

2012 GOVERNOR'S HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARDS

Bale Grist Mill's Historic Grain Cleaning and Sifting System Restoration



Bale Grist Mill's historic grain cleaning and sifting system pictured above.

In 2006, the Napa Valley State Parks Association assumed the task of completing the final stage of restoring the Bale Grist Mill, a project completed after six years. In 2011, when it was announced that Bale Grist Mill State Historic Park and Bothe-Napa Valley State Park were on the closure list, Association board members agreed unanimously to submit a proposal to operate Bale Grist Mill SHP themselves and to find a local park partner to operate Bothe-Napa Valley SP with them. The Association now partners with the Napa County Regional Parks and Open Space District to jointly operate Bale Grist Mill and Bothe-Napa.

Through the hard work of the Association, Californians will continue to have access to the fully-restored Bale Grist Mill and the story it tells of rural life in the Napa Valley of the 1850s and 1860s. The Mill, with its original set of French Buhr stones and 36-foot in diameter redwood waterwheel, is the only water-powered grist mill left in California.

In the 1980s, the mill building, waterwheel and basic milling operation were restored by State Parks, but funds were exhausted and the hand-built grain cleaning and sifting system that had once so amazed local farmers was left stacked in pieces, the story of milling left unfinished. After evaluation by a millwright, the Association undertook the six-year process to complete the final stage of the mill restoration. To do this, the Association raised nearly \$200,000. The commitment of this "small but mighty" group of volunteers to preserving the heritage of California and the Napa Valley and keeping it accessible for everyone is both note- and "award"-worthy.

Learn more about Bale Grist Mill and the State Parks of Napa Valley link:

<http://napavalleystateparks.org/local-activities-attractions/>