

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

Members Step Up for Fundraising Projects

By Jessica Schneider
Bodie Foundation
Executive Director

With a summer so tightly bookended with snow, we in the Eastern Sierra have hardly felt like the season had a chance to get going before we saw snow flying again. With a July 1 opening of the Bodie Road (Highway 270), the latest that road has ever opened, we saw crowds of visitors happy to be out and about. Photo Workshop programs, Private Tours, and a Ghost Walk were all cancelled in June, but we enjoyed the warm weather July through September.

Church Stabilization Project

In July, I met with Doug Gadow of Linchpin Structural Engineering, and Alexandra Neeb, Sierra District Chief of Cultural Resources, Interpretation, and Partnerships, to examine the Methodist Church and Fouke House projects. We have determined that the church is a relatively straightforward fix, since the foundation of the building is stable. As you remember from the *Bodie Times* Spring 2023 edition, the church is leaning (or "racking") to the right and backward, if you're standing in front of the building. The plan is to first *straighten*, then *strengthen* it.

To straighten, wire ropes inside the church will be fastened to the top of the walls on the right side, and go across the church and through the bottom of the wall on the left side,

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Photo by Chris Spiller

The Methodist Church was the focus of the Foundation's fundraising efforts this past year. Above, guests gather at a special fundraising dinner Sept. 23, and below, members attend the evening walk during Friends of Bodie Day August 12, to hear about the work needed at the church.



Photo by Jessica Schneider

Welcome To New State Parks Staff

New District Superintendent

Robert “Rob” Griffith came to Sierra District this past August as District Superintendent.

Rob comes to State Parks from the California Conservation Corps, most recently serving as District Director for the Placer District (Auburn) since January 2019.

Prior to that, he worked four decades for the USDA Forest Service with duty stations in Alaska, the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, and for 30+ years in California. He



Superintendent Rob Griffith

also had the opportunity to work on several short-term overseas assignments while with the Forest Service and was on Incident Management Teams in a variety of leadership roles.

His Forest Service California experience included working as Soil Scientist, Regional Lead for a post-wildfire watershed restoration program, District Ranger, Acting Deputy Forest Supervisor, Acting Deputy Regional Deputy Director for Ecosystem Management, Director for Rim Fire Recovery, and Regional Assistant Director of Fire and Aviation Management.

He was born and raised in the Los Angeles area and spent many weekends and summers recreating outdoors in the mountains of southern California, the Sierra Nevada mountains, and along the Central and South Coasts.

He has a Bachelor of Science degree in Forestry with an emphasis on Forest Soils from what is now Cal Poly Humboldt.

Rob and his wife Ally have three adult children.



Ranger Josh Ritz

New Ranger At Bodie

Ranger Josh Ritz is originally from Los Angeles. He moved to Durango, Colorado at the age of 14 and spent 14 years in Colorado developing a passion for the outdoors, primarily hunting and fishing.

His love for the outdoors led him to study and graduate from Fort Lewis College with an Environmental Biology degree, with a Wildlife and Fisheries emphasis. He was soon hired by Colorado Division of Wildlife for four seasons, working with bears, elk, and a lynx relocation project in the San Juan Mountains.

After that, he moved back to Los Angeles at age 28 where he became a personal trainer for over 13 years.

Missing his passion for the outdoors, he applied to California Department of Parks and Recreation in 2022 and entered into the ranger academy, graduating in April 2023.

“I was fortunate enough to get a ranger position at Bodie State Historic Park and I’m enjoying the scenery, solitude, the people I work with and park visitors,” he said.

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then be anchored to the ground on the outside of the building. Contractors will then use turnbuckles to pull the church back into a righted position.

Once it is back in place, contractors will remove the interior finish of a small section of each of the four walls to expose a section of framing. Within the exposed framing, new plywood sheathed shear walls will be constructed (plywood will be put in between two studs of the wall with its own frame, in layman's terms). Once the shear walls are installed, the beadboard will be put back in place, and the project will be completed.

Thanks to you, our wonderful members, we funded \$30,000 for the plans and measured drawings from Linchpin Structural Engineering. As Phase I is complete, we have started fundraising for Phase II. At the time of this writing, we have \$42,000 toward at least \$60,000 needed for the project. There is a possibility the project could cost more, but we will know once the project goes to bid.

If you want to help with the Methodist Church project, email me at jessica@bodiefoundation.org or go to bodiefoundation.org/church to donate.

