



**The Northwoods
Forest History Experience**

More than a Museum!



“There is a feeling in the heart of many that it is not right to live exclusively for ourselves or for the present time: that it is right to look a little to the interests of those who shall come after us.”

-- Increase A. Lapham (1811-1875)

Wisconsin author, naturalist and scientist; founder of the Wisconsin Natural History Association



The Need



The forests of Wisconsin's Northwoods are magical, productive, abundant yet finite.

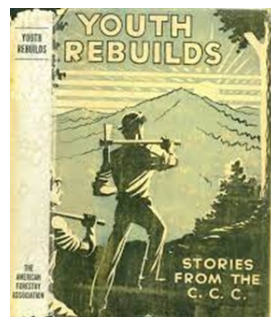
From ancient times to today, the traditions and practices of those who have lived, worked and governed in the Northwoods make our forests what they are today.

Understanding the historical uses of forest resources connects us to the land and to the legacy of those who came before us.

By preserving, sharing and showcasing these stories, images and artifacts, and by directing visitors to actual historical sites in the forest, we become better informed stewards for future generations.

The Objective

Restore and renovate a 90-year-old Civilian Conservation Corps and Youth Conservation Corps building in the heart of the Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest for use as a forest history museum.



The Sponsors



DiscoveryCenter.net. A 501c3 approved non-profit

Mission: To enrich lives and inspire an ethic of care for the natural world by connecting people, nature and community

Offers nature, cultural and history-based programs to children, adults, and families

Founded in 1996, now operates under a permanent easement from the WI-DNR



**Manitowish Waters
Historical Society**

mwhistory.org. A 501c3 approved non-profit

Mission: To collect, preserve and share materials and information relating to the history of Manitowish Waters and the surrounding area so that we engage, educate and excite our members and community

- Collects history through research, interviews, and study of people and places
- Maintains a website containing a prolific digital library of photos, historic videos, podcasts, maps, and publications
- Gives tours and lectures about the history of the area and publishes a newsletter

Stakeholders

Other organizations involved in this project:

- Former YCC campers, counselors, and staff
- WI-DNR Forestry Department and Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest
- Forest History Association of Wisconsin
- The George W. Brown Jr. Ojibwe Museum and Cultural Center

The Goals



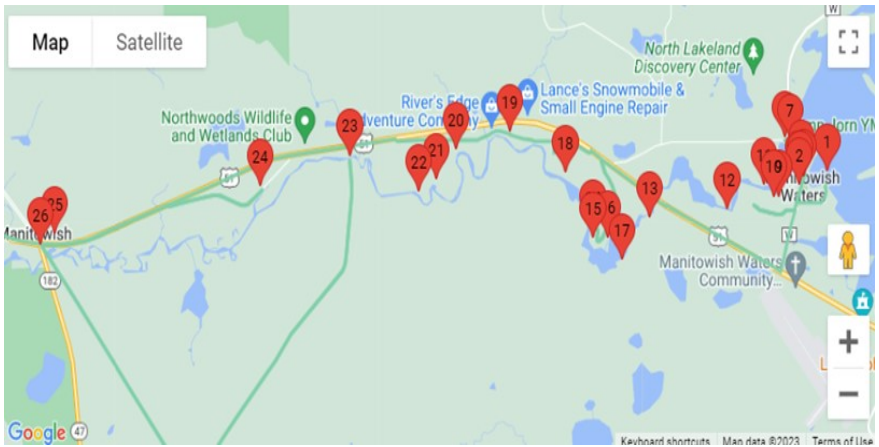
- Preserve both the building and the stories of the historical uses of Northwoods forests
- Inform the public of how forestry practices have sculpted and continue to shape the precious resource of our woodlands, lakes and streams
- Integrate the museum experience with on-site activities and visits to natural and real-world historical sites

The Audiences



- History enthusiasts who wish to explore and preserve Northwoods cultural traditions
- Local and regional schools
- People interested in Indigenous Nations' culture and historic and present-day use of the forests
- The thousands who annually visit the Discovery Center for day programs and recreation
- Ecotourism and other groups staying at the Discovery Center for multi-day programs

Get Out and Explore! The Power of Clio



The Clio app will provide directions and an abundance of information on the many sites in the surrounding area, all with the simple objective: ***Get out and explore!***



Clio will guide you to and through historic destinations throughout the area, including...



