

THE BODIE TIMES

PROTECTING BODIE'S FUTURE BY PRESERVING ITS PAST

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

VOLUME XII

SPRING 2022

NUMBER 1

Executive Director's Report

Foundation Meets To Discuss Projects

By Jessica Schneider
Bodie Foundation
Executive Director

As the swallows piece together their spring nests in the eaves of Bodie's Methodist Church, we at the Bodie Foundation are busy putting together a full summer of interpretive programs, events, and stabilization projects in the park to further the enjoyment of Bodie State Historic Park, and raise funds to keep Bodie standing for future generations.

The Bodie Foundation Board of Trustees finally returned to in-person meetings in April, with an extremely productive gathering overlooking Mono Lake. We discussed long-term plans for collaboration on stabilization and interpretation in all three parks, and set our goals as a group for moving forward on funding projects in Bodie. It was a special opportunity to hear from Hillary Colyer, Interpreter I at Bodie, and Catherine Jones, Interpreter I



Bodie Foundation Board members gather in Bodie April 3. Photographer's Assistant Michael Schneider makes sure all are smiling.

Photo by Paul Friesen

at Mono Lake, regarding their plans for programs in each park. We are lucky to have their enthusiasm and willingness to work together. The Board headed up to Bodie the second day and had a rare opportunity to tour buildings with Park Maintenance Assistant Eric Draper, (thank you Eric!). The Board saw first-hand the work that Eric does day-in and day-out, helping us visualize future

funding needs from the Foundation and members like you.

Thank You

I'd like to extend a huge thank-you to Lisa O'Reilly and Mark Davis for collaborating on the donation of digitized Bodie newspapers. This donation to the Foundation will unlock countless stories of Bodie and its wild and rich history. The

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Take A Ghostly Walk In Bodie

We are now offering three separate walks each evening that Bodie Ghost Walks are available, with the park being open until 10 p.m. for the public. Dates for this popular event are June 25, July 30 and Sept. 3.

The walks include the Cemetery Tour, the Ghost Walk Town Tour and the Ghost Stamp Mill Tour. We will also have a star talk at dark.

A few spots are left for the walks. Check our website for information and to buy tickets at bodiefoundation.org/bodie-ghost-walks.

Bird Chautauqua Is Back!
See Page 4



Art by L. Wren Walraven

- ED Report

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State Park staff also extends their gratitude to Lisa and Mark for such a remarkable resource to be shared by both staffs.

Another thank-you goes out to Kathleen Kennedy, State Park Historian II, for connecting us with Tim White, Restoration Work Specialist in the Capital District. Tim will be building the remaining window sashes to be installed in the Railroad Office in 2023. This is a huge help, since Bodie maintenance staff must spend all winter and spring fixing windows in order to keep buildings sealed within the town boundary.

Fire mitigation co-op

Keep an eye out for a Berkeley Fire crew in Bodie this June. This crew is working for one weekend doing brush clearance while also completing a certification for wildland fire. We are really excited to show them around Bodie, and they are excited to experience a weekend away from the city while honing their skills. It's a win-win for all, and one that we are hoping to continue every year.

July 4th booth in Bridgeport

While we are on the topic of collaborations, make sure to visit the Bodie Foundation booth at the



Park Interpreter Hillary Colyer points out a feature to Bodie Foundation Board members Beth Olson and Jon Elliott during the trip to Bodie.

Photo by Paul Friesen

Bridgeport July 4th festival this year. We will be right next to the Maryn Vilarino Photography Foundation, which is a great organization that gives all profits from photography sales to the Bodie Foundation.

