

Saline Preservation Association

SPA

P.O. Box 1941

Lancaster, CA 93539-1941



Fall 2022

Greetings Fellow Friend of Saline Valley,

This newsletter is an update of events and happenings in Saline Valley and Saline Valley Warm Springs. Remember, for real-time news, road conditions about the springs, and all SPA meeting minutes, and previous newsletters go to the Saline Preservation Association (SPA) forum at:

<http://forum.salinepreservation.org> .

SPA is a non-profit organization providing an informational conduit both between and among governing agencies and a widely dispersed community who visit the Saline Valley and its Warm Springs. SPA's goal is protection, preservation, and conservation of the valley to include geology, wildlife habitat, archeology, and a traditional human presence that emphasizes responsible individual freedom of choice.

As the year 2022 comes to a close, so does a change in its Board Members. John Runkle will be stepping down as SPA President and Mike Ramsey will be taking over as SPA President beginning 2023. Fred Dickson will be taking over as SPA Vice President and Treasurer. To fill the SPA vacancy, Board Members selected Jorel Allegro to start on the SPA Board of Directors beginning 2023.

Forty Years of Saline Valley
Submitted by Oregon John Runkle, SPA President

It truly is amazing how time flies. My Dad took me to the Hot Springs for the first time in 1982 in Baja Bugs. Man, those were the perfect desert vehicles to explore all the nooks and crannies in that Valley. The BLM days were a lot more relaxed as far as the rules go and quite a few rules that were there got stretched far, but we had a helluva lot of fun. It really hasn't changed that much since it became a National Park. We have different outhouses, more signs, a 30 day stay policy, but not very different from the old days. Just a lot more visitors out there.

The characters I have met over the years out there are many. A good portion of the Saline old timers have gone from this earth. I sure do miss the ones that made an impression on me, Turtle Jim, The Wizard, Chili Bob, Skip Hill, and a few more that were more like family than friends. The games we played in the desert were nothing short of amazing. Golf out in the rockiest most unforgiving landscape in any course in the world. There were prizes too! The coveted Green Robe and the trophy to the winner. The one with the most strokes got a fancy certificate that stated the obvious. It was always a hoot. Of course, the biggest of them all and the one that has been playing for years is the Prez Weekend softball game. The Skins and the Misfits put on quite a show for the crowd and the pot luck after the game is legendary. Yep, we know how to live life.

It's the quiet times out there that are flat out relaxing. A nice soak in the morning to get ready for your day. Then maybe some exploring, a hike up to the Peace Sign, scrubbing a tub, or just lazing at camp with a good book from the Library. I have spent some days out there with just a handful of people in attendance at the Springs. It is nice!

For the last 10 years I have been President of Saline Preservation Association, SPA, as a lot of you know it by. It has been a pleasure giving back some of my time to help keep the place in an as is condition. The members that make up the Board are some of the best people I have had the pleasure to work with. Together we made a really good team to keep Saliners informed about what was happening at the Springs. This was especially true when the Management Plan was being put together from the Park. Working within the confines of Government rules and regulations can be frustrating at times. The newest Park Superintendent, Mike Reynolds, has made that path a little easier. Mike is one of the good guys and we are lucky he is the head honcho at the Park. He also has a good staff to complement him there.

All in all it has been a honor to represent Saline Valley and it's users. Stepping down at the end of the year will open the door for the next incarnation of the SPA Board. I wish them success in all the dealings with the Park and may the Springs stay pretty much the same as they are now.

Oregonjohn

SPA's newest Board Member

Submitted by Jorel Allegro, Director

I grew up in Lake County, CA where activities like Boy Scouts and ski trips to Mt. Shasta exposed me to the beauty that the State of California has to offer. Attending college at both UC Santa Cruz and UC Berkeley I felt at home amongst the redwoods and ocean vistas. I met my partner Jess senior year and continued adventuring into the Eastern Sierra where we bonded over hot spring hunting and improving our dispersed camping skills.

