

Priest Lake Museum

Spring 2020 Newsletter



MINING MANIA

A new exhibit, *Mining at Priest Lake*, opens this summer in our temporary gallery. Maps and photographs along with objects from the museum's collection will tell the story of the prospectors that hoped to find riches in the hills and mountains around the lake.

In the 1890's and early 1900's, hundreds of prospectors, some securing financing from

investors, headed up to the lake to seek out a treasure of silver, gold, copper, lead and zinc. Many purchased a "grubstake" of supplies at the Leonard Paul store. Visitors can select goods for their own grubstake and see if they could survive the long winters! They can figure out which Priest Lake "sourdough" to buy mining stock from.

Join us for Museum Mining Mania

Outdoor Mining Exhibit
– Located behind the Museum

Mining at Priest Lake Featured Exhibit
Available during Museum hours

Kalispell Bay Mining Hike – July 16/18 @
9:00. Kalispell Bay Day Use Parking Lot

Priest Lake Mines and Prospectors Talk –
July 29 @ 7:00. Inn at Priest Lake

Woodrat Mine Walking Tour - July 30 @
10:00. Meet at the Museum

The exhibit highlights the better-known mines and prospects around the lake and explains mining claims. Visitors can try their luck at guessing which rock specimens might be a viable ore at the lake. Along with the Priest Lake Museum artifacts, the exhibit features mining objects on loan from the Wallace Mining History Museum.

Last season, the museum opened a long awaited outdoor mining exhibit. A short path takes visitors around three illustrated panels and our largest artifacts, a steam engine and

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Dear Museum Friends,

I would like to begin by introducing myself. My name is Carlos, but many around the lake know me better as “Pancho” Landa, a nickname I got at birth and have enjoyed for the past 60 plus years. I am a Spokane native and have been coming to the lake for my whole life. Our family visits date back to at least 1917 and we have owned property since the 1940's, both in Shoshone Bay and currently in Kalispell Bay.

I have been on the board for over a decade and assumed the presidency last June when Mike Rydbom had to step down for medical reasons. This left me with some pretty big shoes to fill: the Heritage Series, the hikes, and trying to get my hands around the day to day operations of the museum. Mike passed away later in the summer and left the board and myself missing his presence. Our hearts continue to reach out to his wife Carol and family.

The fall came and I was elected President along with Patty Engle as Vice President. We also have some new board members: Paul Bastine, Kent Feldman, and Kristen Winn.

Your response to last summer’s Museum events amazed us! In addition to having 3,124 visitors

The Priest Lake Museum Association was founded to preserve and promote the rich heritage of the surrounding region. The newsletter is published annually.

from 11 different countries, we had the largest audiences ever for our Heritage Series. So many people turned out at the Coolin Civic Club, we had to move across the street to the Inn at Priest Lake (thanks Cindy Stanley). Over 260 people came out to the four presentations on a Wednesday in July! We appreciate the *Idaho Humanities Council* for funding the series. This year we are also planning four more great presentations.

Last year's two Museum Hikes up to a mine above Kalispell Bay had over 50 hikers. This summer we've expanded the hikes to *five* including the Navigation Trail, Woodrat Mine, and the historic Bismark Ranger Station site.

The museum is run by volunteers including our board members and our hosts who literally keep the doors open. We celebrated their service with an Appreciation Happy Hour at the museum last summer and enjoyed everyone's company. Consider becoming a museum host so you can join the fun this summer!

We are living in historic times. The COVID 19 pandemic has affected how life is conducted everywhere, including here at

Priest Lake. The Forest Service has closed the museum until June 30th, 2020 but we hope by July 1 we can open the museum and offer our programs as scheduled. The board’s primary concern is for our visitors and hosts safety as we make our decisions going forward. In the meantime, you can visit our outdoor exhibits around the lake and keep an eye on our Facebook page! Go to: Priest Lake Museum.

