



## Newsletter of the Plumas Eureka State Park Association

### FALL - WINTER 2019

#### MESSAGE FROM BOARD PRESIDENT - Dennis Black



I have been asked if I would be willing to serve as the President of the PESPA Board this year and am looking forward to the opportunity. We are fortunate to have this beautiful and historic gem here in the "Lost Sierra". This summer I had the pleasure of interacting with many of the guests who came to visit. Several said that what they enjoy about this park is the many friendly and helpful volunteers that answer questions and make history come alive. I agree!

My thanks to all the volunteers that have offered their time during the summer. We have a great group of volunteers, but there is always room for more. I would like to answer some of the questions and concerns that prospective volunteers may have.

#### How much time is required if I volunteer?

There is no minimum. Each volunteer decides how much time they have to volunteer.

#### What if I don't know much about the area I am interested in?

You can learn from other volunteers until you feel comfortable in your area.

#### What if I am going to be out of town part of the summer?

Many volunteers take trips in the summer. Just let the person who is in charge of your area know you are unavailable.

#### How do I know where to volunteer?

We will let you know what opportunities are available and you try out what you want and volunteer where you like the best.

#### How do I get started?

Give me a call and I will point you in the right direction. We would love to have you join the team.

Dennis Black  
(530) 249-4334



# JAMISON MINE BARN and MINERS CABIN PROJECT

## By Denise Jaffke, Parks' Archaeologist

Plumas Eureka State Park Association funded stabilization/rehabilitation work on two buildings in the Jamison Mine Historic complex this year. The foundation of the Jamison barn, west lean-to addition, was failing which



Figure 1 West side lean-to addition

resulted in the structure pulling away from the barn's western wall (Figure 1). This force was adding tension to the main structure framing, compromising the overall integrity of the building. It is imperative to make repairs early to avoid more costly repairs in the future.

Volunteers from HistoriCorps, a nonprofit, volunteer based organization, replaced deteriorated sill plates with rough-sawn 6" x 6" timbers and sistered new 2" x 6" studs to existing deteriorated wall studs (Figure 2). While working on the western wall, HistoriCorps project supervisor Patrick Kennedy discovered a deteriorated portion of the southern sill beam. As a result, dry laid stone piers were constructed to support the replaced sill.

Ledger boards were securely fastened to the lean-to rafters, tying the two structures together. The group also replaced deteriorated siding to match the existing along with scraping, sanding, priming, and painting the western addition (Figure 3). Lastly, the crew rehung the sagging main barn double doors and shed doors.



Figure 3 New sill plate on west wall



Figure 2 New siding and painting in process

After concluding work on the barn, volunteers and staff then began stabilization work on the southern miner's cabin. The building's western wall's top plate had detached. The goal of this portion of the project was to halt continued movement of the western room from the main, eastern room. This was done by attaching cables to the interior walls and securing them using turnbuckles. The team also secured the back doorway by screwing in boards to discourage future entry into the building (the door had been previously damaged by illegal entry).

A total of 13 people, representing a total of 632 volunteer hours, worked to ensure that these significant historic buildings remain standing and continue to serve as outdoor exhibits that help convey the mining history of the area. This project would not have been possible without the financial support of PESPA and dedicated Park maintenance supervisor David Cooley and Ranger Tim Quandt. Thanks to all who helped make this project a success!

# "THE WILLIAM JOHNS PRESENTATION WATCH"

By Bruce Macgregor, Author of "Plumas Eureka On Glass"

One of the ironies about researching and writing historical non-fiction is the near-certainty of finding great material *after* the book comes out. Published in the spring of 2016, **Plumas Eureka on Glass** followed the pattern. In the book, I described a ceremonial watch given to William Johns (manager of the Plumas Eureka Mine) upon the completion of the Mohawk Mill in December 1878. It was given in gratitude for Johns' tireless effort in completing the complicated, expensive ore processing facility for his London-based company. The facts surrounding the watch came from a letter written by Johns himself to a company officer named George Coulter, on December 26, 1878. In the letter, Johns thanked Coulter not only for the watch, but also for the gifts of a barometer and a fur coat, both of which came in handy in the long, cold winters of the northern Sierra Nevada Mountains.

