

1995 Project Abstract  
For the Period Ending June 30, 1997

**TITLE:** RESTORATION OF HISTORIC ELBA FIRE  
TOWER  
**PROJECT MANAGER:** NANCY ROBERTS  
**ORGANIZATION:** ELBA BOOSTER CLUB  
**ADDRESS:** ROUTE 1, ALTURA, MN 55910  
**WEB SITE ADDRESS:** N/A  
**LEGAL CITATION:** ML 1995, Ch. 220, Sec. 19, Subd. 12E  
**APPROPRIATION AMOUNT:** \$73,000

Statement of Objectives:

- A. Restore the Elba Fire Tower to original condition and add safety features.
- B. Construct hiking trail to tower.
- C. Plan and develop educational materials and interpret the land use history of the Whitewater Valley and the desired future conditions.
- D. Construct parking lot.

Overall Project Results:

All of the objectives were completed. The fire tower was restored and safety features added. The hiking trail is completed. The interpretive/education and parking lot program is completed. The tower in its' restored condition will be used by many area visitors and the educational value will be significant.

Project Results Use and Dissemination:

The dissemination of the projects purpose for the historical significance, the educational significance, and the recreational value will be disseminated to all visitors of the tower for all time to come.

Date of Report:  
July 1, 1997 Final Report

LCMR Work Program 1995

I. Project Title and Project Number: Restoration of the  
Historic Elba Fire Tower. C43

Program Manager: Nancy Roberts  
Agency Affiliation: Elba Booster Club  
Mail Address: Rt. 1, Box 243A, Altura, MN 55910  
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A. Legal Citation: ML 95, Chp. 220, Sec. 19,  
Subd. 12E.

Total biennial LCMR appropriation: \$73,000

Balance: \$73,000

<u>-\$58,923</u>	<u>\$73,000</u>	Amount Spent
\$14,077	\$0.00	Balance

Appropriation Language:

This appropriation is from the future resources fund to the commissioner of natural resources for an agreement with the Elba Booster Club, in consultation with the Minnesota State Historical Society, for restoration and the development of interpretive materials, and to provide access to the Elba Fire Tower for safe recreational, and educational use. This project must be available for reasonable public use and access.

B. Status of Match Requirement: N/A  
Match Required: \$ N/A  
Amount Committed to Date: \$ N/A  
Match Spent to Date: \$ N/A

II. Project Summary: Restore the historic Fire Tower complete with interpretive signage, media, brochures, trails, steps and vehicle parking lot. The intention is to make the tower available to the public, for recreation and educational use, using community and agency teamwork to accomplish this historically significant project. Interpretive and educational programs about resource management and the land use history of the Whitewater valley will be conducted through Whitewater State Park and self-guiding materials at the tower.

III. Six Month Work Program Update Summary:

Objective A:

Tower - Plans and specifications were developed for bidding. Advertisements for bids drew no bidders. DNR, Field Services will assist to bid second time this winter. Completion date should be extended to June 30, 1996.

July, 1996 Update: A bid was received from Forward Services to complete the fire tower renovation for \$27,675.00 by August 30, 1996. Work on the contract is 100% complete.

January 1, 1997 Update: Tower contract is complete.

July 1, 1997 Final Report:

Objective A, B, C, and D have been accomplished. The grand opening for the tower was June 28, 1997 with an attendance of approximately 100 people. The tower itself was ascended by over half of the visitors.

Objective B:

Trail - Progress on the trail was going very well until an arson fire destroyed 169 wooden cribs to be used for the final portion of the trail base. Labor for the trail construction was provided by Sentence to Service and Elba area volunteers. Sentence to Service to resume work January 2, 1996. Trail be to completed on schedule. Trail is now 60% complete.

4/7/97 Amendment--Tower contract is complete but the division asked to construct a security fence around the tower base. The fencing is completed but the division has requested to add a security fence and safety netting to the tower stair case. Security fence is complete. Specifications for the netting has not been determined by the Regional Engineer.

July, 1996 Update: New cribs were built and installed to replace the ones burned by arsonists. Sentence to Service expects to be complete by July 30. Wet weather in May and June has stopped construction several times. Trail is 70% complete.

January 1, 1997 Update: Cribs are completed. Handrails need to be added to some steps. Trail is 98% complete.

July 1, 1997 Final Report:

The trail is 100% complete.

Education - Work will start January, 1997 as planned.