Lastly, I want to thank all of you for your memberships and donations over the years. This year is a bit awkward as there are many Americans suffering from sickness, unemployment, and economic uncertainty. I can only ask that if you are able to contribute to the museum please do, but if there are bigger priorities in your lives right now we truly understand.

Looking to a brighter tomorrow.

All the Best, *Pancho*



Walking & Talking History

Summer Schedule*

July 8 Community Church Fellowship Room Hall @7:00

See the Changes

presented by Scott Hill

July 9 History Hike – Milepost 36.3 south of Nordman@ 9:00. Easy

Historic Bismark Ranger Station Site Hike

July 15 Inn at Priest Lake @7:00

Straight Lines and Squiggles:

How Idaho Got its Weird Shape
presented by Keith Petersen

July 22 Community Church Fellowship Room @7:00

Mighty Priest Lake Women

presented by Kris Runberg Smith

July 16/18 Kalispell Bay Day Use Parking Lot @9:00. Vertical gain 400ft.

Kalispell Bay Mines Hike

July 23 Beaver Creek Trailhead Parking Lot @9:00. Easy 3 miles

Navigation Trail to the Upper Lake Hike

July 29 Inn at Priest Lake @7:00

Priest Lake's Mines & Prospects

presented by Tom Weitz

July 30 Museum Parking Lot @9:00. Easy 2 miles

Woodrat Mine Hike

**Depending on
COVID19*

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ore car. The objects along with the panels tell stories of the great potential and cruel realities of mining at the lake.

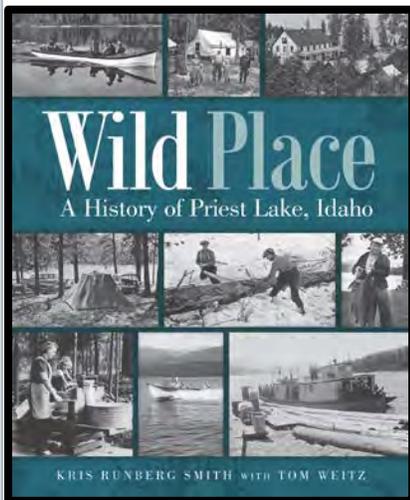
The exhibit was the idea of Lyle and Regina Manser. (Regina served as president of the museum association for many years.) A memorial fund for a mining exhibit was set up in Lyle's memory after he passed away. It provided the funding for the interpretive panels.

Former museum president and geologist Tom Weitz organized both mining exhibits. In conjunction with the exhibit, he will present an illustrate talk on July 29 and the next morning lead a walking tour from the Museum to the Woodrat Mine.



The new **History of Priest Lake Mining** outdoor exhibit opened last summer behind the museum. Tom Weitz, center, curated the exhibit with the assistance of Kris Runberg Smith, left. Lori Hartmann, right, of Feline Graphics created our amazing panels. Funding for the exhibit was in memorial of Lyle Manser.

Wild Place is a Best Seller!



The WSU Press has informed the museum association that *Wild Place: A History of Priest Lake, Idaho* is now one of their all-time best sellers, with over 3500 copies sold thru 2019. In addition to the revenue the museum receives from direct sales of the book, the museum also receives annual royalties from the WSU press. When author Kris Runberg Smith and then museum president Tom Weitz negotiated the publishing contract with the WSU Press, they specified that all profits and royalties from the book be directed to the museum, thus providing a long-term endowment. The museum had a limited number of hard cover copies bound. Hard bound copies are only available at the museum gift shop. Soft cover copies can be purchased at the museum and at local resorts and gift shops.

Museum Hikes



Priest Lake Museum will be hosting five walks this summer season: July 9,16,18,23 and 30. All hikes start at 9AM and are free to the public but donations to the museum are gladly accepted. Please bring water and whatever snacks you like. Questions: call Carlos Landa at 509-951-0239

The first is to **Bismark Ranger Station**, Thursday July 9th. The trail head is a road on the west side of Hwy 57 at mile marker 36.3, just South of Nordman. It is a relatively easy and short walk. Many of the buildings are gone, but the old mule barn still stands.