The gifts came from his British employer, the Sierra Buttes Gold Mining Co., Ltd. They certainly recognized the important role that the Mohawk Mill would play in the fortunes of the mine, but they also recognized the long, successful role that William Johns had already played not only in the Plumas Eureka, but also in other mining properties that the British company owned in California.

The ironic twist came a year later, when the watch itself was revealed to be in the collection of Kim Foster, a descendent of William Johns. Even more ironic, Kim practically turned out to be my neighbor, living in an adjacent town in Oregon. In July of 2017, I met Kim and with his permission, photographed the historic gold watch. It was manufactured in London and bore the following engraving on an inside cover:

Presented  
to  
William Johns  
by the  
Sierra Buttes Mining Company.  
of London  
1878



And yes, in case you're wondering, although 139 years old, the watch still ran.

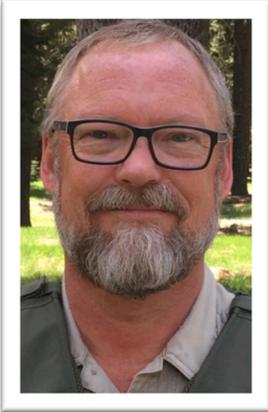
The historic timepiece and the remains of the Mohawk Mill itself are remarkable survivors from the heyday of the Plumas Eureka Mine. And who knows, if our luck holds out, the fur coat and the barometer may still turn up.

## RANGER RAMBLINGS

By Tim Quandt, PESP Park Ranger



California State  
Park Rangers  
150 Years of Service  
1866-2016



As the shadows get longer, the breezes get cooler and the smell of smoke from warming fires begins to waft through the air, it is obvious that fall is in full swing at Plumas-Eureka State Park. One might argue that winter is quickly coming, as we gathered about 4 inches of snow, while the white stuff dropped for most of a Sunday. The snow is mostly gone now at 5000' but not on the peaks as its presence lingers and reminds us that more should be coming soon. And it shall, but hopefully not before this guy has a chance to bag a few more cords of firewood to keep the cold at bay as the temperatures begin to plummet.

We had an eventful summer season this year, though a bit different than years' past. The campground was packed every weekend and we saw increasing visitation from folk that were new to Plumas-Eureka State Park. Our park has a history of visitors repeatedly returning...it's not uncommon for a family camping with us to be multi-generational, with

the grand or even great-grandparents continuing to introduce their families as they bloom and grow and add new additions. Many times over the course of a summer season, I run into families of this nature...heck, some have been coming here for so long that they even recall my own grandfather when he worked as a ranger here, and that was well over 35 years ago! The regulars have been a staple of Plumas-Eureka, well, forever! They are the user group that we actually expect to show up, year after year! Over the past couple of seasons though, we've been meeting a host of new folks to the park. Yes, I am still swearing them to silence before they leave, but I think it's safe to say that the word is out and we've been found. Plumas-Eureka State Park is no longer the best-kept secret in the state! So far, these folk seem to fit in nicely, like a dovetail joint, and as new as they may be to our park, they immediately fall in love (like so many of us) and become mindful stewards of this precious jewel. Welcome to the Plumas-Eureka family new folk, we're happy to have you!

This past summer we sorely missed our interpreter/naturalist Patrick O'Reilly and his own special brand of education and entertainment that he brings to the table, as he dealt with some last minute personal matters. We're making arrangements for next season already, to ensure that the Plumas-Eureka State Park history of dynamic interpretation continues. Whether Patrick returns next season, and in what capacity, is still to be determined...by him...but I presently have a pool of applicants that would like to emulate his approach as well as volunteers that are willing to step up and assist us to meet our interpretive goals. Whether these folk are working side-by-side/hand-in-hand with Patrick, or carrying the torch for him, next season is still to be revealed, but in any event, our next summer season should be much different than the last in regard to this arena.

