

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 Kaltufen 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	

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

