

REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

GLIDE BACK INTO HISTORY: HISTORIAN LEADS RED MOUNTAIN MINING DISTRICT TOUR

Special to the Mirror from the Uncompahgre Watershed Partnership

RED MOUNTAIN—More than 12 million dollars in silver ore was produced by the Yankee Girl Mine up Red Mountain Pass between 1882 and the late 1890s. Today, the mine is defunct and only a few visitors reach it each winter – usually by snowshoes or skis.

Stories about the mining legacy in the San Juan Mountains as well as the peaks' names will be shared during a guided tour of the Red Mountain mining district on Saturday, Jan. 30. The special outing is hosted by the Uncompahgre Watershed Partnership (UWP), a Ouray County-based nonprofit protecting the Upper Uncompahgre River Watershed, and the Ouray County Historical Society.

“The winter scenery is beautiful and the structures in the snow make for very outstanding photos,” said tour guide and Ouray County Museum Curator Don Paulson. “If you love history and being outdoors in the winter this is the trip for you.”

A retired California State University professor, who led research projects and taught organic chemistry, Paulson has always been interested in narrow gauge railroads and Colorado mining. He began

coming to Ouray and researching the area's history in the mid-1970s, and moved here in 2006.

On the mining district tour, “I will tell about the history of the area including the mines, the town of Guston, the Silverton Railroad that ran from Silverton over Red Mountain pass down into the Ironton Valley, and I will identify the mountain peaks and explain how they got their names,” said Paulson, who has authored several books, articles and talks on the area's history, including “Mines, Miners and Much More” published by Twain Press in July 2015.

Tour guests will join him on cross country skis and snowshoes on a route that is about two miles each way on County Road 31 from Highway 550 to the Yankee Girl Mine. The area's most prolific silver producer in the late 1800s, Yankee Girl's head frame is an often-photographed, iconic structure and visible for miles across Red Mountain Pass. The head frame is the building on top of the 1,500-foot deep shaft that raised and lowered the ore and miners from the mine.

Tour participants will also visit the site of the town of Guston, which has several very photogenic buildings. “The tour takes

place at 10,000 feet so participants should be acclimated to the altitude. It can be taken by any age as long as you're in good physical condition. We have had people from toddlers to 80 year olds on previous trips,” he said.

UWP Project Coordinator Agnieszka Przeszlowska added, “It's a nice way to safely explore the mining district in winter-time. It's also a great way to meet people that enjoy getting outside in the winter.”

TOUR DETAILS:

Date & Time: 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Meeting Place: Ouray Visitor Center, 1230 Main St., Ouray, CO 81427 (from there we will carpool to CR 31)

What to Bring: snowshoes, cross country or touring gear, appropriate clothing & accessories to keep you comfy & happy, lunch, water, sunscreen, friends, kids, but please leave your furry friends at home. What we'll bring: refreshments and cookies to complement your lunch

Registration: spaces are limited to 20. Do not delay, sign up now! we kindly request a \$25 donation to support our organiza-

tions: UWP & OCHS. Go to uncompahgrewatershed.org/event/2016wintertour

Questions: Contact Judi at UWPcoordinator@gmail.com or 970-325-3010.

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