...Camp Mercer CCC 660

The Plan



- Restore the building to rustic, historically accurate standards outside and in
- Relocate the building to a prominent site on the Discovery Center campus easily accessible to the public
- Create a series of display areas that tell the story of forest history
- Use actual artifacts, images and digital presentations to create an appropriate theme for each historical period
- Utilize outdoor space for hands-on activities
- Operate as an all-season historical museum



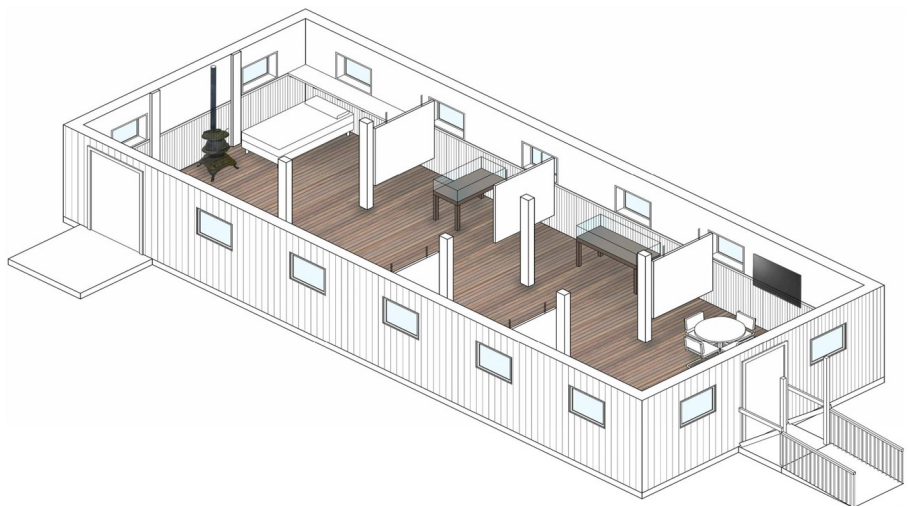
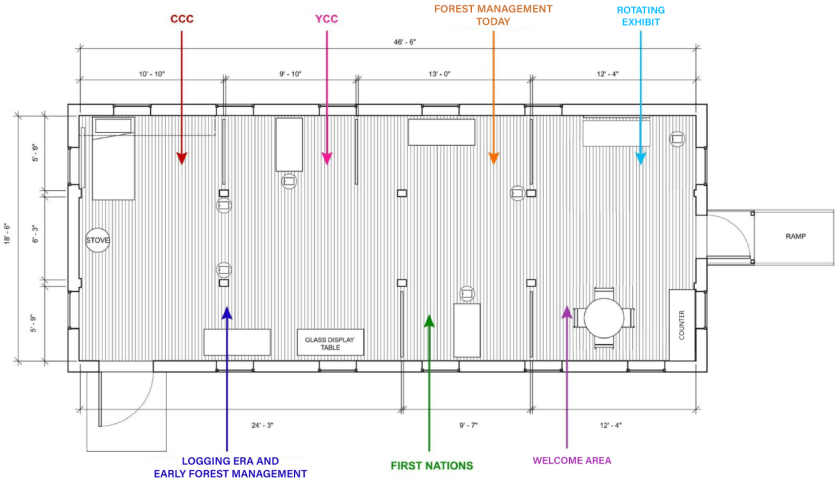
Restored building at Rabideau CCC camp in Minnesota

Building History



- (1933-1935) Used as a Civilian Conservation Corps barracks originally located at Palmer Lake near Land O' Lakes, WI
- (1936–1963) Relocated to Rhinelander, WI and used for several purposes ending up as a storage building there
- (1963-1996) Moved to the Statehouse Lake Youth Conservation Corps Camp in Manitowish Waters, WI for use as the PX store and recreation center
- (1996 to present) – Used for storage by the North Lakeland Discovery Center, the nonprofit nature center that occupies the former YCC Camp site

Interior Overview



Interior Perspective of Logging Era and Early Forestry



Interior Perspective of CCC, YCC and Modern Forest Management Exhibits



The Exhibits

#1 Indigenous Nations

Purpose: Utilized and maintained the forest to create a sustainable place to live and thrive in the natural world

Work:

