



# Western Railway Preservation Society

***Dedicated to preserving the skills and  
artifacts of our western railway heritage***

*E-News Issue - 3  
April 2010*

## *The Electronic Newsletter of the WRPS*

### *President's Report*

Welcome to the latest E-Newsletter produced by the Western Railway Preservation Society and e-mailed to all our WRPS members to keep you up to date on the latest news from the Preservation Society.

Since our last newsletter, it has been a busy couple of months that has brought us some disappointments and a lot of positive progress as well.

First off, I'm sorry to report that our efforts to save the South Baker SVRy shops have hit a road block. As most of you may remember from past newsletters, we contacted the owner of the S. Baker shops to discuss a proposal that would see the historic SVRy engine house and warehouse saved from destruction.

However, while we were involved in these negotiations, the owner received a cash offer from a third party and the property was sold to them for \$140,000. So, we shifted gears and met with the new owners to see what plans they had for the old shop buildings.

The new owners are planning to use the  
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**Western Railway  
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*President's Report continued from P.1*

property around the shops as storage for their scrap metal business. They really have no interest in historical preservation but they also have no intentions of tearing down the shop buildings either.

The new owners do however plan on fixing the huge holes in the roof and finally doing some badly needed maintenance to the old buildings.

For the moment, they also have no interest in selling the buildings or the property. Considering that they have only owned the shop buildings for a couple of months, this is understandable.

However, we do plan to maintain contact with the new owners and we will keep you updated on any new developments on this subject.

While we are disappointed about this delay in our efforts to preserve the old SVRy S. Baker shop buildings, we are very excited by other developments.

In March, the WRPS became the proud owners of West Side caboose #3. WRPS director, Mike Roberts has inspected the new acquisition and together with our vice-president are making arrangements to have the caboose moved to a yet to be determined location where a detailed survey can begin. From this survey, Mike will develop a plan that will result in the restoration of this rare, "short styled" logging caboose. Look for Jerry Huck's article about WSL caboose #3 included in this newsletter.

The WRPS's membership has been growing over the last year. We now have members from Washington State, Oregon, California, Colorado, New Mexico, Canada and even Indiana.

Many of these members have been working on their own railway restoration projects and we would like to have these members share their stories with you. To this end, we have invited some members to contribute to the WRPS's newsletter.

Our first "guest author" we would like you to meet is Jason Midyette from Boulder, Colorado. Jason is the president of the Boulder County Railway Historical Society and has been active in saving and restoring narrow and standard gauge rail equipment from all over the state of Colorado.

One of these projects has been the restoration of a Denver & Rio Grande Western caboose that stated its life as a sister boxcar to the WRPS's very own D&RGW outfit car. It's a small world.

Jason's story is one of accomplishment and great disappointment. Be sure to give it a read in the following pages.

In closing, I would like to give my personal thanks to the members that have already contributed funds to the work of the Preservation Society. Without their support, we could not have completed all the work that we have over the last year.

I hope you will enjoy this current newsletter and we'll talk again soon.



Tim Bain – President

*Western Railway Preservation Society*

# Along the Right of Way

By Jerry Huck

## Part 2, McEwen to Sumpter

This issue we'll examine a couple more surviving structures that are surprisingly close to the current Sumpter Valley Railroad yard in McEwen Oregon.

Upon the abandonment of the Sumpter Valley Railway in 1947, all the structures along the railroad were available for sale to any interested parties. Two of the structures from the McEwen town site were purchased by the Hawley family for use on their ranch located 1.5 miles from the McEwen site, these railroad buildings still survive today.

The first is the McEwen bunkhouse used by the Section crews who maintained the right of way for the railroad.

It is currently situated in a pasture owned by a local rancher between state highway 7 and the dredge tailings. While it is on private property, the current owner was gracious enough to grant us access to the bunkhouse for a few pictures.

The Bunkhouse is in remarkable condition and while similar to the bunkhouse at Thompson siding, there are several differences, primarily in window and door placement and different siding. The buildings share the same dimensions and construction style.

The current owner confirms that he was told the building was purchased from SVRy at McEwen and moved to the ranch.

***The old Bunkhouse is in remarkably good condition. The current owner plans to place the bunkhouse in a different location and open a museum in the building in the near future.***



*Along the ROW – continued from p.3*

Our other McEwen survivor is a little more surprising, Members of SVRR have always been told that the partially collapsed home at the McEwen town site was the McEwen section house.

