



# The Ore Car



**SPRING 2016 Newsletter of the Plumas-Eureka State Park Association**

## Tim Hardie - PESPA Chair



Exciting news, PESPA has agreed to publish a new book, "PLUMAS EUREKA ON GLASS - a Cultural History of Plumas Eureka Mine", by Bruce MacGregor. Please see the included article for details of the offer to PESPA Members. Also, for your added information the front the book is reprinted in this ORE CAR.

Cal Parks Assistant Archeologist for the Sierra District, Denise Jaffke, has received a grant to dig an area in our campground near sites 26, 27 and 28. What are they looking for? This spot is on the delta of the Jameson and Little Jameson Creeks and thought to be the home of the original stamp mill for the 76 Mine and beneath that the location of a Maidu dump. Exploring our history all summer long, a few volunteers will be included in this project, so raise your interest and be prepared for considerable training! Remember last year's re-visit of Eureka Mills on the mountain. Special tours available for small groups on request.

Other promising projects for PESPA in the 2016 season: 60 kids from Portola Charter School visiting in May before Park opening – 4<sup>th</sup> graders from Portola to visit before June 10<sup>th</sup> to understand PESP history and enjoy the music of Pat O'Reilly, Park Interpretive Ranger, at a modified campfire program for lunch – annual 6<sup>th</sup> grade migration from Paradise spending their last three days of school year camping at PESP first week of June – planning assay office expansion to include a diorama of an active mine adit, an engineering office and photo gallery – memorial bench to be set in June at campsite 67 by a family who has visited annually for 30 years – completion of repairing and painting buildings in Historical District by maintenance staff, funded by Cal. Parks Foundation grant – PESPA and DPR working to keep ahead of Mother Nature.

Winter returned to the Plumas Eureka State Park allowing PESPA's winter team to groom trails this past winter season, all led by the generous leadership and volunteer hours by Ken and Debby McMaster. If you haven't been able to ski or snowshoe at PESP because of no snow MARK YOUR BUCKET LIST for 2016-2017 season for a very special experience. No state funds are used for this program.

<http://www.plumas-eureka.org> is PESPA website, look it up for yearly calendar – daily activities, links to campground reservations and interesting events in the area. Come and re-visit this summer and thank the volunteers for their efforts.

Best for last, THANK YOU to DPR employees, campground hosts, PESPA volunteers, docents, and members for supporting this endeavor. Your efforts help us to educate about and interpret this Hidden Gem of the Lost Sierra, Plumas Eureka State Park.

Please Email your suggestions, comments and ideas to Tim Hardie/ [Hardies@psln.com](mailto:Hardies@psln.com) or call 530-836-1995

## Tim Quandt - Ranger



As we move into the 2016 season at Plumas-Eureka State Park, I find myself anxious to see what will unfold this year. With a decent winter dropping snow-loads not seen for a few years, the park was able to offer groomed trails for cross-country skiers and snowshoe aficionados as well as a return of the World Championship Longboard Races at the Johnsville Ski Bowl. The races were held the third Sundays of January, February and March and this Ranger found himself strapping on longboards and actually competing for the first time in March. I crossed the finish line and didn't fall or lose my Stetson, but I lost my heat. I will return again next season with the intent of winning

As I write this, the road to the campground is still impassable with snow covering the way for most of the stretch back. I walked the museum trail in snowshoes a couple weeks back and the beauty was incredible. Visitors to the park this winter who took advantage of the opportunities to hike in snowshoes or travel on cross-country skis truly got to witness a side of the park that most don't see and it is treasure to behold.

With the nice snow pack on the mountains surrounding the park, I expect the watershed will be very healthy this spring providing the park with many happy fish to be sought by anglers and the lakes should be full for those who wish to hike and enjoy them.

Our regular park staff will all be returning this season and we hope to see some new faces possibly helping with the camphost program. We have a number of projects in the works...some in the planning stages and some being actualized. We may see work to the museum trail and in other areas of the park to help us become more accessible to our disabled visitors, as well as ongoing maintenance to our historical structures and other park facilities. We have a number of interpretive projects that are in the planning stages, which we will share more about as we get closer to realizing them.

Moving through the summer, I hope to see many of you attending Gold Discovery Days, the Dinner in the Park and just coming to visit for the day or camp with us for a weekend or a week or two. I think the 2016 Summer Season may be the best I've shared with you all so far!

