

2025 MWHS Accomplishments

The Manitowish Waters Historical Society continued to advance its mission in 2025: 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.

Membership

MWHS membership added 45 new members to a new net membership of 238, up from 233, with 54 lifetime members.

Leadership

Moved into our second phase of strategic planning with our outside advisor. We are currently working on implementing our three strategic objectives during this phase: to increase awareness of current MWHS distribution channels through promotion and social media, to identify administrative tasks to outsource to contractors, and to support the development and opening of the Northwoods Forest History Experience (NFHE): More Than a Museum.

Hosted our annual Leaders of Historical Preservation with appetizers and refreshments, recognizing and honoring John Hanson, Ann Barber Kaltoven and George LaPorte.

Jim Bokern and Frank DiLeonardi attended the Wisconsin State Historical Conference in October.

Fundraising

In a joint effort with the North Lakeland Discovery, we have raised more than \$500,000 over the last two years with about half that amount in 2024 with nearly 200 total donors (our goal) for the NFHE.

Dues, Donations, Tour Revenue

Accepted dues, donations and tour revenue of \$40,522, with \$9,180 from donations earmarked for the NFHE.

YouTube Videos, Podcasts, Archives and Facebook

Grew from 605 in 2024 to 661 YouTube subscribers in 2025

Dropped from 35,900 in 2024 to 8,189 YouTube views in 2025

Dropped from 3,000 hours in 2024 to 850 hours watched in 2025

Added 19 new YouTube videos or podcasts to the MWHS Channel

- 9 historic videos
- 2 videos produced jointly with WJFW Channel 12
- 3 videos from Zoom presentations
- 2 oral histories
- 3 podcasts

Online collection searches for 2025: 9,144 (7,006 in 2024)

New catalog records archived: 255 (280 in 2024)

New catalog images archived: 1,387 (1,342 in 2024)

New catalog media links in records: 495 (486 in 2024)

Update or corrected archival records: 688 (699 in 2024)

Contracted with 2 independent contractors to build our digital archives

MWHS Facebook page grew by 122 followers for a total of 2,180 followers

Partnerships/Collaborations

Northwoods Forest History Experience: More Than a Museum

Directed the moving and renovating of the CCC barracks to house the NFHE

Began the development and installation of 6 exhibits and an outdoor activity area, including detailed curriculum options

Camp Mercer

Cleared trails and added cranberry mulch to the entrance to Camp Mercer with support of the Iron County Outdoor Recreational Enthusiasts (ICORE) and MWHS volunteers

Published Archeological Report on Camp Mercer that may facilitate a National Register of Historic Places application

Helped place new DNR signs at Camp Mercer to educate the public on protecting cultural resources and artifacts