High Peak Patrons lineup

The schedule of events for our High Peak Patron giving circle, which brings educational programs to donors who give \$1,000 or more in a year, is half in Bodie, half online. The first one is an in-person event in June with Dydia DeLyser, PhD. Her "History and Practice of Stabilization in Bodie" is truly not to be missed. If you couldn't make it in the fall, please make an effort to attend in June. It will change how you view Bodie's

buildings! Following Dydia's seminar, Kathleen Kennedy will build on the stabilization theme as State Park Historian II. Our October 15 event in Bodie, "Bodie Cemetery Restoration" with Donna Jones, retired state parks employee and long-time Bodieite, sheds light on another long-term project that the Bodie Foundation is helping move along. The November digital event "State of the State Park" with Dan Canfield, Sierra District Superintendent will wrap up the year, and be a great question and answer opportunity for all attendees. Check our website for details as they become available.

We are also looking forward to the first ever Friends of Bodie Fundraising dinner in Bridgeport at the Bridgeport Ranch Barns and Terrace. Enjoy live music, a silent auction, great food, and hear from our board members and staff about stabilization projects and other programs in Bodie.

Also, the Bodie Mercantile in Bridgeport is open Wednesday through Sunday. Come by and check out new merchandise.

With Grover finally open to day use, it's shaping up to be an eventful summer in Bodie, Mono and Grover!

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The Bodie Times is the official publication of the Bodie Foundation,
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Bodie Loses Merv Nenstiel

Dedicated former State Parks Maintenance Worker and Volunteer Merv Nenstiel passed away October 27, 2021 at the age of 82. Merv began working for California State Parks in 1998 and continued as a volunteer after his retirement from State Parks in 2011.

Merv first saw Bodie in the late 1940s before it was a park. He was traveling with his family when a hitchhiker asked his father and mother for a ride to Bodie. They had never heard of the place, so Merv's dad said he'd take the hitchhiker all the way to the old ghost town. Merv's wife, Wanda, remembered that Merv said the family bought gas for the car, and he had a soda at the DeChambeau Hotel Cafe where he met Sam Leon, a Chinese businessman who had lived in Bodie since the late 1920s.

Merv visited Bodie again with Wanda in the late 1960s and told her he'd like to work here after his retirement from the U.S. Navy Seabees, the construction battalion that builds bridges, runways, barracks and other projects, often while dodging enemy fire.

He joined the Seabees in 1961 during the Vietnam War. His family related the story that Merv said he wanted to avoid being drafted into the

See Merv Nenstiel, Page 7



Merv in Bodie; below right with his wife, Wanda working on a project.

2023 Bodie Calendar On Sale, Winners Announced



The 2023 Bodie Calendar is now on sale for \$14.95 at the Bodie Foundation online store, BodieFoundation.org/store/ and the Bodie Museum store. A team of judges viewed the over 200 entries and narrowed it down to our winning photos. Thank you to everyone who entered, and congratulations to the winners.

Our beautiful cover photo of a colorful sunset on Main Street was taken by Avi Das.

Other photographers with winning images include Eric Draper, Dustin LeBrun, Greg Lugo, Phil Lindsay, Linda Berman, Lori Hibbett, Paula Shroyer, Barbara J. Shaw, Betty Sederquist, Gigi Dean, Paul Cockrell, Scott Morgan, Jeff Dean, Dennis Lint and Barry Lambert.

Entries for the 2024 calendar contest will be accepted in late fall at bodiecalendarcontest.com. The opening of the contest will be announced in our fall newsletter and on social media.



Mono Lake Bird Chautauqua Returns

By Catherine Jones
State Park Interpreter I
Mono Lake Tufa SNR

The 19th Annual Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua will take place June 17-19, 2022 in beautiful Lee Vining, California. We are excited to host an in-person Chautauqua this year, after having to cancel the event in 2020, and hosting a virtual program in 2021.

The Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua brings people together to enhance appreciation and understanding of the Mono Basin's diverse and abundant bird life and to educate the public about the area's value to birds and people.

The Chautauqua offers field trips, workshops and presentations, all of which will take place outdoors with renowned bird guides, naturalists, and artists.

The Bodie Foundation is among the many supporting partners of



Photo courtesy of Mono Lake Tufa State Natural Reserve

this wonderful event. Organizing partners for the event are the Mono Lake Committee and Mono Lake Tufa State Natural Reserve.

