On Saturday the 24th, a dozen hearty, prospective State Park Volunteers journeyed from the world outside, braving a forecast of snow, to be invigorated amid near freezing environs of the Diggins.

A cadre of Incumbent volunteers, some in costume, delivered on the spot Interpretation of the General Store, Drug Store, Skidmore House, Saloon and the Visitor Center / Museum. A general orientation was ably provided by Jenna Randar and Lauren Wilson.

Three volunteers were signed up and others took away applications which, for remote Malakoff, was a successful endeavor.

Mark Michalski interprets North Bloomfield lore.

Additional thanks to Dave Anderson, Marianne Bryant, Syd Brown, Holly Mitten, Judy Arbuckle, & Sue Finley.
# 2018 Bird Walks at Bridgeport

**South Yuba River State Park**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Usual Sightings:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 10</td>
<td>American Dippers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 10</td>
<td>Bald Eagles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 14</td>
<td>Woodpeckers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 4</td>
<td>Blue Birds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 19</td>
<td>Kinglets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 9</td>
<td>Phoebes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 14</td>
<td>Various Migrants:</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 8</td>
<td>Warblers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 13</td>
<td>Swallows</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 8</td>
<td>Grosbeaks, etc.</td>
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</tbody>
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Saturdays, Except Friday May 4

Start Time: 8am, Except June, July, September 7:30am

Meet at Parking Lot
North Side of River
Weather-Appropriate Clothing
Water, Camera, Binoculars

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# Malakoff Diggins State Historic Park

**Tentative 2018 Activities**

- March 24 - Cemetery Tour
- April 14 - Clifford Gans - Book Signing
- May 12 - Hike with Mark Selverston
- June 9 - Humbug Day
- August 11 - Diggins Hike / Campfire Story-Telling
- September 2 - Ice Cream Social
- September 8 - The French Connection
- November 10 - Schoolhouse Tour
- November 13 - Afternoon Cemetery Walk
- December 8 - Christmas at Malakoff
- January 1, 2019 - 1st Day Hike

For Town Tour Info - and to Confirm Activity Dates and Times 530-265-2740
DISCOVER MALAKOFF! HISTORICAL CEMETERY TOUR
MARCH 24, 2018
1:30-3:30 pm
MALAKOFF DIGGINS STATE HISTORIC PARK

Join Chris Ward, author of Cemeteries of the Western Sierra, as he guides us through the historic North Bloomfield cemetery, regaling us with stories and snippets of history extracted from the headstones and markers remaining in the still-operating cemetery. Established in the mid-1800's, this plot of land is dedicated to the enduring stories and memories surrounding the early settlement of this hub of exploration and innovation.

"Cemeteries are more than final resting places for the dead; they are gateways to an area's shared history. Every hand-carved granite or marble monument, every faded wooden marker, holds a clue. Western Sierra populations boomed with the discovery of gold and often dwindled as gold fever waned. Cemeteries of the Western Sierra use the lens of the cemetery to glimpse a rich and disappearing history. Displaced indigenous populations, miners, dueling newspaper magnates, Chinese pioneers: all are part of the mosaic of history represented in a historical cemetery. From solitary graves in the forest to almost forgotten graveyards near the center of a town, cemeteries tell a story not just of who may have died but also of who lived and what was meaningful in their time."

FAQs
Cost: Free for the tour; $5 state park day use fee
Transportation
Car pooling is encouraged. We will meet at the museum/park headquarters. It is a short walk from there to the cemetery. There is parking for 15 cars at the cemetery, if inclement weather or the distance from the visitor center is too daunting. Accessing the park from Tyler Foote Road is recommended, as the shortest route via North Bloomfield Road is very rough, and unpaved from Edwards Crossing.
What to bring
Bring your camera, picnic lunch, if you wish to eat before the tour, water bottle, and dress in layers, to accommodate the changeable spring weather. Hats, gloves, umbrellas, and scarves can help make a chilly day enjoyable. Bring a small backpack to store your un-used articles. Please leave your dogs at home for this event.
More Information
◆ This free event is limited to 25 participants and requires pre-registration RSVP. ◆
Event registration link: https://discovermalakoffcemetrytour.eventbrite.com
Please do RSVP, and update, if you need to change your plans. We will maintain a wait list.
Learn more about Malakoff:
http://malakoffdigginsstatepark.org/ and https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=494

