



# The Ore Car



## SPRING 2018 Newsletter of the Plumas-Eureka State Park Association

### MESSAGE FROM BOARD CHAIRMAN-JOHN SCIBORSKI



I'M BACK!! This could be good news or the other kind of news. I was previously the President of PESPA in the early 2000's.

PESPA has a great Board of Directors who are working hard to get things done. Last year saw a number of projects accomplished, mainly by the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR). This year we have developed a list of projects for one, two and five years. We have met with DPR on two different occasions this spring to get their input. These face-to-face meetings have been a plus and progress has been made with the DPR District Staff.

The following is a partial list of projects for 2018:

- \*Complete Eureka Adit Improvements
- \*Trail from Museum to Jamison Creek with interpretation hikes once the trail is completed
- \*Plantings at the Moriarty House – Vegetable Garden and Flowers of a variety that may have been planted during the mining years. One example might be rhubarb. We are working out ways of keeping deer out of the garden. We do not hunt them in State Parks as the miners probably did when they were in the same area.
- \*Refresh Historical Exhibits in the Museum – Some are 40 plus years old
- \*Assay Office – Install old time wood working equipment in one of back rooms with volunteers to demonstrate how the equipment was used
- \*Rehab the Walkway to Stamp Mill-EPA installed crushed rock that has washed out
- \*Additional Parking near the Museum for big events
- \*Photos and videos of the interior of the Stamp Mill for display
- \*Rodent Control in the Museum
- \*Gold Discovery Days July 21 & 22
- \*Dinner in the Park August 11

A very impressive list! Come visit us this summer!!

### PESPA Board of Directors for 2018-19:

John Sciborski Chairman  
Dennis Black Vice Chairman  
Jay Skutt Treasurer  
Rich Martinez Secretary

Cliff Romig Director  
Tim Hardie Director  
Jane Riox Director

## SKUTT RETURNS TO BOARD



It seems the message did not get understood when in the fall the board asked for Association Members to volunteer for the open position on the Board. So President Hardie did some very diplomatic arm twisting and I find myself back to work on the Board.

I had the pleasure of serving on the Board for 5 or 6 years. Some of it was through trying times when California State Parks had budget issues and the Association rallied with the help of its members and the community kept the Park open. So many good things have happened since then with projects that have helped preserve our buildings. We have a very vibrant Docent program with some new stories to tell visitors.

While I was off the Board, the Board stepped up to a big project, publishing Bruce MacGregor's book "Plumas Eureka on Glass". It has been very well received, requiring a second printing.

The Board has a number of projects scheduled for this year that will even make for new experiences for our visitors. The goal is to have the visitors feel their visit was even better than their last time at Plumas Eureka State Park. So I find it very rewarding to be part of the changes and enjoy the interaction with the Park staff, the docents and our visitors.

That said, the reason I left the Board was to give a new person the opportunity to bring new ideas, which I believe is important to any board. It is hard to come up with new ways when being involved for some time with anything. A new person brings new experiences which allow a board to understand the needs of a wider variety of people. So my message is we need more of our association members to step up and join the Board. You will find it a very rewarding experience. It is a great way to give back. You do not need any experience on boards nor do you need live in the area. So please give it some thought, YOU can make our special place even better.

## HISTORIC CARPENTER'S SHOP OPENS TO THE PUBLIC

**By Dennis Black, PESPA Board Director**

This summer, visitors to the park will be able to check out the carpenters shop in the back of the assay office. The shop is filled with vintage tools, and on select days, there will be docents that will demonstrate how these tools were used during the peak of the gold rush.

We are looking for men and women who have an interest in historic woodworking who would be willing to give some time as docents in the shop. Training will be available. For more information call Dennis Black at 530-240-4334.

# RANGER RAMBLINGS-

## PESP PARK RANGER, TIM QUANDT



The summer season is on its way and Plumas-Eureka State Park is rising up to meet it. As the Memorial Day weekend approaches, the park is finding its legs. This summer will see the completion on the ADA work that has been ongoing at the museum and Camp Lisa. When visitors enter the museum this summer they will notice that some of our displays have been refreshed and new interpretive signage has begun to replace the old. Additionally, last fall we received a stabilization of the Stamp Mill, assisting it to remain standing as more permanent solutions are sought.

We recently enjoyed two days of park volunteer orientation and labor. At the end of April, we gathered for a day of paperwork, signing up new volunteers and viewing informative presentations about being of service at the park. Our dutiful docents and park volunteers spent last Saturday cleaning the grounds and museum and assisting our district forester and his team in clearing hazardous fuels in the historic zone to reduce the risk of fire.

Visitors may notice that the sign at the park entrance near the museum has been refreshed by park maintenance worker Dave Cooley this winter and that 3 campsites (#'s 27, 28, 29) that had been closed for the past few years are now open once again and that water service to the campground has also been improved with new water lines and hydrants in place.

