

# THE WHITE PINE ROUTE QUARTERLY

February 1, 2010  
Volume 11, Issue 3

Price: \$4.50  
www.wimryhpg.com

The Journal of the Washington, Idaho & Montana Ry. History Preservation Group, Inc.

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## THE X-5 COMES HOME!

**It all started with a phone call;** a call from California, of all places.

HPG member Rolland Meyers lives in the Bay Area. He's definitely a fan of the WI&M, but his "true love" is the Milwaukee Road's Elk River branch now owned by the St. Maries River Railroad (a Potlatch Corp. subsidiary). Rolland took the news hard last fall when he learned that the STMA was finally abandoning the entire Elk River line. It was clear to everyone that this was purely a business decision on the part of Potlatch Corp., but that didn't make it hurt any less.

And, learning that the STMA planned to cut up its large fleet of former Milwaukee log cars added insult to injury. So Rolland decided to do something about it. He was in no position to change Potlatch Corp's mind about the abandonment, but maybe he could convince them to preserve one of the log cars. That's when he made his phone call.

Actually, it took a bunch of calls to really get the ball rolling. Rolland's plan involved getting Potlatch Corp. to donate a car to the WI&M HPG, then getting someone else to move it from St. Maries to Potlatch for storage on the track behind the depot. After Mark Benson at Potlatch Corp. agreed to consider a donation, he gave Rol-

And it brought a friend . . .



*Caboose X-5 finally arrives in Potlatch on December 3rd, 2009. The former NP way car served many years on the WI&M, and has now returned after many more years in non railroad use.*

Jim West Photo

land a short deadline to respond with a proposal for taking possession of the car and removing it from St. Maries. Rolland quickly contacted two veteran "git-er-done" guys in the HPG, Don Somers and Jim West, who dropped everything and made some hasty arrangements with Jack Buell to provide transportation for the log flat. When Rolland and Mark Benson next spoke, Rolland had a plan in place, and he soon got a verbal agreement from Mark to donate a car.

Don and Jim took on a lot of the heavy lifting from this point. Don contacted Bill Barnholdt at the STMA and asked him to set aside a log car that was still in de-

*The non-profit WI&M Ry. History Preservation Group, Inc has been organized for railroad historians, enthusiasts, and modelers interested in gathering and sharing information on the Washington, Idaho & Montana Railway, from its origins in 1905 through it's operations of today.*