DATE AND TIME FOR DISCOVER MALAKOFF! HISTORICAL CEMETERY TOUR
Saturday, March 24, 2018
1:30 PM–3:30 PM
Malakoff Diggins State Historic Park
23579 North Bloomfield Road
Nevada City, CA 95959

Presented by the Friends of North Bloomfield & Malakoff Diggins and California State Parks Sierra Gold Sector
For more information call (530) 273-7714 or email lauren.wilson@parks.ca.gov

Friends of North Bloomfield & Malakoff Diggins Mission:
We enhance the interpretive experience for visitors, promote park-based education for learners of all ages, and support and preserve the natural and cultural resources of Malakoff Diggins SHP. We also assist other cooperative associations and the State Park System mission for the benefit of the public.
Amid the dull winter overcast a ray of sun shines down upon the Historic North Bloomfield School. Built in 1873 and enlarged with a “wing” around 1900, the place educated hundreds of country kids until it closed in 1941.

Suffering from Deferred Maintenance, sagging a bit and needing to be tweaked, aligned and painted, the place should soon receive a loving make-over thanks to an up to, $100,000 in state parks, Phase 1 funding. State Parks and Partners are working with Historicorps, (a group dedicated to renovating long neglected historic structures around the country), to participate in the overhaul.

Beginning in September, look for crews outside, jacking the foundation, replacing beams and painting the exterior. Folks inside will adjust, align, fill holes and make the place suitable for visitors, school groups, Environmental Living, etc. Cross your fingers for a completion by Halloween. (A Great Place for a Halloween party, right next to the cemetery.)

Technically, the project aims to create a weather resistant shell by repairing roof leaks and encapsulating the exterior white paint with non-toxic alternative.

North Bloomfield School is listed by The National Register of Historic Places as part the Malakoff Diggins-North Bloomfield Historic District and represents the only building devoted to education in this remote mining town.

Malakoff is a park on the rise and the Schoolhouse is just one of many new projects scheduled for this year. We have a new, million-dollar solar energy system, plans to repair all of the picket fencing and to continued work on many of the historic facilities.

Matthew Green
Chief Ranger
Sierra District
Not an Ivy Covered Hall

It was a state-of-the-art four-holer and there was one each, for boys and for girls, at opposite ends of the school, but it was still an outdoor sprint through snow, rain and wind.

Then there was the draft, but one would have to have experienced that phenomenon to appreciate the point.

In fact, “drafty” would describe the schoolhouse itself, drafty and cold most of the time. Boys were kept busy chopping wood to keep the stove popping and pushing heat through overhead pipes suspended from ceiling hooks. Note the ceiling vent, adjusted manually from the teacher’s desk.

The first school in North Bloomfield was built in 1857 and then replaced by the present structure in 1873 at a cost to the townspeople of $3,700, complete with furnishings and its own library. Classes were held for kindergarten through eighth grades, all at the same time with two or three students per desk.

The left wing of the school was extended at a later date, to accommodate the expanded enrollment. As many as 144 students took lessons from two teachers in the L-shaped two room schoolhouse.

cont.
Notice the length of the L-addition in the left hand photo at the bottom of the previous page. The room ends approximately one foot beyond the window. This photo was taken before 1900. The right hand photo reveals that sometime later an additional 15 feet were tacked on, no doubt to accommodate some of those 144 kids.

Numerous blackboards graced all four walls, chalk being used as the primary teaching aid since paper products were scarce during the gold rush. Children used slate boards and chalk to do homework.

A bench was used to seat children who were being disciplined or were figuratively wearing the dunce cap.

The front doors open into two cloak rooms with a supply room in between. A small hole in that ceiling provided boys access up into the bell cupola. A perpendicular wood ladder made the climb interesting or even exciting for some. Shinnying up that ladder into the dark attic below the cupola, possibly inhabited by bats, and only back-lit by kerosene lamps from below, was not for the meek. On the previous page both men and boys had made the climb to pose for the photographer.

When the school opened in 1874, F.D. McAlister served as principal and teacher for which he received a salary of $90 per month. His assistant, Mrs. McDonald received $50 per month. Subsequently, residence cottages were provided near the school for the schoolmasters and mistresses.

