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News Release



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Phase II Restoration Project Begins on Historic St. Marks Lighthouse

St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge announces the selection of Rippee Construction as the general contractor to complete the Phase II restoration of the historic St. Marks Lighthouse. Locally-owned, Rippee Construction considers this project more than just another job. “Most of our crew have fished in front of the lighthouse all of our lives and we are excited to be part of its preservation for future generations,” said Callie Neal, President of Rippee Construction.

Phase II includes renovations to the keeper’s house, cleaning, repairs and painting to the exterior walls and porch, repair and/or replacement of all joists and rafters that have been compromised by termites, repairs to the roof including new shingles, partial repairs to the porch floor, reconstruction of all doors, windows, sills and headers back to historical design, reconstruction of the wood floors, illumination of the cistern, repairs and painting of all interior and exterior walls and railings, and new HVAC, electrical and lightning protection systems. The start date for demolition is November 27, 2017 and the planned completion date is March 28, 2018.

Funding for Phase II is primarily from Division of Historical Resources grants to the Friends of the St. Marks Wildlife Refuge, along with support from the Florida Lighthouse Association, and private donations. However, more funds are needed to complete the restoration. Fundraising is ongoing for planning and installation of the Lighthouse Museum exhibits in the keeper’s quarters, as well as constructing restrooms, and the historic cistern, landscaping and picket fence.

“All throughout this process, the community has engaged with the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge to restore this beloved landmark. Donations are still coming in to help fund the restoration, and many companies such as Ring Power and Cason Environmental, have donated services to move the project forward,” said Refuge Manager Terry Peacock. “We are proud of and grateful to all who have contributed, especially our wonderful Friends of the St. Marks Wildlife Refuge.”

The refuge will host a press briefing about Phase II of the restoration of the historic St. Marks Lighthouse on Friday Dec. 1 at 10 am down at the lighthouse. The briefing will: provide an overview of the project and timeline, introduce the contractors, thank sponsors, and provide media a tour of the inside of the keeper's house and tower. For more information about the project and the St. Marks Lighthouse, please call the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge at 850/925-6121.

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