Parking - The parking lot fill and final graveling is complete. Gravel, curbs and seeding remain to be completed in spring, 1997; 90% complete. Ahead of schedule.

July, 1996 Update: The parking lot is complete.

January 1, 1997 Update: The parking lot is 100% complete.

July 1, 1997 Final Report: The parking lot is 100% complete.

Summary - Total project is going well and on schedule.

IV. Statement of Objectives:

Timeline for Completion of Objectives:

	7/95	1/96	6/96	1/97	6/97
A. Objective A xxxxxx Restore the Elba Fire Tower. Restore tower to original condition and add safety features.					
	7/95	1/96	6/96	1/97	6/97
B. Objective B xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx Construct hiking trail from parking lot to fire tower					
	7/95	1/96	6/96	1/97	6/97
C. Objective C xx Plan and develop educational materials and educate and interpret the land use history of the Whitewater Valley and the desired future conditions.					
	7/95	1/96	6/96	1/97	6/97
D. Objective D xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx Construct parking lot to provide adequate and safe parking from access off of Winona County Road #26.					

V. Objectives/Outcome:

A. Title of Objective/Outcome: Restoration of the historic Elba Fire Tower.

A.1 Activity: Restore steps, cab of tower, paint entire structure and examine or replace bolts on steel work. Add safety features.

A.1.a. Context within the project: Tower needs to be restored for safe use by the public.

A.1.b. Methods: Employ structural engineer, volunteers, and contract work. Funds (\$4,500) pledged from stakeholders will be used for future maintenance on the tower project.

A.1.c. Materials: The materials will be designated on the engineering report and original design blueprints. These must be followed to assure public safety. The type will be steel, wood and wire.

A.1.d. Budget:

Total Biennial LCMR Budget:			
LCMR Balance: \$39,500	Amt. Spent-	\$28,645	
		\$39,500	
MATCH: \$4,500	Encumbered	-\$ 913	\$39,500
MATCH BALANCE:	Balance	\$ 1,442	\$0.00

A.1.e. Timeline:

	7/95	1/96	6/96	1/97	6/97
PRODUCT #1	xxxx				
Structural Engineering Report					

	7/95	1/96	6/96	1/97	6/97
PRODUCT #2	xxxxxxxxxx				
Restore cab of tower with new wood floor. New or restored sheet steel wall and ceiling. Add gridded window system and safety features at cab stair entry. Use all new fasteners.					

	7/95	1/96	6/96	1/97	6/97
PRODUCT #3	xxxxxxxxxx				
All bolted connections in the tower framing shall be replaced with new bolts.					

	7/95	1/96	6/96	1/97	6/97
PRODUCT #4	xxxxxxxxxx				
All rust of entire structure to be removed and repainted with a weather protection.					

	7/95	1/96	6/96	1/97	6/97
PRODUCT #5	xxxxxxxxxx				
Replace all wood steps and wood landings with new treated wood. Use all new fasteners. Add safety netting and railings as instructed by engineer.					

	7/95	1/96	6/96	1/97	6/97
PRODUCT #6	xxxx				
The entire area within 20 feet of the tower legs shall be cleared of woody vegetation to protect the foundation of the structure.					

	7/95	1/96	6/96	1/97	6/97
PRODUCT #7				xxxxxxxxxxxxx	
<u>Additional safety netting or steel strap must be added between hand rail and steps. Also add security fence as instructed by Attorney General's office. Budget is \$1,442.</u>					

A.1.f. Workprogram Update:

January 1, 1996 Update:

Product #1 completed. Cost \$2,938.80, \$500 Booster Club.

Product #2 through #6 - The tower was advertised for bids. No bids were received. DNR, Field Services will bid tower work this winter.

July 1, 1996 Update: The tower will be completed by July 30th.

January 1, 1997 Update: The tower contract is complete. Additional safety netting to be added to stairs between hand rail and steps and add security fence around tower. Product #7 is not completed.

July 1, 1997 Final Report:

All products are completed and in operation.

B. Title of Objective/Outcome: Construct Hiking Trail

B.1 Activity: Layout/plan hiking trail location and implement plan.

B.1.a. Context within the project: The trail should be pleasing to hikers with several rest stops. Its location will not be obtrusive to viewers from County Road #26. It will lead hikers from the parking lot to the tower.

B.1.b. Methods: The trail will be done largely by volunteers including a commitment from the sentence to service program. Engineering will be provided on site by experienced state park staff who have developed trails.

