

# North Point Lighthouse

PUB-RR-824

March, 2009

## North Point Lighthouse

2650 North Wahl Avenue  
Milwaukee, WI  
Milwaukee County

2 Acres

**Location: Milwaukee's Lake Park, near the shores of Lake Michigan.**

**The grounds of a 120 year old lighthouse are now safe for visitors, thanks to cooperation between the DNR and the U.S. Coast Guard.**

### History

The North Point Lighthouse has been a permanent fixture in Milwaukee's Lake Park since the time when the earliest German immigrants were giving the town a reputation for brewing beer. Starting in 1855, the light served as an essential guide for ships traveling to and from Milwaukee along Lake Michigan's shores.

In 1888, the lighthouse we see today was completed, along with the keeper's house. In 1994, the U.S. Coast Guard took the lighthouse out of service. Ownership of the landmark was eventually transferred to Milwaukee County. The county now leases the historic structure to North Point Lighthouse Friends, Inc.

Before the county's purchase, work began to restore both the grounds of the site, and the

lighthouse itself. Among the problems addressed was the danger of lead found in the soil of the property.



*The North Point Lighthouse at Lake Park, prior to restoration work (photo courtesy DNR).*

### Investigation & Cleanup

Flakes of lead paint had broken away over time and covered a substantial portion of the ground around the lighthouse.

Lead contamination in the park soil registered at levels too high to be safe for human contact. Since the area was being developed for a public park, the problem needed to be addressed.

Between two and three feet of soil was removed from a large section the lighthouse property to remove any threat from direct contact with contamination. The removed soil was replaced with clean fill.



Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources  
Remediation and Redevelopment Program

PO Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707  
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## Redevelopment

Once soil remediation was completed to state standards, North Point Lighthouse Friends and Milwaukee County began restoration work on the lighthouse and keeper's residence. Included in the changes was the re-addition of a connection between the residence and the lighthouse tower, which existed prior to the 1920s.

Renovations were completed in 2007. Today, visitors can tour the lighthouse, including a climb to the top of the 74-foot tower.

## Financial, Liability, Technical Assistance

The DNR's Remediation and Redevelopment (RR) Program assisted the U.S. Coast Guard and their environmental consultant in overseeing the necessary soil cleanup. A DNR letter of closure was issued for the property in 2003, enabling its sale to Milwaukee County.

## Contacts

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*A newly restored North Point Lighthouse gleams brightly in the winter sun (photo courtesy DNR).*

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