However, research has confirmed the section house was relocated to the Hawley ranch and survives to this day in decent condition.

*Here is the McEwen section house as it looks today. Note the similar construction and matching windows with red trim found on this bunkhouse as well as the Thompson depot and bunkhouse seen in part 1 of this story.*

The Section house currently sits across the highway from the Hawley ranch in a unused but stable condition.

Unfortunately the interior of the section house is exposed to the elements and is in poor condition.

We are hopeful that we will be able to contact the present owner of the section house and get permission to document the building in 2010.

That's all for this edition of ALONG THE RIGHT of WAY.

*In the next issue, On to Sumpter!*



# Denver & Rio Grande Western caboose #04990

## *A Story of Restoration and Destruction - Part 1*

By Jason Midyette



D&RGW 04990, awaiting scrapping in the Alamosa yards in September of 1950.  
*Author's collection*

Caboose 04990's story begins in 1896 when it was built by the Ohio Falls Car Manufacturing Company of Indiana as part of an order for 400 narrow gauge boxcars by the Denver & Rio Grande railroad. Boxcar 4990 served the D&RG for a little over 2 decades before encountering its first major change. In 1919 the Rio Grande's Alamosa car shop converted 4990 into caboose 04990. The conversion resulted in 04990 looking like a standard Rio Grande long caboose, while retaining many of its 4000 series boxcar features, including an overall length of 30' and the low ceiling height of the boxcar's peaked roof.

For the next 30 years, 04990 trailed Denver & Rio Grande Western narrow gauge freight trains through the mountains of Colorado and New Mexico. In 1950, the D&RGW decided that they no longer needed 04990 and the car was

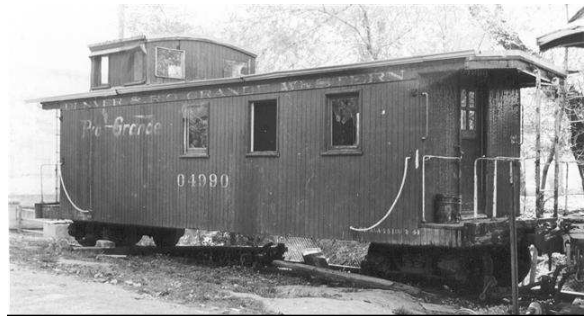
retired and scrapped at Alamosa. By the end of the year, 04990's body had been sold to a farmer in the San Luis Valley who used it as a shed for the next 25 years.

In 1975, 04990 was located by University of Colorado Professor John Schooland. Since 1958, Schooland had been looking for a narrow gauge caboose to display in Boulder, Colorado's Central Park. Schooland was instrumental in bringing former Colorado & Northwestern locomotive #30 (a.k.a Colorado & Southern 74 and Rio Grande Southern 74) back to Boulder for display in 1951, and the original display in the park consisted of #30, D&RGW coach 280 and Rio Grande Southern caboose 0401. In 1958, the 0401 was destroyed in a dynamite blast, and Schooland set out to find a replacement.

D&RGW 04990 – continued from p.5

By 1976, 04990 had been moved to Boulder and placed on the trucks from RGS 0401. Other parts from 0401, including the truss rods, couplers, ladders, brake staffs and complete brake system, were retained by the City of Boulder for possible future use on 04990. For the next 20 years, 04990 sat in Central Park, receiving occasional attention, including replacement of both end sills and portions of a side sill by the Boulder Model Railroad Club in the late 1980's.

In 1996, then City of Boulder Parks Superintendent Doug Hawthorne decided that the time had come to properly care for Boulder's narrow gauge train. Out of that decision, a Committee was formed, a Master Plan developed and beginning in 1998, restoration work was undertaken. D&RGW coach 280 was fully restored by 2001 and now resides at the Colorado Railroad Museum in Golden, locomotive 30's



D&RGW 04990 in Boulder's Central Park, shortly after its arrival in 1976. Author's collection

tender was fully restored by 2004 and #30 itself received a lot of work, though its future is somewhat cloudy at the moment. (That is a story for another time!)

In 1998, the newly formed Boulder County Railway Historical Society (BCRHS) undertook the restoration of 04990. Over the next few years, BCRHS volunteers were able to accomplish a lot of work and 04990's condition was vastly improved. Funding for the restoration came from a combination of private donations and small grants from Colorado's State Historical Fund. A parts swap with the Friends of the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad saw some of RGS



BCRHS volunteers at work on 04990 in Boulder's Central Park on January 25, 2004. (L to R) Adam Glazier, Todd Hackett, Brian Dellaplaine, Chris Weaver. The locomotive is Colorado & Northwestern #30. Jason Midyette photo.