Presentations/Outreach

See next page

| Date | Location | Speaker | Subject | # of Attendees | Notes |
|--------|-------------------------|----------|--|----------------|---------------------------------------|
| 11-Jan | Howling Dog | Jim | Loveless | 30 | |
| 22-Jan | White Oak | Jim | Rest Lake Dam | 60 | paid lunch program |
| 11-Feb | Zoom | Jim | Culturally Modified Trees | 21 | |
| 12-Feb | White Oak | Jim | Indigenous People | 25 | cocktail hour presentation |
| 12-Feb | Eagle River | Jim | Moonshining | 22 | |
| 18-Feb | Zoom | Kay | Jim Plunkett, Forestry and the 10th Engineers of WWI | 27 | for Forest History Association of Wis |
| 22-Feb | Marathon County | Jim | Moonshining | 65 | for Marathon Cty Historical Society |
| 23-Feb | MW Community Church | Jim | Moonshining | 25 | |
| 15-Apr | North Lakeland School | Jim | Paul Revere | 80 | |
| 22-Apr | Zoom | Jim | Rest Lake Dam | 45 | |
| 7-May | North Lakeland School | Jim, Kay | Dillinger Pontoon Tours | 14 | Two tours |
| 9-May | Nicolet College | Kay | Learning in Retirement Dillinger Weekend | 30 | |
| May 28 | MAC | Jim | NHAL Centennial | 60 | |
| 3-Jun | NLDC | Multiple | Leaders of Historical Preservation | 40 | |
| 3-Jun | Kayak group | Jim | Round Lake to Big Lake Tour | 25 | |
| 5-Jun | Lakes | Jim | Alder and Wild Rice Pontoon Tours | 0 | Cancelled |
| 6-Jun | Turtle Flambeau Flowage | Jim | Natural Resource Foundation-Eagle Banding | 30 | |
| 7-Jun | Crystal Lake | Jim, Kay | WDNR NHAL Forest Centennial celebration | 65 | |
| 12-Jun | Meggie's | Jim | History of Tower Tea Room property | 40 | |
| 13-Jun | Lakes | Kay | Dillinger Pontoon Tours | 0 | Rain out; rescheduled for June 26 |
| 19-Jun | Some Nerve | Jim | Moonshining | 33 | |
| 20-Jun | Lakes | Kay | Clear, Fawn and Stone Lake Pontoon Tours | 14 | Two tours |
| 20-Jun | Lakes | Kay | Manitowish and Little Star Lake Pontoon Tour | 8 | |
| 25-Jun | NLDC | Kay | YCC Tour for NLDC Staff | 7 | |
| 25-Jun | White Oak | Jim | NHAL Centennial | 30 | cocktail hour presentation |
| 26-Jun | Pub Crawl | Jim | History of various bars | 15 | |
| 26-Jun | Lakes | Kay | Dillinger Pontoon Tour | 9 | |
| 26-Jun | BJ Community Center | Kay | Francis Badger | 20 | |
| 29-Jun | MW Community Church | Jim | NHAL Centennial | 24 | |
| 4-Jul | Koller Park | Multiple | America250 Booth | 85 | |
| 8-Jul | Lakes | Kay | Manitou Island Pontoon Tour | 9 | |
| 9-Jul | White Oak | Kay | Resorts | 115 | |
| 11-Jul | Lakes | Kay | Crime Pontoon Tour | 9 | |
| 15-Jul | Lakes | Jim | Spider and Island Lake Pontoon Tours | 9 | |
| 17-Jul | Winchester Library | Jim, Sam | WinMan | 35 | |
| 18-Jul | Lakes | Kay | Dillinger Pontoon Tours | 18 | Two tours |
| 23-Jul | Turtle Flambeau Flowage | Jim | Pontoon Tour | 11 | For Natural Resources Foundation |
| 24-Jul | Turtle Flambeau Flowage | Jim | Pontoon Tour | 8 | For Natural Resources Foundation |
| 24-Jul | BJ Community Center | Jim | Manoomin Presentation | 38 | |
| 25-Jul | Lakes | Jim | Pontoon Tour and Shore Lunch | 9 | |
| 29-Jul | Turtle Flambeau Flowage | Jim | Pontoon Tour | 6 | Rescheduled from 7/23 due to rain |
| 31-Jul | Camp Mercer | Jim | Hiking Tour | 0 | Rain out |
| 7-Aug | Lakes | Jim | Pontoon Tour and Shore Lunch | 9 | Private event |
| 8-Aug | Schroeder Home | Kay | Private Dillinger Presentation | 10 | |
| 13-Aug | White Oak | Kay | Skiing Skeeters | 72 | |
| 14-Aug | Lakes | Kay | Crime Pontoon Tours | 20 | Two tours |
| 19-Aug | Big Lake | Kay | Pontoon Tour | 10 | |
| 20-Aug | Land O Lakes Library | Kay | Shackers | 45 | |

