

Maturango News

Preserve, interpret and develop an appreciation for
the natural and cultural history of the Northern Mojave Desert.
100 E. Las Flores Ave., Ridgecrest, CA 93555
Open Monday – Saturday 10 am – 5 pm, Sunday Noon – 4pm
760.375.6900 www.maturango.org
Death Valley Tourist Center Northern Mojave Visitor Center



Museum Director's Notes

Debbie Benson

"The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched –
they must be felt with the heart." Helen Keller

There are times I question if February, much like January 2024, will be a bit confusing as to what season it is. After a winter that did not, as of yet, hold us in ice for a time, there are plants that have bloomed and already seeded from the heavy rains last summer. We're already enjoying waist-high mustard plants that have thick stalks and dark rich leaves. It's all very interesting but does raise the question of the coming activities of spring growth. We are optimistic for the wildflowers!

Here at the Museum it is good to see the work done to keep our gardens ready for the coming warmer seasons and many weeds cleared. A great job was done on the last clean-up but the request was made to come pull weeds when possible or join us on February 2 at 10am-12noon to celebrate Groundhog Day and help clear the grounds. Either way, the help is always appreciated!

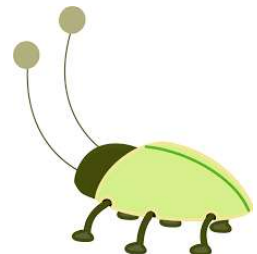
This is an active time of year when we start planning more outside tours and activities. Please watch our website and check our events. If planning some outings of your own and would like some ideas on where to go, we have information and books in the Gift Store as well as some great advice. Make sure to have your photo-taking device charged and ready; there is much to see!

March 23 at 3pm. will be Maturango Museum's Annual Meeting. We will be meeting in person at the Museum. Next month we will publish more information about this event but we hope to see you there! Thank you for your help and support for these many years and your belief in the importance in what we do and contribute to our community. You make all the difference. We hope you will have a chance to stop by and see.

My best to you all!

Children's Hour - Insects Friday February 16, 10:30 - 11:30 am.

The Children's Hour Group is enthusiastically looking forward to welcoming young children plus older siblings to the first of our free winter programs. Families are encouraged to consult the Maturango Museum website www.maturango.org for all of the monthly dates and program themes.



Officially we have an approved building permit to begin construction
on the new Curation Storage Building.

Free Saturday Reptile Presentation

12 noon February 10, 2024

The Free Saturday activity for February is a presentation titled, "Reptiles of the Desert" by Greg Watson. During this hour-long presentation the docents will bring out many of their taxidermied reptiles to allow you a close-up look at different reptiles in this area.



As an avid hiker, Greg comes across many animals in the desert. He is always eager to learn anything he can about the animals and plants he encounters. Greg's learning process focuses on legitimate, objective sources of information and his experience. His ongoing education and many decades of experience have given him a fond appreciation for all of our desert reptiles, including those that are feared and maligned. Greg feels that it is important for those who live in our desert to know about its reptiles, especially the ones that can harm people and pets. That knowledge can let us safely and comfortably interact with desert reptiles without fearing them.

This presentation provides a fairly comprehensive photographic guide to reptiles in our area, while also listing some excellent references for anyone interested in further learning. Each photograph is captioned with the reptile's common name and scientific name to aid identification and further research. The presentation also addresses information about rattlesnakes, such as their behavior, effects of their venom, and first aid for bite victims.

Greg has lived in the desert all of his life, 24 years in New Mexico and the past 46 years in Ridgecrest. He is a retired electronics engineer after a 40-year career. He contributes reptile photographs and sighting details (date, time of day, GPS location) to iNaturalist, a global network that allows wildlife enthusiasts to mutually educate one another and to support wildlife research by professionals.