B.1.c. Materials: The materials will be largely treated wood. The construction techniques will follow general state park guidelines with an emphasis on durability and cost effectiveness.

B.1.d. Budget: \$26,578  
 Amt. Spent -\$29,895  
 Balance -\$ 3,317  
Transfer \$3,317 from C.

B.1.e. Timeline: January 1, 1997

	7/95	1/96	6/96	1/97	6/97
PRODUCT #1	xxxx				
Plan the location of the hiking trail after visual inspection. Protect natural heritage elements from construction area.					

	7/95	1/96	6/96	1/97	6/97
PRODUCT #2	xxxxxx				
Develop materials list. Purchase lumber, timbers and fasteners needed for construction of trail structure.					

7/95      1/96      6/96      1/97      6/97  
 PRODUCT #3    xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Construct wood trail structure. This phase of the project has been pledged by seven (7) crews from the Sentence to Service program. Site specific engineering will be provided by Sentence to Service crew leaders and staff from Whitewater State Park trained and experienced in trail construction.

B.1.f. **Workprogram Update:** Funds transferred from C, to fund destroyed trail cribs (five) and trail landings.

Workprogram Update January 1, 1997: Add safety netting and security fence to tower stairs.  
Transfer \$913 from Education, Title C.

January 2, 1996 Update:

The trail work was slowed because of an arson fire destroying 169 wood cribs. Sentence to Service will start on trail again January, 1996 building balance of cribs to be installed July 30, 1996. No change on completion date.

Product #1 completed

Product #2 completed as used; 70% installed.

Product #3 Sentence to Service and Elba area volunteers are providing labor and tools to construct trail; 70% complete.

July 1, 1996 Update: Funds saved on the objective A (tower) and Objective C (parking) should be transferred to Objective B (trail) and Objective D (education).

January 1, 1997 Update: Trail needs hand rails on some cribs.-----95% complete.

4/7/97 Amendment---As determined  
Engineer in April, 1997.

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July 1, 1997 Final Report: Hiking trail is complete.

C. Title of Objective/Outcome: Educational program.

C.1 Activity: Signs and other media will be used to illustrate this story in an effective manner at the trail head, on the trail and on the tower.

C.1.a. Context within the project: The main reason for the tower project is for education. A major goal is to have visitors (users) understand what happened in the past to the watershed and its entire ecosystem and to work with them for attaining desired future conditions (DFC's).

C.1.b. Methods: A broad spectrum of users will want to learn about the Whitewater. In order to facilitate as many users as we can, a broad range of education and interpretive techniques will be needed.

C.1.c. Materials: Brochures, signs, pictures, scopes and audio will be used to tell the story. The Whitewater State Park Naturalist with other professional assistants will develop the program.

C.1.d. Budget:	\$14,087	
	<u>\$ 3,317</u>	<u>transferred to B.</u>
Balance	\$10,770	\$0.00

July 1, 1996 Update: Replace \$3,000 from completed objectives to this budget.

January 1, 1997 Update: Transfer \$913 to Title A, Fire Tower Rehab. for security fence.

July 1, 1997 Final Report: The educational program is 95% complete. The balance of the program will be completed by division staff as soon as possible. Video footage of the completed tower and grand opening was needed to complete the educational program.

C.1.e. Timeline: June 30, 1997

	7/95	1/96	6/96	1/97	6/97
<u>PRODUCT #1</u>	xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx				
Develop an interpretive/educational plan using the land use history of the Whitewater Valley and desired future conditions established by the Whitewater Integrated Management Team (WIMT) with its stakeholders. i.e. landowners, businesses, residents, recreation users, sportsmen, etc.					

	7/95	1/96	6/96	1/97	6/97
<u>PRODUCT #2</u>			xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx		
Implement the interpretive/education plan. Construct or develop brochures, bulletin boards, kiosks, signs, plaques, pictures and audio necessary to complete the plan.					

C.1.f. Workprogram Update: Funds transferred to complete trail project.

Workprogram Update January 1, 1997: Education:  
Research started on history of tower.

January 1, 1996 Update:  
Educational/interpretive program will start January, 1997.

July 1, 1997 Final Report: The educational/interpretive program is completed except for the video that division staff will complete. Video footage of the grand opening and final pieces of the project were needed to complete the educational video program which will be used in the interpretive center.