Fouke House Stabilization Project

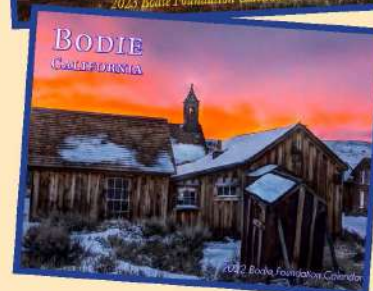
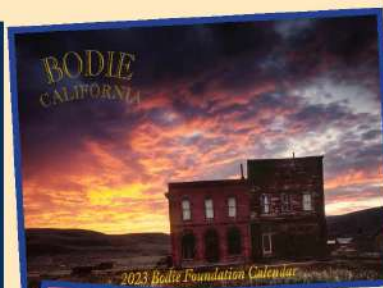
The Fouke House is in severe disrepair, as it has no building "envelope," which is just as it sounds – there is no roof and little siding. There was no roof when Bodie became a state park in 1962, which is the time in which all Bodie stabilization work should return to, or reference. With no roof and inadequate siding, the building has deteriorated to a condition that has caused failure of roof sheathing, roof framing and the bearing walls. Without an envelope,

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Calling all photographers!

See your photo of Bodie State Historic Park in the 2025 edition of the Bodie Foundation Calendar.

Entry deadline: January 28, 2024.



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 bodiefoundation.org.

Interested in photo workshops at Bodie? Check our website for information: bodiefoundation.org/photo-workshops.



Photo by Chris Spiller

Our last Ghost Walk event Sept. 30 was a cold one, with snow and wind, but everyone still enjoyed the evening despite the chilly weather. The next morning, the Bodie ghosts left close to three inches of new snow to start the month of October.

Phalaropes Featured At Annual Mono Lake Bird Chautauqua

By Catherine Jones
State Parks Interpreter

The Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua brings people together to enhance appreciation and understanding of the Mono Basin’s unique ecology. This year’s Chautauqua celebrated one of the lake’s charismatic bird species, the Wilson’s Phalarope and culminated with the first ever Phalarope Festival.

The goal of the Phalarope Festival was to highlight this magnificent shorebird that depends on Mono Lake and other saline lakes throughout the western hemisphere for survival.

Wilson’s Phalaropes breed in the northern United States and Canada where the female will lay eggs and embark on her migration, leaving the male bird behind to incubate the eggs and raise the young. When Wilson’s Phalaropes arrive at Mono Lake, they are greeted with an endless buffet of brine shrimp and alkali flies.

After a few weeks of resting, molting their feathers, and fattening up, phalaropes will embark on an epic migration to warmer areas, thousands of miles to the south, settling in on lakes such as Laguna Mar Chiquita in Argentina. Laguna Mar Chaquita is a designated sister lake, as is the Great Salt Lake in Utah, to Mono Lake. Each of these lakes is a vital stop for thousands of phalaropes and each worthy of protection. This sister lake connection brought researchers, educators, conservationists, and scientists together at Mono to enjoy the Chautauqua, join in the Phalarope Festival, and share their great work and the amazing places they help protect.

Some folks traveled all the way from Argentina, including a park ranger from the newly created Ansenzuza National Park, which allowed for State Parks staff to share our park management successes and struggles.

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The day’s events included a costume contest and unveiling of murals in Lee Vining by artist Franco “Vato” Cervato. Starting at top right, Bonnie Jones and Dave Carle in their costumes, Catherine Jones with one of the murals, and above, winners of the contest, Kerry Livingston, Dave Carle, Cassia McQuilkin, Bonnie Jones and Teri Tracy (in a Val Kilmer mask: Val A Rope).

Photos courtesy of Catherine Jones



Fall Comes To Grover, With Winter Not Far Away

Fall at Grover Hot Springs State Park brings cooler temperatures and changes in park operations as the season progresses toward winter.

At this time, only the hot pool is open; the cool pool remains closed. Ticket sales for use of the hot pool start each morning at 9 am. The regular session times are Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays and are as follows: 9:30 am – 11 am, 11:30 am – 1:00 pm, 1:30 pm – 3 pm, and 3:30 pm – 5 pm. Fees for one pool session are \$10 for adults, and \$5 ages 0-16. For those not camping at the park, there is an \$8 parking fee. The changing rooms are still closed. Please arrive wearing your swimsuit. There is an outdoor shower for rinsing off.

