

Greenwood State Beach Visitor Center/Museum Exterior Preservation Project

After years of deterioration and concern about its potential health hazard, the exterior of the historic Greenwood State Beach Visitor Center/Museum has been repainted and preserved. Thanks to persistence, teamwork, and good old-fashioned hard work, the Visitor Center/Museum has reclaimed its place as the shining jewel of the Elk community.

In January 2009, Dennis McSweeney, Maintenance Supervisor for Mendocino District State Parks, came to Elk's Annual Town Meeting. He was invited by Prue Wilcox and the Greenwood Civic Club to address the deplorable condition of the Visitor Center/Museum and came to be part of a solution. He warned that time was running out, however, as funds set aside some time ago to paint the museum would be re-absorbed into the State coffers if not utilized soon. This wasn't the first attempt to get the building painted; the project had been already approved, but was derailed by the discovery of lead paint chips. That cold, winter night, Dennis asked the community to submit a plan of action that would allow him to finally implement the project.

Sleeves were rolled up and a proposal to coordinate teams of town volunteers and hire local contractor, Lori Kaye, to complete the project under special terms was submitted. The use of volunteers created liability issues, so, while appreciated, the offer was rejected. Instead, State Parks located a nearby Lead Abatement Contractor who could remove the hazard. The State's process for hiring general contractors, however, requires open bidding which usually takes 15-18 months, raising fear that the project would be cancelled under the state's dire economic predicament. Dennis offered the project for a sum that could be approved locally and immediately if Lori was willing to do the work. The State was able to provide all of the materials, equipment, and occasional labor to assist, but a licensed, bonded and insured contractor would be required. Lori was up for the task.

Working closely with the State Historian, Michael Cabaniss, on aspects of preservation, a deal was struck and the project was scheduled to start in June, weather permitting. The abatement company promptly and efficiently removed the loose paint chips. The State Parks grounds crew staff cheerfully assisted with relocating the heavy scaffolding when needed. Lori volunteered an additional three weeks of her own time to make sure that every detail was attended to. On a warm, summer day – August 16, 2009 – the work was concluded.

Lori would like to thank the Greenwood Civic Club for keeping the pressure on the State and not letting the funds slip away; the Elk community for its kind support and appreciation; the State Parks grounds crew - Robert, Seth, Louis, Mike, and Hideki; and Dennis McSweeney for finding a way to make it happen. For Lori, "It was a huge honor and a pleasure to participate in the preservation of this Historic Site."

The Elk community is grateful to Lori, Dennis McSweeney, and everyone else instrumental in returning pride to Greenwood State Beach Visitor Center/Museum.