## PESPA Board of Directors for 2015-16

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## Save The Dates

**Saturday, April 30<sup>th</sup>** – Annual Volunteer Training, 10:00 am at the Museum for new volunteers/docents. Special program for all (new and returning) volunteers 1:00 pm.

**Saturday, May 7<sup>th</sup>** – Annual Volunteer work day 10:00 am Historic District.

**Weekend, July 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup>** – Gold Discovery Days at the Park

**Thursday, August 18<sup>th</sup>** – On Thursday, August 18<sup>th</sup> at 5 PM as part of the Plumas Eureka State Park Association's fifth annual *Dinner in the Park* fundraising event, Steve Hale of Genoa, Nevada will portray Stephen T. Mather in an interpretive/educational presentation. Steve Hale will present



Mather's bold vision that birthed a new US National Park

Service on August 26, 1916. He was appointed its first Director with faithful Assistant Horace Albright at his side. After amassing a fortune as the consummate salesman, that included creating the iconic 20 Mule Team Borax brand, Mather masterfully sold his captivating vision of how the national parks should be managed together as national treasures for the

American people. Mather will describe in first person how Lake Tahoe was denied national park status three times during his lifetime. On the other hand, Tahoe played a little known but indispensable key role in inspiring him to give nature interpretation a central role in the new Agency's mission. You are invited to come hear these stories and Mathers's unique idea embodied in a unified national park system continue to inspire the world over a century later as the National Parks, America's best idea.

Tickets to the event will be limited to 100 so be sure and get yours early. For additional information and pre-ticket sale reservations contact Tim Hardie at [hardies@psln.com](mailto:hardies@psln.com) or 530-836-1995.

All proceeds from the event benefit Plumas Eureka State Park Association.

# Plumas Eureka State Park

*proudly presents*

## GOLD DISCOVERY DAYS

*Johnsville, California*

**July 16 and 17, 2016**  
10 o'clock to 3 o'clock

*The pioneering spirit comes alive with a bonanza of FREE activities for the whole family*

**Blacksmith Shop Demo  
Moriarty House Tours  
Assay Office Tours  
Wood Working  
Period Costume  
Tintype Photos**

**Gold Panning  
Food + Music  
Candle Making  
Wagon Rides  
Children's Games  
Museum Displays**

**Rotary Pancake Breakfast Under the Trees  
Sunday July 17th, 8-11 AM**

[www.plumas-eureka.org](http://www.plumas-eureka.org)

## **Investigating on Ancestral Mountain Maidu Archaeological Site**

**Denise Jaffke 3/19/2016**

The Northern Maidu, native inhabitants of Plumas and surrounding counties, occupy the Feather River region and its many tributaries. Prior to the arrival of miners and farmers to the area, Mohawk Valley and surrounding area, was seasonally occupied by the Northeastern Maidu. The Northeastern, or Mountain Maidu, are one of three Penutian-speaking Maidu groups; the other two groups are the Southern Maidu, or Nisenan, and the Northwestern Maidu, or Konkow.

The Mountain Maidu territory begins at the headwaters of the North and Middle Forks of the Feather River. Major villages were generally placed below the 4000-ft elevation level, presumably to avoid the heavy snows of winter. Big Meadows (Lake Almanor), American Valley (Quincy), and Indian Valley are traditionally held to be major examples of permanent habitation localities, or rather, of winter habitation areas. They established settlements along the edges of these valleys, within the timbered borders and out of the marshy flats. Following the winter rains and snow, families would leave these low elevation villages in favor of seasonally productive upland areas. These seasonal encampments were situated to provide easy access to important hunting, fishing and gathering areas.

Rapid disruption of the central Sierra territories during the Gold Rush had a profound effect on the Mountain Maidu. Miners and ranchers moved into traditionally occupied areas, restricting access to important seasonal resources. Although they suffered direct effects of the incursion, it was the indirect effects of ranching and mining that ultimately threatened the Mountain Maidu way of life.

Histories of California's past have primarily been concerned with the trials, triumphs, and progress of Euroamerican miners, ranchers, and settlers while minimizing the expansive history of the indigenous groups that called the state their home for over 12,000 years. Plumas Eureka State Park has unfortunately continued this bias, highlighting the area's 150 years of mining industry and skiing tradition with only brief discussions of the Indian population that occupied the area before the 1851 gold discovery. We are now looking to correct this imbalance through research, collaboration, and interpretation.

