

FEATHER RIVER RAIL SOCIETY

DATE: August 2019
ITEM: New Business Item 5
FROM: Eugene Vicknair

HISTORIC DESIGNATION for WP 106 “Charles O. Sweetwood”

For a very long time, the FRRS has debated registering some of its equipment and / or structures for state or national historic status.

In recent years, I am noticing more and more grants and foundations that are making historic register status a requirement for funding. Therefore I would like to broach this subject with regards to the Western Pacific 106, “Charles O’ Sweetwood”.

Contrary to some past opinions, gaining federal historic status will NOT impede anything we wish to do with the car. This is clearly stated in all the historic filing documents. The only restrictions would be if we take grant money and it requires certain measures or actions. However, historic status itself does not carry any restrictions.

I would propose going for one of the federal levels. There are two:

National Historic Landmark (NHL)

NHLs are the MVPs of America’s historic places; each “represents an outstanding aspect of American history and culture.” National Historic Landmarks are the places:

- with the strongest association with a significant event in our nation's history
- that best tells the story of an individual or group who played a significant role in the history of our nation
- that are an exceptional representation of a particular building or engineering method, technique, or building type
- have the potential to yield new and innovative information about the past through archeology

There are fewer than 2,500 National Historic Landmarks nationwide. Also, all NHLs are automatically included in the National Register for Historic Places (but not vice versa).

National Register for Historic Places (NR or National Register)

The National Register is managed by the National Park Service, and is the nation’s official list of historic structures / places. More specifically, the National Register:

- has more than 80,000 listings, made up of 1.4 million individual resources -- buildings, sites, districts, structures, and objects
- includes at least one listing from nearly every county in the United States
- focuses on buildings and structures that are more than 50 years old (newer buildings must be especially significant)

I propose that we seek National Historic Landmark status for the WP 106. It meets several of the criteria, including being an excellent example of a Pullman Business Car, having played a unique role in the Korean War, and being on the cutting edge of medical technology with the blood procurement program.

For reference, there are 145 NHL sites in California. There are NONE in Plumas County and only 2 in NE California north of Lake Tahoe: the Donner Camp and the Tule Lake WWII Internment Camp.

Other examples of NHLs in California include the USS Hornet, the Jack London Ranch, Bodie Historic District, Carmel Mission and the Hearst Estate. In Nevada, V&T McKeen car 22 has NHL status.

Currently, only one Landmark has a relationship with the Western Pacific: WP tug "Hercules" is a National Historic Landmark.

Getting NHL status for the Sweetwood would open funding doors and bring in some automatic notice and promotion.

REQUEST: Approve seeking National Historic Landmark status for Western Pacific business car 106, the "Charles O. Sweetwood" and designate a lead person for this project. Volunteer would work with historic landmark commission and Congressman LaMalfa's office to secure status.