The second and third are the **Kalispell Bay Mining Hike**, Thursday July 16th and Saturday July 18th. We will meet at the Kalispell Bay Day Use parking lot. The Thursday hike is about two hours up to a mining site with panoramic views of the lake. Vertical gain is 400 feet. Saturday's hike will be longer, taking about three hours, with almost double the vertical gain and more spectacular vistas.

The fourth walk is the **Beaver Creek/ Navigation Trail** on Thursday July 23rd. We will meet at the Beaver Creek trail head parking lot and walk up into the upper lake. This very gentle walk with virtually no vertical gain is about three miles.

The fifth and final is the **Woodrat Mine Walk**, Thursday July 30th. We meet at the museum parking lot for a fairly flat walk along the lake with a single track to the mine. Roundtrip is about two miles.

Museum Hosts



Well, it's almost summer time at Priest Lake and we are hoping that some things will get back to normal, like spending time with family and friends. For some of you this includes going to the Priest Lake Museum and for others that can mean volunteering at the museum.

Last year the museum was open for 85 days with the help of over 45 volunteers, many of whom are hosts. Hosts are an integral part of keeping the museum open. Visitors last year represented eleven different countries and more than 40 American states.

Some volunteers are locals and others are seasonal but all love spending time sharing their histories, memories and time as museum hosts. The host's main job is to welcome visitors to the Priest Lake area and answer questions. Most hosts enjoy talking with people with long histories at the lake, meeting new visitors and helping others find their relatives in books and/or pictures.

If you would like to be a volunteer, we would love to have you, please email kbaconhord@gmail.com or call (509)994-8157.

Kelly Bacon-Hord, Host Coordinator

Heritage Series Highlights

We offer a great lineup for this summer's Heritage Series! Scott Hill kicks us off on July 8 with a focus on the **Continental Mine** and its impact on the early days of Priest Lake. Scott, a lifelong Priest Lake resident and Chef/Owner of Hill's Resort, is not your typical chef. With a B.A. in Film Production from The University of Utah and a love of all things history, documentary films are a favorite of his. Along with the Priest Lake Museum, Scott produced *See the Changes*, a 30-minute historical film about North Idaho.

Keith Petersen, former Idaho State Historian, presents *Straight Lines and Squiggles: How Idaho Got that Weird Shape* on July 15. The West is a land of rectangular states. And then we have Idaho. What happened? Drunken surveyors? Corrupt politicians?

Just how Idaho got this way is a fascinating story of diplomacy, politics, luck, and a congressional obsession with straight-line boundaries. And it affects every Idahoan even today!

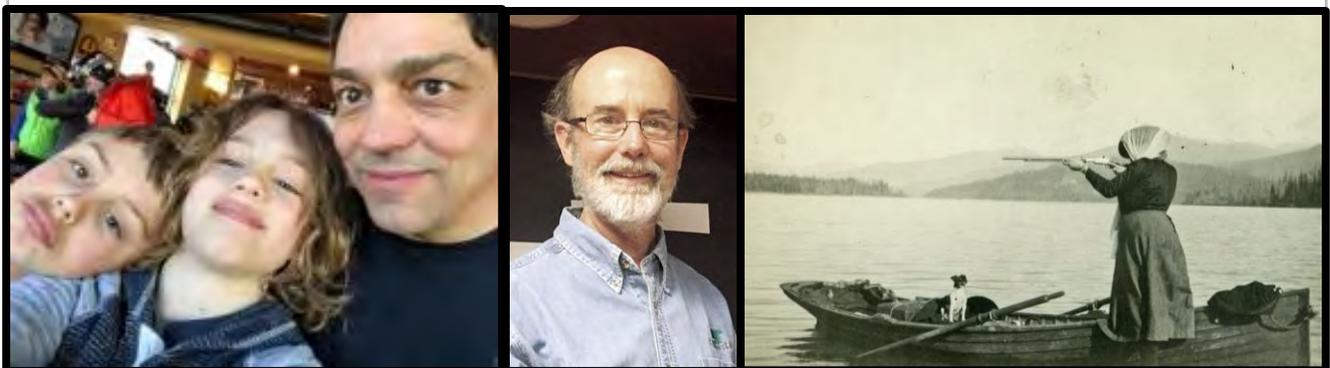
Keith is the author of several books about Idaho and the Northwest, including *Idaho: The Land and Its People*; *John Mullan: The Tumultuous Life of a Western Road Builder*. He is

also a longtime supporter of the Priest Lake Museum.