While reservations started for

the festival back in April, some openings for programs may remain. Those not registered yet can check for information and openings at

birdchautauqua.org.

History Tour Offered By Friends Of Mono Lake Reserve

Enjoy a history tour of the Mono Lake Tufa State Natural Reserve lands north of Lee Vining to learn about the people who have called this land home for centuries, and those who came later to farm the land surrounding ancient Mono Lake.

"Living At The Lake," a two-hour tour, is led by a guide for Friends of Mono Lake Reserve, a non-profit which raises funds for the Tufa State Natural Reserve.

As we learn about those who made Mono Lake their home, we will enjoy views of the lake and see marsh and migratory birds.

Reservations must be made no later than two weeks in advance

These tours can be booked for either mornings or late afternoon to avoid midday heat in the summer.



Photo by Chris Spiller

Contact Chris Spiller at Chris@bodiefoundation.org to start the reservation process or to receive more information.

Prices for this tour are \$200 for 2-4 people with additional people \$50 each.

Phased Opening Of Grover Planned

By Jennifer McCallan
State Parks Ranger

May 6 Update: The park is open for Day Use hiking and picnicking! See our website, parks.ca.gov/?page_id=508 for more information.

As the days get warmer, signaling summer's approach, more and more folks are asking, "When will Grover Hot Springs State Park reopen?"

Crews have been hard at work in the park since the Tamarack Fire burned its way through parts of Grover Hot Springs and Alpine and Douglas Counties in July 2021. Cleaning up the rubble, restoring and replacing the lost infrastructure, and making the park safe for visitors has been a complicated and ongoing process. Since my last update, we are starting to see a glimmer of light at the end of the tunnel and anticipate the first phase of reopening soon!

The park will reopen in phases: first, day use for hiking and picnicking, then the campground,

possibly this summer, and later, the hot spring pools, which are unlikely to open this year.

Progress with hazard tree removal

When you return to the park you will find that the fire has transformed both the landscape and your experience of the park. The most obvious and startling change is the hundreds of acres of burned forest that you pass through as you drive toward the park. The fire burned through the most popular hiking trail in the park, the Burnside Lake Trail, unofficially called the "waterfall trail." Our Sierra District State Parks forestry crew, along with heavy equipment operators, and Cal Fire and California Conservation Corps (CCC) crews, spent the last several months identifying several hundred hazard trees (trees at risk of falling due to fire damage in areas frequented by visitors). Crews felled the trees, stacked and hauled away the logs, and piled up branches and brush into burn piles. Once all heavy

machinery and pile burning finishes, the trail can once again open to hikers. Restoring and/or rerouting the ADA trail will be a longer-term project, so any hiking for 2022 will be on the Burnside fire road/trail.

Storms cause debris flows

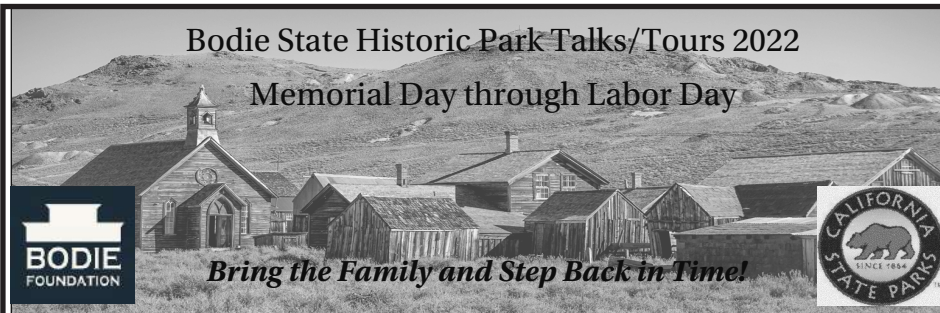
A subtler change to the landscape is the tons of ash, soil, gravel, and sediment washing downhill in recently burned areas. After a fire, the layers of ash that cover the ground are hydrophobic, so water runs off rather than being absorbed into the ground. The plants and shrubs that once helped anchor the soil in place have burned, and so erosion increases. October 2021 brought rainstorms, which caused major debris flows. All the debris quickly and completely filled stream channels with sediment, causing creeks to flood over roads and through campsites, creating new paths. The sediment quickly filled in the catch basin for the park's water supply. This in turn affected and continues to affect our water system, which may directly impact the visitor experience. If the debris flows continue to clog the water system,