Docent Doings

By Nora Nuckles, Education Coordinator

With beginning a new year I would like to acknowledge some new docents that are bringing a lot of energy and much needed renewal to our docent programs. Fran Kely is so enthusiastic and volunteers for so many of our programs. She learns quickly and enjoys every moment teaching the children and answering their questions. Renee Sloane has also joined the docents this year. Renee is involved with many of our programs but especially enjoys supporting Children's Hour. She says she never realized how much fun it could be to share stories with the young children!

The docents who continually support Children's Hour are Charlotte Goodson, Sue Parker, Ingrid Carroll, Shirley Crouse, Susan Moore, Renee Sloane, Judy Breitenstein, and Sherry Brubaker. We recently welcomed back Kate Goodson who has given great support to Children's Hour. Elaine and Peter Wiley do the set up and take down for Children's Hour. Cam Alden, Carol Dezelle, and Cathy Heseman are the movers and shakers for the art programs. Other docents frequently help, especially when the art lesson will be given to 90 kindergarten students during one day.

The docents enjoy providing many programs for teachers as well as sponsoring activities for Free Saturdays. A few other docents that are almost always present to give programs are Terry McGuire, Bob and Sue Parker, and Glenn Harris.

Our next Free Saturday on Feb. 10 will feature Greg Watson with his spectacular photos of desert reptiles. On Sunday, Feb. 11, the docents will host a Mardi Gras mask-making activity, always a very popular and creative event.

We welcome and need new docents. If you are interested in joining us, please call me, Nora, at the Museum, or come to our next docent meeting on Feb. 6, 10am at the Museum.



Frances Nichols' Retrospective Art Legacy Gallery Exhibit January 6 – March 31, 2024

The artwork in this exhibit will include many subjects from around the world painted over a lifetime of experience. The art will be for sale but mostly this will be an experience to view a body of work from a very lovely lady with outstanding talent. The paintings are made in watercolor, pastels and oils – some framed, some not.



Frances Nichols passed away a few years ago and left an abundant amount of artwork. Her family has been gracious to share her artwork with us. The spirit of this exhibit is to spread Fran's Art Legacy to people who like and appreciate her work.



For her 2020 exhibit at the museum, Frances said, "My passion is landscape. I try to etch a memory of a place, beginning with an idea of the finished piece, but leaving myself open to the work evolving. I work in plein-air on site or from my own photos in the tradition of the early California Impressionists. Realistic representation is balanced with Impressionistic play of light and color on the landscape. For me, the landscape is a prism where the time of day can transform the light moving through it into constantly changing color.

My subject matter is the Indian Wells Valley, Owens Valley, Antelope Valley, and the Eastern Sierras, ranging from desert washes, mountain canyons, to the explosion of spring color in the desert.



This exhibit includes works in pastel, oil, watercolor and gouache. As the song says, 'Love the one you're with!'

I enjoy working in all media and my favorite is the one I'm using that day. I do love the immediacy of pastel with its instant color and layering, and the drama underpaintings can bring, but I also like the richness of oil and the fresh luminosity of watercolor."

Presentation: History of the Kawaiisu People in the Ridgecrest Area Sunday February 25, 2 pm

David Laughing Horse Robinson will present topics that provide a glimpse into how the Kawaiisu lived, their culture, art, science and religion. Born and raised in Kern County, CA, where his native elders taught him the traditions and knowledge of his tribe. This includes an understanding of the role of the petroglyphs, pictographs and geoglyphs as an ancient source of knowledge for the Kawaiisu.



Despite our website's message that the trip is "sold out", there are a few spaces remaining as of this printing date of 26 January. Please call the gift shop 375-6900 or come in to buy your tickets.



Field Trip to Kernville

Saturday February 10, 2024

Join Maturango Museum for a day long field trip to historic Kernville. Our trip will include a morning visit to the Kern Valley Museum with a guided tour and visit to their new archive, time for touring in "downtown" Kernville, and tasty lunch on the scenic back deck at Kern River Brewery.