Historian Kris Runberg Smith gives **Mighty Priest Lake Women** their due on July 22. Our regional history brings to mind trappers, miners, loggers, rangers, and sportsmen so Kris will put the women back into the picture. She co-authored *Wild Place* and contributes to museum projects. She is professor of history at Lindenwood University in Missouri with long roots at Priest Lake.

Geologist Tom Weitz presents **Priest Lake's Mines and Prospects** on July 29. Ever wondered about the abandoned mine pits and rock dumps you run across as you explore the area? Why didn't Priest Lake become a mining center like the Coeur d'Alene region? And how important was mining to the lake? Tom will explain all this and more as he shares his extensive knowledge. He co-authored *Wild Place* and is the former museum president. He curated the museum's new outdoor Mining Exhibit and our interior exhibit **Mining at Priest Lake**. Tom will also lead a tour to the Woodrat mine on July 30.

Scott Hill and his sons Wiley and Nick; former Idaho State Historian Keith Petersen; and Aunt Bella Angstadt



**Priest Lake Museum
Association
P.O. Box 44
Coolin, Idaho 83821**

Priest Lake Museum is a volunteer 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Our financial support comes from memberships, monetary/in-kind donations and the sale of Priest Lake-related books, DVDs and other Museum-related items. There is no paid staff. The Museum is maintained and operated by a dedicated corps of volunteers.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail: _____

YES, I'd like to become a member (or renew an existing membership)!

- | | | | |
|-------------------------|----------------|------------------------|---------------|
| _____ Gold Club | \$500 or more | _____ Silver Club | \$400 - \$499 |
| _____ Baritoe Island | \$ 300 - \$399 | _____ Kalispell Island | \$200 - \$299 |
| _____ Eight Mile Island | \$100 - \$199 | _____ Four Mile Island | \$ 50 - \$ 99 |
| _____ Twin Islands | \$25 - \$ 49 | _____ Papoose Island | under \$25 |

YES, I'd like to make an additional donation of \$_____

This gift is: In memory of _____

In honor of _____

Please acknowledge this gift to:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

YES, I'd like to become a (new) volunteer!

I'd be interested in:

- | | |
|---------------|----------------------------------|
| _____ Hosting | _____ Nature Garden & Facilities |
| _____ Display | _____ Newsletter |
| _____ Other | |

Museum Hours (or not)

The museum is usually open from Memorial Day weekend to the last weekend in September. Museum hours are 10 to 4 daily, Tuesday through Sunday. The museum is closed on Monday except on holidays. BUT not this year.

At present, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the US Forest Service has ordered all Priest Lake area recreational facilities, including the museum, closed until June 30th, unless the order is rescinded earlier. Once the order is rescinded, the museum's board of directors will assess the situation and make a decision regarding if, when and how the museum will open for the 2020 season. Please be assured that if the museum does open, CDC guidelines will be followed to protect the hosts and our visitors. Check our Facebook and Website for updates.

2020 Board Members

Kelly Bacon-Hord
 Paul Bastine
 Barb Conboy
 Kay Coykendall
 Mary Driscoll
 Patty Engle
 Kent Feldman
 Brent Guyer
 Arley Sue Hagman
 Tom Holman
 Kim Impehoven
 Carlos Landa
 Sam and Dorothy
 Latendresse
 Tom Weitz
 Don Widman
 Elaine Widman
 Kristen Winn
 Debbie Butler,
 USFS Liaison



Check in with our Facebook posts for Priest Lake history and museum schedule updates!