D. Title of Objective/Outcome: Develop parking area.

D.1 Activity: Develop a safe parking area adjacent to Winona County Road #26.

D.1.a. Context within the project: The parking area will provide a safe alternative from parking along the Winona County Road #26 highway. It will facilitate buses and smaller vehicles. The lot will be graveled and adequately maintained to provide parking service year-round.

D.1.b. Methods: The Winona County D.O.T. will assist with design and construction. We expect other volunteers in this segment of the project.

D.1.c. Materials: Class 5 crushed rock, wood barriers, and approved signage will be used for the parking area.

D.1.d. Budget: \$422  
Amt. Spent -\$383.40 \$422.00  
Balance \$ 38.60 \$0.00

D.1.e. Timeline: October 30, 1995 July 1, 1996

	7/95	1/96	6/96	1/97	6/97
PRODUCT #1	xxxxx				

Design and plan parking lot to provide adequate and safe parking from access off of Winona County Road #26. Secure all permits including access and cultural surveys from county and state engineers.

	7/95	1/96	6/96	1/97	6/97
PRODUCT #2	xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx				

Develop parking area according to plan. Layout and stake construction area. Secure contracture or volunteer to assist with grading, site renovation, and finish surfacing with class 5 crushed rock.

	7/95	1/96	6/96	1/97	6/97
PRODUCT #3				xxxxxxxxxxxx	

Install final curbing, signage and landscaping.

D.1.f. Workprogram Update: The parking lot is 75% complete. Class 5 crushed rock is the only item to purchase.

January 1, 1996 Update:

The parking lot is 60% complete. Fill and final grading are complete. Crushed rock and curbing will be added starting in spring of 1996.

July 1, 1996 Update: Parking lot is 100% complete. Product #2 completed.

January 1, 1997 Update: Product #3 complete.

July 1, 1997 Final Report: The parking lot is complete.

VI. Evaluation: The tower parking lot and trail will be evaluated at the projects end. The interpretive program will be reviewed by professional park staff. Education, information, recreation, and economics will be the potential impact of this project. People will come, be informed, and enjoy.

VII. Context within field: This project will further the knowledge base of visitors about the watershed and its programs in the valley.

VIII. Budget context: \$4,500 from the sale of steps on trail are being spent for project maintenance. Feasibility study done by DNR engineers.

IX. Dissemination: Information on the progress of this project will be disseminated through local newspapers within a 25 mile radius including the Winona and Rochester daily news, KTTC-TV, channel 10, Rochester, Minneapolis and St. Paul WCCO channel 4, and interested radio shows such as Minnesota Public Radio (MPR), KROC, KNXR, KWNO, KSTP and WCCO.

X. Time: This project will be completed within the two year limit.

XI. Cooperation: Sentence to service programs, DNR Whitewater integrated management team, Elba Booster Club, friends of Whitewater State Park, and more importantly this project includes many private citizens. Volunteer efforts will vary with expertise and availability.



XII. Reporting Requirements: Semiannual six month work program update reports will be submitted not later than January 1, 1996, July 1, 1996, January 1, 1997, and final six month workprogram update, and a final report by June 30, 1997.

XIII. REQUIRED ATTACHMENT:

1. Qualifications:

Nancy Roberts:

- President of the Elba Booster Club, member for 10 years.
- Religious Education Teacher for 22 years.
- Manager of LB Express (Convenience Store) for 6 years.
- Volunteer Coordinator of the Marnach House restoration project.
- Womens CCW Church group at St. Aloysius Catholic Church.
- Avid crafter and homemaker.

Helen Olson: Vice President of the Elba Booster Club

Harold Becker:

- Assistant Supervisor, St. Croix State Park 1966-1967
- Supervisor, Nerstrand Big Woods State Park 1967-1969
- Supervisor, Camden State Park 1969-1976
- Supervisor, Whitewater State Park 1976-1994
- Past committees: State Parks Training Board, Law Enforcement, State Fair.
- Service organizations: Lions, Toastmasters, Church President.

John Huber:

- Supervisor - DNR Fisheries, Crystal Springs Trout Hatchery

Jon Cole:

- Supervisor - DNR Wildlife, Whitewater Wildlife Management Area

Ray Hinds:

- Friends of Whitewater State Park, Director

Dr. Jim Eddy:

- Professor, Political Science - Winona State University
- Board of Directors for Citizens for Southeastern Minnesota State Parks

2. Project Staffing Summary: \_