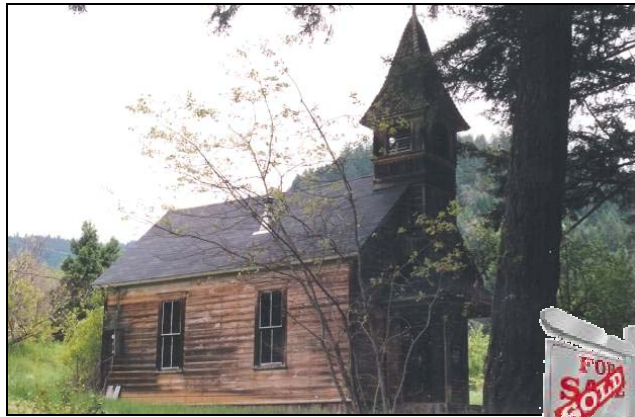




## Special Report

### **Introducing the Newest State Park in the State of Oregon!**



*Golden church*

The little ghost town of Golden is now safe and secure in the hands of the Oregon State Parks Department thanks to years of hard work by board members of Golden Coyote Wetlands, Inc. More than eight years ago the intrepid members of the board voted to borrow the funds needed to purchase the ghost town rather than let it go on the open real estate market. Although the board had actually formed around the theme of the mining reclamation project, all the members valued the importance of the historic site and recognized that the stories of the mining reclamation and the ghost town are intertwined.

The founders and settlers of Golden were miners. They came and worked the ground energetically until they realized that more money could be made elsewhere. Some of the settlers went beyond the typical mining town and tried to create a well rounded community with a school, a church an orchard and a store. They bragged they were the town with two churches and no saloons.

Golden is also noted for a long standing feud over the mining claim that was pursued through the courts for years, with ownership bouncing back and forth between Ruble and Kelley. Since neither owner knew how long they could maintain ownership they had to work harder and the Ruble boys invented and patented the Ruble Rock Elevator. This device helped to speed up mining and get more done during the few months when water was available and while they held the claim.

The RC&D Council has been involved with this project from day one when it was focused on reclaiming the mining area. We brought in technical assistance from NRCS to survey the site for a topographic map and a complete study of the vegetation. We provided organizational assistance and planning assistance throughout the many phases of the project. Early reclamation work was funded through the US Fish and Wildlife service and OWEB.

When the Golden Coyote Board looked into buying Golden, the RC&D Council offered to assist in identifying grants to pay it off. Unfortunately this proved far more challenging than anticipated as we found that most donors would not pay off debt through grants. Meanwhile the RC&D worked with graduate student Shawna Adams and NRCS experts to get the site listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and get grants for stabilization and cleanup projects. Work was completed with volunteers, youth groups and grants. Interpretive activities, tours and other events were held in addition to the everyday visitors who discover Golden on their own.



*Susan Bush, chair of Golden Coyote Wetlands, Inc., signing the sale papers.*

Golden Coyote Wetlands board persevered and finally found the win-win option of selling the property to the Oregon State Parks Department to become an adjunct site to the Wolf Creek Inn National Historic Landmark. The purchase was attractive to the state who has a goal to protect heritage resources because it is a site of statewide importance and it tells an interesting part of the Oregon story. They were also excited that the Golden Coyote Wetlands group has interest in continuing their active role as Friends of Golden. The State has a mechanism to enter into formal agreements with “Friends of” groups and they will be exploring

this possibility with the Golden Coyote Board. The reclamation site, commonly called the Wetlands, is still owned by Josephine County and Golden Coyote continues reclamation and interpretive work there. Congratulations to Golden Coyote Wetlands!

### **Golden Church Foundation Project**

Thanks to generous grants from the Kinsman Foundation, Meyer Memorial Trust and Fourway Community Foundation, Golden church got a new foundation and a bit of shoring up this summer.

At the direction of Historic Consultant George Kramer and engineer Joel Woodward, representing TJ Bossard Engineering, work is underway to give the old church a new lease on life. George was on board to provide the best stabilization possible while protecting historic integrity. Joel helped make sure the steeple didn't topple and to retrofit structurally to strengthen the building. It will be much stronger now!

Paul Weller House Moving got a rise out of some passers-by who thought we might be moving the church!!! In the end he did an excellent job of jacking the building up and down again in the same spot with hydraulic systems.



*Paul Weller House Moving.*

Shawn, of Montgomery Construction, was the man of the hour, carefully tending to all the details of laying a new concrete block foundation, structural repairs and dealing with the idiosyncrasies of bringing an old building up to esthetic and structural standards. The final result will be a concrete block foundation skirted for a rustic look, a reinforced steeple to distribute the weight a bit more evenly and new stairs to better accommodate visitors.

### **Wetlands Interpretive Project**

An Interpretive plan has been developed for the wetland area to provide a framework for the trails and interpretive work. The theme “Human footprints on the ever changing landscape” frames the context of what visitors see and encourages folks to consider how humans have impacted and continue to impact the landscape. Sub themes include early day mining, seasonality of water supply, reclamation efforts and appreciation for ponds and wetland ecosystems.



*Wetlands trail*

Interpretation will be designed to help visitors comprehend the immense effort and ingenuity that was required to mine the area in early days. The ability of natural ecosystems to heal themselves is also demonstrated at this site.

Two information kiosks are being designed and a brochure will be published for walking tours. The art work being developed is fantastic! A curriculum is being created to be made available to teachers and home-schoolers for student groups.

Middle Rogue Watershed Council pitched in to help build trails with the Job Council Youth Crew and we are planning a ceremony to open and dedicate it soon. Our thanks are extended for the funding from Medford District BLM Resource Advisory Committee (Title II).

### **Josephine County Heritage Days**

Evergreen Federal Bank put Golden, Wolf Creek and Sunny Valley in the limelight with this 2005 community heritage event. Evergreen has been promoting what is special about Josephine County and local history is high on the list. This event featured activities at all three locations. Living History Players entertained, food was served and free transportation was provided from Grants Pass.



*Wolf Creek Postmaster Ken Miller aka Columbus Bennett and Amy Wilson, RC&D Coordinator*

Getting off the bus visitors headed for the general store where **Henry and Myra McIntosh** greeted them. There was old-fashioned root-beer candies and folks peered in to see the abandoned store.

Next stop was the “Post Office” where Wolf Creek Postmaster Ken Miller *aka Columbus Bennett* volunteered to help us open for business for this special event. Collectible and everyday stamps were postmarked from Golden for just one day.

Five couples personalized the event by renewing their wedding vows in special ceremonies at the Golden church. Pastor Dennis Webber came dressed for the occasion to perform services. Among the couples was Jeff and Susan Bush of the Golden Coyote Wetlands Board celebrating their almost-50<sup>th</sup>!

A gold nugget worth more than \$3,000 was the grand prize offered to participants. Over 600 visitors took part in the festivities.

Golden was spruced up and looking wonderful, thanks in part to Evergreen Federal Bank and staff, who were a huge help in prepping Golden for its public debut. Montgomery Construction pitched in and got the foundation project looking spiffy just in time for a great community event.



*One of the brides enjoying cake with her family.*



*Brady Adams, President of Evergreen Bank with Susan Bush, chair of Golden Coyote Wetlands and the gold nugget.*

Thanks to Living History Players organized by Mollie Means: Holly Wilson, Medette and Jim Hayman, Denise and Doug Baker, Karen Pacheco, Nancy and Ray Campbell, Louise Lyden, Carol Blake and A Jay Means.

And special thanks to Brady Adams and Evergreen staff members who developed and sponsored the event.