- Hunting and gathering
- Employing fire to maintain areas for harvest of crops and wild foods
- Sustaining a healthy forest in a natural balance



Legacy:

- Tradition of sustainability in modern forest practices
- Knowledge of important forest food and medicinal products

#2 Logging Era and Early Management

Purpose:

- Provide key timber resources for a growing nation
- Aggressive logging creating cutover land and forest fires
- Government response to restore and protect natural resources

Work:

- Logging, transport, milling of timber
- Forest products
- State and federal forestry departments created to restore the forest
- Fire protection, planting, surveying, law enforcement, tourism

Legacy:

- Scientific forest management to guide future forestry
- Created Wisconsin Department of Forestry, Wisconsin Conservation Commission
- Laws and zoning to encourage government, business, and private landowners to restore forests sustainably
- Indigenous Nations partner with government agencies to restore critical resources

#3 CCC and CCC Indian Division

Purpose: Environmental reclamation and improvement work for men 18 to 25 during the Great Depression

Work:

- Reforestation projects
- Educational opportunities
- Helped build State and National Parks
- Forest fire protection



Legacy:

- Helped young men support their families
- Trained men for lifelong work
- Parks, campsites, forests, and wildlife habitat created

#4 Youth Conservation Corps

Purpose: Summer work experience in conservation for youth 15 to 19

Work:

- Reforestation, improvement, and sustainability projects
- Game and fisheries management

Legacy:

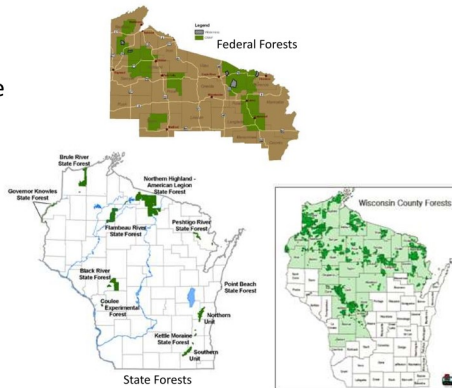
- Built hiking, ski, and snowshoe trails
- Created campsites and remodeled park facilities
- Improved fish and wildlife habitat
- Contributed to fire protection



#5 Forest Management Today

The Wisconsin public land puzzle

Note how the pieces fit, creating over five million acres of public lands in Northern Wisconsin



Foresters use scientific management to fulfill the mission of each forest

Purpose: Using science and traditional cultural knowledge to manage timber products, recreation, and sustainability.

Work:

- Maximize timber products while embracing science and new technology
- Increased emphasis on recreation in state forest and parks
- Encourage growth of privately owned forests

Legacy:

- WDNR created to manage the forest for multiple stakeholders
- Greatly expanded recreational opportunities
- Greater collaboration between business, Indigenous Nations, private landowners, and government

#6 Rotating Exhibits

Legacy: Display unique uses of forest as a place of history, art, literature and exploration



Examples:

- Forest art exhibitions
- Maple sugar production
- Medicinal plants
- Legends and stories of the forest
- Forest to farms and back
- Cranberry harvest

Project Schedule

2021 – Organization, exhibit planning and preliminary design

2022 – Architecture, exhibit prototypes and budgeting

2023 -24 – Fundraising and events

Fall/winter 2024-25 – Bidding

Spring 2025 – Begin construction

Winter/Spring 2026 – Grand opening!

How the Museum will Operate

- An affiliate organization will be formed under the umbrella of the North Lakeland Discovery Center with its own board, bylaws and memberships.
- The board will govern the museum's operation, creating the annual budget, establish use rules, etc.
- The board will supervise volunteers and Discovery Center staff in maintaining the building and exhibits.
- Finances will be handled through the Discovery Center.

The Budget

Construction: \$250,000

New construction: foundation and crawl space, roof, insulation, HVAC, electrical, interior walls, windows and doors.

Repairs: Rafter tails, floor finishing, siding

Site work: \$35,000

Demolition, site work and cost to move the building

Exhibits: \$40,000

Architecture/engineering: \$15,000

Campaign costs: \$20,000

Marketing materials, events, credit card fees, etc.

Contingency: \$40,000

Total: \$400,000



 **NORTH LAKELAND
DISCOVERY CENTER**



**Manitowish Waters
Historical Society**