

The Sierra Pelonaagram



November 2021

... Member of the California Federation of Mineralogical Society Inc. ...

The Sierra Pelona Rock Club is a non-profit organization founded in 1959 with the objective to sponsor activities and promote interest and education in: mineralogy, lapidary, geology, paleontology and related subjects.

SPRC General Meeting

October 19, 2021

Zoom

The meeting was called to order at 7pm. 16 members were in attendance.

Heidi said that she was unable to reach anyone at Gilchrist Farms by phone or email, and any advertisements and the website show no vendors, just in-house activities.

Bill talked about elections coming up in December at the Holiday party. Dues are also due.

Updates were given regarding meeting rooms. Neither Tina White or Peggy Stamboulion had anything new to share, both are waiting for managements to contact them.

Julie Tinoco talked a bit about the upcoming field trip with the Pasadena Gem and Mineral Society. PGMS field chair Rex spoke for a bit about what to expect and where they were going that day.

The meeting was adjourned for Tina's presentation and the Zoom meeting was adjourned at 8:30.

Respectfully Submitted
Heidi S Webber, Secretary,
SPRC



November

Shana Brunes-Ruiz
Frank Hummelbaugh
Jack Jenkins

December

Dianne Erskine-Hellrigel
Mark Scott



Officers:

President – Bill Webber
Vice-President – Julie Tinoco
Secretary: Heidi Webber
Treasurer –Shana Brunes-Ruiz
Federation Director (CFMS/AFMS) --Ron Rackliffe

Chairpersons:

Claim--Linda Jenkins
Donation Rock Table--Dianne Wholleben
Equipment--Bill Webber
Field Trips – Julie Tinoco
Historian -Open
Hospitality – Ron Rackliffe
Membership – Heidi Webber
Website-- Larry Holt
Pelonagram Publisher, Editor – Heidi Webber
Programs –Tina White
Publicity –Open
Sunshine--Brigitte Mazourek

The Sierra Pelona Rock Club, is a member of the California and American Federation of Mineralogical Societies, Inc. (CFMS/AFMS). The general club meetings (Open to the public) are at 7:30 PM, on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at: Currently via Zoom

Contact the Club or the Sierra Pelonagram Editor at:

Sierra Pelona Rock Club

P.O. Box 221256

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Or e-mail: hwebber@pacbell.net

Visit the SPRC website www.sierrapelona.com



President's Message

Here it is already almost another year gone. We still don't have a new meeting room; our fingers are crossed that we will have one soon. It has always been very difficult to find rooms to use in the SCV, and the pandemic hasn't helped.

This is a very busy time of year for most of us. The holidays are coming up like a speeding train. Our club Holiday Party is on December 11 at the clubhouse of my motorcycle club, a rustic old building on Sierra Highway.

The party will be pretty much as usual: the club will provide a turkey and ham, and the paper and plastic. You will bring dishes that compliment it. Tina White will be emailing you all a sign-up list.

The party is also our General Meeting for December and December is when we hold elections for the board for the following year. We really would like to see new blood on the board, which equals new ideas and traditions. So please think about it and support your club. The current board has been in office for a couple years now. We will have your back, so don't be afraid to take that step. As a bonus, the new president gets to write the President's Message for the Pelonagram. (Or your exceedingly lovely and helpful spouse...)

AND, last but certainly not least, dues are due by January 1 and late by the board meeting in February. After that, there is a \$2 late fee and membership will be dropped by February 28. Please, the club needs all our members plus we LIKE each other, so don't let it get that far. You can pay at the Holiday Party, so make it easy and save a stamp! Shana also has Zelle, Venmo and CashApp, so you can pay your dues that way too. Her transfer info is at the bottom of this message.

Also, for the party, we will have our auction. Bring clean and working items. They don't have to be rock related. If your item doesn't go at auction, please take it back with you. This is a great time to clear out a few things from your garage or closet. And bring small bills! (Shana also has Venmo--@ShanaRuiz805, Zelle--805.746.0287 or CashApp--\$Shana805 or good old check, if that helps).

As you can see, a lot is going on. I hope to see you all at the party.

SPRC Business Meeting

November 2, 2021

Zoom

The meeting was called to order at 7:10pm. In attendance were Ron Rackliffe, Tina White, Julie Tinoco and Bill and Heidi Webber.

Shana was unable to attend, but Heidi noted that there were no expenses or income for October.

The board was presented with the documents needed to be approved to use the clubhouse of Peggy Stamboulion. Heidi moved to turn down the proposal as it was very expensive for the club to use. Ron seconded; the motion passed. We do want to thank Peggy for bringing us the proposal and doing the legwork with her management company to get to this point. We are still waiting to hear from College of the Canyons.

Elections are in December. We really need club members to run for a position: they are all open for reelection.

Dues are due by January 1 and late as of the February board meeting. Dues are \$25 per adult and \$5 per youth from 7-18 years.