The structure served as a church and Sunday school on weekends. Catholic, Methodist and Episcopalian religious services were conducted here. The place also provided the community a town meeting hall before Cummins Hall was constructed.

Closed in 1941, North Bloomfield School was acquired by the California Department of Parks and Recreation in 1973, one hundred years after it was built.

Source: *Malakoff Diggins SHP Unit History, Edited by, L. Clark, 2010*
CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS
DRONE LAW

California Code of Regulations § 4319.
Games and Recreational Activities.

No person shall engage in games or recreational activities that endanger the safety of persons, property, resources, or interfere with visitor activities except as permitted by the Department. No person shall hold, sponsor, lead, or otherwise have control over a game or recreational activity, occurring wholly or partially within or on any property owned, operated or administered by the Department without an approved Special Event Permit. (This includes Drones. In addition to the Permit, one must have an FAA License and an approved Flight Plan.) Matthew Green, Chief Ranger

_________________________

VOLUNTEER SIGN UP DAYS
A WEARING OF THE GREEN - March 10 & 17

Stop off at Empire Mine State Park on Saturday March 10; or on the 17th on the way to your St. Patrick’s Day Celebration and sign up as a State Park Volunteer.

It Tis not just a pot of gold you may find but the enjoyment and satisfaction of volunteering at one of the three local California State Parks; Empire Mine, South Yuba River and Malakoff Diggins all have their own histories yet are all connected. Whether you enjoy meeting people or signing on to build and repair there’s a spot waiting just for you.

Arrive any time between 9:00a.m.-3:00p.m. Capital Live Scan will be there for LiveScan fingerprinting, so a valid ID and $12 in cash, credit card or check form will be required. If anyone has any questions or concerns, please call or email Jenna Randar at: (530)-273-0291 or Jenna.Randar@parks.ca.gov.
“Major” William Downie

His book, Hunting for Gold, published shortly before his death in 1893, gives scant details of William’s origins and life apart from gold prospecting and exploration. What is clear is that he was born in Glasgow, Scotland and gave his name to the town of Downieville, in Sierra County, California, where he claims to have built the first house, a log cabin, as well as having been one of the first to find gold there, in 1849.

“On my voyage to America. I shipped at Donegal (Ireland) for Quebec, there hearing of the gold rush, sailed from Boston to New Orleans on the brig Monterey, on to San Francisco round Cape Horn on the clipper Architect, under Captain Gray of Baltimore.”

Downie arrived in San Francisco on 27 June 1849 and like all on board, except the officers, immediately left the ship. After working for a few days in the city, he sailed from San Francisco on 5 July for Sacramento, arriving after a voyage of 11 days.

First gold prospecting was at Nye’s Ranch, now known as Marysville (across the river from Yuba City), he injured a finger and took a break from prospecting to go into store-keeping. The urge for gold soon took over and he set off again into the hills in early October 1849, finally coming on a place called, the Forks, which appears on the modern map as the junction of the River Downie [the North Fork] with the N. Yuba River. His description of the place is quite lyrical:

“The scene that burst upon us was one of marvelous beauty, and after these many years it still lies before me like a lovely panorama, in my recollection of the moment when I first saw it. The silence of the woods was broken only by a meeting of the currents and the breeze through the foliage.”

THE FORKS
Looking Upstream from Durgan Bridge, over the N. Yuba River at Downieville. Hwy. 49 crosses the Jersey Bridge over the Downie River (N. Fork of the N. Yuba River) at upper left.
After building a cabin, of sorts, he wrote, as they moved in December 10, 1849. ".. We were already well settled and kept a sort of open house for all travelers, who were welcome to share anything with us, which we had to eat. Charley Wilkins and Albert Callis, the two colored men, would cook for them and make them feel at home, and as far back as those early days I had become known as Major Downie, and travelers in search of shelter or relief were often told to go to Major Downie's cabin."

Other buildings were erected and by 3 March 1850 a meeting at Mr. Kelly's cabin set a series of laws governing claims in the upper Yuba district. One of these was, "That none but native and naturalized citizens of the United States shall be allowed to hold claims". William was the victim of a lawsuit later in which claim jumpers accused him of not being a US citizen, "But I soon vindicated my rights as an American citizen, notwithstanding the fact that I was born in Scotland and 'proud of the land that gave me birth' ".

