

# Maturango Museum 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](http://www.maturango.org)

Death Valley Tourist Center    Northern Mojave Visitor Center

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## **Museum Director's Notes**

*By Debbie Benson, Director*

In all of the excitement and planning for the Dinner Auction on October 25, it is so very lovely to take a break and walk through the Gladys Merrick Garden. Volunteers are working to control the sudden sprouting of small trees from the rains. The cool morning breeze is making our little colored flags wave to passersby. Each color reflecting the garden and its plants and flowers. We are planning a new area in the garden to encourage pollinators. It will be a positive place for all. I am thankful for the process and the volunteers who make additions like this happen.

Thank you all for your time and your support. I hope to see many of you at the Dinner Auction and when you stop by to see us!

Be well!



## **Annual Museum Dinner / Auction**

**Saturday October 25**

**Doors open at 4:30**

**Kerr-McGee**

**Tickets on sale NOW;**

**Maturango.org or in gift shop.**

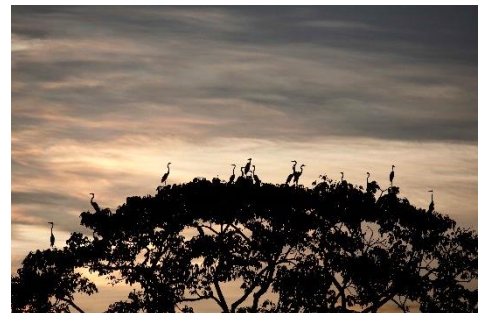
Donations needed by October 13.  
Items for gift baskets, activity ideas  
(workshops, field trips, house  
rental, catered meal or dessert...) and other cool stuff...

## **Travel Presentation: Peru's Upper Amazon**

**Sunday October 5, 2pm**



Alice and Ken Atwood will present a talk on their trip to the Upper Amazon. In February 2025 they explored the 2 major rivers, Marañon and Ucayali, that make up the Amazon River confluence.



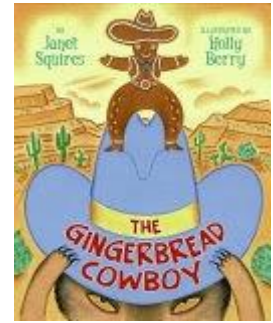
The Pacaya-Samiria Preserve is a National Park comprised of over 5 million acres. It is a biodiverse rain forest that is home to a wide variety of animals and plants. The presentation will include photos of some of the animals including Pink Dolphin, Saki Monkey and Pigmy Marmoset.

## Children's Hour: "The Gingerbread Cowboy" - Folktale with a Desert Twist

### Friday October 10, 10:30 – 11:30

"Giddyup, giddyup as fast as you can. You can't catch me, I'm the Gingerbread Man!" The Gingerbread Cowboy can run from the rancher, he can dash past the javelinas, and he can giddyup right by the cattle grazing on the mesa. But what happens when he meets a coyote sleeping in the sun? ..." Join our Storytelling Docents to hear about the adventures of the Gingerbread Cowboy.

We'll have stick ponies to ride and a craft project, also.



### Free Saturday October 11: Burros



The Museum will host the **burros** that Karin and John Usko bring as part of the California Breakfast Burrito group. The burros are here to be loved and petted. Burros will be here from 9am - 2pm, weather permitting.

[www.californiabreakfastburritos.org/](http://www.californiabreakfastburritos.org/)

We will also provide a craft in the Museum from 11am – 2pm.



### Docent Doings

*By Nora Nuckles, Education Coordinator*

If you missed Second Saturday on Sept. 13 at the Museum you missed a really good time! Our favorite flintknapper, Mike Thompson and his wife Linda, brought small arrow shafts already prepared with feathers and taught us how to make and bake small arrowheads (points) from Sculpey clay. Debbie Benson and Andrea Pelch provided small toaster ovens; Linda and Terry McGuire ran the arrowheads through the ovens. Ingrid Carroll, Bob Parker, and Andrea Burgoyne used hot glue guns to attach the points to the shafts. Each person then decorated their arrow shafts! The Museum hosted about 95 participants that day. The Museum thanks Mike and Linda and the docents who assisted them.