[D&RGW 04990 – continued from p.6](#)

caboose 0401's parts (truss rods, end ladders, end railings and some grab irons) return to use on D&RGW short caboose 0579, which the Friends restored to service. In return, the BCRHS got some needed parts for 04990, including truss rods of the correct length and the correct metal coupler buffer castings.

By 2007, 04990 was looking pretty good. Over the previous nine years, the car had been painted and lettered, received new windows and doors, a rubber membrane roof and a new roof walk. In the mechanical department, new queen posts had been obtained from the Colorado Railroad Museum, along with new side bearing castings, the truss rods and coupler buffers had been installed and one of the trucks received a new bearing. All that remained was the installation of the brake system using the parts from RGS 0401, which were stored in 04990, and the rebuilding of the interior which had been removed in 1950 when the caboose became a shed.

Then came the early morning of July 2, 2007. Two local losers, not being capable of doing anything constructive or positive with themselves, decided it would be fun to light something on fire. This inspiration came to them while walking through Boulder's Central Park and the rest as they say is history.

The two walked to a nearby gas station, dug an empty gallon jug of windshield washer fluid out of the trash, filled it with gas, bought a lighter and headed back to the park. One of them climbed on 04990's roof, kicked in a cupola window, dumped the gas out and lit the lighter.

Seconds later, the old caboose that we had spent so many years working on erupted into flames and all our hard work was now going up in smoke. For the members of the Boulder County Railway Historical Society, it was not a good day.

**[In Part 2 we'll explore the aftermath of the fire that destroyed the recently restored D&RGW Caboose #04990.](#)**



**[After the fire D&RGW 04990 was a gutted ruin upon its arrival at the BCRHS's Valmont display site on July 27, 2007.](#)**

*Jason Midyette photo*

# West Side Lumber Company Tank Car #5

## *A Short History and the Resurrection - Part 3*

By Mike Roberts

Taken in the late 1960's, this shows Tank #5 at the Roaring Camp & Big Trees railway in California. The car was still complete at this time, but starting to deteriorate.

Dr. Nick Muff photo, Dave Squire collection.



We restart the West Side #5 tank car story in June 2008. With all of Tank #5's parts in one place at the same time, we could finally start on the biggest subassembly to date – the new frame.

The West Side Lumber Company car shops used the tried-and-true double mortise and tenon joints for holding the main beams and end beams together. So, each long beam required careful measuring and cutting to match the original tenon joints. Each set of tenons also received a coat of paint like the originals, an early method of preserving the wood to try to avoid rot at these critical joints.

When the 'A' end tenons were finished and we tried to fit the new end beam on the 'A' end of the frame, we soon discovered two things: 1 - we were not

building fine furniture and our clearances were way too tight and 2 - the worst that the long eight-inch square beams had twisted as they had dried. The new end beam had the carefully cut mortises opened up by an eighth of an inch, and by shimming the beams we were able to get our first end beam into place.

The twist in the beams was an unexpected problem. When originally built, the car's frame was probably put together in a week or two, and we were working over a period of months to get to the same place. After some brainstorming, we came up with a plan. Angle iron and long bolts would be used to tie the beams down to the flat tops of the steel sawhorses, hopefully reversing the twisting so the second end beam could be slid over the 'B' end tenons and into place.

**West Side Tank Car – continued from p.8**

The following work weekend we drilled holes in the sawhorses, and added the new hold downs and bolts. Much to our delight and relief, they worked!

After the second end beam was installed, the needle beams followed. Draft timbers were fitted, and the heavy truck bolsters went into place. Each set of cross beams helped get rid of more of the twist in the long beams, too.

The truss rods followed, and after the buffer blocks were finished, the truss rod nuts were cinched down. Another important restoration milestone was successfully completed.

There are an amazing number of iron bolts, nuts, brackets, plates, and truss parts that get fitted to the frame – several hundred pounds worth. Several work weekends were required to get all of the various bits and pieces cleaned up, inspected, repaired or replaced as needed, and installed. The Climax couplers and associated draft gear parts were also fitted. Along with all of this was the



**The 'A' end tenon joins of the car frame take shape as we see one of our society's directors, Arnie Lipshetz chiseling out the last piece.**

installation of the small through air line, the main air brake line, and the rebuilt AB brake cylinder and brake wheel rod.