Our sister museum in Kernville, the Kern Valley Museum, preserves the history of the Southern Sierra, with extensive collections and exhibits on gold mining, Native American prehistory, local movie making, ranching, Edison Power, gems and minerals, gun collection, and historical maps. Run by the Kern River Valley Historical Society, their mission is to "educate all generations about our past as well as present... through the extraordinary and proud history of local Native Americans, the resilient gold miners, hardy loggers and pioneering ranchers, with colorful places such as Keysville, Onyx, Johnsondale, Whiskey Flat, and Kernville". Our museum tour will also include a look at the museum's comprehensive new archive building across the street from the museum.

There will be time after our museum visit for sight-seeing and shopping in the interesting downtown stores or a visit to beautiful Riverside Park on the banks of the Kern two blocks away from the museum before regrouping for lunch at the nearby Kern River Brewing. If the weather is good, we can enjoy lunch on their new deck or comfortable dining inside. Their selection of locally brewed beer is excellent when paired with a variety of tasty pub foods like burgers, pulled pork, tacos, and appetizers. Vegetarian options are equally tasty!



Your online ticket purchase (\$35 members, \$45 non-members) includes a donation to Kern Valley Museum. Brewery lunch is a la carte and not included in ticket price; lunch rsvp requested for brewery reservation.

Meet at Kern Valley Museum in Kernville at 10am; suitable for all mobility levels, limit 15 participants. Tickets available online at the Maturango Museum: maturango.org/event/kernville-field-trip/ Ticket refunds available only in case of museum cancellation due to weather/road conditions. Questions? Maturango Gift Shop 760-375-6900.

The Paleolithic Display

Sherry Brubaker, Natural History Curator

Work is being done to display the fossils so they can be seen by all. This includes some shelving and platforms. The last piece to go in will be a plexiglass case to cover the whole display. The case will be the most significant cost, about \$4k. Generous donations have already been made, paying for the mural, the shelving and platforms. Please consider a specific donation for this endeavor.

Searles Valley Historical Society Museums Field Trip

Saturday, March 23

Have you ever driven through Trona on your way to someplace else, passing all the wonderful museums and wished you could stop and take a look? I know I have thought about it, but it can sometimes be hard to do spur of the moment since several of the museum buildings are open by appointment only. Guess what? We've made those appointments for this trip.

Come with us to the Searles Valley Historical Society Museums. We'll be visiting the Fire Museum, History House, Trona Railway Museum and Caboose, and the Old Guest House Museum. Docents will be on-hand at each location to guide us through their rich history and their exhibits. Want to peruse at your own pace? You can do that as well during the time we are at each area.

Our journey will start at the Maturango Museum and we'll drive over to Trona through Poison Canyon. Oh by the way, did you know that the "real name" of Poison Canyon is Salt Wells Canyon? I didn't. I've already learned something.

We'll make a brief stop at the Trona Pinnacles turn off to view two monuments; John Searles' Freight Wagon Route Monument and the Epsom Salts Monorail Monument. If you want to learn more about the Epsom Salts Monorail, Maturango Museum has a great book on this subject.



From there we'll continue to the Fire Museum. Inside this museum are two antique fire engines, a 1924 Stutz and a 1938 Ahren-Fox. Displays in the Fire Museum include 20 photographs of major fires in Argus, Borosolvay, and Trona and other fire memorabilia.



We'll then make a quick stop at the Trona Rest Stop to take care of business and proceed to the History House, Caboose, and Railway Museum.

The History House is one of the oldest residential houses in Trona (built around 1920) and is a treasure trove of items from yesteryear. The Trona Railway Museum displays artifacts from the Trona Railway and the Caboose will be open to those able to navigate the steep stairs to get in and out.

We will then return to the Trona Rest Stop for lunch. The kiosk at the Rest Stop was a joint project of the BLM Ridgecrest Office and the Searles Valley Historical Society. There are 16 panels that have information about the local area, local mining, local history, sightseeing and recreational opportunities, and desert safety.