Numerous pre-contact archaeological sites have been discovered in recent years along the Jamison Creek corridor, but aside from recording surface artifacts, there's been little effort toward a comprehensive understanding about how these resources collectively functioned in the larger seasonal cycle of mobility and resource exploitation. In May 2016, Parks and Sonoma State archaeologists will conduct the first systematic subsurface investigation of an ancestral Maidu site in the park. The site located in the Upper Jamison Creek Campground was initially discovered during studies conducted for the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) toxic remediation work in 2011. Although limited, the initial investigation produced a relatively sizeable sample of basalt manufacturing tools and debris, including several diagnostic projectile points dating back as early as 3,000 years. Although most people prefer to be involved with the excavation, the real work is done in the lab; washing, sorting, bagging, and cataloging the collected artifacts. PESPA volunteers will be a critical component to getting these items processed in the five short days of fieldwork. If you would like to participate as a volunteer, please contact Tim Hardie or Denise Jaffke.

## Winter At The Park

### Ken McMaster - Volunteer

Winter is a beautiful and magical time of year to visit Plumas Eureka State Park. Cross country skiers and snowshoers are invited to use the variety of trails within the approximately 12 kilometer (8 mile) groomed trail system.

The trail system passes through part of California's history. In fact, this area was the birthplace of winter sports in North America. In 1851, what we now call Plumas- Eureka, gold was discovered. In the winter mining operations slowed, and the miners found themselves with free time on their hands. It was in this area that competitive downhill ski races were held, possibly for the first time in North America. Racers started above Eureka Lake, and traveled the 1,700-foot run with speeds up to (and sometimes more than!) 80 miles per hour. They moved on what they called "long boards" or "snowshoes". Today, we call them skis. These "long boards" measured up to twelve feet in length, and often weighed as much as 20 pounds. They also had one long, large ski pole which was carried between the legs, and served as a brake (although they did little braking!). Prize money for the winners ran as high as \$250.00, a considerable amount in those days. The famous "Snowshoe Thompson" raced here, too. Today, the Plumas Ski Club continues the tradition with the annual "Historic Longboard Revival Race Series", held at the former Johnsville Ski Hill. Check out the Ski Club's website, [plumasskiclub.org](http://plumasskiclub.org) for a schedule of events.

Today, with two trailheads and 8 separate trails, winter enthusiasts will find different terrain to suit their abilities. The professionally groomed trail system includes set track and skating lanes, as well as separate snowshoe trails, which meander through the majestic woods, following the general course of the groomed cross country ski trail system. Picnic tables are located at each trailhead and along the trails. The trail system is managed entirely by PESPA volunteers and the use of the trails and its maintenance is accomplished solely through donations (a donation slot is located on the Museum door). Trail maps are available at each trailhead and grooming reports are available online at [www.plumaseureka.org](http://www.plumaseureka.org).

The Museum Trailhead, with ample plowed parking, accesses the main Plumas- Eureka trail, a 2.7 km beginner trail with great views of the surrounding peaks. This trail takes folks into the myriad of the park's trails. Immediately off of this trail is a new beginner loop, called Bear Scat Flat.

From the Jamison Trailhead, also with plenty of plowed parking (and a porta-potty) the 2.2 km beginner trail accesses the Camp Lisa trail (intermediate) or the new Harpers trail (beginner). From there, or from the Museum Trailhead, the Upper Campground trail or Lower Campground Loop are located at the midway junction of the trail system. At Camp Lisa, there is a short out and back trail that overlooks Jamison Creek and Eureka Peak, with an incredible view! An information kiosk is planned to be established for the 2016-2017 season at the start of this trailhead.

For winter enthusiasts, these trails are waiting to be enjoyed! Come out and enjoy the deep blue skies of winter, sparkling snow, and the beautiful views of Eureka Peak and Mt. Washington. It is the locals go to place for wintertime adventure.

## Special Offer for PESPA Members

Jay Skutt - Volunteer

The PESPA Board is offering PESPA members the First Chance to order Bruce MacGregor's new book Plumas Eureka on Glass. It is a cultural history of the Plumas Eureka Mine. Bruce is a descendant of one of the family's that is highlighted in the book. He has spent over 10 years researching and writing. His sources included letters and documents from William Johns, Mine Superintendent, that were found in the Bancroft Library, State Parks Archives and records found at the Park. Bruce is in possession of family photographs that were printed from glass plates that were taken by Mitchell-White. This is not the first book Bruce has written, he has written eight books on California History. We feel very fortunate to be able to publish this book for Bruce.