While I'm addressing the arena of interpretation, Plumas-Eureka State park is also making preparations to begin highlighting the history and contributions of the Maidu Native Americans that have made this area their home for millennia. It is our hope to have tribal involvement in the park in the near future. I'll hopefully have more news for you regarding this endeavor by the next Spring-Summer newsletter.

If you are one of our many visitors that enjoy wetting a line in the water in the hopes of attracting a trout, you probably had one of the best summers of fishing in the park for some time now. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife was able to plant both Jamison Creek as well as Eureka Lake this year. This was the first time Eureka Lake has seen a planting in many, many years and as of yesterday, folk are still pulling trout out of its cold depths. The road to the lake is now closed for the season however, so you'll have to trudge on foot at this point, if you want to get up there.

The California Conservation Corps have been doing all of that magnificent work on the Madora Lake Trail, bringing it up to ADA standards, so that the disabled may enjoy its beauty. They are nearly done for this season, but will return again next year to complete the project. Speaking of ADA...we were able to open Camp Lisa again this summer, as the work to improve it was completed at the end of last season. Those of you with large groups may want to consider it as an option when you come camping...it CAN be more cost effective than multiple campsites if your group is large enough to take advantage of the cost break.

Another item of note is the work that was completed on the Jamison Mine complex, by the HistoriCorps group, to stabilize structures that have seen better days. The barn at the Grass Lake trailhead saw some improvements as well as one of the cottages near the roadway. The work performed on them should keep them standing a while longer.

Now, as winter approaches, it is time to start planning projects for the next year. Our partners at the Plumas-Eureka State Park Association have no end of ideas and energy and love for this park. They keep things rolling on, improving, and becoming a testament to the tenacity and goodwill that a group of people can inspire as volunteers with a vision and a mission to keep this place that we call Plumas-Eureka State Park, special and valuable for others to visit, see, learn from and fall in love with. Just like us.

Cheers!



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

Dennis Black – President  
Tim Kurdupski - Vice President  
Rich Martinez - Secretary  
Nancy Degger – Treasurer/Membership  
Cathie Davies – Director  
Tim Hardie – Director  
Cliff Romig – Director

The PESPA Board would like to say thanks to all of the volunteers for the many hours they devote to making the park a fun and interesting place to come, and to the members who back the park with their donations and give year-round support. The Board invites you volunteers and members to our winter open house at the Park.

PESPA gratefully accepts all “additional” tax-deductible donations and any donation you choose to make when visiting the park, summer or winter. PESPA is dedicated to supporting interpretive and educational programs at Plumas Eureka State Park. Your memberships and donations are invaluable to this endeavor.

*PESPA is a 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Corporation. Donors' contributions are tax-deductible. Our Federal tax ID Number is 94-2452427.*

# “WHAT ARE THEY DOING?”

By Lorraine Nielsen

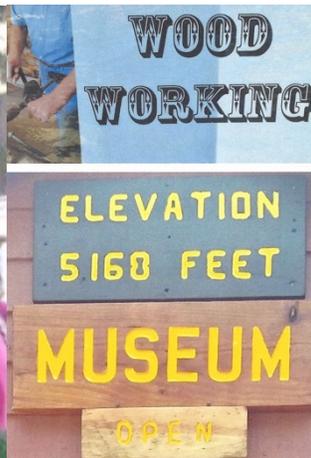


What are they doing?” squealed eager, young voices from across the parking lot at Plumas-Eureka State Park every Saturday this summer, as families approached the museum lawn to watch Janet Baldrige and Lorraine Nielsen demonstrate the art of spinning wool into yarn on their various historic spinning tools. Some visitors were familiar with spinning wheels—a few had grandmothers they had watched at wheels as children—but most were completely amazed by the process and fascinated with the tools. Visitors enjoyed feeling the



wool in different stages: raw, washed, and “carded” (brushed and ready to spin) and a few lucky ones were invited to assist Janet or Lorraine at a great (or “walking”) wheel, the large wool-spinning wheel of the park’s historic time period. Both adults and children displayed great curiosity and had wonderful questions for the spinners. All left the demonstration with new perspectives on daily life in the 1800s and where our textiles come from.

