



# Wiscasset, Waterville & Farmington Railway Museum

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## Introduction

The Wiscasset, Waterville and Farmington Railway Museum is an operating heritage railroad that acquires, preserves, and restores an historic and unique transportation system that once operated in the Sheepscot Valley. We educate and enlighten our visitors of the social and economic impact of railroads upon communities served by recreating a living, historical experience as this railway once operated circa 1910. The museum attracts visitors from around the world - and also hosts many community events. All who come leave with a greater appreciation of our heritage, and how Maine's narrow gauge railroads helped shape our communities.

The WW&F Railway Museum is tucked away in the historic town of Alna in Lincoln County, Maine. The town has several villages, and retains much of its unique character from years gone by. Community gatherings are held in the centuries-old meeting house. The local residents can be found exchanging the local gossip at the post office, or at the country store gathering essential provisions while stopping for a bite to eat. And, the charming whistle of our narrow gauge steam train still resonates through the Sheepscot Valley.

The WW&F Railway Museum continues to grow and welcomes additional guests each year to experience a taste of a bygone era. However, some of our facilities are dismal, leaving us completely unequipped to handle the needs of our visitors.

We are embarking on a 2-3 year plan to construct a new restroom facility. Currently, we do not have suitable public facilities for our visitors to use. Once completed, the museum will be better able to host our visitors, expanding our outreach to local schools, civic organizations, and tour groups. This is a major project requiring the cooperation of the local government, our dedicated volunteer corps, our membership, and community organizations.

Please consider partnering with us to help fund this project.

## Project Details

Since the Wiscasset, Waterville, and Farmington Railway museum was founded in 1989, it has grown in a remarkable fashion. What started as a simple gathering of railroad historians has developed into an 1100-member organization that has rebuilt a railroad that was last used in 1933. Our mission is to recreate and preserve this unique facet of Maine's history in a fashion that honors and maintains the fabric of life in rural Maine as it existed around 1910.

Visitors marvel at these little trains and how they were integrated into the lives of the residents of the Sheepscot Valley. They come from all over the world to experience our museum - as our volunteer corps lovingly maintains and recreates history.

As the fame of our museum has spread, we must provide a better experience for our visitors. The public restrooms currently consist of a single porta-potty. This is unacceptable to the hundreds of families which come to see our attraction. Moreover, tour groups will not stop here since our bathrooms are woefully inadequate. Finally, the current facility is not handicap-accessible.

In 2007, our long range planning committee began considering a multi-year plan to further develop the museum grounds. Highest on the list of planned improvements is the need for better restroom facilities. However, geographic and financial constraints dictated that other priorities would first need attention. We are now in the midst of constructing our site plan and are anticipating completing phase 1 in the next few years, as funding becomes available.

Once the restrooms are constructed, we will move forward to the next phases of site improvements. These are predicated on the completion of a new parking facility to accommodate the continued growth in visitor traffic. Each phase is outlined on the following pages and is provided to place the restroom project in the context of the expanded site.

It should be noted that the WW&F Railway Museum owns all of the land needed for our plan, having purchased the needed parcels over the last 5 years. A consultant has been engaged to review our site plan and is designing appropriate drainage and grading.

The restroom building itself will be of cinder-block construction, but styled in a historically appropriate fashion. It will be fully ADA accessible and comply with all local and state regulations. Due to the location of a well used for drinking water, the placement of the building had to be carefully chosen, as well as the location of the large septic field required for such an installation. The best location for the septic field was determined to be in a remote portion of our property, requiring the construction of an access road. Ultimately, this grading will be re-used for the expansion of our rail yard as shown on the following pages.



This restroom facility is similar in style to the one to be constructed at the WW&F Railway Museum.

The actual construction will be overseen by two of our most prominent member/volunteers. One is a past president of the museum and a master plumber. The second is our current president and a general construction contractor. They recently completed a major expansion of our shop facilities, as well as many other construction projects at our museum. They have donated hundreds of hours of their skill - and the pride they take in their workmanship can be found throughout our campus.