Armed with a CA hot springs guidebook on a road trip through Death Valley during the spring 2016 super bloom, we made a 'slight' detour on the way north for our first visit to Saline Valley. Experiencing the sunrise from Wizard tub with the snow-capped Inyos glowing pink beyond the wash & dunes was extraordinary. Although only able to visit for one night that trip, we vowed to return soon. The winter of 2017 allowed for a more extended visit where I was immersed in the unique culture and got to know some of the kind souls that frequent the Warm Springs camps. I learned to drain and scrub the tubs; I gleaned some history from long-time regulars; road conditions were debated while dodging bats in the evening soak. I knew then I had to make Saline Valley a regular part of my life and contribute to this incredible community.

I am honored to serve on the Board of Directors to help preserve the true oasis and unique culture of the springs. As a construction estimator/project manager currently based in Bishop, CA I hope to leverage my enthusiasm and experience organizing diverse groups to benefit Saline Valley and the Warm Springs camps. Effective communication of camp etiquette, cultural norms and continued stewardship of the areas natural resources & infrastructure are key to preservation this special place.

You'll likely find me at the Palm Springs with my 5 meter canvas bell tent and dark grey Tacoma or on the Lower Springs lawn enjoying the shade. I look forward to working with the Saline Valley community and welcome outreach from its members.

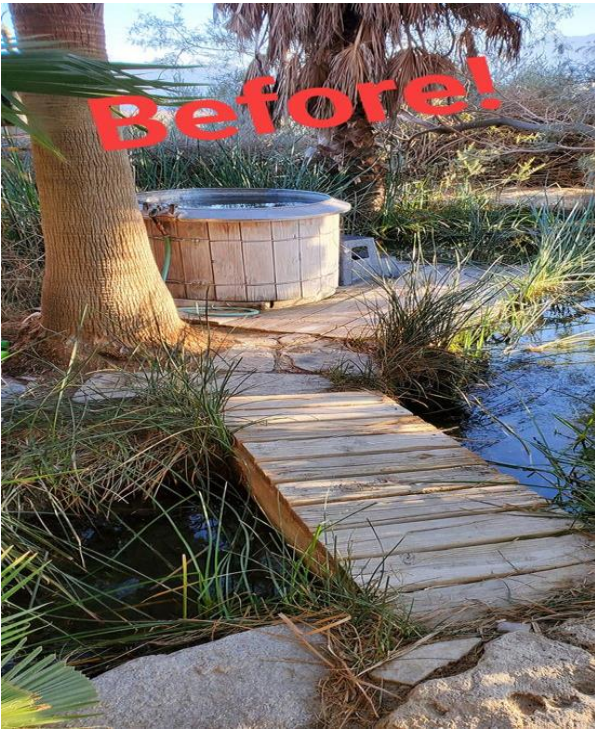
Live Free & Soak,

Jorel Allegro, Director
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Deck maintenance of the fishpond tub

Submitted by Mike Ramsey

Over the Halloween weekend at the springs, SPA organized the repair and maintenance of the deck under the tub next to the fishpond. The original deck was constructed with reclaimed wood from retired BLM signs and that wood had almost rotted away.



This project required the 100 plus gallon tub to be moved aside to allow the project to be completed. As many of you may know there is a very large stone seat inside the tub. But the all-volunteer crew were not intimidated. To support the understructure of the deck 2 3inch steel pipes were sledgehammered into the lakebed for support. The deck frame itself was assembled on the lawn and carried to the island. The decking was then screwed into place. The tub was put

back on the island and screwed into place.



The deck received a coat of tongue oil, and the wood sides of the tub got a coat of linseed oil. The deck should last 30 plus years.



This maintenance project is an example of where your donations to SPA are used. Thanks to all who donate. Other thanks go out to all of the volunteers that helped that day. Last, a special thanks to Justin Barton for loaning SPA his trailer and getting the lumber loaded at Bishop lumber. And to Dennis Horn for hauling Justin's trailer to the Springs.

When did the Saline Preservation Association get started?

Submitted by Michelle Hamilton with help from Sheri Cosgrove

The Saline Preservation Association was created to respond to concerns brought about by the proposed California Desert Protection Act.

