



# Knife River Heritage & Cultural Center

PO Box 240 • 180 Marina Road  
Knife River, MN 55609  
info@krhcc.org

October 2022

By Paul von Goertz - KRHCC Board Member

## **SLAB POURED FOR COMMERCIAL FISHING EXHIBIT. Shelter will end 83 years of CRUSADER'S exposure to weather.**



The mood was almost festive for the sidewalk superintendents who were present on October 21 to see 32 cubic yards of concrete poured to form the 23' x 46' commercial fishing exhibit slab. The concrete workers (photo left) from Primetime Concrete on Old North Shore Drive smoothed freshly poured concrete. Three truck loads were required. Primetime was good to work with, met our timelines, did the

work as per estimate, and overall did a very professional job.

It was decided to add about 80' of sidewalk to create a flat and smooth walkway between the depot apron and fishing exhibit, and demonstrate our commitment to make the KRHCC totally ADA-compliant (Image right).

The pour represented the culmination of months of work for the KRHCC. First, we had to design the shelter so we would know where to place extra concrete to support shelter posts and determine the



overall size of the slab. Next, we had to work through the permitting process, and finally budget and funding.

Permitting was challenging when taking into consideration railroad right-of-way setbacks, setbacks from Marina Road and compliance with Federal Railroad Administration railroad site-line distances. We are grateful for the help of the county engineer and environmental services director for helping us move efficiently through the permitting process.

Once the slab cures, in about two weeks depending on air temperatures, the Knife River (KR) Marina will move CRUSADER the 200 feet or so to the slab where it will rest on a robust wood cradle built by volunteers. The KRHCC and the KR community owe a big "Thank you!" to the KR Marina for the donation of their travel trailer and time.

Electrical service to the slab will be in place yet this fall. A viewing deck into the boat will be built over the winter. The post and beam roof framework and roofing will be installed late next summer, providing the last funding pieces are in place.

The building of the shelter will fulfill a commitment made by a small group of optimistic KRers, about six years ago, when CRUSADER was gifted to the community by the Lake County Historical Society. The commitment was that the community would build a protective shelter for the boat, something the society acknowledged they could not do after 34 years of good intentions.

All photo credits above: Paul von Goertz

### **MORE PLANS FOR KR LAND USE.**

**Much of a 2003 design team's plan for KR becomes reality 20 years later.**

The September issue of this newsletter gave three land use proposals that did not exactly thrill KRers. Therefore, I entitled the story "Don't mess with KR." For the more than the three years I have been writing this newsletter, this story created the most reader comment – and all positive, thankfully.

Now for a more positive story on KR land use, I want to call your attention to a 2003 design team's plan for KR that had a lot of merit, and what they proposed became reality years later through the initiatives of the KR community, acting independently from the study.

In 2003, the Northland Sustainable Development Partnership, in conjunction with the Arrowhead Regional Commission, hired the Center for Changing Landscapes, associated with the U of M, to "... design a place or space that resides within a scenic byway," and chose KR.

By way of background, designation of a scenic byway such as Scenic 61 is based on "one or more of its archeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreation, and scenic qualities." KR was chosen because "(it is) along the North Shore Scenic Byway, is unique and filled with a colorful history. Few settlements can claim a past that is intertwined with so many different aspects of commerce and life."