This year we will see the return of our stellar visitor service staff. Cindy, Pat and Kathy will all be returning to assist, educate, entertain and interpret the park for our visitors...and be sure to say hi and welcome our newest addition, Emma to the team here. Emma is a student at Northern Arizona University and will be coming on board in May to join the state park family.

The California Conservation Corp (CCC) will be finishing their work this summer on the Madora Lake trail conversion. The final stage will see the trail, now ADA accessible; complete its course to the parking lot. This project has been 3 years in the making and will be a nice addition to the parks' other ADA accessible features.

We had a much lighter winter this past year than last year and as such, we've been able to access and open areas that were still closed at this time last year. The trailhead at the Jamison Mine complex is accessible and open to vehicle traffic and work to get the campground open and water systems on line is underway.

We're only a couple weeks away from opening day as I write this and there's still much to do, but it's underway and moving nicely and will no doubt be ready for action when the time is here.

I hope to see you all here at the park this summer, enjoying and appreciating all that it has to offer.

# SAVE THE DATE...STEVE HALE RETURNS TO PLUMAS EUREKA STATE PARK FOR THE THIRD TIME

On **Saturday**, August 11<sup>th</sup> from 5-9 PM as part of the Plumas Eureka State Park Association's 7<sup>th</sup> annual Dinner in the Park fundraising event Steve Hale of Genoa, Nevada will portray George Whittell, Jr. a famed Sierra conservationist by accident!. Steve dressed in historic garb as George will bring alive stories and more in a first person Chautauqua performance.

Cost for the evening including a catered dinner by "Quincy Cooking Cottage" will be \$60. A no-host bar will also be available. Tickets to the event will be limited to 100 so be sure and get yours early. Tickets are available on our website <http://www.plumas-eureka.org> or at the Museum Store. For additional information contact Tim Hardie at 530 249-4288.

There will also be a silent and live auction featuring works from local artists and items donated by merchants. All proceeds from the event benefit Plumas Eureka State Park Association.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| May 18th             | Museum opens   |
| May 22 <sup>rd</sup> | PESP officially opens campground for 2018 season<br><br>Make camping reservations online at:<br><a href="http://www.ReserveCalifornia.com">www.ReserveCalifornia.com</a> or call 1-800-444-7275<br><br>Park information (530) 836-2380 |
| July 21-22           | Annual Gold Discovery Days at the Park 10AM – 3PM  |
| July 22              | PESPA Annual Pancake Breakfast/Raffle 8AM – 11AM   |
| August 11            | Seventh Annual "Dinner in the Park" Fundraising Dinner and Auction 5-9 PM  |



**THANKS** to all who helped on the "JAMISON CREEK FOREST STEWARDSHIP" program on May 5! We had 74 hard workers who accomplished reduction of fuels around the Historical District (3+acres), revitalized the Museum and Nature Trails, and also completed general Park cleanup.

# "WEATHER OR NOT" By Carl Chavez, Park Manager 1975-79

(The Following is an excerpted version of a story from Carl Chavez' book "A Pathway Through Parks". The unedited full story can be found on pages 158-161.)

Everyone seems to talk about the weather whether one is a meteorologist or not. Certainly when on a family camping vacation weather is of utmost concern especially when tent camping. That was the case in October 1977 as the Chavez family embarked on yet another "busman's holiday" vacation. Most of the time we stayed in either U.S. Forest Service or National Park campgrounds. On these camping trips I was always on the lookout for "new" ideas that I might introduce into my own park, in this case, Plumas-Eureka State Park.



On this occasion I was able to make a "discovery" that I "stole" or "borrowed" which in turn has spread into other California State Parks since I brought the idea back from Chaco Canyon Cultural Natural Historic Park in the northwestern part of New Mexico. I had gone in to take a look at the park visitor center/museum and upon leaving I noticed a rock suspended by a rope from three sticks tied in tripod fashion. I noticed the neatly lettered sign mounted on it that read "THE WEATHER PROPHET ROCK". This rock is the perfect weather indicator, it never fails. It is more accurate than your local weatherman. This rock is the living word and it is 100% correct.

This is how it works:

- A dry rock means fair weather
- A wet rock means it's raining
- A dusty rock means a dust storm
- A swaying rock means the wind is blowing
- A shadow under the rock means the sun is shining
- If the rock is jumping up and down, an earthquake is upon us
- A white rock means there is snowstorm

Most beautiful of all, though the rock is not attached to its existence – it doesn't mind which of the above is occurring.

At first I gave it no further thought as I walked to our vehicle but by the time I reached our old VW van I decided the Weather Rock was indeed something unique. I scrambled around for paper and pencil and walked back to the Weather Rock to copy the wording as written.

Weeks later, back at PESP, I found in my notes the scrap of paper with the Weather Rock words on it and decided to make my own specimen to place outside the entrance to the park museum. Right after I put it up the rock turned white and sure enough we had snow!

