

**2025 Annual Fall Conference:
Celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the
Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest
October 3–4, 2025 Manitowish Waters, Wisconsin**

This fall, the Forest History Association of Wisconsin invites you to gather in the Northwoods for a special two-day conference honoring the centennial of the Northern Highland–American Legion State Forest. Set against the beautiful backdrop of the North Lakeland Discovery Center in Manitowish Waters, the event will explore the forest’s rich natural, cultural, and historical legacy.

The conference begins Friday, October 3rd at the North Lakeland Discovery Center with registration, coffee, and light snacks at 8:30 a.m. Following a welcome and brief orientation at 9:00, participants will embark on a day of guided tours to historic sites in the Manitowish Waters area. Traveling by carpool, the group will visit:



660th Company Civilian Conservation Corps, Camp Mercer, along the banks of the Manitowish River. Circa 1935.

- One of the earliest ranger stations on the NHAL State Forest, including an original surveyor’s blaze along the lakeshore
- Historic Rest Lake Dam
- WinMan Recreational Trails, exploring the historical roots of this modern trail network
- Papoose Creek State Natural Area, with insights into its ecology and management
- Manoomin (wild rice) sites at Papoose Creek, with cultural perspectives
- Camp Mercer Civilian Conservation Corps site

Guiding the daylong tour are four individuals whose expertise and passion bring the region’s rich heritage to life. Jim Bokern, retired educator and president of the Manitowish Waters Historical Society, shares insights into local history and archaeological finds tied to Camp Mercer. John Berg, retired teacher and author from Nekoosa, offers his knowledge of logging history. Jim Meunier of the Wisconsin DNR adds ecological context, explaining conservation efforts to preserve the Northwoods natural areas. Joe Graveen, representing the Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians, provides a compelling cultural perspective on wild rice restoration and Ojibwe traditions.

After returning to the Discovery Center by late afternoon, attendees will have free time to explore area attractions before gathering for the Conference Banquet at Little Bohemia Lodge at 6:00 p.m. This historic venue—famous for its connection to the John Dillinger story—will host keynote speaker John Bates, who will present *The State of Old Growth Forest Today*. Dinner options include chicken marsala or walleye.

Saturday's program returns to the North Lakeland Discovery Center, once the site of the Statehouse Lake Youth Conservation Corps Camp. After coffee and registration at 8:30 a.m., the day's presentations begin at 9:00:

- Welcome – Beth Feind, WDNR/Northern Highland–American Legion State Forest Property Manager
- Historical Overview of the NHAL State Forest – Jim Bokern, Manitowish Waters Historical Society
- Present-Day Forestry & Recreation on the NHAL State Forest – Tom Shockley, WDNR
- Lunch & Annual General Membership Meeting
- Historic Statehouse Lake YCCC Camp & the Future Northwoods Forest History Experience – Kay Krans, Manitowish Waters Historical Society
- The Best Dam Builder in the Chippewa River Watershed: The Enigmatic William H. "Billie the Beaver" England, Captain Charles Harmon Henry and the Eau Claire – Chippewa Falls Pool– John Berg..

The program concludes with closing remarks at 3:00 p.m.

Whether you are drawn by the history of forest conservation, the legacy of the CCC, the cultural traditions of the Northwoods, or the beauty of Wisconsin's largest state forest, this conference offers a rare opportunity to connect with experts, explore historic landscapes, and celebrate a century of stewardship.

Conference Lodging

A block of rooms are being held for Friday and Saturday under the FAW at the Great Northern Hotel in Mercer, WI (about a 15-20 minute drive from the Discovery Center). Please call them to make your reservation.

Great Northern Hotel
5070 N Hwy 51
Mercer, Wisconsin 54547
\$139/night

Call to Make Your Reservation

715-476-2440

Rooms Blocked Only until Sept. 15

To fully immerse yourself in the history, consider staying in the affordable bunkhouses at the Discovery Center. They have modern bathroom facilities and sleep six (bunk beds). The cost for each bunk house is \$150 per night) For additional

information, or to make your reservation, call Tom Jerow:

715-401-1578

Discovery Center Bunkhouses
14006 Discovery Lane
Manitowish Waters, WI 54545

Pre Conference Webinar

Wednesday, September 17, 2025

6:30 PM (Central Time)

Title: History of the Little Bohemian Lodge and the Dillinger Gang Shootout

Presenter: Kay Krans, Manitowish Waters Historical Society

Register Here:

https://us02web.zoom.us/join/https://us02web.zoom.us/join/register/WN_g-dV-xO4S9SORrtSOuYzTQ

2025 FHAW Fall Conference October 3-4, 2025
Manitowish Waters, Wisconsin

Schedule at a Glance

Thursday, October 2, 2025

1:00 PM — Board Meeting — North Lakeland Discovery Center,
Conference Room, Discovery Lane, Manitowish Waters, WI 54545

5:30 PM — Dinner at Meggie's, 6101 County Hwy W, Manitowish Waters, WI 54545 (Dutch treat)

Friday, October 3, 2025 – North Lakeland Discovery Center, 14006
Discovery Lane, Manitowish Waters, WI 54545

8:30 AM Registration & Check-in. Coffee & light snacks.

9:00 AM Welcome and Orientation to the tours. (Note: we will be traveling by carpool to various locations. All are within a few miles of the Discovery Center.)

- Tour the site of one of the earliest Ranger Stations on the NHAL State Forest. Visit an original surveyor's blaze at a section corner along the lakeshore.
- Historic Rest Lake Dam
- WinMan Recreational Trails: Explore some historical aspects of this modern recreational trail system

Lunch

- Papoose Creek State Natural Area Tour
- Manoomin (wild rice) stop at Papoose Creek
- Camp Mercer CCC

4:30 PM return to the North Lakeland Discovery Center

Friday, October 3, 2025 Conference Banquet Little Bohemia Lodge,
142 US-51, Manitowish Waters, WI 54545

6:00 PM Dinner followed with keynote speaker, John Bates, *The State of Old Growth Forest Today*. Dinner choices: chicken marsala or Walleye

Saturday, October 4, 2025 - North Lakeland Discovery Center, 14006
Discovery Lane, Manitowish Waters, WI 54545

8:30 AM Check-in & Registration. Coffee & Snacks

9:00 AM — Welcome Beth Feind - WDNR/NHAL Property Manager

- Historical Overview of the Northern American Legion State Forest - Jim Bokern
- Break
- Present Day Forestry & Recreation on the Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest - Tom Shockley, WDNR

Noon —Lunch and General Membership Meeting

- Historic State House Lake YCCC Camp & the beginnings and future home of the Northwoods Forest History Experience - More than a museum! On-site with Kay Krans
- The Best Dam Builder in the Chippewa River Watershed The story of the rest lake logging dam and the journey to downstream saw mills. - John Berg, Forest History Association of Wisconsin.

3:00 PM —Closing Remark