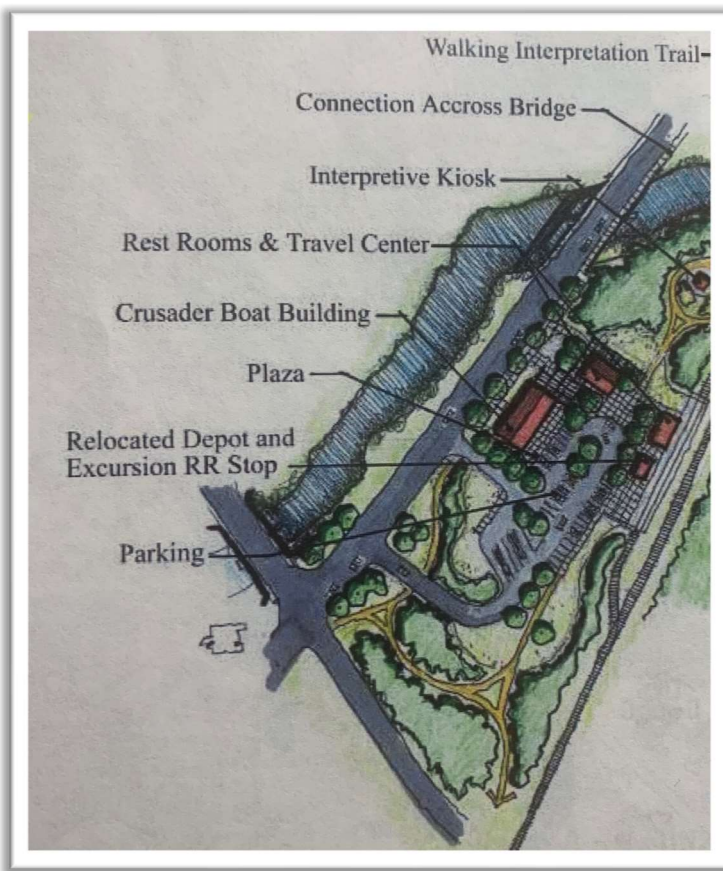
Detailed research on KR's history and culture was one done by a Mike Kennedy through meetings and interviews with long time locals and the Lake County Historical Society. I was not a "long time local" at the time and was not contacted, or if I was, I was so burned by earlier land use proposals addressed in "Don't mess with KR," that I declined.

Somehow, I got hold of a copy of the design team's recommendations and was pleasantly surprised to see how many of the KRHCC's initiatives to date and in our long-range plans dovetail with what the design team recommended. In truth, I had forgotten all about their report and only discovered it when I was going through old files to gather info for the story on "Don't mess with KR."

If you look at the design team's site plan (Image credit: Center for Changing Landscapes), you will note that a lot of what is shown on the 2003 site plan is on the KRHCC site today. An exception is the location of the KR campground. It somehow went away. I assume this was done so that many of the components of the 2003 site plan would be along the KR Scenic 61 "business corridor."

## NEWSLETTER

Here are some of the similarities between the 2003 design team recommendations and what KR has done on its own:



1. Restore the depot. Design team recommended moving to business corridor. We chose to leave it where it was.

2. Display CRUSADER. The recommended location is about where it will be.

3. "Plaza." We have dedicated public green space.

4. Rest rooms and travel center. We have on our site plan and will do as soon as someone gives us \$1 million to include well and sewer hookup.

5. Interpretive kiosk. Rather than a centralized kiosk, we have four interpretive displays near the depot

and four within the commercial fishing exhibit.

6. Provide parking. Got it, but off Marina Road.

7. Interpretive trail heading south along river to Lake. It's on our master plan, but issues remain with private landowners and the DNR which owns most of the land along the west side of the river.

Many kudos to the Northland Sustainable Development Partnership in conjunction with the Arrowhead Regional Commission in developing a plan nearly 20 years ago that addressed so many of the land use values embraced by the KR community in 2022.



## THE KNIFE RIVER SOUTH RAILROAD YARD DIORAMA

By Todd Lindahl

When Randy Ellestad bought the Knife River campground in Knife River in 2003, the purchase included two buildings that had been built by the Duluth & Iron Range RR.

One was the former Knife River passenger depot and the other was a freight house that had been moved here from Palmer station (base of Homestead Road) in 1959. After years of neglect, both structures had become quite dilapidated and were little more than eye sores.

The depot had been historically important to the community and Randy expressed a desire in 2006 to try to restore it to its glory days of long ago. I suggested that I could

build a scale model of the depot representing how it had looked in the past before the railroad had cut the building in half. He thought this was a good idea and I set about building it in model train HO scale.