Soon after that meeting, there was a proposal to name the growing township Downieville and the proposer, a Mr. Galloway, made the name official on being made a Justice of the Peace, signing his writs as from "Downieville" after his election on 1 June 1850, which may be taken as the date on which the town was officially founded. Downie may have bid a pot of gold for the honor. (?)

*The Oakland News* of November 28, 1871 Albert Beckert names William Downie as the founder of Downieville and confirms his claim to have built the first cabin there. It also mentions his marriage to "a Scotch lady" in British Columbia and notes that he "returned with his family to Downieville". In the book, he mentions his brothers in law, Artemis and Douglas Davison, which leads to the conclusion that his wife's maiden surname was Davison (or Davidson).

By 1874 Downie is reported to have mined gold in Panama by robbing graves. Whether common graves or ancient tombs, I guess one has to read the book. Downie died aboard ship enroute to San Francisco from British Columbia in 1893.

*Source: Excerpts from Hunting for Gold by Wm Downie & C. M. Waage*
169TH WIDDER'S BALL JAMBOREEE
CELEBRATED SINCE 1849

MAJOR WILLIAM DOWNIE CHAPTER #1849
NOBLE GRAND HUMBUG BRIAN GARDEI
CORDIALLY INVITES ALL REDSHIRTS, WIDDERS AND GUESTS
TO OUR ANNUAL WIDDER'S BALL JAMBOREEE

NEW DATE       SATURDAY, APRIL 14TH 2018
NEW PLACE      NEVADA COUNTY HORSEMAN CLUB
               10600 BUBBLING WELLS RD GRASS VALLEY 95945
               DOOR OPENS 5:00PM  DINNER 6:30
               DINNER + DANCING + RAFFLE + BEST DRESSED CONTESTS
On January 12, 2018, staff from Nevada County, Jennifer Horne from Congressman Las Malfa’s office, representatives from the California Department of Parks & Recreation (DPR), the Save Our Bridge Campaign Committee, the South Yuba River Park Association, and the Friends of North Bloomfield & Malakoff Diggins met to discuss the upcoming projects scheduled to start in the South Yuba River and Malakoff Diggins State Parks. The two projects will include reconstruction of the Bridgeport Covered Bridge in the South Yuba River State Park and the Energy Efficiency Improvements to Malakoff Diggins State Historic Park. Both projects are planned to start construction in August, 2018, and will benefit the local economy while preserving Nevada County History.

District 4 Supervisor, Hank Weston has been active in the projects since discussions first began, saying, “After six years of hard work and planning, I am pleased that construction on both projects will start later this year. Neither of the projects would have been achieved without the South Yuba River Park Association and Save Our Bridge Campaign Committee who led the charge on these initiatives, and the support of multiple local agencies, non-profits, organizations, volunteers, and community members who are passionate about keeping these Historic sites open and true to their historic nature for residents and tourists to enjoy.”

*Historic preservation clearly does much more than preserve bricks and mortar. It recognizes that our built history connects us in tangible ways with our past and provides context for the places we occupy and the world we live in.*

*Craig Potts, Executive Director of the Kentucky Heritage Council and State Historic Preservation Officer*
The job of a Columnist for a newspaper must be fraught with mine fields. One may wax eloquent on an apparent mundane topic, and up jumps a support group for that subject, hurling proverbial brick-bats. (What is a brick-bat, exactly?) It is easy to be slightly off target and litter the field with “collateral damage”, or “Unlucky, he was, to have been sitting there”.

To arrive at the paper and find your desk and e-mails populated with letters of outrage, demanding you be publicly flogged, would have the writer yelping, “What?” “What?”

The turn of a phrase or an innocuous substitution of a word can unconscientiously ignite a fire storm of rebuttal.

As the amateur author of park circulars over the years, I once replaced “Hell” with “Hades” for proprieties. The speaker called me on the phone and reprimanded me with, “Boy, Ah said the place was goin’ ta Hell! Don’t be waterin’ it down!”

