free seminars, both in the park and online. Keep an eye out on our website for the 2022 schedule of events. And a special thank you to Dydia for her time spent with our HPP group.

HistoriCorps leads and volunteers were in Bodie at the end of September for three weeks

finally getting the work done that we planned in 2019. The Railroad Office downstairs window sashes have been installed, replacing the plywood over the windows allowing for natural light when we lead Ridge Tours. Emergency stabilization was done on the Fouke residence to get it through another winter, and foundation and roof work was done to stabilize the D.V. Cain Barn. With extra time, the crews worked to piece together the change room that fell

off of the side of the Hoist House on the bluff sometime this summer. As you may remember, several years ago another HistoriCorps crew had attempted to stabilize this change room, but as we all know, Bodie often has other plans. The change room fell over completely, but the walls and roof were still intact, so they put it back together and we are hoping this time it lasts. We have one session planned for HistoriCorps next year in Bodie to continue moving forward with stabilization.

State Park maintenance staff in Bodie did a great job using the funds we raised for roofing materials this summer. The Foundation was even able to help with an extra \$3,000 for lumber to continue roofing before the season was over. (See Page 7 for other projects.)

It felt good to see stabilization, events, and workshops happening again in Bodie this summer. There is a mountain of work to accomplish, which in reality is an unending process of keeping Bodie standing. But, again, that is why you're here supporting us, is it not? Thank you, members, for your support as we head into our planning season.



At left, the "after" photo of the Standard Mine change room. At right, another team of HistoriCorps volunteers work on the D.V. Cain Barn. HistoriCorps crews worked at Bodie for three weeks in September.

Photos by Dave Swisher and Betty McCunniff



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Photo by Jeff Sullivan