The base for the model was a 20-inch by 36-inch scalloped board that looked great. Then Randy appeared with a wooden water tank kit like the one that had been a few hundred feet east of the depot. After a quick calculation, I found I could still fit it on the board while staying with the proper scale. All I had to do was move the depot location to one end of the board and the water tank to the other. Problem solved and I was a happy fellow.

Photo credit: Paul von Goertz

That is until Randy showed up again a few days later with an interlock tower kit. The Knife River interlock tower was a couple of hundred feet west of the depot and well off the scale of the base I had. I could imagine my beautiful base board going up in flames rivaling the 1918 Cloquet fire.

The new board would encompass the entire south yard of both the Duluth & Northern Minnesota Ry and the Duluth & Iron Range Ry. The out-of-the-box interlock tower was

nothing like the original structure, so I had to “kit bash” it until it looked like the real one.

Determining the correct size and exact location of numerous buildings was a major headache. I had to reproduce the “Big Duluth” clothing store billboard advertisement on the side of Congdon’s store along with the lettering on the windows on the storefront.

Other necessary small details made the project very challenging. In all it took about two years to complete the diorama in detail. By then Randy had discovered that while he owned the two former railroad buildings, they sat on the railroad right of way. The depot restoration project seemed to be at an end before it even started. I did not have the room to display the diorama, so it went into storage in several large boxes.

On April 26, 2011, I set it up in the basement of the Knife River Lutheran church for a special event. It was the first time Knife River residents had seen it except for a few individuals.

I was about to get involved with the Yellowstone mallet restoration for the Lake County Historical Society that summer, but there was a government shutdown, which stalled the project.

In 2005 I headed up the restoration of the 3 Spot locomotive and now they wanted me to take on the gigantic Yellowstone project. The Historical Society offered to display the diorama in the museum with the understanding that if the Knife River depot restoration eventually happened, it would be relocated there. In the meantime, they had a Plexiglas cover made to protect it.

Work on the depot began in earnest in 2019 and finally on July 19, 2022, Paul von Goertz, David Grong, and I moved the diorama from the Lake County Historical Museum to its permanent home at the KRHCC. The Lake County Historical Society graciously donated the cost of the Plexiglas cover and historical photos I had provided. The Society had the photos printed on a metal backing and they looked great!

Presently, I am working on the north rail yard diorama which includes the Duluth & Northern Minnesota Ry roundhouse and other related buildings and turntable. It, along with the south yard diorama, will give people an overall perspective of what Knife River looked like in the distant past, and the glory days of railroading and logging.



Todd's painstaking attention to historical accuracy is evident in this close-up that shows a train approaching depot. Water tower in background.

Photo credits: Todd Lindahl

A look inside the KR depot. Left to right: storage, men's waiting room, depot agent's office, women's waiting room. Spur from Duluth & Northern Minnesota RR at top. Depot was later cut in half as train ridership declined. What is left is the right half.

Editor's note:



*We are very fortunate that Todd Lindahl has had a seemingly unsatiable interest in KR railroading. The results have been this diorama of the depot and adjacent south yard, and he has already started on the north rail yard that was at the west end of the DNR parking lot. I have seen this in progress. The replication of the locomotive turntable and its moving parts will be a must see!*

## **TOLD YOU SO! NSSR "CHRISTMAS TREE TRAIN" SOLD OUT.**

As we predicted in our August issue, the NSSR's "Christmas Tree Train" would be another sell out and by mid-October it was, even though the NSSR doubled the number of tickets from last year's 60 to 125. We hope the readers of this newsletter heeded our advice and got their tickets early.

The Christmas Tree Train event takes place in conjunction with KR's "Trees. Trains. Traditions." Locals are invited to select a tree, wreath or garland at the depot tree lot from noon until 3 PM on Saturday the 26<sup>th</sup>. Hot food and beverages on site from Larsmont Trading Post. See story on this year's "Trees. Trains. Traditions" event that follows.