## **Phases of Construction:**

(Letters in parenthesis refer to Project Site Map on the previous page.)

### ***Phase 1: Restrooms (Underway):***

Phase 1 is the subject of our immediate needs.

- Expand Shop Building. **(L)** - *Completed May, 2009.*
- Survey grade for Construction Access Road. **(C)** & Car Storage Building **(J)** - *Completed April, 2009.*
- Clear land for Septic System and Construction Access Road. **(C)** - *Completed September, 2009.*
- Grade land for and build Construction Access Road. **(C)** - *Scheduled for October, 2009.*
- Construct Septic Field. **(C)** - *Scheduled for Spring 2010. (Pending funding)*
- Construct Restroom Building. **(D)** - *Scheduled for Summer/Fall 2010. (Pending funding)*

### ***Phase 2: Parking***

- Clear land for Parking Lot. **(A)** - *Underway; additional work scheduled for Winter, 2009-2010.*
- Grade land for Parking Lot. **(A)**
- Surface Parking Lot. **(A)** - *Gravel surface.*
- Convert existing parking area to path. **(M)**
- Formalize short term parking area. **(B)**

### ***Phase 3: Rail Yard***

- Add 16' extension to the north side of the Shop Building **(L)** - *Not shown in Project Site Map.*
- Reposition existing team track as turntable lead. **(G)**
- Construct Turntable. **(G)**
- Convert construction access road **(C)** to railroad bed.
- Construct yard trackage for car storage **(A)** and roundhouse ready track (run-through bay.) **(F)**
- Move coal pile from short term parking area **(B)** to roundhouse ready track. **(I)**

### ***Phase 4: Railroad Building Facilities***

- Construct Roundhouse. **(F)**
- Construct Car Storage Shed. **(J)**
- Construct Blacksmith Shed. **(H)**
- Add Fire Suppression System to All Buildings

### ***Phase 5: Visitor's Center***

- Convert existing home/membership house to Visitor's Center and Museum. **(E)**
- Complete landscaping, picnic area, etc.

**Note:** Some portions of the various phases laid out here may not necessarily occur in sequential order. These phases have been outlined to give an overall scope of the site plan. The various portions may occur as time, resources, and schedules permit.

## Project Budget

### Budget for Phase 1 (Restroom Project)

<u>Item</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Cost</u>
Shop Extension (south)	Completed	\$17,000
Land Clearing	Completed	\$500
Land Survey	Completed	\$250
Land Grading	Scheduled	\$18,500
Septic Field	Pending Funds	\$25,000*
Restroom Building	Pending Funds	\$35,000*
Total for Phase 1:		\$96,250*

*\* Estimated costs based on preliminary bids.*

Funds for the completed portions of this project were raised though through two generous grants from private institutions, with the balance coming from general donations made by the membership. We anticipate the funds for the remaining items to also come from private grants and through the traditional fundraising by our membership.

To date, \$5,200 has been collected by the museum through a single donor and corporate match specifically for the construction of the restroom building. In addition, the restroom project was a line item in our 2008 and 2009 annual campaigns. These annual fundraising efforts typically bring in \$50,000-\$80,000 for the several major capital projects the museum plans to undertake the following year.

The cost for each portion of Phase 1 has been greatly reduced through the use of volunteer labor. We have no paid staff, and our volunteers donate thousands of hours each year towards the various tasks required to operate and restore the railway. Our regular volunteer corps include a master plumber, a general contractor, a heavy equipment operator, a trained surveyor, and a professional electrician.

## Conclusion

The WW&F Railway Museum has quickly become a world-renowned operating heritage railroad. Visitors are drawn to experience the integral role these little trains had on Maine's rural landscape.

Yet, our museum lacks an adequate restroom facility, which restricts the number of guests we can accommodate. We hope to address this as we further our Site Plan in the coming years. Please consider partnering with us in this endeavor.



A child stands mesmerized at the sight of a locomotive at the Wiscasset, Waterville and Farmington Railway Museum where volunteers are rebuilding a historic railroad that once tied together the communities along the Sheepscot Valley.

*(Photo courtesy of Stephen Hussar.)*