## YOUTH ACTIVITIES AT THE PARK - Hiking, Camping, Learning, Fun:



# HISTORY OF THE JAMISON MINE - Cliff Romig, Board Director

Edited by George Ross, 25 years ago

Condensed by Cliff Romig

There were some similarities but as many differences when the Jamison Mine opened in the late 1880's as the Plumas Eureka was struggling toward a finish line. Early on, a prominent mining man and capitalist named W.J. Cheney bought up a substantial portion of Jamison stock. This renewed faith in this new mine, and brought about a major change. In June 1881, Sam Cheney, son of the prestigious investor, and himself a trained mining engineer, was appointed to be the Superintendent.

Under Cheney's direction the existing 160 foot shaft was driven deeper to a depth of 295 feet, allowing Jamison Creek to drain into it. A pump, improved by Cheney, lifted the water 50 feet to a drain tunnel in a continuous stream 10 inches in diameter, which pumped out 1,800 gallons a minute back into the creek.

It wasn't until 1896-97 that a 20-stamp mill was erected, soon to crush 60 tons of ore per day. The mill tailings were flumed a half mile to arrastras, where the last values could be extracted at \$1 a ton.

The miners fared much better in the more modern mine. A visiting editor wrote:

"Few mines in the state supply their men with as good food that was set before the miners at the Jamison. In the sleeping quarters, iron bedsteads with spring mattresses are furnished. The men appreciate the good treatment..."

There were then about thirty-five on the payroll.



Modernization went underground too; pneumatic drill machines replaced handheld steel drills and 4 pound hammers that were once used to drill holes in the face-rock walls. Dynamite sticks stuffed into deeper holes blasted out bigger loads of ore to fill bigger ore cars.

Some of the abundant water power provided by the Pelton water turbines led to lighting the mine tunnels with strings of electric bulbs and this at half the cost of having oil lamps lighting the mines and surface buildings. With safety improved, insurance costs were lowered.

Still, mining is a dirty and dangerous work. In May 1889, fire started in the drying room where miners' clothing was hung too close to a heater and the fire destroyed the hoisting works, at a loss of \$10,000. The mill and mine shut down until September, and Johnsville felt the pinch. The works reopened, with a crew of sixty men, the largest number to date. A new sprinkling system and hydrants had also been added.

As efficient and cost-effective as the Plumas Eureka had been in its heyday, the Jamison was even better, while its good rock lasted. The total cost of mining and milling a ton of ore--including administrative expenses, taxes, and insurance was \$2.46. The Jamison was making money on ore running \$4.25 to \$4.75 a ton, while Plumas Eureka was going broke on \$6.00 rock. The Jamison mined \$60,000 of gold in 1897 and earned a \$25,000 profit.

In 1898 a Johnsville miner and Hotelman, William Passetta contracted to process the tailings, building two miles of flume to arrastras on Jamison Creek below Johnsville. Hardly a fleck of gold was going to waste.

Sam Cheney transferred to a San Francisco office to direct the many mining interests under his command and George Redstreak took over the Jamison. He and Cheney had teamed up in this successful operation since 1886. Redstreak was also famed as an accomplished ski champion on the heavy Long-boards that were perfected here.

Water shortages in the dry years, starting in 1907, and a reduction in gold values took a toll. The workforce was cut back and operations reduced from a norm of 8-9 months a year to 7 months. And in 1918, for these and other war-related reasons, the mill ran only ten stamps for 188 days.

Although mining continued until 1943, the rich ore was all but exhausted by 1919. Like its older sister (the Plumas Eureka up the hill) it had been a **"Magnificent Mine"**

## "NEW" OLD ITEMS AT THE PARK

By Tim Kurdupski, PESPA Board Vice President

These decrepit ore cars were wasting away outside the Blacksmith Shop at Plumas Eureka State Park. The one on the right was buried to the top of the wheels by a flood we had a couple years ago. To save them from further decay we decided to give them a little better home.