With the onset of the new school year, docents have become very busy. They have been out to schools to teach art and programs on Native Americans and Rocks and Geology. We led a tour and taught a thorough program on Desert Alive to children from the Ridgecrest Adventist School. Susan Moore took the lead on the program with the goal of increasing the students' understanding of the food chain and web. Our Children's Hour docents provided a wonderful story time to begin this season. See the article here in the newsletter for a preview of the October Children's Hour.

At our first docent meeting we welcomed Jane McEwan, Charlotte Pofeldt, and Sonia Camarena to our first meeting of the season. Nadia Mohsen and Scott Oku are also helping us with some docent programs. We thank Mark Pahuta for showing his Hidden Ridgecrest videos to the residents at High Desert Haven. So, in that way he is also acting as one of the Maturango Docents!

If you would like to consider becoming a Maturango Museum docent, please join us at our next meeting in the Coso Room on Oct. 7 at 10:00 AM. Don't miss the fun, comradery, and good food!

## Video: "Hidden Ridgecrest 6"

By Mark Pahuta and John Daly  
Sunday October 19, 2 pm

Included in this episode are stories of the Bonnefin Family living at Dead End Cabin several years before the navy got here, the development of theater in the valley (CLOTA and the China Lake Players), and the mysterious Blue Jeans Ranch, among other things. The video runs close to an hour, producers Mark Pahuta and John Daly will be on hand to answer questions. As usual, admission is free, but seating is limited.



## Maturango Museum Field Trip to Devil's Punchbowl Natural Area

Saturday, October 18, 10:30am – 2:30pm

Nestled in the San Gabriel Mountains, this stunning geological wonder offers a unique opportunity to explore dramatic rock formations, vibrant desert landscapes, and the dynamic forces that shaped this region.



Our adventure begins at 10:30 am at the Devil's Punchbowl Nature Center near Pearblossom, Southern California. We'll enjoy a presentation on the geology and history of the Punchbowl at the scenic View Point. Learn about the tectonic forces and erosion that created the Punchbowl's iconic tilted sandstone layers and rugged canyons.

Following the presentation, we'll embark on a guided one-mile loop hike into the Punchbowl canyon, offering breathtaking views of the striking rock formations and surrounding desert and mountain terrain. The trail features moderate inclines and rocky paths, so sturdy hiking shoes and perhaps walking sticks are recommended.

We'll wrap up the day by 2:30 pm, leaving time to enjoy the scenic beauty of the area or relax at the Nature Center. Howard McCauley will send out an update and details to those who've registered a couple of days before the trip.



Bring Comfortable hiking shoes

- Water bottle (at least 1 liter), snacks for the trail
- Sunscreen and hat
- Light layers for cool mornings and warm afternoons

This family-friendly trip is perfect for geology enthusiasts, hikers, and anyone eager to discover the natural beauty of the Devil's Punchbowl. Don't miss this chance to explore one of Southern California's most remarkable landscapes!

Buy tickets on the museum website [maturango.org/events](https://maturango.org/events) The cost is \$35 for museum members (\$60 for 2 members), \$45 nonmembers (\$80 for 2). Kids under 18 are free.

Cancellation Policy: If the Museum cancels your trip, you will be given a full refund or you may transfer the money to a different trip. No cash refunds will be given if you cancel.

## **Manzanar National Historic Site Member Only Field Trip**

### **Friday October 24, 2025**

If you are interested in going on this field trip and you are not a current member of the Maturango Museum, you will need to become a member prior to signing up for the field trip. This is a Member Only Event. To become a member, see our website...[maturango.org/become-a-member-2/](https://maturango.org/become-a-member-2/)

Manzanar was one of 10 War Relocation Centers where the US Government incarcerated Japanese American citizens and Japanese immigrants who were ineligible for citizenship during World War II. Most of the internees were from the Los Angeles area, Terminal Island, and the San Fernando Valley. Others came from the San Joaquin Valley and Bainbridge Island Washington; the latter transferred to Minidoka in 1943.