Grover Hot Springs Day Use and

2023 Workshops, Tours Finish Up For Season

Photo workshops and private tours got off to a late start this past season with the road into Bodie not opening until July 1 due to extensive winter damage.

The photo workshop season started July 9 and ran until October 20. Despite the short season, 27 workshops took place with 230 participants, led by 13 leaders. The workshops included early morning and nighttime sessions.

To learn more about the 2024 photo workshop program, please visit bodiefoundation.org/photo-workshops.

Private tours also started in July and ended Oct. 15. Tours included five four-hour Mine, Mills, Rails and Ruins tours, two-hour private history tours, a Mono Lake cultural history tour, and a bus company tour. A total of 72 people participated in these 16 tours.

For information about booking a 2024 tour, see bodiefoundation.org/bodie-tours.

camping are open. However, Loop Two (Toiyabe Loop) is closed for the season. Loop One (Quaking Aspen Loop) will remain open until the temperature drops to a level that may freeze the water system. Once Loop One closes, there will be winter camping available on a first-come, first-served basis with an 18-foot limit for motor homes

and trailers. Winter camping is available until mid-May when campgrounds return to a reservation system.

Day Use parking is \$8 (\$7 for seniors 62 and older). If you have paid for pool admission, day use parking is included.

Please see the park's website, parks.ca.gov/?page_id=508 or call 530-694-2248 for updated information on park activities.

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The Phalarope Festival was a great success. The afternoon began with the unveiling of Lee Vining's new phalarope murals, created by artist Franco "Vato" Cervato from Argentina. There was music, including a bilingual phalarope tribute song, food, talks by international shorebird scientists, a bird calling contest, a phalarope costume contest, and booths, including the Bodie

Foundation and the many other partners of the Chautauqua.

Join us next year, June 21-23, 2024 at this fun and educational event. Registration opens on April 15 and the 100 plus events fill up fast. Visit birdchautauqua.org for information.

For more information about Mono Lake's unique ecosystem and to see phalaropes; view this nine-minute PBS program: [Trillions of Animals Rely On This Lake \(And It's Drying Up\)](#) - YouTube.



Photo by Andersen Yun

To celebrate California Biodiversity Day, the Mono Lake Tufa State Natural Reserve joined with the Mono Lake Committee, Inyo National Forest, Friends of the Inyo, and Mono County Libraries for the BioBlitz. Using the iNaturalist app to record biodiversity in the Mono Basin; 45 participants made 1,431 observations of 464 unique species, more than any other State Park that participated. Standing, L- R: Tim Messick, Leah Gardner, Joe Woods, Catherine Lewis, Catherine Jones, Darlene Batatian. In front: Anneka Reiter, Beth Long.

Support The Bodie Foundation While You Shop For Holiday Gifts

The Bodie Foundation store has some great gift items to include in your holiday shopping! Bodie winter ornaments, hats, tumblers, drinking glasses and much more. Don't forget to include a 2024 calendar that showcases some of Bodie's finest photography. You can order online at bodiefoundation.org. Please place your orders by Wednesday, December 13 to ensure your items arrive in time for Christmas.



Photos by Josy Pickett



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the building is moving and racking in multiple directions with each weather event.

Linchpin Structural Engineering recommends that supplemental shoring be installed within the main building structure of the Fouke. Essentially, they are proposing we build an interior frame and attach the failing siding and roof to that structure. This would allow the building to have a support system without changing the exterior of the building or adding a proper roof, which is not allowed per the park's management plan for Bodie's buildings.

Events

I'd say our summer has been marred by weather events, since the Bodie road opened July 1 due to snow, but the rest of the weather proved to bring people together in a way that I didn't expect.

Our Friends of Bodie members' dinner started out on a beautiful evening, when suddenly we were struck with downpour of rain. Members ran inside the Red Barn to finish their meals, but not without first helping bring tables and chairs inside in record time. Spirits were high as we all delighted in the sudden change of events. The final part of the evening program was in the Methodist Church together, which seemed extra cozy after the rain.

Our Pony Up, Cowboy! Fundraising event was a lovely evening, but of course it came on the one weekend in September that was bitterly cold. Everyone who stayed to enjoy the live music found comradery around the bonfire. The event was a huge success, raising over \$10,000 for the Methodist Church stabilization project. Thank you to everyone who attended!