Collecting rails, ties, and some bedding rock we put it all together for a permanent display.

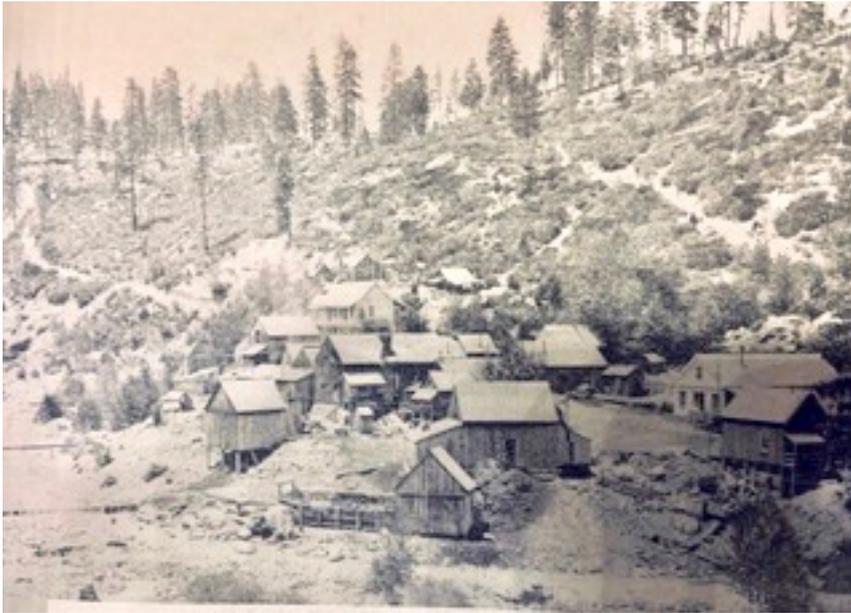
Special thanks to John Work, Howard Lee, Dakota, and Bruce from the park staff for making this all possible.

This display joins a beautiful ore car donated by Norma and Paul Teldeschi and restored by David Cooley. It was placed, dumping its ore, in front of the State Park sign below the museum. Great job Dave!



# THE SEARCH FOR THE LOST CITY OF JAMISON CITY IN THE "LOST SIERRAS" - By Dennis Black, PESPA Board President

Three intrepid old men recently set out on their quest to find the location of the notorious Jamison City.



Armed with only some rudimentary directions and an optimistic outlook, we met at the prearranged location bright and cheery, expecting to find all that remains of this historic town that was an integral part of life in what we now call Plumas Eureka State Park.

The town of Eureka Mills, half way up Eureka Peak, was a family town, civilized and not as prone to "dissipation" as the rambunctious placer mining town of Jamison City.

We knew that much of our exploration would not be following any trails, but what we discovered is brush so thick as to be nearly impassable and ground as steep as a

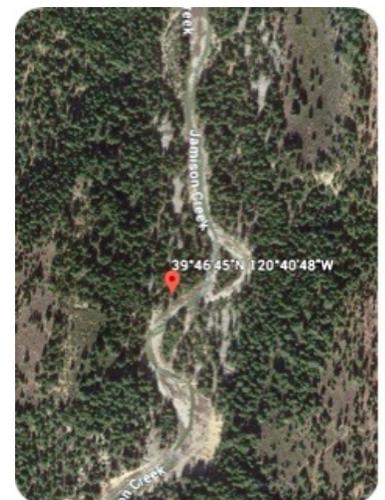
"horse's face eating grass".

We pressed on and finally reached Jamison Creek and were met with the obvious workings of thousands of man-hours searching for the elusive gold nugget. There were acres and acres of rocks piled up, stacked and moved. We let our imagination travel back in time to the 1850's when various enclaves of Chinese, Mexican, Turk, Greek, Italian, Irish and Cornish miners converged on this creek hoping to make their fortune.