We will be visiting the Visitor's Center, Block 14, and then take the Auto Tour, stopping along the way to visit the various exhibits including Merritt Park and the Cemetery & Monument. What makes this trip unique is I have arranged for a 30-minute Q&A with one of the Rangers during our time at Manzanar.

Note: Parking can be limited on the Auto Tour; at the Manzanar site carpooling is encouraged.

Our journey will start at the Maturango Museum and arrange carpools (if people want to carpool) and head north on 395 to the Owens Valley trying to stay together as much as possible without annoying others on the road. We'll stop at the Interagency Center just before Lone Pine to use the facilities and look around a bit (about 30 minutes). The Interagency Center has a lot of information and if you feel that you need more time to peruse, I encourage you to do that after we've completed our Manzanar visit. The Interagency Center closes at 4:30pm, gates close at 4:15pm.

From the Interagency Center we'll again head north on 395 about 16 miles to Manzanar. We'll park at the Visitor's Center. There are many different things to see while at Manzanar and I'm expecting us to be at the site for 3-4 hours, including lunch and the Q&A Session.

Please note from the NPS Website: **Limited visitor amenities are available at Manzanar.** Visitors must bring their own drinking water, carry out their own trash, and are recommended to bring personal handwashing/sanitizing supplies.

Other Info:

October 24, 2025 - 7:30am: meet at the 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. Families are encouraged. Pets are not allowed.

Sign up at <https://maturango.org/event> or in the Gift Shop. This is a Maturango Museum Member Only Event so there is not a fee for this field trip, however, donations are appreciated.

Other Info:

Be sure you have enough gas (approximately 200 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, camera. It is better to have these items and not need them, than need them and not have them. We will be walking on uneven ground to get to outdoor exhibits and gardens. Parking area also may be uneven ground.

Bring a picnic lunch to eat while we are at Manzanar. Water, snacks, lunch, etc. No alcohol.





## Buy a Brick is Back!... Missed it last time?

### Now's Your Chance.

The QR code takes you directly to Maturango's Fundraising Brick's online ordering.

This Brick Campaign ends on December 31, 2025. Thanks!

<https://maturango.org/fundraising-bricks/>



## Passing of Rock Art Steward Manual Andrade, 1939-2025

California lost a fierce advocate for rock art preservation recently with the death of Manual Andrade, long time steward of Rocky Hill Archeological Preserve in Exeter, California. Many Maturango field trip participants will remember Manual's care and preservation of the Rocky Hill rock art as he

guided us on numerous field trips. Manual was a caring steward who advocated for the landscape he loved, Tribal respect, and the spiritual power of special places.

Born in 1939, Manual was preceded in passing by his wife of over 60 years, Mary Andrade, and his daughter, Cristine. Manual was many things in his long life: stone mason, logger, construction worker, archeological steward, story teller, and valued member of the Three Rivers community where he and his family lived for many years. Maturango mourns his passing and extends condolences to his family.

### Recent Donations

#### Donations

Dan and Brenda Burnett  
Shirley Fisher  
Greg and Ann Lenz  
Jann Philpott  
Patricia Wharton  
Ken Wetzel

#### Building Fund

Robert Westbrook

#### In Memory of Janet Westbrook

Terry and Andrew Mitchell  
Susan Prazak  
Libby Vincent

#### In Memory of Cheryl

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Susan Hueber

#### Matching Funds Drive

Debbie Benson  
Gary Hewer and  
Jane McEwan-Hewer  
BJ Holden

#### New Business Members

Stafford's Pest Control  
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Evelyn Knierim  
Bruce and Lisa Livingston  
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Roger and Kara Warnock

#### New Premium Members

Julie and Bas Acosta  
Brenda Hubbard  
Doug Sticht

## Devil's Hole Seiche: Everything in This World is Indeed Connected!

A seiche (pronounced \"saysh\") is a standing wave that sloshes back and forth in a partially or fully enclosed body of water, like a lake or bay. These oscillations are typically caused by factors such as strong sustained winds, atmospheric pressure changes, and earthquakes. Seiches can vary in duration, lasting from minutes to days, and can cause significant water level changes and damage to shorelines and structures.



