

WILSONIA HISTORIC DISTRICT TRUST

The Wilsonia Historic District Trust (WHDT) is a nonprofit and educational organization that provides educational opportunities and works to maintain the historic designation.

The entire community of Wilsonia became a National Historic District on March 15, 1996, at which time Wilsonia was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. On the 4th of July, 1997, a bronze plaque was dedicated noting the designation of Wilsonia as a National Historic District.

The story of how this came to pass is one of perseverance and patience. In the 1970s and 80s, the National Park Service actively sought to purchase and remove cabins in Wilsonia. Close to 100 cabins and all commercial property were purchased and totally removed. If nothing had been done, Wilsonia would have probably vanished. But in 1991, at a meeting in the Clubhouse, a group of cabin owners proposed the formation of a Historic District that would effectively halt the NPS "buy and remove" activities. It took several years and several thousands of dollars, but in 1995, an ultimately successful application was made to the State of California's Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and word was received from Washington DC that the entire community of Wilsonia had been designated by the US Department of the Interior as a Historic District. This status put an immediate halt to the NPS activities to buy and remove cabins. The WHDT successfully renewed our community's Historic District designation in 2011, as part of a process that requires such renewals every ten to fifteen years.

However, this is not a permanent protection. A percentage of our still standing cabins must continue to be historic in nature. If a cabin is modernized so much that it no longer has its original historic appearance, it can no longer qualify as historic. Obviously, if a historic cabin is torn down, it too loses its historic designation. If the number of the cabins designated as "historic" drops below the required percentage, the US Department of Interior can take away our "Historic District" designation, which would then enable the NPS to resume their program. If you have any questions concerning the Historic District, please check with any WHDT board members. It is not that difficult to maintain historic status.

Submitted by Drew Sorensen, WHDT President

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