

Military Hill Fire Tower

The Military Hill Fire Lookout Tower served as a central link in the fire detection system. Constructed on the highest points on the landscape, fire lookout towers were distributed to form a network from which the entire landscape could be kept under surveillance. The towers were critical in the early detection of fire outbreaks. During daylight hours from May through September, trained fire spotters kept constant watch over the surrounding area from the cab at the top of the tower. They reported “smokes” by telephone to a central station that directed the fire suppression effort.

The Military Hill Fire Lookout Tower is one of the last remaining structures associated with the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest. The CCC provided much of the physical labor that was associated with fire protection in these forests during this period. Camp enrollees also manned the tower and fought fires in the area.

The tower is a galvanized steel structure resting on four concrete piers. An interior stairway rises through the center of the tower to the cab at the top. Prefabricated by the Aermotor Company, it was constructed in 1936 of heavy galvanized angle iron on a 23-foot by 23-foot base. It is about 120 feet tall with a 6-foot by 6-foot look-out room on top. The Military Hill Tower was last used for wild fire suppression in 1960.



In 1978, the Forest Service was approached by Lowell Buell who asked to purchase the tower. Following the purchase, he donated the tower to the Town of Phelps with the hope it would be managed as a historic site. The Town of Phelps now owns this property and tower and is developing a plan to once again make the tower accessible to the public.

Directions: To get to the tower, follow State Highway 17 north of Phelps about ¼ mile. Turn left onto Tower Road immediately past the cemetery. There is a gate 100 yards down Tower Road, from which the tower can be seen. Beneath the tower is a secluded woodland area that is ideal for family picnics and wildlife viewing.

Anvil Lake Campground Shelter

The Anvil Lake Campground Shelter was built in the rustic style in 1936 by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Company 641 located at Camp Ninemile and by Camp Imogene, a camp for the unemployed.

Constructed primarily of tamarack logs, at one time, it had cedar shake shingles and steps of stone leading to the beach. The rock was hauled from the Phelps Area as this was a good source of rock for rubble work. While cutting the right-of-way for what is now Highway 70, enough tamarack logs were obtained for the Anvil Lake Campgrounds. About a dozen large pine logs left from the pine days were used to make the shake shingles, for both Anvil and Franklin Campgrounds. It was originally built to serve as a bathhouse and a picnic shelter.

Note the skills needed to construct the structure, in the log work, wrought iron door hinges, and the stone fireplace. An amphitheater, which included a stone stage and log seats, (now gone) was located 150 feet south of the shelter. The shelter was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1996. The ongoing maintenance at this historic structure is a fine example of your tax dollars at work, as well as the partnership the US Forest Service had with the Wisconsin Conservation Corps.

Directions: From Eagle River, Drive east 8 miles on Highway 70 to Military Road (FR 2178). Turn right (south) and drive 1.5 miles to the parking lot on the east side of the road. Follow the hiking trail to the shelter.



Franklin Lake Campground

The development of the Franklin Lake Campground was a joint venture; the cooperative efforts of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), the Works Progress Administration (WPA), and the U.S. Forest Service. The landscape, structural, and architectural designs were developed by Forest Service architects and engineers. CCC enrollees from Camp Ninemile (641st Company, Vilas County, Wisconsin) worked in cooperation with the Forest Service in developing the landscape, roads, trails and campsites. Construction of the buildings was performed by enrollees from a Vilas County (Wisconsin) WPA War-Vet work camp; enrollees were all World War I veterans.



The buildings were constructed from both standard and original Region 9 Forest Service plans and fit stylistically within the Rustic architectural theme. The largest and most stylistically-sophisticated building is the shelter and bathhouse. Built into a hillside slope, it features a fieldstone foundation, a fieldstone chimney, projecting log purlins, and saddle-notched log construction. The other buildings feature some or all of these elements on a smaller scale. The Comfort Stations are constructed of fieldstone with log construction only in the gable ends. The Well House and the Reservoir Building share the same size and scale but the walls are built entirely of stone. The remaining buildings are of log construction, two of which are further

elaborated by fieldstone elements. All are distinctive if somewhat modest examples. The Franklin Lake Campground buildings are unchanged from their 1936 appearance with the exception of routine maintenance. Due to their excellent integrity, variations in the use of materials, and architectural cohesiveness, the buildings uniquely represent the adaptation of the Rustic style for the rather utilitarian buildings of the United States Forest Service.

Franklin Lake Campground Historic District was listed on National Register of Historic Places and the State Register of Historic Places in 1988.

Directions: From Eagle River, Drive east 8 miles on Highway 70 to Military Road (FR2178). Turn right (south) and drive 2.8 miles to FR 2181. Turn left (east) and drive 4.6 miles to the campground.

Bailey Lake Plantation

The Anniversary Plantation (as it was originally named) is about 370 acres of red pine located in the Bailey Lake Area of the Eagle River-Florence Ranger District.

It was originally a northern hardwood forest which was clearcut and subsequently burned in 1926. Later, the area burned repeatedly by fires that were started by the logging railroad that ran through the southern portion of the area until 1931-1932. The frequent burning killed most woody plants and resulted in a large grassy opening.



In 1933, the area was planted to red pine and Norway spruce, but the drought and fires during 1936 resulted in a failure. It was replanted during the fall of 1937 and spring of 1938 with red pine stock from the Chippewa National Forest by members of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). The planting was successful except for small areas of frost kill.

The Bailey Lake Plantation has been thinned several times since then but you can still see some of the original plantings and the furrows they were planted in.

Directions: From the intersection of highways 45 and 32 southeast of Three Lakes drive 4.3 miles east on Highway 32 to Military Rd. (FR2178). Turn left (east) and go 1.7 miles to Sheltered Valley Road (FR 2182). Turn right (east) and go east 2 miles to FR 3861B. Turn left into parking area. Park at the Bailey Lake Equestrian Trail parking area and take the path north which goes through the plantation.

Lost Lake Organizational Camp

The Lost Lake Organizational Camp was constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Company 651, Long Lake between the spring of 1938 and the spring of 1939. It is believed that the construction of the stone chimneys was done by masons employed through the Works Progress Administration (WPA). As an organizational camp, Lost Lake Camp was initially developed to accommodate organizational use by organizations such as scouting groups, church organizations, and the like. Since 1996, the Camp has been operated by a permittee who rents the cabins to individuals, families and groups.



The Lost Lake Organizational Camp is only one type of recreational facility that was developed by the U.S. Forest Service. The agency built a total of 44 organizational camps during the Depression Era after it established the Division of Recreation and Land in 1935. The Lost Lake Organizational Camp is an early example of this type of property. It is the only example of an Organizational Camp on the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest and in the State of Wisconsin. The buildings and their arrangement follow the Rustic Style of architecture which was used heavily during the Depression Era.



Characteristics exhibited at Lost Lake

Organizational Camp are the low massing of building forms, broad overhanging roofs, rough cut board and batten siding, and natural colors. Building settings are non-intrusive, blending in with the natural landscape among the trees and vegetation.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 allowed the Forest Service to restore the Lost Lake Organization Camp and make it available once again to the public.

When visiting the camp please be respectful of the campers.

Directions: From Florence, take Highway 70 west for 17 miles to the intersection with Dream Lake Road (FR 2450). Turn left (south) on FR 2450 and drive 1 mile to Chipmunk Rapids Road (FR 2156). Continue straight 3.2 miles on FR 2156 to the cabins.