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# New Visitor and Nature Center Opens at Newport State Park

By *Door County Pulse*, July 25th, 2008

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The Newport Wilderness Society (NWS) will hold a dedication event of the new Visitor and Nature Center at Newport State Park in Ellison Bay on July 26 at 1:30 pm.

This will be the culmination of a long-term project first thought of by then Park Manager Harvey Stahl who, in 1983, wanted to move the Ferdinand Hotz log cabin from its site on Europe Lake to the entrance area of the park for use as an office and nature center. However, funding was not available, and the cabin was later moved to a location near Sturgeon Bay. In 1985, the first president of the NWS, the official friends group of Newport State Park, Dr. Bill Scheckler, made sure that the nature center initiative became a priority for the group.



As NWS grew over the years to more than 500 members, its board of directors decided the time had come for a fundraising effort that would allow the DNR to include a nature center, naturalist's office and library in the construction of its proposed visitors center. During 2005 – 2007, NWS raised \$230,000, which was used to build and furnish a 1,200 square-foot portion of the center for those purposes. More than 200 donors contributed to the effort.

The day-long celebration will include interpretive hikes led by NWS volunteers between 9 am and noon. A complimentary lunch will be provided to building donors and NWS members. State, area and NWS officials will participate in the dedication service at the new facility. Original artwork by Brigette Kozma, Greg Scheckler and the late Mary Hotz Apfelbach, as well as donor plaques listing those who contributed to the building, will be unveiled.

A membership recruitment drive is being held this summer in conjunction with the opening of the new facility. The organization works with the park management to preserve Newport as a minimum-development natural park; encourages study and preservation of wilderness and nature in the park; seeks volunteers to support park management with projects and programs to maintain the park and facilitate its proper use. Contact Marc Savard 920.854.7335 or the society's Web site <http://www.dcty.com/newport/nws.html> for membership information.

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