

The Friends of the Pine Creek Grist

Restoration Progress Report 87

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We had a lot of things going on the last month at the mill. The contractor the DNR hired has completed cleaning the mud out of the basement flywheel pit and the park staff has stained the front of the mill. The stain covers some of the graffiti on the front of the mill and it will give the siding years of protection against the elements. Again I want to thank the DNR for all of the support they have given the mill this year.

This last month we have been doing a lot of small repair jobs at the mill. Everything from repairing light fixtures to lubricating machines to constant adjustment of the mill's power train. A typical maintenance issue that cropped up is when we noticed that the cottle screen in the basement stopped turning. The cottle screen gets its power from a shaft that extends from the boot pulley on the north slanting elevator, it in turn is powered by the line shaft on the second floor.

We discovered that one of the tensioning belts (one of two men's waist belts) that splice the elevator belt together had broken. Both were replaced from my stock of old men's belts from home. Then we discovered that the screen was rubbing against its feed chute increasing its drag. After an hour of fiddling we got it all working again.

The wheat roller mill also had power transmission problems. In its case one of the drive belts had stretched and had to be adjusted. Eventually we decided that the mill's drive pulley in the basement was too small in diameter for the belt idler to work properly. Clarence Klauer solved the problem by wrapping some scrap belting around the pulley to increase its diameter slightly.

Our DNR safety inspection has been done. To get the mill in compliance we have done the following:

1. Install a lighted EXIT sign above the basement door.
2. Install a NO EXIT sign on the basement creek side door.
3. Install non-slip material on the basement steps.
4. Add a mid rail on the basement steps.
5. Purchase a flammable materials storage cabinet for the mill shop for storing paint, solvents and lubricants.
6. Installed a lockout on the mill motor starter

The Flammable materials storage cabinets are expensive, fortunately for us the DNR inspector knew of a surplus equipment dealer in Cedar Rapids that had exactly what we needed. Including shipping we were able to buy the cabinet for less than half price of a new one. Since the cabinet we purchased is a table top model I had to build a



Stand for it. The cabinet has been delivered and it is in place in the mill shop.

On top of all of that work a vandal broke into the log cabin. The person gained entrance to the cabin by kicking the door in. That broke the hasp off and splintered some of the door and its jam. Gary Christensen made repairs to secure the cabin until we could get at it on the following Tuesday. Both Gary and Gwen notified me of the break in.

The door has been reinforced with two steel plates that are bolted into place. The hasp is now fastened in place with three inch wood screws that go into the logs and with 1/4" steel bolts that are double nutted on the back. The best we can hope for is that the next time someone tries to kick the door open they injure their foot.

After whoever broke into the cabin they tried to kick the mill door open. They failed at that and succeeded only in damaging the dead bolt. Cody purchased a new dead bolt and it has been installed.

On a more positive note Heather Shoppa had asked if we could erect a wall on the north side of the shop to prevent saw dust from our wood working machines from raining down on the country store on the first floor. I am happy to say that after being sidelined by numerous other projects the wall has been built.

We have started building the frame for the cabin's rope bed. So far we have been able to plane some of the rough oak boards that we had in the container and trim them for width for the bed's sides. Barring any more mill or cabin problems I hope to get the bed completed by the end of July.

We have two new volunteers on the restoration crew, Hank Mann and Don Stoltenburg. Since Hank has worked on major hydroelectric projects before he retired I am waiting until he returns from vacation to work on the mill turbine. Currently the turbine runner is clogged by debris. Our plan is to first clean the penstock grating out at the water inlet above the dam. Next we are going to lift the runner out of the turbine casing so the bottom thrust bearing can be inspected. The casing will be cleaned and the top bearing lubricated. Once the turbine is back in operation it will be a new interpretive exhibit.

Dick Stoltenburg and Hank Mann are starting work on the log cabin's rope bed by planing oak lumber for the bed's frame.



At left Dick Stoltenburg is replacing a broken elevator belt tensioning strap in one of the two slanting elevators.

Here's Dick again with his brother Don installing our new flammable materials storage cabinet in the mill shop. Dave Metz built the stand for it over the forth of July weekend.



Clarence Klauer is installing the lighted exit sign above the boiler room door.

Below Dick is building what we have come to call "Heather's Wall" in the shop.



Clarence Klauer and Don Stoltenburg repaired the broken cabin door. The steel plate they installed to reinforce the hasp is shown above.