



FOREST HISTORY ASSOCIATION of WISCONSIN

Woodchips

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Traditional Cooper - George Smithwick - History and how to make a wooden bucket

George Smithwick is a sixth generation cooper who makes traditional wooden buckets and barrels. He is continuing a family tradition that began in the 18th century in Ireland. George talks to us about what a Cooper is, some history of the trade, tools he uses, and the step-by-step process of making a wooden bucket. Edward Washington and Jimmy Murray from the Sydney Living Museums' Programs team flew down to catch up with George to see if he could help with making us some new buckets and he was happy to show us how he worked; using tools, techniques and practises that have remained the same for hundreds of years. George also let us into what was once a very tight-knit and sometimes secretive coopering industry – and we captured it all on camera [View Video](#)

In the News

Wisconsin's Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest Celebrates Centennial with Public Festivities

consider joining the 100th-anniversary celebration of the Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest. According to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the centenary events are set for June 7, running from 9 a.m. to a proposed 3 p.m. at the Crystal Lake Day Use Area and its adjacent pavilion. Marking a century since its establishment in 1925, the state forest covers an impressive 236,000 acres, making it the largest public property in Wisconsin. [Read More](#)

Free Fun Weekend Offers Free Access to Wisconsin's Parks, Trails, and Fishing Spots

Next weekend, you can get outdoors and explore somewhere new for free during the annual Free Fun Weekend in Wisconsin. Happening June 7 and June 8, all state park admission fees, fishing licenses and trail passes are waived for all visitors. With 50 state parks, 15 state forests, 44 state trails, 84,000 miles of rivers and streams and roughly 15,000 inland lakes, Wisconsin has something for everyone to enjoy. [Read More](#)

125 Years of Wisconsin State Parks

To commemorate the 125th anniversary of the Wisconsin State Park series, former ranger and park supervisor Jim Buchholz compiled the new book Wisconsin State Parks, Forests, and Recreation Areas — A Ranger's Guide.

To celebrate Wisconsin's state parks and Jim Buchholz's book, "The Larry Meiller Show" has over the past year featured a series of episodes dedicated to our beloved state park system. [Read More](#)

'Sacred' Mushroom Is Popping Up In WI Forests — Here's How To Find It

One of the most delectable of springtime treats — elusive morels, the so-called "sacred mushroom" — are popping out of the ground in Wisconsin. Morels are among the most desired wild mushrooms in the world. Although morel hunters are a notoriously secretive group, many have reported the date and general area they found their caches to The Great Morel. [Read More](#)

New Research on Milwaukee's Urban Forest Shows City has About 3.7 Million Trees

Milwaukee is lucky to have a thriving urban forest, and now, a first-of-its-kind research project is shedding even more light on the impact trees have on the city. "We kind of poetically call the urban forest 'the forest outside your door,'" said Dan Buckler, an urban forest analyst with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Buckler explained that an urban forest is any tree in a park, a yard, even a parking lot or median. [Read More](#)

Forests "Talk" Before a Solar Eclipse: Study Reveals Mysterious Electrical Communication

Spruce trees don't just react to solar eclipses—they anticipate them, synchronizing their bioelectrical signals hours in advance in a display of forest-wide coordination. This discovery reveals a level of intelligence and communication in trees that rivals animal behavior. Remarkably, older trees lead the charge, hinting at environmental memory being passed down through the forest. [Read More](#)

Watch Out!

Have you ever walked through a patch of poison ivy or brushed up against wild parsnip? If so, you probably learned an uncomfortable lesson about encountering harmful plants. Luckily, there is a less painful way to learn about dangerous vegetation hidden among Wisconsin's natural beauty. Now is the time to brush up on hazards you may encounter while outdoors. [Read More](#)