## **“TREE. TRAINS. TRADITIONS” SURE TO BE A FAMILY CHRISTMAS TRADITION**

Last Holiday season the NRRS initiated the “Christmas Tree Train” event. Idea behind it was to bring families by train from the Duluth area to the KRHCC site to select a Christmas tree from a broad selection, and shop for wreathes and garland. Trees selected would be wrapped and placed on a flatcar and brought back to the Duluth Depot. Folks could then drive right up to the flatcar and load their tree directly onto their vehicle. The train would run one day only on the Saturday following Thanksgiving and be in KR for a couple hours.



Image: Train ride and excitement of selecting the family Christmas Tree! A magical day for families.

Photo credit: Paul von Goertz

We liked the idea so much we built an event around it and called it, “Trees. Trains. Traditions.” This year the NSSR doubled the number of tickets from 60 to 125 and it sold out by mid-October! How many of those buying tickets this year were repeat riders from 2021? Could this be a start of a memorable family Holiday tradition? Let’s hope!

The KRHCC has an agreement with the NSSR that the supplier of trees and greenery be from Lake County, and same for food service. As a result, the Jon and Lynette Hanel family from TH, owners of Northern Connections, will provide the trees as they did last year. Larsmont Trading Post will again serve hot food and beverages.

The event takes place at the KRHCC site from noon until 3 PM on Saturday the 26<sup>th</sup>. The site will be open to locals from noon to 3 PM. The depot will be decorated for the Holidays and heated. With Holiday music and décor, the day will surely get you in the spirit of Christmas!



## **HONOR A FAMILY MEMBER, OR YOUR FAMILY'S HERITAGE, IN A LASTING WAY THAT ALSO SERVES THE PUBLIC**

The commercial fishing exhibit, now being built, will have four interpretive displays similar to the four now outside the depot.

The fishing exhibit displays will be made by the same company that made the depot displays. Photo credit: Paul von Goertz

The displays will be mounted on a viewing deck into the interior of CRUSADER and interpret KR commercial fishing from four perspectives:



**Display 1: “The beginnings of commercial fishing in Knife River.”** (The Native and European commercial fishing partnership)

**Display 2: “The Scandinavian influence on commercial fishing.”** (Commercial fishing and boat building skills of Norwegians drawn to the North Shore; effort to build their own harbor).

**Display 3: “CRUSADER II is Knife River’s tie to Norwegian Royalty.”** (CRUSADER Christening by Crown Prince Olav; history of boat)

**Display 4: “Commercial fishing demanded being resourceful.”** (Resourcefulness and inventiveness of fishermen)

The KRHCC is encouraging a family, or family members, to sponsor a display. Recognition of the sponsorship will be printed in the lower left of the display.

The displays are American made, very high quality and are warranted against chipping or fading for ten years. With the addition of the Viking ship to the KRHCC, the fishing exhibit will be seen by thousands each year and will further educate visitors about the history and culture of Knife River from Native times to present.

If you would like to see the full text of each display prior to making a sponsorship, or if you wish to commit to a sponsorship now, please email [info@krhcc.org](mailto:info@krhcc.org).

Each sponsorship is \$1,200. The KRHCC is an IRS recognized 501(c3) non-profit so your sponsorship is tax deductible.

Thank you!

## A HOLIDAY GIFT JUST FOR OUR READERS THAT GIVES TWICE.

Michelle Gratton is the owner of the 47 Degrees Art Gallery and Gift Shop in Knife River. She curates the creations of more than 60 local artists with a focus on providing affordable art and has many hand crafted gifts at less than \$100.

She has made a very generous offer to (1) help the KRHCC achieve its mission and (2) make Holiday gift buying a very pleasant and personally satisfying experience for her customers.

