

Visions of the Past:

Sierra Gold, Aurora Silver



September 16–17, 2017

Terri Geissinger

\$155 per person / \$140 for Mono Lake
Committee members
enrollment limited to 15 participants

The gold-mining operations of Bennettville and the Log Cabin Mine and the silver-mining town of Aurora offer visions of the past to those who visit these now-deserted outposts at the Sierra crest and in the high desert. During this two-day seminar we will visit huge mills that once processed millions of dollars' worth of gold and silver ore and get a sense of people's lives in these early settlements.

At Bennettville and the Log Cabin Mine we will get a sense of the miners' struggle to hit pay dirt at the highest elevations of California, overlooking Mono Lake. After traveling the legendary Aurora cutoff route we will be treated to spectacular views and tales of the Aurora's lively history. Terri Geissinger is a Bodie Foundation Historian and Guide. She is active in the Mono Basin Historical Society, and has a talent for making history come alive.

ITINERARY

Saturday, September 16, 8:00am: We will meet in Lee Vining at the Mono Lake Committee Information Center & Bookstore. After brief introductions and discussion of the day's events, our first destination this day will be a hike to Bennettville. Located near Tioga Pass, this short hike through lush meadow and pine will transport you through time. Legends of great discoveries, lost treasure and murder mystery will keep you intrigued. Next we will travel to the Log Cabin Mine where gold was discovered in the 1890s. This state-of-the-art mine and mill was once was known as the largest gold producer in California. We will return to the Mono Lake Committee by 4:00pm.

Sunday, September 17, 8:30am: Meet in the parking lot at Bodie State Historic Park. Our adventure to Aurora begins on the historic stage route that leads down Del Monte Canyon; not much has changed since the freight wagons and stages traveled this way. At Aurora we will see what remains of this late-1800s silver mining town—brick foundations, Samuel Clemens' former home, and a fascinating cemetery. When it is time to head back to modern civilization, we will continue on the historic stage route that will lead us to Highway 182. Our day will conclude in Bridgeport at 4:00pm.

Physical Requirements: *You must be able to hike up to one mile on uneven terrain to take this tour.* If you use a cane or walker, have balance issues or are unsteady on your feet, or if you are

restricted to staying near your car, *this is not the tour for you*. Please be realistic about your physical limitations before embarking on this tour.

Altitude & Dehydration: These mining sites are all located at high altitude where the weather can change quickly. Remember to bring and drink lots of water because your body loses more water at higher altitudes. Also, the sun is fierce at high elevations, capable of burning even on cool and cloudy days, so be sure to protect yourself thoroughly using sunscreen, sunglasses, and hat.

Four-wheel Drive: Except for a few highway miles, we will be on dirt roads throughout this tour. The routes in the itinerary are subject to change due to weather and road conditions. Although the dirt roads are generally maintained, ***we recommend four-wheel drive and at least high clearance.*** If you don't have four-wheel drive or high clearance, we may be able to accommodate you by carpooling, *but there is no guarantee*. If you do have four-wheel drive and high clearance, please come prepared to take multiple passengers in your vehicle.

MEALS

Pack a lunch and snacks for both days. Don't forget plenty of water!

TO BRING

- camera
- comfortable shoes
- jacket
- hat, sunscreen, sunglasses
- lunch and snacks for both days
- plenty of water!



Mono Lake Committee Field Seminars

P.O. Box 29 • Lee Vining, CA 93541 • (760) 647-6595 • monolake.org/seminars