The Holiday Party will be held on Saturday December 11 from 11am-whenever at the Sierra Inn on Sierra Highway. Heidi will send out details to the club membership. This will be a pot luck with the club providing turkey and ham and paper goods. Tina will be emailing a sign-up sheet for the side dishes.

Julie will email membership about the December field trip the first weekend in December. We are thinking of something a little different and very local. Details will follow.

With no more items on the agenda, Ron motioned to adjourn. Julie seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 8:34pm.

Respectfully Submitted
Heidi S Webber, Secretary, SPRC

The Lost Burro Mine

The Lost Burro Mine is located in Inyo County California, within the boundaries of Death Valley National Park. It is recorded in the USGS MRDS database as records 10036121 and 10236489.

The mine was discovered in 1907 and was worked intermittently by several owners until the 1970s.

The National Park Service has provided a report with historical details and a site assessment for the remaining mine infrastructure; the following text is from that report. Mine photos were taken in 2008.

Lost Burro Mine History

The rich outcroppings of the Lost Burro Mine were first discovered, quite by accident, on 18 April 1907 by Bert Shively while in the process of rounding up some of his burros. Shively, who had formerly been involved in a lease on Ladd Mountain in Rhyolite, immediately filed on six claims that showed free gold with surface assays running from \$40 to \$1,000 per ton.

In partnership with him on the property located about 3-1/2 miles northeast of the Racetrack and six miles north of the Ulida Mine were W. D. Blackmer, general manager of the Tramp Consolidated; W.B. Morris, superintendent of the Bullfrog Mining Company; Charles N. Garden, superintendent of the Tramp Consolidated; and Jack McCormick.

Almost immediately the five discoverers bonded the property for sixty days to a Julius Lamley (Lemle) of Beatty and associates for \$45,000, the new operators intending to work eighteen shifts a week. For one reason or another their plans did not materialize, and a month later their option was turned over in the form of a working bond of \$50,000 to Thomas Cornish, a Denver capitalist, and H.B. Lind of Goldfield. By October, however, due to a complex chain of circumstances, the property had reverted to the original owners.



It seems that upon Cornish's death, his partner Lind, being hospitalized, was unable to make the next payment on the property within the allotted time. His request for an extension was denied by the owners, who doubtless preferred operating what was turning into an extremely valuable property by themselves or leasing it to someone else at a much higher price. The mine was producing ore reportedly averaging \$80.86 per ton in gold, with at least \$50,000 worth of the ore in sight; probably tons more existed underground that was as yet undeveloped.

The financial depression of 1907 did not halt work at the Lost Burro, by now regarded as one of the richest claims in the Ubehebe District. It was proposed, however, that some crude form of treatment, such as mortaring and panning, be used to process the ore and help make ends meet during this crisis period. A 110-foot tunnel was the extent of the property's underground workings in the winter of 1907.

By early spring 1908 the property was undergoing another change of ownership, with its appropriation by the Goldfield Consolidated interests for a reported \$35,000. Incentive for the purchase was probably provided by recent assay results ranging from \$300 to \$1,450 in gold per ton.

By February 1909 the mineralized zone on the Burro that was being worked included a ten-foot-wide blanket vein with an extraordinary showing of \$15 to \$18 in gold per ton from wall to wall, and a very rich twelve-inch-wide strike that ran through the property and produced samples running well over \$1,000 per ton.

A new sale was now pending for the property involving a reputed \$60,000, and rumors hinted that the new owners would install a mill to handle the high-grade ore. The end of February saw completion of the deal for \$40,000 to mining interests from California, the third sale concerning the property on which a payment had been made within the last two years, total cash payments amounting to \$9,000.



Development at the site consisted of a 120-foot-deep shaft with lateral workings running along the vein. Several thousand tons of ore, said to be worth around \$30,000, had been stockpiled on the dump. Immediate company, plans called for shipping the high-grade ore while awaiting completion of the mill.

Once again, in the summer of 1909, the Lost Burro came under option, this time to a Keeler man for \$4,000, but no further mention was found as to whether he made the required payment. By 1911 Charles Garden and the McCormick brothers were still performing annual assessment work on the Lost Burro Group, where development now included a fifty-foot-long lower tunnel that intersected a vein yielding an average of \$15 in gold per ton.

Four years later the Montana-Tonopah Company secured the property on a lease and bond basis, their tests showing that 85% of the gold could be recovered by amalgamation. Construction was immediately begun on the foundations for a fifty-ton five-stamp mill to be shipped from Bonnie Claire. Trucks would be used to haul the machinery the first thirty miles from the railhead over the good sections of the road, and a Caterpillar tractor, maintaining a top speed of three miles per hour, would be used over the last difficult twenty-two miles to the mine.



In 1917 the mine property was reported to consist of several short tunnels driven along the vein and intersecting ore averaging \$25 per ton; no production of record had yet resulted. Mention was also made of foundations existing for a five-stamp mill and cyanide plant, which had never been completed, that was to have been powered by water relayed via a pipeline from Burro Spring located on Tin Mountain about 7-1/2 miles northeast.

