

The MWHS held its first set of focus groups with the community for the purpose of gaining input for our programming. We had 15 total participants, with one session at Koller Memorial Library and one at WinMan. Thank you to all who participated!

We focused on three areas, asking participants to share their favorite parts of MW history, areas they wanted to learn more about, and where the MWHS should focus its efforts in the next three to five years. For purposes of this report, we have combined the first two areas. Finally, this report does not provide every idea expressed but, rather, general themes we heard. However, we have retained all ideas for our files.

Favorite Parts of MW History/Learn More About

There continues to be a lot of interest in MW's early history, including the first resorts, transportation (rail and our airport), and how the town was settled. Participants want to know what early life looked like and how people survived the winters!

There is an interest in historical recreation like fishing, the guides, the fish hatchery and what early boating looked like. And how about trapping camps? Speaking of camps, what about our early logging camps and the history of forest fires in the area? People want to know more about our forest management program and the Statehouse Youth Conservation Corps. Finally, there is a curiosity about our wild rice!

MWHS Focus in the Next Three to Five Years

So, how should we focus our efforts? We received great counsel on continuing to follow our passions, to maintain our identity, to not dilute our mission, and to continue to collaborate with other organizations and communities. We were also advised to develop our bench, to embrace new media and technology, and to manage our overhead.

We heard we need to share more on the history of our lakes, the implications of broader historical events (like the Great Depression), to seek out more family stories while we still can (including through advertising), and to continue outdoor events. And, we were encouraged to continue to research and document our rich history.

Conclusion

Again, this report does not provide every idea expressed but the themes we heard. Thanks, again, to all participants. We appreciate your candor and willingness to share. We feel challenged by your input, and we will take it to heart. We look forward to incorporating your input into our planning and programming.

Respectfully, Jim Bokern and Frank DiLeonardi