The book comes in two formats, hardcover with colored and black and white photos and softcover with Black and white photos. There are nearly 300 pages of very interesting facts about the mining operation and a story line that follows two family's through the heydays of Johnsville and the surrounding settlements. It is a very descriptive easy to read account of life in the gold mines. Many of the photographs have not been seen by the public. The hardcover offer includes the author's signature on the title page.

Our first printing is very limited and we are offering PESPA members the opportunity to order first. The hardcover sells for \$89.95, tax and shipping \$12.00, and softcover \$29.95, tax and shipping \$7.25. The book should be available when the Park opens the end of May. If you want to combine your membership with the book purchase please do so. Any questions call Jay Skutt, 530-836-4135.

## The Making of Plumas Eureka on Glass

### Bruce MacGregor - Author

If the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, then it follows that a history book is more than the thousands of facts that fill its pages.

Ten years ago, when I first met Plumas Eureka State Park docent and historian, Phil Reese, it became clear to me that several large, unique collections of Plumas Eureka Mine records existed. Phil personally acted as custodian for the Plumas Eureka Collection, containing thousands of photographs, prospects sheets, legal records and newspaper articles from the period of British ownership of the mine, 1871 to 1905. He shared them. It was amazing to realize there were 69 boxes of material in the collection.

I began to dig- mostly out of curiosity - but perhaps also to answer a question I've long asked myself. Why hasn't the Plumas Eureka Mine gotten the book it deserved? The last narrative history about the mine was done by W. Turrentine Jackson in 1961, over fifty years ago. Jackson wrote a wonderful essay on the mine. But as far as I could tell, he did not have access to the papers that Phil Rees curated, or to the collections that soon began to appear, as if by magic, in the months that followed. New sources, and new research, would make a whole new approach possible.

I kept finding new stashes of material. I learned of the William Johns Mining Records, held at The Bancroft Library, which proved to be an even larger collection of mine correspondence from the time period of the British ownership of the mine. And private collections, those of Jim and Dianne White and Barry Foster, added personal facts about two families important to the mine: Barry is the great grandson of William Johns, who ran the mine for thirty years, and Jim White is a third generation descendent of Sam White, who worked as a miner and was a distant relative of my own, through marriage.

In the ten years of work that followed, these collections became small gold mines of their own. Each one took years for me to research, understand, and summarize in the form of notes and photographic scans. Often, one collection would provide leads to find another collection.... and then another. A newspaper- the Plumas National- added to the wealth of facts through its continuous coverage of the mine. Genealogical records came to light for the Johns family, the Mitchell family, the Whites, the Soroccos and the MacGregors (my own family) - who worked in the mine and whose roles gradually became clear.

But to be honest, even as this mountain of information grew, the idea of making a book out of it became more and more distant. To put it another way, buried under a mountain of facts, it was hard to imagine what the view from the summit would look like. I had reached a point, about three years ago, where the bounty of new information had to fit – like puzzle pieces- into a picture I couldn't quite see. The book wasn't a book, just thousands of pieces. No text was even begun.

Then, in the seventh year of work on the project, one of those strange, unexplainable discoveries came along that put all the facts into perspective and all the fragments into a clear picture... a force so powerful that it seemed to gather all the thousands of fragments together and squeeze them through into a narrow opening. Arson- not one but at least four separate fires- ravaged the mountain town of Johnsville, the support community for the Plumas Eureka Mine. The worst of the arsons, in 1906, killed two people, adding the crime of murder to a community already stressed by declining profits from the mine, and layoffs.

Learning about the arsons had the same organizing affect on the book as a plot does to a novel. Characters took on well-defined roles; good guys emerged. And so did villains. From this point in the ten year history of the project, it took less than a year to write the text that became Plumas Eureka on Glass. The book almost wrote itself.

You'll need to read the book to find out the identity of the arsonist, but in revealing the villain, the book explores the rich history of the towns of Jamison City, Johnsville and Eureka Mills, the Plumas Eureka Mine and the courageous community of miners who contributed to the mine's enormous success.

Bruce MacGregor, is the author of eight books about California history. His critically acclaimed Birth of California Narrow Gauge was published by Stanford University Press in 2002. He continues to work as a photojournalist, living in the Pacific Northwest.