After lunch we'll head to our final stop, the Old Guest House Museum. This building was built around 1917 and is one of the oldest buildings in Searles Valley. Originally it was built as four apartments and was remodeled as a guest house with twelve rooms for visitors to Trona. The twelve rooms show events in Searles Valley from the early mining days to present plant ownership. Since this is our final stop, once you have finished viewing all the cool "stuff", you can head home, we just ask that you let the of the Field Trip leader know you are leaving.



9am: meet at the Maturango Museum for check in. Participants will be required to sign a liability waiver. Car caravan will be organized and for those that want to carpool, we'll figure it out there.

The cost is \$25 for museum members (\$40 for 2 adult members), \$30 nonmembers (\$50 for 2 adults). Pets are not allowed. Buy tickets at <https://shop.maturango.org/field-trip-searles-valley-historical-society-museums-may-13-2023/> or come to the Maturango Museum Store.

Be sure you have enough gas (less than 100 miles round trip), car and tires in good running order.

Usual dress code for field trips applies: hat, sunscreen, comfortable walking shoes, layered clothing, water, and camera (although some of the buildings ask no photographs). It is better to have these items and not need them, than need them and not have them.

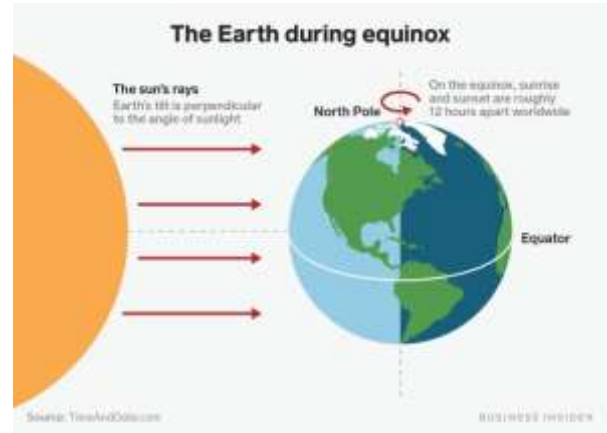
Bring a picnic lunch to eat while we are at the Trona Rest Stop.

March Equinox Event

Free Saturday March 9, 11 –2 pm

The Maturango Museum is celebrating the March equinox on Saturday, March 9th from 11 to 2pm. We will have a sun/earth/moon model to view, a craft and if weather permits, astronomers from China Lake Astronomical Society will set up their telescopes for viewing the sun.

A solar equinox is a moment in time when the sun appears directly above the equator rather than north or south of the equator. On the day of the equinox, the Sun appears to rise "due east" and set "due west" and daylight and night are almost equal in length in most time zones in the world.



The March equinox is the moment the Sun crosses the equator from the south to the north. For us in the northern hemisphere, this moment in time marks the beginning of spring. The March equinox is also called the vernal or spring equinox. For those in the southern hemisphere, the March equinox marks the autumnal or fall equinox and the beginning of fall.

The craft for this event is a pressed flower suncatcher.

Recent Donations

Donations

Dan and Brenda Burnett
Ward Fanning
Diane Foucher
Pat Gooch
Jeffrey and Marcia Ihnen
Timothy Kirkpatrick
Penelope LePome
John R. Mathews
Howard McCauley
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Susan Parker
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Patricia Wharton
Ken Whetzel
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In Honor of Service of BOD

Rachel Woodard

In Memory of

Laura Boyd-Serpanos

Greg Watson

In Memory of Arlee Lakin

Patsy Lakin, et al.

