



History happens

Tour of Pine Grove and Buffalo Creek

by Pat Mauro, Park County Historical Society

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The Park County Historical Society had another great trip Oct. 2. We congregated in Pine Junction and drove down County Road 126.

We began the tour by stopping above Crystal Lake, which is on the way to Pine Valley Ranch Open Space Park.

Historic stories were told of train wrecks that occurred there and the 100-plus room hotel once located there. The lake was used for ice operations also.



Baehrden Lodge

Sue Glenn looks through the fence at Baehrden Lodge. (Photo by Pat Mauro)

We then went to the Pine Valley Ranch Park to view the Baehrden Lodge and review its history.

We hiked around the lodge, and noted the great architecture of the 27 room lodge. We found a stone bridge and remnants of the water system that feeds the lodge.

We made our way down to the gazebo, built by the Baehr family in 1939. We walked downstream on the narrow gauge trail, which is the grade of the Denver, South Park and Pacific Railroad.

We viewed how the blasting by the powder monkeys (powder monkeys would hang from the cliffs and drill rock to blast it) was done and how the blasted rock is in the river now.

At one blast location, you can still see where the blast had occurred in the rock.

We then gathered in the pavilion to eat lunch. When we finished with lunch, we drove into the town of Pine Grove.

We stopped on the way near CR 126, to view a now and then picture included with the tour guide. We started by entering the

Pine Emporium (originally Pine Mercantile, which was run by Charles Dake and his son Albert, from 1888-1937).

We started the walking tour and went to the Prosser Hotel, which was one block north. The owner came out, and invited us in to view the first floor interior.

The interior has changed very little since it was built in 1886 by the Prossers. Pictures of the Prossers and other rare scenes of Pine Grove hung on the walls.

The building has been preserved by the current owners, and it was a great surprise for everyone attending, to be able to enter the great structure. We made our way on the walking tour and the owner of the Pine Grove School house greeted us, and we were able to view the building.

The owner rang the bell in the belfry, which still works. She uses it for a doorbell

We made our way back to the Emporium, and noted the former locations of the railroad depot and railroad wye.

At that time, most of the attendees left. We did go to Buffalo Creek and stopped at the Green Mercantile and viewed some of the remnants of the railroad era in the area, including the railroad section house which still stands.

Everyone enjoyed the trip and we were able to discover some history of the area. Stay tuned for more PCHS fun coming in 2017 at www.parkcountyhistory.com.