Recently a local newspaper columnist decided that the restoration process of the Bridgeport Covered Bridge was a bureaucratic fur-ball, wasting a pile of money on, “creating a structure that will fit right in at Disneyland”. To all who venerated the history of the bridge, etc., that was like a slap in the face. But.......when he followed with, “Where a lot of people like to dress up in old-timey clothes and pretend the good old days were better than they were”..... that was the collateral damage that hit a lot of innocent people who were doing good things. He seemingly chose to ridicule defenseless targets, while assuming or fabricating the idea, that the “target” in fact, “pretended the good old days were better.....” , which suggests he has no grasp on the Oral Interpreter’s presentation of history. Not verifying his “facts”, is said to be a sin for newspaper people, unless they are cartoonists....

Well, the target moved, the newspaperman was set straight on the Cultural History associated with the bridge and its everlasting effect on, Who We Are, And......... who we ain’t, (with all due respect)...... Disneyland!

“Brick-Bat” The Tommy-knockers know: A Piece of a Brick.
“NO MAN THAT EVER SAW
KIND OF A BARREN,
LESS, D—D MEAN GOD
THIS IS, NOT GOD
NEVER HAD ANYTHING
HAS ANY IDEA WHAT
WORTHLESS, VALUE-
FORSAKEN COUNTRY
FORSAKEN FOR HE
TO DO WITH IT.”

SO WROTE DON CARPENTER
TRAIN CROSSING FORTY
MILE DESERT, NEVADA

Once the Humboldt River died, the going only got worse. From the Humboldt Sink, the emigrants had to make a near-waterless leap—a leap of faith—across the hottest, driest section of the trail: the Forty-Mile Desert. It was 40 miles from the end of the Humboldt River to either the Truckee River or the Carson River—the nearest streams flowing off the eastern slopes of the Sierra Nevada. Here the grim trails were easy to find, marked by bloated carcasses and bleaching bones of livestock that had perished from heat and thirst. Their decomposing bodies filled the air with the stench of death. Desperate emigrants discarded tons of valuable possessions to lighten loads for weakened animal teams. Wagons and goods piled up, abandoned, in the desert. The only water, barely potable, lay in a handful of dug wells clogged with algae, or in sulfurous holes that belched steam like portals to hell. Aridity reigns in the Forty-Mile Desert—and across the rest of the Great Basin—because the Sierra Nevada traps cloud moisture on its western flanks.

“Long emigrant-trains whose footsore cattle wearily toiled and escaped a thousand dangers and had crawled thousands of miles across the plains, faced the reality of a granite, eastern wall of the land of gold. And as with shaded eyes they gazed through the tremulous haze of the desert, with what joy must they have descried as finding an open pass, through which they were to enter the land of their hopes and dreams!”

John Muir
When spring arrives in the Nevada County foothills there is no better way to welcome its arrival than with a walk among the beautiful wildflowers at South Yuba River State Park. Docents will provide guided wildflower walks beginning on March 10, and will continue every Saturday and Sunday through May 13 at 11:00 a.m. The walks and blooms are at the whim of Mother Nature. Rain may cancel. Call 530 432-2546 for information.

The Buttermilk Bend Trail, which winds above the wild and scenic South Yuba River, is highly regarded for the many species that bloom on its hills and slopes. Each season observers are delighted with an everchanging tableau of spring color. Early season walkers may find Western Buttercups, Zigzag Larkspur, and Shooting Stars. By mid-season, the hills usually turn gold and purple with Tufted Poppies and a variety of lupine. Mid to late season floral treats can include Fairy Lanterns, Chinese Houses, and Birds-eye Gilia. Docents will share facts, legends and the many uses of the flowers and plants along the trail.

Docent led hikes last about 1.5 hours. The Buttermilk Bend trail is an easy 2 mile hike out and back. Meet at the trailhead in the South Yuba River State Park north parking lot. Follow Pleasant Valley Road north past the Visitor Center over the South Yuba River. Parking is $5.00. Sturdy walking shoes, hat and water are recommended. A $3.00 donation is requested and appreciated. (Dogs are not permitted on the guided walks as the trail is narrow and the groups can be large.)

To make your visit complete, bring picnic lunch and allow time to take in the park Visitor Center, check out the covered bridge (while is it under renovation) and barn (both built in 1862), and the restored 1920’s gas station.