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Fire-damaged "hazard trees" were felled along the Burnside Lake Trail. After branches were removed, the logs are hauled away. At right, "debris flows" filled several stream channels in October 2021, causing Shay Creek to flood over the road leading to the pools and leaving knee-high-deep piles of sediment on the road.

Photos by Jennifer McCallan



Bodie Foundation Private Tours

- Two-hour tours of Town & Stamp Mill (or Cemetery)
- Also available: Living History Stamp Mill, Twilight Tours and Mining District Tours.
- Ask about our Mono Lake History Tour! (Meets in Lee Vining)

Email chris@BodieFoundation.org for advance reservations. See our website, bodiefoundation.org for more information.

Bodie SHP Public Tours

Stamp Mill Tours: 11 am - 1 pm - 3 pm
 Tickets at Museum, \$6 per person

Daily Free History Talks

Park Admission: \$8 per person; \$5 ages 4 to 17.
 Summer hours 9 am to 6 pm. Park phone: 760-616-5040

Please note: Dogs must be on a leash at all times & are not permitted on Mill tours or inside buildings.

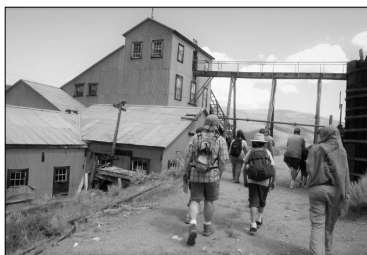
By participating in the tours above, you're helping the Bodie Foundation as we provide a constant stream of funding to keep the buildings in Bodie standing. Ask park staff or visit our website to become a member.

For more information:
BodieFoundation.org
 760-932-7574
info@BodieFoundation.org

SAVE THE DATE!

Friends of Bodie Day: August 13, 2022:
 "Winter In August"
 Daytime Festivities

Members' Dinner & Members Only Evening Event



– Grover

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either all at once, as happens during a major rainstorm, or gradually, when the snow melts little by little — there may not be enough water to supply the campground restrooms and showers at regular capacity. We will not know the answer to that question until we see what Mother Nature has in store for spring precipitation and runoff.

Similarly, debris flows have already shown that the cold pool cannot be supplied with enough water. The debris flows are just one piece of the pool-reopening puzzle. Other major repairs are needed at the pool complex before it can reopen, and the decades-old facilities need upgrades, all of which will take time.

When the park reopens, one might feel sad walking through a forest that looks charred and barren, so different from how it used to be. But look a little closer, and you will see how nature is already renewing and returning. Green shoots emerged mere weeks after the fire, and green shrubs appeared in late winter. Many of the trees with burn scars will survive. Wildlife is abundant and is spotted more frequently in the closed park compared to the when the park is full of visitors. Nature is constantly changing, and the cycle of fire is part of that change. Gazing across the meadow, most of which did not burn, you will see that much of Grover Hot Springs is a green island, surrounded on all sides by burned areas. We can't wait to welcome visitors back to the park.

Historic Graffiti Discovered During Project

Bodie's stabilization workers often glimpse interesting sights as they work on interior of buildings.

Park Maintenance Assistant Eric Draper spotted names and other messages written in the schoolhouse outhouses while working on the building. One name shown at left is, "Victor Cain."



Where Are Stabilization Funds Going This Year?