Our last Ghost Walk of the season

was September 30, which also happened to be the first snow of the year. Not only did event-goers battle sleet and snow, it was the darkest of all the ghost walks of the year. Everyone stuck it out and enjoyed one of the most memorable Ghost Walks to date. Freshly falling snow in Bodie is nothing short of magical. I can't believe the resilience of our patrons. You are a tough group!

New staff

Kudos to Erica Hedlund, Interpreter I, and Mike Rominger, Supervising Ranger, for getting everything up and running in Bodie (and Mono) after an epic winter. Mike Rominger joined us for another season as a retired annuitant, and we couldn't have done it without him. Erica held the seasonal staff together, conducting trainings, preparing schedules, and being the unspoken leader that Bodie needed this summer.

We welcome the new additions to the State Parks staff, Robert Griffith, the new District Superintendent, and Josh Ritz, Ranger 1, and look forward to making real progress for Bodie, Mono and Grover, together.

If you are a *Bodie Times* regular, you may be noticing that stabilization work isn't keeping up with the deterioration of the buildings. Even when the Foundation is fundraising with all our might, the processes for getting through State Park red tape to get boots on the ground takes a long time. It is easy to get bogged down and overwhelmed by how much work there is to do and how little is actually being done. Bodie is also easily pushed to the back of people's minds in the state parks system, since we are so isolated, both physically and in our communications.

However, we know that we have all of you: our die-hard Bodieites. You'll not forget about Bodie and the importance of its buildings, its stories, and the feeling you get when you come over the top of the bowl and see the elegant stamp mill popping grey against the autumn brush, as sun reflects off the windows in town, as if sending out a beacon of hope that life is still there. Keep reading our newsletter, keep donating, keep showing up to Bodie. We are working on big things to come - stay tuned. Together we will keep Bodie standing!



Photo by Chris Spiller

Bodie Maintenance Worker Eric Draper at work at the Moyle House (North) in September.

Park Visitors Enjoy Daytime FOB Activities



We had another wonderful Friends of Bodie Day on Saturday, Aug. 12. Children enjoyed the craft tables, at left, where they made "Thaumatropes," an optical toy first popular in the mid 1800s. Some young visitors also decorated pinecones.

The Methodist Church was the site for two performances of a skit that showed visitors a possible future where the church did not stay standing, a past scene where 1882 residents of Bodie discussed the successful fundraising that built the church, (photos below) and finally, a present-day scene that discussed the present fundraising for needed work to save the church and fundraising efforts.

Visitors also enjoyed visiting the vendor booths, bottom left.





Because of road closures, an area needed to stage horses and wagons was not available. However, Bodie Foundation Board of Trustees members, Paul Friesen (at left) and Jon Elliott rode through town meeting daytime visitors.

The day featured musicians whose music was a wonderful addition to this special day. At left middle is Fiddlin' Pete Watercott, and bottom right is the Bodie 601 band. Many visitors enjoying the daytime activities and music dressed in their 1800s finery, which brought the old town to life!

Photos by Chris Spiller



Ghosts Come Out for Members At FOB



Friends of Bodie Day on August 12 closed out with Bodie Foundation members having a delicious dinner prepared by Ray Robles and his hard-working crew, top left photo.

After dinner, members gathered for the evening tour where they met people from the past talking about life in Bodie in 1877-1882.

In the middle left photo, two undertakers discuss their businesses. At bottom left, firefighters and a businessman debate the merits of a new piece of firefighting equipment. At top right, ladies plan a fundraiser for the construction of a Catholic Church in Bodie and above, two doctors discussed the variety of medical cases in town and formation of a medical society in Bodie.





The Fouke House, another key project of the Bodie Foundation, was discussed by Board of Trustee member Shannon Fell, who was later joined by a long-lost relative of the Fouke family in two top photos. Then it was on to an 1880 census worker's talk, which turned bitter as a reporter and others questioned the accuracy of the count in middle photos.



At left, the evening ended in the Methodist Church, where members heard from the chairwoman in charge of the committee raising funds to building a church building. Rev. Warrington also addressed the members about his time in Bodie. The evening concluded with Jessica Schneider, the Foundation's Executive Director, discussing the crucial project to save the Methodist Church.

Thank you to our members for your support. And a special thank you to Bodie State Historic Park staff and volunteers, and Bodie Foundation staff for making this evening happen!

Photos by Josy Pickett and Chris Spiller



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Photo by Betty Sederquist