The main air line had been carefully sandblasted, taken apart, inspected, and reassembled, with one end section replaced.. In hindsight, an air test before its laborious installation should have been done as well. When the air test was finally done, there were several leaks – the pipe had rusted from the inside-out, and some of the resealed fittings were leaking as well. By the time we were finished, over half of the air pipe and fittings had to be replaced.



**Arnie Lipshetz is seen once again here installing the steel "hold down" brackets that will remove the twists out of the main beams of the new car frame.**

**West Side Tank Car – continued from p.9**

The last difficult job on the rebuilt frame was the installation of the truck bolster truss rod hardware. In spite of the large size of all of the beams and parts, it came down to fractions of an inch of clearance as they were worked into place – a story all by itself.

In September 2009, after a year’s worth of work weekends, the frame was ready to be flipped over and placed on the rebuilt trucks. The flip went well, using the SVRR fork lift and lots of muscle. The trucks were rolled into place, and the frame went out for several test runs to check clearances, coupler height, and to seat the rebabbitted truck bearings. It went surprisingly well - a real tribute to all of the time and effort given by great bunch of volunteers.

October 2009 saw the start of the new flat car decking, and the tank was placed back on the frame and rolled under cover for the winter – the first time Tank #5 had been this complete in nine years.

Spring of 2010 will see the finish of the flat car decking installation, the start of new castings for missing coupler parts and brake shoes, and the rebuild of the brake valves and first tests of the brake system. A new coat of West Side red paint will also be applied.

The last big subassembly of the project will also be started – the assessment of the century-old steel tank, and the start of its repairs. Exploratory surgery will be carefully done, and the amount of replacement steel plate determined. Feelers are already out for new quarter-inch thick plating, and the rolling required for us to match the original tank’s radius along the badly rusted tank bottom. A promising source for the missing two-cylinder steam pump has also been found.

Still a long ways to go before Tank #5 is ready for its return to service, but there is a bright light at the end of our tunnel!



**Jerry Huck helps to guide the forklift operator as the newly completed tank car frame is flipped right side up and placed on its trucks. Building the frame up side down allowed much easier installations of the car’s hardware.**



**With the car frame now completed and installed on its trucks, the new car is off for some test runs with help from the Sumpter Valley Railway's 10-ton switch engine.**



**With the test runs completed and most of the decking now installed, tank car #5 had its steel tank placed back on the deck ready for winter storage.**

# Good Things Come in 3's or 3's Company.

(Sorry I couldn't resist ...)

By Jerry Huck

**B**y now you should be wondering if I am suffering from dementia or excessive amounts of Tim's magic elixir (Smirnoff Ice). Neither is the case this time. I am referring to our latest adventure which has resulted in the WRPS "adopting" a new project.

Shortly after returning from our trip to northern California, I was contacted by our good friend and CMO of the Pacific Coast Railroad, Mr. Jeff Badger, who suggested we may want to check up on a small caboose outside Trinidad California as it was

in rough condition and the current owners were seeking a new home for the car. Jeff provided contact information and a quick phone call revealed the caboose, thought to be West Side lumber company #6 was indeed available for purchase.

At the March meeting of the WRPS board of directors we discussed purchasing the caboose at which time several officers pledged funds to purchase the caboose. The society board authorized a deposit on the caboose with the remainder to be paid upon inspection of the caboose.

**WSL Caboose # 3 in Tuolumne, California, shortly after the closure of the West Side railroad. (Photo by Fritz Klinke)**



[3's Company – continued from p.12](#)

Mike Roberts, who heads up the WSL tank car #5 project, volunteered to accompany me on a trip to inspect the caboose. Mike quickly pointed out that the caboose was actually West Side caboose first #3 which later served the WSL as a sand facility at their camp 45. The caboose had then served West Side successor the West Side & Cherry Valley tourist railroad until that operations closure in the mid 1980's.

At that time the caboose was moved to the Stone Lagoon RV Park and Campground outside Trinidad, California where it has been on display for the last twenty five years.

The caboose was heavily modified by the West Side & Cherry Valley to more comfortably accommodate tourists. The cupola seating was removed and additional larger

windows were cut into the sides and benches were installed along the length of the caboose to provide added seating for passengers while new railings and steps were installed to provide easier access to the car.

After a typical drive thru the rains of Oregon's coastal region, Mike and I were anticipating a cold wet day in the rain while inspecting the caboose. However, as we crossed into California the sun came out and we were treated to a beautiful spring day.