### **Questions, Comments, or Concerns**

FYI: We always include a membership form in every Ore Car as everyone does not pay their dues at the same time so if you have already paid for 2015, just skip that page. E-Mail: [pespablairsden@gmail.com](mailto:pespablairsden@gmail.com)  
Mail: P.O. Box 1148, Graeagle, CA 96103 Web Site: [Plumas-Eureka.org](http://Plumas-Eureka.org)



## PLUMAS-EUREKA STATE PARK ASSOCIATION 2016 MEMBERSHIP

It is time to renew your PESPA membership for 2016. Please fill out the form below and send along with your tax-deductible check!

PESPA is dedicated to supporting interpretation and education at Plumas-Eureka State Park and your continued support through memberships and donations also helps in the efforts to keep the park open.

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### Plumas-Eureka State Park Association Membership Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

#### *Membership for a friend:*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

*You will receive correspondence and newsletters electronically if you provide your email address.*

Membership: **NEW RENEWAL** (Circle One)

Membership type:

- Annual Single Person Membership (\$25)
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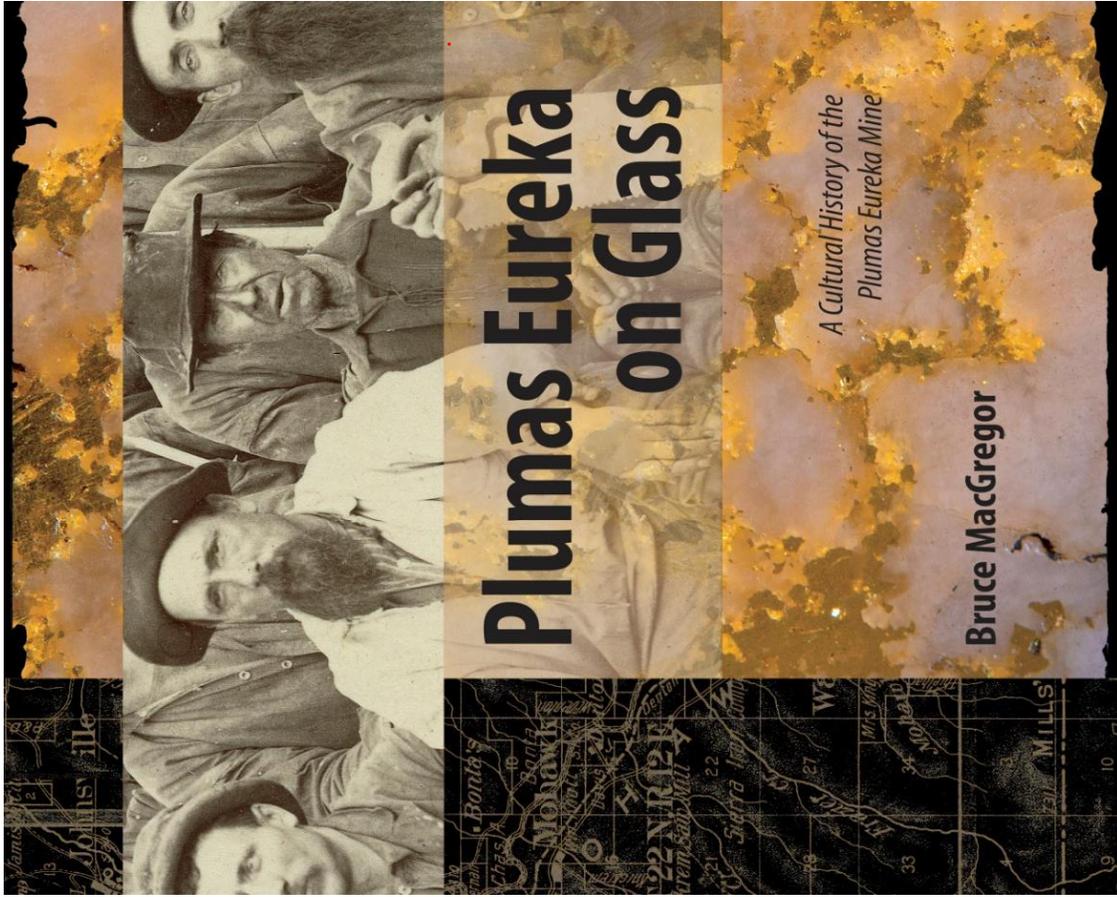
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Please mail your tax-deductible check to:

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PO Box 1148  
Graeagle, CA 96103  
Attn: Membership

*If you're moving or would no longer like to receive our mailings, please let us know. By emailing us at **pespablairsden@gmail.com***



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