

South Fox Island work session October 5 - 10, 2006

Report by Phil von Voigtlander

On October 5th, Todd Huck piloted the Showboat to the boathouse anchorage at the SE corner of South Fox Island. On board were George Carpenter, John McKinney and Phil von Voigtlander. We arrived at 0900 and immediately started the several shuttle trips needed to unload the materials and supplies.

During the course of the day, Todd Huck used his fire training skills and equipment to work on the chimneys of the Keepers Quarters. He was assisted by Phil on the ground manning the safety lines and delivering materials. Todd completed the vegetation removal from the 3 chimneys, checked the fit of the chimney caps and patched an area on the roof. Afterwards on the ground he cleared the back sidewalk of sod and debris. George and John concentrated on continuing painting the Lighthouse metal work that day. At the end of the day, George and Todd returned to Northport and for the next 5 days John and Phil stayed at the Station and continued working.

John focused on completing the metal work painting, clearing sidewalks, cutting back brush along them and cleaning up the interior of the Light tower. Phil patched and primed the roof of the Oil House and then focused on the Boathouse. There he completed excavating the overfill that had covered the bottom of the siding and sill plate of the south wall and installed a set of three 16 foot T beams to brace up the North wall. These are mounted onto a temporary header on the outside of the building and attached to footing boards anchored with boulders.

For a change of pace on Sunday (noting that Lightkeepers "kept the Sabbath"), John and Phil explored and assessed the condition of the Fog Signal building and the family apartment of the Keepers Quarters Sunday morning. In the former, they discovered that the primary cause of interior water damage to the structure was the failure to close up the upper story portals. Subsequently, Phil fashioned covers for the broken windows there and further secured the door to the catwalk deck. To explore the family apartment, we choose to enter through the attic because we did not wish to dismantle the tight weather and security protection that still covers all the portals. We found the apartment to be in generally good condition; cleaner and in a better state of repair than the bachelors apartments. We did find the expected focal plaster damage that seemed to be caused by earlier water incursion through roof leaks that we have now repaired. We plan to return to the apartment again next season during or immediately after a major rain event to further assess the weather tightness.

On Monday, Phil assisted by John installed the shutters including one with a safety glass window in the lantern room of the Historic Lighthouse. When not working on this, John continued clearing sidewalks and revealing their destinations.

Sunday and Monday were bonus days provided to us by the weather (we were originally scheduled to return on Sunday). As it turned out we had needed both of them to complete our tasks. On Tuesday, Andy Thomas and George returned. They set about installing the 3 chimney caps that Andy had constructed in his shop and patching a section of roof cover the dormer of the Lighthouse office. Once more we used the equipment that Todd provided with Andy doing the high work and George handling the safety lines. Andy and George also installed a cap over the top of the Lighttower to replace the missing ventilator. Meanwhile John completed the metal painting and Phil closed up all the historic structures for the Winter. He also removed 2 trees that were damaging the roof of the Carpenters shop.

We loaded out through the west beach anchorage and departed the Island late in the afternoon well ahead of the arrival of the subsequent rain, wind and cold. In the course of this first season of FILA efforts on the Island, we left all the historic buildings with the portals closed to the weather, the roofs repaired and all the metal work of the Lighthouse (except the overhang) and the Oil House painted. In addition, the Boat House has been strengthened sufficiently to hopefully get it through another Winter so that it can be properly repaired next season.

FILA thanks the DNR for the opportunity to contribute to the maintenance of the this historic property and looks forward to discussing our work in more detail with you, your staff and supervision.

Phil von Voigtlander October 13, 2006