The Weather Rock I constructed at PESP remained in place for many years after I moved on to Humboldt Redwoods State Park. At HRSP I built another Weather Rock that I also placed in front of the Visitor Center. It had the distinction of having the suspended rock fall to the ground during the major Humboldt County earthquake of 1983, serving as further proof of the amazing accuracy of this friend of all weather watchers.

Many years later when I returned to PESP I was surprised to see my Leroy Lettering sign had been replaced by a professionally made metal sign. Today, where the Weather Rock can be found in other parks you can get a picture postcard of the Weather Rock. Check it out next time you visit the museum and test its accuracy for yourself.

# **PESP CULTURAL RESOURCE PROGRAM—Summer 2018**

**By Denise Jaffke**

## **Associate State Archaeologist/District Native American Liaison Sierra District California State Parks**

Last year we experienced great success working with Park Champions whereby we conducted reconnaissance surveys and collected preliminary data at the Eureka Peak Settlement Site and conducted intensive artifact inventories at Eureka Mills Town Site. The “Champions” will be returning this year to work at the Jamison Mine Site. We will conduct a systematic surface survey of the site and record and map archaeological features. With help from our friendly parks’ maintenance staff, we’ll also evaluate the condition of buildings and prepare preliminary condition assessment forms.

The Jamison gold-bearing ore was discovered in the late 1880s, with the Jamison Mining Company incorporated on January 19, 1887. The Jamison Mine operation was established about two miles south of Johnsville and claims of the company—including 590 acres of claims and incorporating three distinct ledges (Jamison, Neville and the Bosco)—were adjacent to the Plumas Eureka with Jamison Creek serving as the dividing line. The character defining feature of Jamison Mine was the degree to which the company utilized water to power their entire mining operation. Water from four natural lakes (including Rock, Jamison, Wade and Grass) and connecting streams was conveyed by a ditch for 1¼ miles to the mine site to power the hoist, compressor, mill, electric lights, dynamo, rock crusher and a train of light shafting, carrying circular saw, drill press and grindstone. Since the area had been mostly deforested by 1890, wood was expensive and water was used as a source of power and a viable economic solution for the company.

William Passetta, Johnsville miner and hotel owner, made an agreement with the Jamison Mining Company to process the tailings from the mill. During the summer of 1898, Passetta employed 12 men to construct two miles of flume to transport the residue from the mill site to a point on Jamison Creek below Johnsville where arrastras were installed to further treat the tailings.

The company had to divert Little Jamison Creek because it flowed over a vulnerable neck of the mine. They built a wooden flume (12” wide by 1,000’ long) to carry the water over and past the mine. By 1896, a 10-stamp mill was constructed and the company employed, housed and fed 40 men. By the turn of the century, the Jamison Mine operation was noted as the “the leading producer of gold in Plumas” and “the only important quartz mine now productive in the county.”

Although mining continued until 1943, the rich ore located on the Jamison claims was all but exhausted by 1919, when the mine was only running part-time. In 1920, the area was leased to Sobrero and Company, but finally sold a year later to the Plumas Eureka Annex Company. While the venture was small, the Jamison Mine was still classified as “the largest producer of dry gold in Plumas County” and “the largest deep-gold mine in operation in the county.” The Carnation Gold Mining Company, Ltd. purchased the property in the 1930s, but production didn’t amount to much. Lessees began treating the tailings on the ore dumps by the early 1940s through a process of amalgamation and concentration.

If you’re interested in volunteering for the 2-day Jamison Mine project (June 22 & 23), register with Park Champions at <http://www.calparks.org/help/park-champions/>

Thank you for your continued interest and support...we really do appreciate it!



Jamison Mine (ca. 1910).

## **ASSAY OFFICE By Cliff Romig, PESPA Board Director**

The Assay office is continuing to expand and improve its venue.

- New paint and fixed the siding.
- Re-furbished Mine Office Sign
- Mine office is coming together w/ added maps, ledgers, pictures and antique office equipment.
- 2nd back room has been cleared and ready to be converted into a 1800/1900's Wood working shop or a Miners Bunk house.

We have some experienced Docents that will guide anyone through the Assay Process. Also, they will guide you through ~100 years of industrial progress that made Mining a somewhat profitable Business.

We are still looking for Rocks with character and a Rock hound that can identify some of the existing rocks we have.

Last year we had ~ 200 school children come through the office and gave them a wonderful experience they don't teach in schools.

Did you know (I do not know for sure) the consensus is they pulled out ~\$23,000,000 (yes that's Millions) of gold out of this Mine at \$20. an ounce? And if you look up today's price it is over \$1,200 per ounce. You do the math!



The Mohawk mill was temporarily stabilized by DPR in December 2017 to allow time for planning and fundraising to eventually redo this historic structure!

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