The Visitor Center is open from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Thursday through Sunday until Memorial Day and every day from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. starting Memorial Day weekend. Here you can find a collection of wildflower books educational and souvenir items. (And perhaps that bottle of water you forgot to bring for the hike)

For More Information Call the Park at 530-432-2546 or visit www.southyubariverstatepark.org
Join Friends
of North Bloomfield & Malakoff Diggins
or Renew Your Membership - See Last Page

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Empire Mine
Park Association
empiremine.org

The Empire Star
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©
2017 was a great year for Malakoff Diggins State Historic Park, and we hope you had a chance to come out and create your own special memories here. Maybe you were here for the fun of our events, as we:
* Celebrated the history of N. Bloomfield with the 51st Humbug Day
* Honored the contributions of the early French-speaking residents with our first French Connection event
* Supported the Environmental Living Program, bringing 4th grade students to the park to experience history first-hand
* Kicked off the New Year with the wildly-successful First Day Hike. For Activity Details and newsletters: [http://malakoffdigginsstatepark.org/park-association-newsletter/](http://malakoffdigginsstatepark.org/park-association-newsletter/)

A big part of this was our creation of a Strategic Plan to focus our efforts for the next 3 years supporting park enhancement and interpretation. We invite you to read: [http://malakoffdigginsstatepark.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/FNBMD-Strategic-Plan_2017.pdf](http://malakoffdigginsstatepark.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/FNBMD-Strategic-Plan_2017.pdf)

**Highlights of the Strategic Plan include:**

- Expanding the Environmental Living Program to include a science component for grades 5-6, to be offered in the fall
- Celebrating the transition to 100% solar power for the entire park
- Increasing our fund raising efforts and results so we can fund increased interpretation and restoration work, park-wide
- Creating monthly special events, the 2nd Saturday of each month to bring people out to: “Discover Malakoff”

Much of this work is slated to start, if not be completed in, 2018! As a 501(c)3 organization, our mission is to enhance the interpretive experience for visitors, promote park-based education for learners of all ages, and support and preserve the natural and cultural resources of Malakoff Diggins SHP. The primary way we will accomplish this mission is to raise funds to bridge the funding gap for activities not covered by the State Park budget.

If you have received this e-mail, it’s because you are a member of the FNB&MD, a volunteer at the park, or are just a general park lover! That’s why we’re sending this e-mail to you today—to ask that you support the park you love by renewing your membership, making a donation or both. Of course, all donations made to FNB&MD stay in the park for the benefit of present and future generations, and are tax deductible.

To join Friends or Renew, visit: [malakoffdigginsstatepark.org/membership-application/](http://malakoffdigginsstatepark.org/membership-application/)

Donation may be made at: [http://malakoffdigginsstatepark.org/donation/](http://malakoffdigginsstatepark.org/donation/)

We’re excited about all of the progress that we’ve made to bring Malakoff Diggins SHP back this progress, and for all you do to help us keep moving toward that vision. Looking forward to seeing you at the park!

Submitted by: Holly Mitten
Membership Application

The Friends of North Bloomfield & Malakoff Diggins (FNB&MD) is a non-profit organization assisting the California Department of Parks and Recreation in the operation of Malakoff Diggins State Historic Park. Your tax deductible membership in FNB &MD will

- help preserve, protect and enhance the man made and natural resources of Malakoff Diggins SHP
- support interpretation of the park's rich biological diversity, geologic features, historic and cultural resources
- provide you with a quarterly newsletter and other notices of Park activities
- include a 10% discount on purchases from the Malakoff Park Store.

Membership Levels

Annual Individual membership ($20) □
Annual family membership ($25) □
Lifetime individual membership ($150) □
Lifetime family membership ($200) □
Annual business sponsor ($100) □

Name _________________________________
Street Address _________________________________
City __________________ State ______ Zip ______
Phone __________________ (home) __________________ (cell)

Email _________________________________

I am interested in:

☒ helping the park organization financially
☒ becoming a trained docent
☒ becoming a park volunteer
☒ other

Send payment with membership application to
FNBMD
P. O. Box 1658
Penn Valley CA 95946

FRIENDS OF NORTH BLOOMFIELD & MALAKOFF DIGGINS

Mission:

We enhance the interpretive experience for visitors, promote park-based education for learners of all ages, and support and preserve the natural and cultural resources of Malakoff Diggins SHP. We also assist other cooperative associations and the State Park System mission for the benefit of the public.

for more information call 530.265.2740 or check out our website:
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friendsofmalakoff@gmail.com
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