**The offer:** For each gift purchased from 47 Degrees from November 11- 20, she will donate to the KRHCC an amount equal to 47% of the price of the gift. In addition, she will donate to the KRHCC the **full amount** of a Dan Findley bench sold during the same time period. The smaller size bench sells for \$140 and the larger for \$160.



Michelle Gratton rests on the larger Dan Findley bench. Dan is from Two Harbors and has presented his work at 20/20 tours. He selects his woods from a local mill, freehand routs each image of Lake Superior, then pours in a colored resin and sands it smooth. He is known for his exceptional wood working skills and generously giving back to the community. Photo credit: Paul von Goertz

**This offer is valid only for those customers who either mention they saw it in the KRHCC newsletter, or show this page from the newsletter, whether as an electronic or hard copy.**

Says Michelle, “This offer is an opportunity to show my gratitude to the good people of Knife River who support local art. And, also to the Knife River Heritage & Cultural Center that is preserving Knife River’s deep roots in fishing and railroad history. I cherish the opportunity to see the treasures that are being restored.”

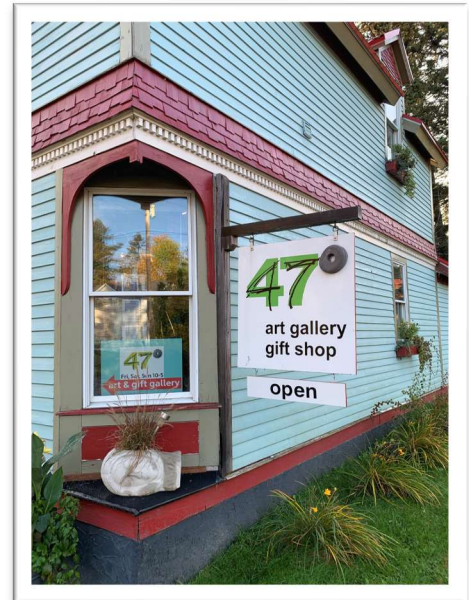
The KRHCC is thrilled to be the recipient of Michelle's generosity and helping create awareness for our mission to preserve and present the history and culture of Knife River.

You will find Michelle at her gallery, 47 Degrees, from Friday-Sunday, 10 AM-5 PM, June-December.

Address: 243 Riverview Street, Knife River, MN, 55609

Phone: 218.590.4532

Photo credit: Paul von Goertz



## **DONOR MAKES SURE OUR FLAG WILL TRIUMPH THE NORTHEAST.**

When we had our "First Flag Raising" ceremony conducted by the Two Harbors American Legion Post 109 in the fall of 2020, we bought a special "Ceremonial Flag" that measured about 4' x 10'. Very big and impressive. We figured we would fly it just on national holidays and very special occasions and then take it down for a smaller "everyday flag." However, the larger flag looked magnificent and should for sure spark a bit of patriotism in passers-by.



The flagpole and 24/7 lighting (Image left, Photo credit: Paul von Goertz) were gifts of the Alert Wieme family of KR in honor of Wieme family members. Krista Sannes Mosby, Albert's granddaughter, offered to pay for the special occasion flag. Summer of 2021, Krista visited KR and the KRHCC, noticed the flag had faded and its leading edge was frayed.



As it appears our flag will need to be replaced on a yearly basis, I asked May newsletter readers to consider honoring a loved one by donating to cover the cost of a flag, noting that we should not expect Krista to replace the flag yearly.

Well, Krista soon responded to my request with these words: "If it is OK with you, as my contribution to the community, I would like to take on the responsibility of replacing the flag yearly." This is most generous of Krista, and in many ways indicative of the support the KR community has shown for the KRHCC, and the values we hold as KRers and Americans.

The first flag to fly on the KR community flagpole donated by Krista Sannes Mosby, was "retired" at a Flag Retirement Ceremony conducted by the Two Harbors America Legion Post 109 at Lake View Cemetery on September 10 (Image right, Photo credit:



Paul von Goertz). The community was invited to bring all torn and faded flags to the ceremony where the flags were recognized for their service and burned over a very hot flame. Your writer was honored to be asked to participate by presenting a flag representative of the KRHCCs "First Flag" for retirement.