- \$10,000 to support park maintenance
- \$10,000 for CCC crew to build let down fence around park boundary
- \$5,800 for new freeze-proof water fountain
- \$10,000 for food/support for volunteer maintenance crew
- \$40,000 for Fouke stabilization project

– Merv Nenstiel

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Marines, as he didn't want to have to wear a pack on his back, carry a rifle and run around in the jungle. So, he became a "Bee," and was trained as a surveyor. They also gave him a pack, an M-1 rifle and trained him in how to run around in the jungle.

He served for four years with Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 11, serving at Naval Air Stations in Guam, Alaska and Kwajalein Atoll. He left the service but returned six years later in 1972. During the next 22 years he was

stationed at Pt. Hueneme, CA, and was sent to locations all over the world. He retired in October 1992 as a Senior Chief, Engineering Aide (EACS), but did another four years as Navy Fleet Reserve, for a total of 30 years combined service. During his service he received both the Navy Commendation Medal, Navy Achievement Medal, Seabee Combat Warfare Specialist Designation, and a multitude of other medals and awards.

After retirement, he soon

became a contractor to the U.S. State Department, providing security checks on material that went into building U.S. Embassies and consulates all over the world. He spent time in Nigeria, Ethiopia, Benin, Brazil, Russian Siberia (launched a satellite), Belize, Hong Kong, and Qatar. His last station was Brussels, Belgium, where he helped construct the new NATO Headquarters.

In between overseas trips he worked as a Skilled Laborer for State Parks in Bodie. He began his intermittent stints in late 1998 and continued with the stabilization crews until his final retirement in 2011. After retirement from the park, he continued to volunteer every summer for at least two weeks, resurrecting outhouses, repairing and replacing windows and doors, replacing ceilings or floors, and doing roofing jobs where needed.

Merv last volunteered in Bodie in the unprecedented year of 2020. Bodie Foundation's "Friends of Bodie Day" was cancelled due to the pandemic. Merv and Wanda joined other volunteers in playing roles for a socially-distant skit about 1920s life in Bodie. The skit was recorded for members and fans to enjoy online.

They returned a few weeks later for volunteer work on various projects.

Thank you, Merv for all your work in keeping Bodie standing from your "Bodie Family."

Bodie Foundation Presents

**FRIENDS OF BODIE
DAY**

Winter in August!

35TH ANNIVERSARY
August 13, 2022
1:00 PM - PARADE THROUGH TOWN

Spend all day in Bodie with us!

Ongoing activities and booths throughout the day: Kids Corner with activities and games, craft booths, Stamp Mill Tours, Geology and Junior Ranger booths, vendors and more! Members' dinner begins at 4:30 pm, Members' evening event starts at 6:00 pm.

BODIE FOUNDATION

WWW.BODIEFOUNDATION.ORG/FRIENDS-OF-BODIE-DAY

CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS

Become A Bodie Volunteer!

Interested in volunteering at Bodie State Historic Park? To find out about short-term and long-term opportunities at Bodie, and how to apply, contact Bodie's Interpreter, at hillary.colyer@parks.ca.gov.



Bodie Foundation

P.O. Box 278
Bridgeport, CA 93517
(760) 932-7574

BodieFoundation.org
info@BodieFoundation.org



*Your renewal means you continue to be a part of Bodie's future!
Join or renew online at BodieFoundation.org,
or fill out and return this form:*

- \$35 - Pay Dirt
- \$50 - Silver Vein
- \$75 - Gold Mine
- \$100 - W. S. Bodey
- \$250 - Teamster
- \$ _____ - Donation

Our Newest Level:

- \$1000 - High Peak Patrons
Special Access/Special Events

To support Friends of Grover Hot Springs or Friends of Mono Lake, please visit the websites below:
visitgroverhotsprings.org
visitmonolake.org

Please send to:
BODIE FOUNDATION
P.O. BOX 278
Bridgeport, CA 93517

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____

STATE, ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____

EMAIL: _____

Please make checks payable to:
BODIE FOUNDATION

Photo by Greg Lugo