The property, listed as owned by the Lost Burro Mining Company of Los Angeles, W.H. (D?) Blackmer, president, was idle at this time, but the report said that the property had reportedly been sold to the Montana-Tonopah Mines Company, of which Charles E. Knox of Berkeley was superintendent and manager. This was evidently the last year the property was worked until the 1930s.

In 1928 a notice of deeds filed associated Andy McCormick with ownership of the Lost Burro and Lost Burro No. 2 mines. According to the present claimant, Mr. W.C. Thompson, the Montana-Tonopah Company leased the mine from McCormick from 1906 through 1912, after which time McCormick and his partner Phil Day recovered \$85,000 in gold from the property.

McCormick continued mining here until 1938, occasionally shipping small amounts of ore. Thompson also states that he and A.Z. "Shorty" Borden relocated the original claims in 1942, Borden later quitclaiming them before his death and Thompson then amending the claims in

1948. Official records, however, show the Lost Burro #1 and #2 claims were relocated by these two men in 1948 along with a Gold Belt Mill Site 1/4 mile north of the spring and later amended by Thompson as sole owner in 1970.

Thompson continued performing a small amount of mining activity and at one time intended to install a ball mill above Mosquito Spring to process the Lost Burro gold ore, then averaging \$50 per ton.

Present Status of the Lost Burro Mine

The Lost Burro Mine is located at the northern end of the mountain range separating Hidden Valley from Racetrack Valley. It is situated in a draw reached by a dirt track extending a little over a mile west from the gravel Hidden Valley Road. The site is about 1-1/2 miles south of Lost Burro Gap.

Several signs, some warning against trespass and others of a humorous nature, line the road. The claimant's wood shack is at the mouth of the draw along which, advancing uphill, are the remains of an ore-processing mill; several adits, some of which have been used for storage; a one-chute ore bin; and other miscellaneous mine workings.

The wooden shack, with an associated shed, dugout, and outhouse in close proximity to the northwest, was vandalized sometime toward the end of 1977, and a wood-burning stove and other objects of minimal value were taken. A large trunk was broken into





and its contents—papers and records—scattered about.

The various sealed tunnels leading off the gully were used for storage of fuses, pulleys, canned goods, old mining equipment, mill parts, etc. The mine workings consist of two shafts plus the various tunnels. Thompson evidently built the ore bin himself.

Much debris in the form of rusted oil drums, tin cans, old chairs, etc., as well as several lengths of the Burro Spring two-inch-diameter pipeline litter the site. The mill remains consist of the wooden framework and five or six levels of masonry foundations stair-stepping down the hillside. Various items of machinery connected with the milling operation, such as a small retort or smelter (?) and sluice box (?), are scattered about over the foundations.

The main underground workings include three groups of stopes connected to the surface by two adits, while separate workings surround both the east and west shafts. The Lost Burro Mine lies totally within the Lost Burro #1 and #2 claims.

NPS Recommendations for the Lost Burro Mine Site

The significance of this mine lies in its being the only exclusively gold-bearing property in the Ubehebe District. Considered one of the richest mines in the area, it procured for its owners several thousand dollars in options. Despite the listing of its official production between 1935 and 1942 at 255 ounces of gold, it probably produced closer to \$100,000 during its lifetime.

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Because of the site's status as the largest gold producer in the predominantly copper, lead, and zinc-producing Ubehebe District, and because of the presence of impressive ruins of a large stamp mill, whose operation required construction of an eight-mile-long water pipeline, and of assorted machinery that can contribute to our knowledge of twentieth-century mining technology, the property is determined eligible for nomination to the National Register as being of local significance.

Ref: Western Mining History, Facebook



Claim Signs Made by Ruth and Paul

Ruth Hidalgo and Paul Hobbs made and installed new signs at the claim. They are perfect and were badly needed as the old ones were... old! Really old. Or destroyed. These look great. Thanks guys, you did good.





October 30, 2021 Field Trip

By Julie Tinoco, Field Trip Chair

On Saturday October 30, 2021, the Sierra Pelona Rock Club group of 8 joined with The Pasadena Lapidary Society's group of 18 for a Halloween weekend field trip. On the agenda was Castle Butte, the Sierra Pelona Rock Club Claim, the 20 Mule Team Museum and Brown Butte. Rex the field trip chair of The Pasadena Lapidary Society did a great job organizing and leading the trip.

The group explored two locations at Castle Butte. The hard-to-find Bloodstone was found by some at the first location. In addition, other amazing rocks, including Jasper and Agate were found.

The group traveled to the SPRC claim where it was time to dig. There was float waiting to be picked up, but the ones doing the digging found that the hard work paid off as large pieces of beautiful and extremely colorful Travertine came out of the ground.

The weather was warm and breezy which made for a beautiful day. Some of us went to Domingo's Mexican Restaurant for a relaxing lunch. Six of the SPRC group decided to skip the Museum and Brown Butte and opted to head for home. A wonderful time was had by all.

Photos by Mark Scott, Dianne Wohlleben, and Julie Tinoco.