As a reminder, November 11 is Veterans Day. Please remember our veterans. The willingness of America's Veterans to sacrifice for our country has earned them lasting gratitude.

## **GOOD NEWS! KRHCC RECEIVES THREE GRANTS**

The KRHCC was recently awarded three grants for which we are very grateful. The first was from the Henry and Sarah Wheeler Historical Awareness Fund.

The fund supports projects that promote awareness of the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation's service territory's rich, untapped historical legacy and inspire others to participate in preserving and promoting that history. We thought the KRHCC was a good fit for the mission of the fund and so asked their support to offset the cost of the four interpretive displays that will be part of our commercial fishing exhibit. The award was in the amount of \$821.



The second award was a “Round Up” grant from Coop Light & Power in the amount of \$500. It will be used to help bring electrical power to the commercial fishing exhibit.

Third award was from Loving Lake County, the marketing arm for Lake County, and will be used to pay for promotional costs and visitor services for the November “Trees. Trains. Traditions” event that coincides with the North Shore Scenic Railroad’s “Christmas Tree Train” November 26. Some of the promotional items will carry into Julebyen the following weekend.



### **NOT SO GOOD NEWS....**

We are just over halfway through the work we planned for this building season and can see we will need all our contingency, and then some to cover increases in building materials, inflation, and security measures required by the terms of our lease with our landlord, the Regional Railroad Authority.

Not all of this could have been foreseen when we put our budget together last spring, and the amounts awarded us by our grantors are fixed. Which means the KRHCC has to cover any overage beyond the amount of our required match. Can you help? If you normally make your charitable giving during the Holiday season, please consider the KRHCC. We are an IRS recognized 501(c3) non-profit so your gift is tax deductible. For more info: [krhcc.org](http://krhcc.org).

Thank you!

### **FOLKSY KR JEEP COMES TO END OF THE ROAD.**

Mary and I bought our white 5-speed manual transmission Jeep Cherokee Sport in 1996. For 26 years we received and returned many friendly waves and horn honks as we traveled the streets of KR. As it aged, we called it “Trusty Rusty.” Recently, it became more “Rusty” than “Trusty” to the extent it was not safe to drive. Sadly, we decided to “put it down.”

Image: Rusty Trusty prepped for public viewing.

Photo credit: Paul von Goertz



It is now at our son's rural Two Harbors home where it will be taken off life support (battery removed), vital organs removed (and sold), then buried in Woods Auto cemetery.

Rust in piece O' faithful servant. (Suddenly I feel like writing a country music song.)

## **OCTOBER DONATIONS, MEMORIALS, HONORARIUMS AND SPONSORSHIPS**

### **Donations:**

- 5'x15' Norwegian flag donated to KRHCC for special events that celebrate Norwegian history and culture, by the Two Harbors Sons of Norway Lodge.

-----

*The KRHCC is a 501 (c3) non-profit so all donations whether in the form of a memorial, honorarium or sponsorship are fully tax deductible. Your comments and suggestions for this monthly emailed newsletter are always welcome. Email to: [info@krhcc.org](mailto:info@krhcc.org)*

*If you have family or friends who may enjoy reading this newsletter, they can access the current and all past issues on the "Current News" page of our website at: [krhcc.org](http://krhcc.org)*

*Newsletter published and copyrighted by Knife River Heritage & Cultural Center. Editor/Writer: Paul von Goertz; Historians/Researchers: Todd Lindahl, Randy Ellestad and Paul von Goertz; Graphic Design and Production: Anne-Lù Hovis.*

*No portion of this newsletter may be reproduced without written permission from the KRHCC. Contact: [info@krhcc.org](mailto:info@krhcc.org)*

© KRHCC 2022