The California Desert Protection Act (CDPA) was first introduced in 1986 but received resistance in the Senate. If passed, it would establish 3 National Park Units: Death Valley National Park, Joshua Tree National Park, and Mojave National Preserve. It would abolish Death Valley National Monument established in 1933 and incorporated its lands into the new Death Valley National Park. Saline Valley was part of Death Valley National Monument. Death Valley National Park would become the largest National Park in the lower 48 states and 95% of it would be designated as "Wilderness Areas". The Sierra Club was instrumental in lobbying for its passage. They list its eventual passage as one of their major accomplishments for 1990 <https://www.sierraclub.org/accomplishments>

The California Desert Protection Act (CDPA) of 1994 was signed into law October 31, 1994.

Sheri Cosgrove and her husband Glenn Young were the founders of the Saline Preservation Association (SPA). They spent the better part of their lives at various mines and camps in Saline Valley during the winter months. In 1986, they learned the Sierra Club was responsible for crafting the CDPA and were concerned about how this could affect vehicle access to various mines, access to the Springs, as well as what would happen to the Springs themselves. They wanted to make sure the folks living in and visiting Saline Valley knew about the proposed CDPA and had their voices heard.

Sheri had a background gathering and organizing mailing lists. She would use these lists to mail and tabulate surveys. She decided to use her skills to let the folks visiting the Springs know what was going on and how to let their voices be heard. As a teacher, she knew acronyms were popular and made up the name Saline Preservation Association (SPA) while driving down Grapevine Canyon. She also came up with the logo of the mermaid. Sam Merk, a long-time resident joined them. Now SPA was a force of three.

In 1986 there was no such thing as email. A physical address was needed. 2G cell service would not come out till 1999 so communication was via a land line. They collected names, phone numbers and addresses by hand of those visiting Saline Valley. They even left a box in which visitors could leave their contact information. The Sierra Club nominated David Bybee, a Saline Valley visitor, to work with SPA.

Sheri, Glenn and Sam designed newsletters with action items and mailed them to those who signed up. They took in donations to cover the printing and mailing costs. This created hundreds of letters of concern that were written by SPA members. Those letters even made their way to Washington DC. In addition, they also phoned SPA members and made sure they were present at all scoping meetings.

These founders would be followed by many others. They helped form what SPA is today. Its goal has always been the same: to preserve, maintain and keep Saline Valley open to be enjoyed for the magical place that it is.

Most recent Saline Preservation Association (SPA) Meeting Minutes

Submitted by Michelle Hamilton, SPA Secretary

In attendance:

John Runkle

Mike Ramsey

Michelle Hamilton

Fred Dickson

Gary Kremen

October 12, 2022 @ 8:33 a.m.

John Runkle called the meeting to order, seconded by Michelle Hamilton via Zoom

Replacement of SPA Board Member

There were several qualified candidates to choose from and Board members agreed there was no need to look any further.

Some board members knew some of the candidates but not all and some did not know any of them. Gary Kremen proposed that SPA interview the candidates. The Board members agreed to that.

Michelle Hamilton recommended her three top choices. The Board voted unanimously to go with her recommendation.

It was decided Michelle would email the top 3, as well as the others that had submitted letters of interest.

Interview Criteria

The Board decided that each Board member would email his or her question to the candidate. They agreed that many questions may be duplicates and would be narrowed down to maybe 3 to 5 questions and who on the Board would ask what questions. Each candidate would be asked the same questions.

Gary proposed SPA use Doodle to narrow down convenient times. SPA agreed and he said he would do this.

Road Conditions

John Runkle circulated a recent road report via Abby Wines to the Board Members. Darwin Road is open and Town's Pass is scheduled to be open the middle of November. Michelle Hamilton brought up that Steel Pass is washed out and the Gear Grinders who would normally repair Steel Pass no longer had a Memorandum with the National Park Service.

Sunrise Tub Repair

Michelle brought up the Sunrise Tub Repair. It was reported by Kegger Mike there was a chip in the Sunrise and that it was getting larger. Mike was willing to repair it himself. He would prefer SPA reimburse him but would be willing to foot the bill. He just wanted SPA's blessing.