Upon arrival at the campground we were greeted with our first actual view of the caboose. It is incredibly small measuring 19' over the link and pin coupler faces and 12'6" tall.

The caboose is in better shape than either of us anticipated considering the ocean is only a few hundred yards away!

**WSL #3 at the Stone Lagoon RV Park and Campground near Trinidad, California.  
(Photo by Hart Corbett)**



[3's Company – continued from p.13](#)

The trucks show light rust on the exterior but the bearing surfaces and boxes are clean and well lubricated, the caboose does not have air brakes but does have a brake pipe and a conductors valve to apply brakes from the caboose.

The theory at the WSL being that the caboose was too light and that the air brake applications would simply slide the wheels.

The caboose trucks have good wheels and brake shoes. All the draft gear for the link and pin couplers are still intact as is most of the brake rigging.

Now the bad news, although the car's metal hardware is in good condition the same can't be said of the wooden components. The sills and end beams are badly rotted, the car framing is questionable and the cupola is sagging from having the supports removed to make room for the benches.

While not exactly operable in its present condition, the caboose is actually a relatively easy project.

The Society is planning to move the car to Oregon towards the end of May where documentation and stabilization can be undertaken. Our goal is to restore the caboose to its original West Side Lumber Co. configuration.

Anyone interested in assisting with the caboose restoration can contact Mike Roberts at;

[mike@westernrailwaypreservation.org](mailto:mike@westernrailwaypreservation.org)

Donations to help fund WSL caboose #3 are greatly appreciated and can be sent to:

*Western Railway Preservation Society*  
1644 plaza way #209.  
Walla Walla, WA. 99362

Oh, and the title to this.... Imagine a caboose hop on the Sumpter Valley Ry. with W.H. Eccles Heisler #3, SVRy Caboose #3 and West Side Lumber Caboose #3... Awesome!?!



**West Side Lumber Caboose # 3 in Tuolumne, California, shortly after the closure of the railroad in 1960. (Photo by Fritz Klinke)**

## **WRPS Membership Information**

**The Western Railway Preservation Society is *dedicated to preserving the skills and artifacts of our western railway heritage, with particular attention given to the narrow gauge railways such as the Sumpter Valley Railway in northeastern Oregon.***

If you have not done so already, please consider joining the Western Railway Preservation Society. Until this summer, it's free to join. All you need to do is send your e-mail address to; [tim@westernrailwaypreservation.org](mailto:tim@westernrailwaypreservation.org) and we will place you on the e-mail list. Then, we will be sending you our e-mail newsletter, where you can stay informed on the progress of the WRPS's restoration projects including the efforts to save and preserve the West Side Lumber Co. caboose #3 and

Of course, if you would like to go that extra step and purchase a membership, you will not be asked to renew your membership until the summer of 2011. Membership levels are;

General \$20  
Sustaining \$35  
Life Membership \$250

Membership fees and donations for the Western Railway Preservation Society can be mailed to;

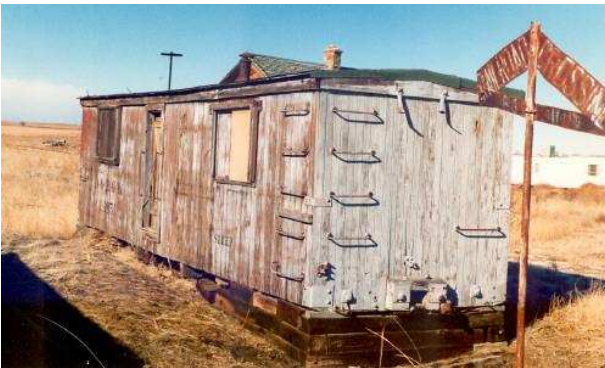
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If you have any questions or comments about the WRPS or any of our projects, please feel free to contact Tim Bain at [tim@westernrailwaypreservation.org](mailto:tim@westernrailwaypreservation.org) or Jerry Huck at; [jerry@westernrailwaypreservation.org](mailto:jerry@westernrailwaypreservation.org) We would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

### ***It's a Small, Narrow Gauge World.***

The Western Railway Preservation Society's own outfit car #04951, currently in Oregon and the ex-D&RGW caboose #04990 were both originally designed and built as 4900 class boxcars in 1895. While they both stated out the same, their current statuses are quite different. Look for our next newsletter to see how Boulder's caboose #04990 ended up.



Outfit car #04951



Caboose #04990