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The newsletter of the non-profit WI&M Ry HPG. Organized for railroad historians, enthusiasts, and modelers interested in the Washington, Idaho & Montana Railway, from its origins in 1905 through it's ownership of today.

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Mission Statement of the Washington, Idaho & Montana Railway History Preservation Group:

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"To locate, preserve, and archive all items of a historical nature relating to the history of the WI&MRy; to issue publications on this and related subjects; to encourage public interest in the history of the WI&M and the Potlatch Lumber Company; and, to acquire objects and property appropriate for a museum and/or any of the purposes listed above."

# THE WHITE PINE ROUTE QUARTERLY

The Washington, Idaho & Montana Railway  
History Preservation Group, Inc.



Locomotive number 23 takes a break at the Potlatch Lumber Co.'s shops north of Bovill. This engine spent most of its career in this area, bringing long trains of logs out of the mountains. By the time this photo was taken in 1947, #23 had been converted from burning wood to burning oil. Even at this late date, the little Prairie still had a few years of work ahead. Tom Burg Collection

## Jack of All Trades Potlatch Lumber Co.'s 2-6-2 Number 23

To supplement their small roster of steam locomotives, the WI&M purchased a 59-ton 2-6-2 Prairie type locomotive from the American Locomotive Works in 1910. With several shay locomotives working on the logging spurs, the WI&M selected a smaller rod locomotive to help move logs out of the woods and on to the mills.

Shortly after placing the order for #23, (this order also included 2-8-0 #22, which was delivered later than #23) the management of the WI&M realized that they could benefit from transferring ownership of their logging locomotives to their parent, the Potlatch Lumber Co. In particular, federal laws governing strict boiler inspections for common carrier railroads did not apply to industrial or logging lines. Keeping the road locomotives separate from the logging engines would help avoid performing several inspections each year, thus saving considerable time and money.

Shays 100-103 were "sold" to PLCo. in 1909, and upon its arrival several months later, #23 was promptly transferred to the log-

ging railroad as well. Its Alco builder's photo was probably the last shot taken of #23 with WI&M lettering on the tender.

As built, the new engine burned cordwood, and its stack was capped by a flattened, inverted cone that housed the spark arrester. As it turned out, 1910 was a bad year for forest fires, and the WI&M expected that this feature would prevent cinders from the engine starting other fires.

Being a rod engine, rather than geared, #23 was not able to run on the steep logging spurs that ventured up into the forests. But, with its 43" diameter drivers and 22600 lbs of tractive effort, the little Prairie was more than adequate for line hauls from the logging camp staging areas to the WI&M or Milwaukee mainlines.

When it wasn't hauling logs, #23 also proved its worth in other capacities. Many of the PLCo's logging camps were railroad camps, meaning that the camp's narrow bunkhouses, offices, shops and kitchen were all mounted on flat cars. When a particular spot