Mike Ramsey brought up the materials to repair the tub are already out there and that he would be going to Saline Valley October 24th. Fred Dickson and Michelle Hamilton will also be going to Saline Valley. SPA decided to let Kegger Mike know they would prefer he wait on the repair till the SPA members were there to see the actual damage.

New SPA President

John Runkle nominated Mike Ramsey to take his place as SPA President starting January 1, 2023. All Board members in attendance agreed. Mike Ramsey will be the SPA President starting January 1, 2023.

New SPA Vice President

Mike Ramsey asked if any of the SPA Board members was interested in becoming Vice President starting January 1, 2023. Fred Dickson said he was interested in becoming Vice President. All Board members in attendance agreed. Fred Dickson will be the SPA Vice President starting January 1, 2023.

SPA Treasurer

Mike Ramsey said he was comfortable keeping the duties of Treasurer. He emphasized it is not a good thing to change banks, but SPA is banking with Wells Fargo so that another member should be able to take over if needed.

Fred Dickson said that he was interested in being Treasurer, but it could stay with Mike if that's what the Board decided. The person to have the duty of Treasurer has yet to be determined.

SPA Bi-Laws

Gary Kremen brought up the SPA Bi-Laws need to be reviewed and updated. Several things should be discussed, such as the need to have addresses for SPA members, attendance requirements, excused or non-excused absences and a stipulation for at least four newsletters. Board members agreed to review the Bi-Laws next year.

National Park Service Report

Timbo was unable to make the SPA meeting and John Runkle agreed to reach out to Timbo as Park Liaison to get an updated Park Report to address the outhouse and a possible SPA meeting with the NPS. This report would be included in the final meeting minutes.

Agricultural Tub Maintenance Project

Mike Ramsey has been in contact with Speedy Dave, one of Saline Valley's camp hosts over concerns about the structural integrity of the deck under the agricultural tub. The structure has been there longer than most of the SPA members could remember and is

sagging and falling apart. There is a need to replace the decking with the same size deck. The wood needs to be environmentally friendly treated lumber and some flag stones between the wood and the dirt would help prevent the new deck from decaying like the current one. SPA Board members unanimously agreed to let Mike Ramsey oversee this project.

Fall Newsletter

John Runkle will provide a letter telling of his 40 years going to Saline Valley and his departure from SPA.

Michelle Hamilton will write an article giving the history of how SPA started out as SOAKS.

Mike Ramsey will give an update on the tub repair.

Interviews & future meeting

The next SPA meeting will be held for the interviews. Hopefully before the middle of November. Tentatively SPA and its new Board member will meet around January 11th to keep with its quarterly meeting schedule.

John Runkle called the meeting to adjourn at 9:42, Mike Ramsey seconded the motion.

National Park Service report via Timbo 10/13/22

In regards to meeting with the NPS, our POC, Rob Wissinger indicated last week that the park is going through many challenges that the flooding has created and that having a meeting this month is not going to happen.

He did say November might be a possibility, however, that time and date hasn't come to fruition as of yet.

The outhouse situation was not brought up since our last interaction, which basically tells us it's not high on the priority list, given what's going on presently.

SPA Board Members

(OJ) John Runkle, President
(Flipper) Michael Ramsey,
Vice President/Treasurer
(Red Molly) Michelle
Hamilton,
Secretary/Membership

(Timbo) Tim Hynes, Park
Liaison
Bonneau Dickson, Director
(Farmer) Fred Dickson,
Director
Gary Kremen, Director

*SPA is an eligible 501(c)(3) Nonprofit. 100% of all donations go towards the maintenance and continuance of Saline Valley.

Membership to SPA is free, just email your name and email information to www.membership@salinepreservation.org.

If you want to donate to SPA using PayPal or a Credit/Debt Card click on the donate button at the bottom of the [SPA Website](#)

You can also donate by sending a check or cash to:
Saline Preservation Association
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Lancaster, CA 93539-1941