Jamison creek was flowing clear and cold, its beauty belying how dangerous and slippery the rocks were as we crossed. In just a split second Tim Hardie was in the water nearly up to his neck and Tim Kerdupski's faithful dog, Jack, refused to cross the flowing rapids. After drying out in the sun for a moment, we continued on our mission. The first settlement we found had various foundations and miscellaneous artifacts but it was lacking level areas big enough to hold Sperry's Hotel, Penman's barn, Cook's Saloon, the Willoughby Store, Ford's barn, Dunn and Tivan's Hotel and other various businesses and homes that we know to have been part of Jamison City.

Continuing up the stream for a while we came to the next settlement among the piles of rocks. This second unnamed location had several foundations big enough for a hotel or saloon, but we wondered if we were still in the suburbs of Jamison City. Throughout the afternoon, we kept our eye out for some sort of road or trail, but to no avail. We eventually came to the third settlement and found even more foundations including what remained of a blacksmith shop.

As the afternoon wore on we decided to head up to the top of the ridge instead of continuing up the creek to make sure we made it home before dark. What we thought would be a simple "three-hour tour" had turned into a nine-hour adventure. I am not convinced we found Jamison City, but we did find various settlements, natural beauty on a perfect fall day, and an adventure that we will not soon forget. Since I ran out of water, I had no choice but to drink from the creek but at the time of this writing I feel fine. Since Giardia takes some time to show symptoms, the jury is still out if this adventure continues.



## **"TAKE A WHIFF"**

### **Musings by Jay Headley, Ranger PI, PESP 1969-1980**

Have you ever smelled a tree? I don't mean smelling the forest as you get into the Sierras or the cottonwoods and willows along a streambed. I mean putting your nose into the bark and taking a good whiff! Of course you might want to check for creepy crawlies in the bark first.

Actually, this is a way to identify one of our Pine trees at PESP. The sun causes the sap to flow in the Jeffrey Pines, producing a smell like vanilla – or maybe strawberries if you ask a five year old.

The picture is of Mr. Jones, Principal of Warm Springs Elementary School, Fremont, CA, taken by Park Aide Joyce Bullivant in 1972 or 1973 on her nature walk.

At Plumas Eureka we have five varieties of Pine trees. Our "common sense" says when we see two cones the same shape, but different sizes that the smaller one is just younger; but that's not the case. –



So, here is a primer on how to know what you're seeing or sleeping under.

First, the five Pines names are: Sugar, Ponderosa, Jeffrey, Lodgepole, and Western White.

Those nice long cones you see decorated at Christmas time belong to the white pine called Sugar Pine. You usually notice them as you drive up the Johnsville Road by Madora Lake. This tree has needles in bunches of 5.

The Sugar Pine's cousin is the Western White Pine and you can find it at Eureka Lake. It too has five needle bunches and the cones are about half the size of a Sugar Pine and the trees are MUCH smaller.

While at Eureka Lake you'll see a two-needle pine tree with fist size cones. This is a Lodgepole Pine. Its bark looks quite scaly.

Now for those who just can't get out of their camp chairs, you will find that the campground pines have long needles in groups of three and that some of the cones are almost pineapple size while others are the size of a baseball.

These "yellow" pines are the Jeffrey and Ponderosa Pines, but which one is which? Actually they're easy to tell apart: First, CAREFULLY grab a cone – the small one (Ponderosa) will prick you and large one (Jeffrey) won't. Now use your nose – smell the bark on the sunny side of the tree. If it smells "sweet" you've found a Jeffrey, if you found a spider instead then it's a Ponderosa.

So now you're an expert on our pines – but remember there are other evergreen trees at PESP – Incense Cedar, Mountain Hemlock, Red Fir, and White Fir.