In Memory of Carol, Cecelia,

Peggy and Dixie

Carol Lair

In Memory of Philip Rogers

Susan Hueber

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Docents

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Education

Camille Alden
Janice Ogar

Exhibits

David Kurdeka

Paleolithic Display

Susan Hueber
David Kurdeka
Susan Parker

Taxidermy Fund

Audubon Society

New Members

Ed Burke
Travis Denning
Sarah King
Dennis and Mary Jane Kline
Sidney MacArthur
Pat Quist
Pam Smith

“Glimpses Thru Time; Early 1900s”

The exhibit in the Sylvia Winslow Gallery includes information on the construction of the Los Angeles Aqueduct from 1908 - 1913. The aqueduct construction attracted many workers to the eastern sierras. Once the Nevada and California Railroad (now the Southern Pacific) lines were established, Brown (Railroad Siding #18) became a construction camp for the Los Angeles Aqueduct and grew in population to between 2,000 and 3,000 people. A post office was established in 1909, and the town of Brown drew in business and homesteaders. The aqueduct workers left the area in 1913 after the completion of the aqueduct and the population dwindled to 50 in 1920.

Further north toward Little Lake are the Coso Hot Springs. Long before people of European descent came to the Indian Wells Valley, local Shoshonean tribes used the bubbling mud and highly mineralized waters of Coso Hot Springs for therapeutic purposes. By the early 20th century a health resort was flourishing there. In the 1920s the water was bottled and billed as the “finest in the world for arthritis, rheumatism, sinus, stomach ulcers, asthma, acute gastritis, and all kidney and liver ailments.” Today, the Coso Operating Company leases the land from the Navy and produces about 145 net megawatts of power using geothermal energy directed to Southern California Edison.

This current exhibit, “Glimpses Thru Time”, combines a small fraction from previous historical exhibits created by the museum’s former History Curator, Liz Babcock. Over Liz’s 13 years as History Curator, she created and displayed over 15 different historical exhibits for the Maturango Museum. For this current exhibit, we bring back the popular “Town of Brown” exhibit and add “Aqueduct”, “Coso Hot Springs” and “Early Indian Wells Valley” exhibits.



Pizza Factory and Beanster’s Espresso Fundraiser

All day, Wednesday, February 14.

20% of your purchase is donated to the Maturango Museum

You must mention this fundraiser when ordering.



Valentine’s Day

February 14

Gift Giving is Easy with a Gift Certificate from the Maturango Museum

**Maturango Museum
of the IWW**

100 E. Las Flores Ave., Ridgecrest, CA 93555
Open Mon - Sat 10 am – 5 pm,
Sunday noon – 4pm, (except major holidays)

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Maureen Goff, Store Manager/Buyer
Barbara Bane, M.A., RPA, Archaeology Curator
Molly Dickinson, Curation Technician
Elaine Wiley, History Curator
Sherry Brubaker, Natural History Curator
Cheryl McDonald, Webmistress
Judie Foust, Finance Manager
Andrea Pelch, Art Gallery Coordinator,
Newsletter Editor
Nora Nuckles, Education Coordinator
Linda Saholt, Membership, Donations
Leslie Layfield, Accounting Bookkeeper
Nora Nuckles, Museum Assistant
Nick Rogers, Museum Assistant
Megan , Museum Assistant

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Vaughn Realty
WACOM
Warren's Automotive



Upcoming and Ongoing Exhibits and Events

- + Children's Hour: Insect Stories - Friday, February 16, 10:30 – 11:30am
- + Free Saturday: February 10, 12 noon Reptiles...
- + Frances Nichols' Art Legacy Gallery Exhibit: January 6 – March 31, 2024
- + Kernville Field Trip: Saturday, February 10, 2024
- + Pizza Factory and Beanster's Espresso Fundraiser: All day, Wednesday, February 14
- + History of the Kawaiisu People in the Ridgecrest Area Presentation: February 25, 2pm
- + March Equinox Event: Free Saturday March 9, 11 –2 pm
- + Searles Valley Historical Society Museums Field Trip: Saturday, March 23
- + Museum Annual Meeting: Saturday, March 23, 3pm
- + Annual Wildflower Exhibit: weekend of April 5 - 7



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100 E Las Flores
Ridgecrest, CA 93555



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