Bodie-Benton Railroad, CA       June 3 - 29, 2018

A ghost town preserved in a state of “arrested decay” just outside of Yosemite National Park – how would you have been able to say no? This project offered incredible opportunities for photographers and history buffs alike.
PROJECT PARTNERS: Bodie Foundation and California State Parks System

PROJECT SITE DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY:
From www.parks.ca.gov: “Bodie State Historic Park is a genuine California gold-mining ghost town. Visitors can walk down the deserted streets of a town that once had a population of nearly 10,000 people. The town is named for Waterman S. Body (William Bodey), who had discovered small amounts of gold in hills north of Mono Lake. In 1875, a mine cave-in revealed pay dirt, which led to purchase of the mine by the Standard Company in 1877. People flocked to Bodie and transformed it from a town of a few dozen to a boomtown.

“Only a small part of the town survives, preserved in a state of ‘arrested decay.’ Interiors remain as they were left and stocked with goods.

Designated as a National Historic Site and a State Historic Park in 1962, the remains of Bodie are being preserved in a state of ‘arrested decay.’ Today this once thriving mining camp is visited by tourists, howling winds and an occasional ghost.” Bodie has been named by California legislature as the official state gold rush town. You can read a detailed brochure about the town’s (occasionally salacious) history here. You can also find beautiful historic photographs of Bodie, like the one above of the Railroad Office, on the Library of Congress’ website.

The Bodie & Benton Railway, the office of which we worked on, was a three-foot narrow gauge railroad in California, from the Mono Mills to its terminus in Bodie. What makes this railroad unusual is that it was isolated and unconnected to any other railroad system. Its purpose was solely to link gold-mining Bodie to Mono Mills, a sawmill, 32 miles south along the east shore of Mono Lake. It was made operational by 1881. Visitors can still walk (or even mountain bike) the rail line to Mono Lake. The railroad office structure, primarily its chimney, were destabilized by recent earthquakes. There are more than 100 other historic buildings remaining from Bodie’s tumultuous heyday.

SCOPE OF WORK: Volunteers worked with field staff to learn and improve their skills at the following tasks:

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<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Approximate Percentage of Scope*</th>
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<td>1. Remove and repair timber sill plates at building foundation</td>
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2. Remove and repair timber framing supporting walls  20%
3. Repoint mortar  20%
4. Repair and replace loose stone and brick elements  15%
5. Excavate and regrade earth along building foundation  10%

**WHERE:** Bodie State Historical Park is located only an hour from Yosemite National Park!
GPS Coordinates: 38.213284, -119.0168604
[Here](#) is a Google map of Bodie State Historical Park.

“Yosemite Valley, to me, is always a sunrise, a glitter of green and golden wonder in a vast edifice of stone and space.”
— Ansel Adams

Half Dome, standing watch over Yosemite National Park