**AND THEY ALL LOOK GREEN ALL YEAR ROUND**

**HAPPY SNIFFING!**

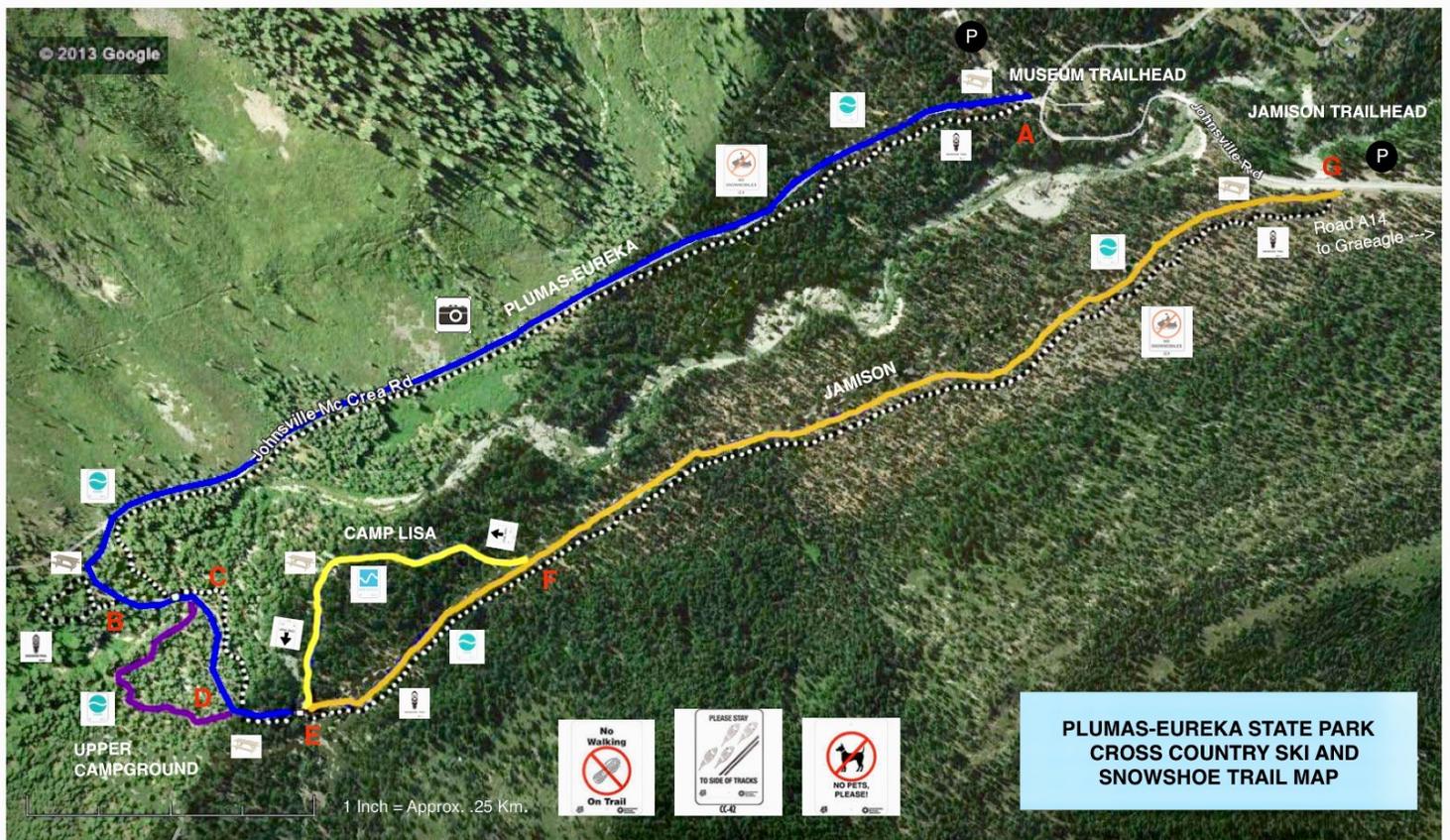
# "WINTER ACTIVITIES"



Museum closed until spring



Trail grooming for skiing



## TRAILS

	Plumas-Eureka	2.7 km
	Upper Campground	.5 km
	Jamison	2.2 km
	Camp Lisa	.6 km

**NOTE:** Letters denote trail intersections. You will find corresponding letters on trail signs for location & orientation. **NO DOGS ALLOWED ON TRAILS**