AMARGOSA VALLEY, Nev. – On July 29, just 21 minutes after a magnitude 8.8 earthquake struck Russia's Kamchatka Peninsula, waves were triggered nearly 4,000 miles away in Death Valley National Park. Earthquakes can generate waves in enclosed bodies of water, even over surprising distances.

Devils Hole is a water-filled cave approximately 12 feet wide and over 500 feet deep, with a water surface that is typically sheltered from wind and remains extremely calm. The endangered Devils Hole Pupfish depend on a shallow shelf at the cave's mouth for most of their food and spawning.

The pupfish's habitat was previously affected by earthquake waves in December and February, which removed most of algae and invertebrates that pupfish rely on for food. During the official survey in March, only 38 fish were counted.

Fortunately, biologists are less concerned about the impacts of the July 29 quake on the pupfish. The waves generated by this earthquake were smaller than those from the previous quakes, as the epicenter was farther away. The 10-inch waves from the Kamchatka quake only removed some materials from the shallow shelf.

Additionally, the timing of this quake is less concerning for the pupfish. With the sun at a high angle in summer, conditions are favorable for algae regrowth. Pupfish typically increase their spawning rates after disturbances, offering hope for a rebound of the Devils Hole Pupfish population.

([www.nps.gov/deva/learn/news/devils-hole-2025-07-29.htm](http://www.nps.gov/deva/learn/news/devils-hole-2025-07-29.htm))

**Historic Equipment at the Maturango Museum**

We recently received old farming and mining equipment from the Desert Empire Fairgrounds. Previously, this equipment was stored in a fenced area located east of the Model Railroad building, where the Eastern Sierra Railroad Society has its model trains set up.

The equipment is part of Dick Lewis' estate. He came to the Indian Wells Valley in 1936 at the age of 14 to live with Tiny and Earl Standard, early settlers in this area. He purchased the Homestead Restaurant in 1975, where he served delicious meals and a bit of local history complemented by various historic items adorning the walls.



**Maturango Museum  
of the IWV**

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

Staff

Debbie Benson, Museum Director  
Maureen Goff, Store Manager/Buyer  
Barbara Bane, M.A., RPA, Archaeology Curator  
Nadia Mohsen, Curation Technician  
Elaine Wiley, History Curator  
Sherry Brubaker, Natural History Curator  
Andrea Pelch, Art Gallery Coordinator,  
Newsletter Editor  
Nora Nuckles, Education Coordinator,  
Museum Assistant  
Linda Saholt, Membership, Donations  
Leslie Layfield, Accounting Bookkeeper  
Heidi Farmer, Accounting  
Addie Reyes, Website  
Nick Rogers, Museum Assistant  
Barbara Ingle, Museum Assistant

Committee Chairpersons

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Bob Westbrook, Strategic Planning  
Bev Hill, Gardens

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The Swap Sheet  
TJ Frisbee Bicycles, Inc  
T&T Alignment, Inc.  
Vaughn Realty  
WACOM  
Warren's Automotive



## Upcoming and Ongoing Events

- Peru Trip Presentation: Sunday October 5, 2pm
- Children's Hour: "Gingerbread Cowboy" Friday October 10, 10:30 – 11:30 am
- Free Second Saturday: Burros visit October 11, 11am - 2pm
- Field Trip to Devil's Punchbowl: Saturday October 18
- Video: "Hidden Ridgecrest 6": Sunday October 19, 2 pm
- Field Trip to Manzanar for Museum members: Friday October 24, 7:30am
- Annual Dinner / Auction: Saturday October 25, Kerr-McGee, doors open 4:30pm



Donations needed by **October 13**.

Items for gift baskets, activity ideas (workshops, field trips, house rental, catered meal or dessert...) and other cool stuff...

Archaeology Day on Saturday November 8 in Borrego Springs: "Honoring the People". Presentations and displays by local indigenous basket artist Eva Salazar, Kumeyaay Storytelling, traditional games and plant medicines by Ami Admire, Payómkawichum. Guided tours of the Begole Archaeology Research Lab, fields trips Saturday afternoon, Nov 8 and Sunday Nov 9

See [www.anzaborregoarchaeo.org/archday2025/](http://www.anzaborregoarchaeo.org/archday2025/)

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