

2014 GOVERNOR'S HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARDS

Captain Fletcher's Inn at Navarro-by-the-Sea



Captain Fletcher's Inn after stabilization and restoration

Captain Fletcher's Inn, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is located on the North Coast of California in Navarro River Redwoods State Park. It is one of only two surviving structures of the original town of Navarro that developed around the Navarro Mill during the Civil War. It was built in 1865 by Captain Charles Fletcher, a Scottish seaman and the first Anglo-explorer to settle in the area in 1851. When the Mill closed in 1893, the town of Navarro slowly vanished, but the Inn survived under the continuous ownership of Fletcher until his death in 1906, and then his family until 1923. The rising popularity of car travel transformed the Inn into a roadhouse and coast-side destination known as Navarro-by-the-Sea. The Inn continued as one of the longest running inns on the North Coast until closing in the 1980s, where it languished and faced imminent collapse by 2010. In addition to the local and regional history the Inn represents, it utilized a rare form of plank wall construction that is no longer practiced. The planking was found to be intact and the integrity of its workmanship remained good, making it a valuable example of this long lost method of construction.

Navarro-by-the-Sea-Center (NSCR) is an all-volunteer non-profit that has been working diligently with California State Parks to preserve the historic Inn. A unique lease agreement with State Parks allowed NSCR to move forward with critical stabilization work at the Inn. NSCR secured two grants from the California Cultural and Historical Endowment to fund stabilization and complete construction work. Over \$900,000 was raised as well, in cash and in-kind donations from supporters throughout the region. The project architects Carey & Co. and a team of other professionals worked largely pro bono to complete the extensive planning, environmental review, and construction drawings and supervision.

Construction drawings and specifications for stabilization were prepared consistent with the Secretary of the Interior Standards. NSCR oversaw the major construction work, which included a new perimeter foundation, seismic retrofitting, reconstruction of the historic front porch, repair and replacement in-kind of the exterior siding, painting of the exterior, and fabrication and replacement of first floor windows to match the originals. Non-contributing elements were demolished during construction. Important historic elements such as the brick fireplace mantle, rain gutters, porch posts, and horizontal redwood siding, were salvaged and stored during the initial demolition phase and later reinstalled.

With over 150,000 visitors a year to Navarro River Redwoods State Park, which currently has no visitor interpretive facilities, Captain Fletcher's Inn is once again poised to become an important landmark for all of Mendocino County. NSCR's long-term goal for the Inn is to create a thriving visitor center that interprets the past and educates people about how to protect cultural and natural resources. To that end, NSCR received a \$40,200 grant from the Coastal Commission to make ADA improvements and install permanent interpretive displays at the Inn in the summer of 2014.

Learn more about the history of Captain Fletcher's Inn:

<http://www.navarro-by-the-sea-center.org/history.html>