## SYMBOLS

	Parking
	Snowshoe Trail
	Picnic Table
	Views

	No Snowmobiles
	One Way Trail, Please
	Easier Trail
	More Difficult Trail

.... = Snowshoe Trail  
1 kilometer (km) = .62 miles

### INFORMATION:

THE PLUMAS-EUREKA STATE PARK WINTER CROSS COUNTRY TRAIL SYSTEM IS SUPPORTED BY DONATIONS FROM THOSE WHO USE THE TRAILS. PLEASE DONATE TO THE CONTINUING GROOMING EFFORTS AT THE SLOT ON THE MUSEUM DOOR.

**Snowshoers:** Please use the signed snowshoe trails or stay to the complete side of the groomed ski trails....thank you!

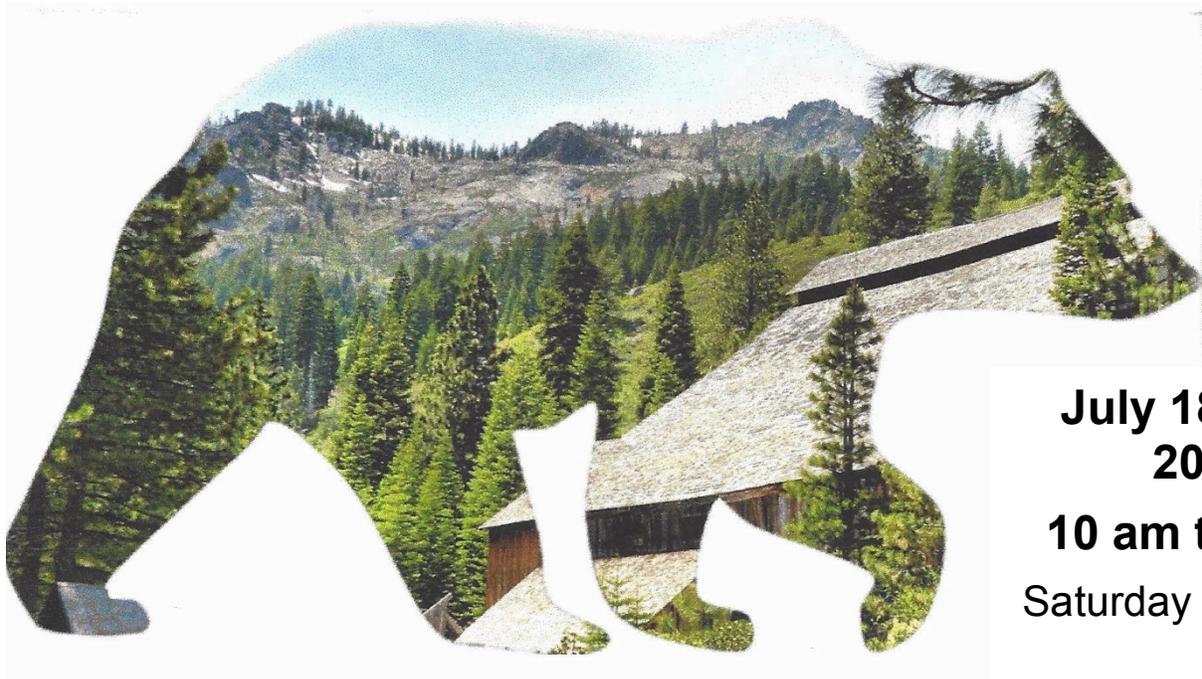
**NOTE:** All kilometers are one way, double km if out & back.

**Notice:** There is no trail sweep at the end of the day.

Plumas Eureka State Park Association  
P. O. Box 1148  
Blairsden, CA 96103

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## GOLD DISCOVERY DAYS



**July 18 & 19,  
2020**  
**10 am to 3 pm**  
**Saturday & Sunday**

For more information check out our website at: [www.plumas-eureka.org](http://www.plumas-eureka.org)

Follow us on Facebook at: Plumas Eureka State Park Association