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|--------------|---------------------|-----|--|-------------|--------------------------------------|
| 22-Aug | Lakes | Kay | Dillinger Pontoon Tours | 20 | Two tours |
| 27-Aug | Mercer | Jim | Bike Trail Tour | 12 | |
| 9-Sep | Lakes | Kay | Dillinger Pontoon Tours | 20 | Two tours |
| 17-Sep | Zoom | Kay | Dillinger | 64 | For Forest History Assn of Wisconsin |
| 30-Sep | Northwoods | Jim | Driving Tour | 5 | |
| 2-Oct | County Highway M | Jim | Landmark Pines Billboard | 18 | |
| 2-Oct | Northwoods | Jim | NHAL Centennial | 50 | For DNR |
| 3-Oct | MW Area | Jim | Driving Tour | 24 | For Forest History Assn of Wisconsin |
| 4-Oct | NLDC | Jim | Northern Highland American Legion State Forest | 28 | For Forest History Assn of Wisconsin |
| 4-Oct | NLDC | Kay | YCC and Northwoods Forest History Experience | 25 | For Forest History Assn of Wisconsin |
| 8-Oct | Blue Bayou | Jim | History of Blue Bayou Property | 55 | |
| 10-Oct | Lakes | Kay | Dillinger Pontoon Tours | 14 | Two tours |
| 10-Oct | Northwoods | Jim | Driving Tour | 22 | For DNR |
| 20-Oct | Marshfield | Jim | Moonshining | 18 | Marshfield Area Retired Educators |
| 23-Oct | White Oak | Kay | Shackers | 57 | |
| 26-Oct | MW Community Church | Kay | Halloween, Mysteries and Ghosts | 29 | |
| 28-Oct | Nicolet College | Kay | Gangsters of the Northwoods | 80 | |
| 9-Dec | Zoom | Jim | Northern Highland American Legion State Forest | 27 | |
| 13-Dec | Some Nerve | Jim | History of Manitowish Waters | 43 | |
| TOTAL | | | | 1993 | |

Other Outreach

Created 3 MWHS newsletters with articles and images

Presented to Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest leadership on management of important cultural resources and sites

Interviewed at Trout Lake Station regarding wild rice in support of Sagen Lily Quale, UW-Madison Agroecology Masters Student, Indigenous Correspondents Program and wild rice research

Presented and drove a pontoon boat for WI DNR/Natural Resource Foundation eagle banding and fish tagging tour on the Turtle Flambeau Flowage

Hosted Northern Wisconsin Heritage Council at Koller Library, November 2024

Accepted 6 boxes of archives from the Paul Brenner collection being evaluated and scanned by the Upper Flambeau River Research Group

Helped Price County Historical Society fund digitizing a rare map of the Chippewa River watershed

Collaborated with the UW Cartography Lab on creating a unique map illustrating Wisconsin public forests

Archeological Work

Contracted an archeologist to record 1 new Manitowish Waters site on the Archeologic Site Index

Assisted DNR foresters in locating logging camps, ensuring site preservation from during timber harvest

Conducted field work and produced a preliminary report on potential moonshine cache sites in Iron and Sawyer counties

Collaborated with a drone operator on videoing 4 original lookout tower views in the Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest

Signs

Completed the Forest History Association of Wisconsin with the Landmark Pines sign development on County Highway M

Continued development on a new concept of small signs with QR codes to replace large and expensive signage that has historically been used on interpretive trails and destinations

Created historic signage and movie with Win-Man Trails regarding Win-Man and MWHS 2026 historic signage project

Collaborated by presenting at/to these other businesses, community groups, historical societies, governments, and libraries not previously listed above:

- Wisconsin Archeological Society
- Pea Patch
- Ye Olde Shillelagh's
- Manny's
- Greer's Pier
- Office of the State Archaeologists
- George Brown Jr. Museum and Cultural Center in Lac du Flambeau
- Eagle River Historical Society
- Manitowish Waters Visitors Bureau
- Lac du Flambeau Tribal Historic Preservation Office
- Manitowish Waters Alliance Foundation
- North Lakeland Elementary School
- Boulder Junction Historical Society
- Presque Isle Heritage Society
- Pukall Lumber
- Manitowish Waters Skiing Skeeters
- Camp Jorn
- Wreaths Across America

