

Fifield Fire Lookout Tower

In 1932, building plan #440 was used by the Wisconsin Conservation Commission to begin construction of the Fifield Fire Lookout Tower. It was completed by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in 1934. It was a standard tower type: A steel frame standing 100 feet high with a 7-foot square cab which had a wooden floor, windows and a pyramid-shaped steel roof. Lookouts accessed the cab by climbing an exterior ladder surrounded by a protective cage.

The tower cabin facilities usually included a privy, combination garage and woodshed, and well. This photo shows the Fifield tower, cabin and garage as they appeared in May of 1940



The Fifield Fire Lookout Tower was manned by personnel of CCC Company 642 of Camp Riley Creek (F-3) for a significant period of time between at least 1935 and 1941. Adjacent to the camp was the Riley Creek Guard Station which coordinated the camp's firefighting activities and stored and repaired firefighting equipment. The fire tower communicated with the dispatcher located at the guard station as well as with other fire towers in the area and the Park Falls Ranger Station.

A significant piece of history sets this fire tower apart from others: Betty Stein Murnik became a

lookout at Fifield Fire Tower during World War II -making her the first woman fire tower lookout in Wisconsin. More information about Betty and other Stein family lookouts can be viewed among the 3 interpretive signs you'll find at this site.

Directions: The Fifield Fire Lookout Tower is located 5 miles east of Fifield on State HWY 70.

A trail from the Wintergreen Parking Lot (crossing an ATV Trail) follows the original trail up to the tower allowing the public to hike to the tower. However, there is no public access to climb it.

MONDEAUX DAM HISTORIC DISTRICT

As the forest experienced a rising number of visitors by the 1930's, the CCC initially erected simple and inexpensive recreational facilities for the Forest Service. However, the agency gradually determined that forests should be made more accessible to motorists and developed for recreational activities non-harmful to the natural setting. Through the 1930s, recreation projects gradually involved increasingly complex development. In some areas, the Forest Service developed summer and winter sports areas.



The Mondeaux Dam Recreation Area was conceived and developed as a long-term recreational facility. The development includes four campgrounds, picnic and children's play areas and a bath and club house which serves as a shelter and houses a food concession. There is also a caretaker's/concessionaire's dwelling and a garage used for tool storage and as a repair shop.

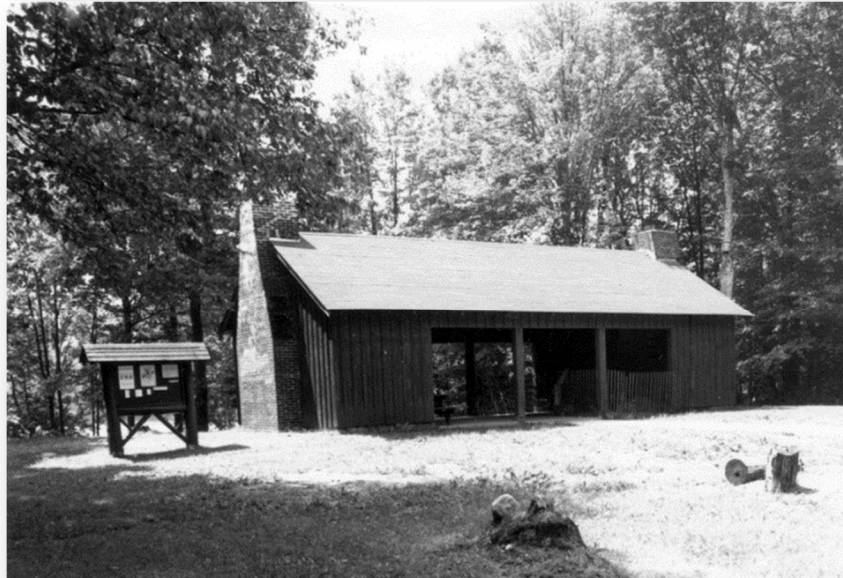
Development of the 416 acre Mondeaux Flowage and associated facilities commenced in the winter of 1936-37 and was completed two years later in the winter of 1938. The dam itself is a concrete spillway which holds a 14 foot head of water. The landscape, structural and architectural design was developed by Forest Service architects and engineers. Actual construction and landscape modifications were done by the Civilian Conservation Corps enrollees detailed from Camp Mondeaux River.

The photo to the right, taken August 16, 1938, depicts the dam with parking for a picnic unit in the background. The buildings, as well as the dam, are in excellent condition and appear almost exactly as they did when originally built. The Mondeaux Historic District, which makes up a 2.2 acre portion of the broader 6.1 acre Recreation Area, consists of the bath & clubhouse, the caretakers/concessionaire, garage/repair shop, the dam, and the landscape included within that immediate area. The Mondeaux Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1984.

DIRECTIONS: Travel 4 miles north of Medford on North 8th Street/Hwy 13. Turn left onto County Rd M and travel 7.2 miles. Turn right on to County Rd E and travel for 8.5 miles. Turn right onto Park Road and travel 1.2 miles. Turn left to stay on Park Road/ FR- 106 and travel .8 miles to the Rec Area entrance.

SPEARHEAD SHELTER

Picnicking was one of the most popular recreational uses of the northern Midwest recreational areas in the 1930s. These areas provided focal points for family and community gatherings and celebrations. While shelters erected by the CCC were often open, those in Michigan and northern Wisconsin are more closed perhaps to provide additional protection against inclement weather.



The Spearhead Shelter was erected in 1939 through a combined effort from Perkinstown Camp (F-16), Camp Mondeaux (F-18), and workers from the Works Progress Administration (WPA). It was in the same project series as the dam and flowage at the Mondeaux Dam Recreation Area in 1937 and 1938.

The building follows Forest Service standard plan U-30, a design for a picnic shelter approved in September, 1937. This particular example exhibits considerable refinement of the roughly shaped materials used in early log bathhouses and shelters in the Wisconsin National Forests. The framing of this shelter is primarily of finished lumber instead of lumber and timber. The brick chimneys lack the roughness of the stone used in many of the earlier examples. The shelter is the only example of the more refined late Rustic Style picnic shelter within the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest.

DIRECTIONS: Travel 4 miles north of Medford on Highway 13. Turn left (west) onto CR-M and travel 7.2 miles. Turn right (north) onto CR-E and travel 8.5 miles, then turn right (east) onto FR1563/Park Road and continue for about 1.2 miles. Turn right (east) onto Forest Road 106/Campers Drive and look for the campground entrance sign at the top of the hill. The picnic grounds and shelter sit on the south side of this small peninsula within the Spearhead Point Picnic and Campgrounds. The access drive to the picnic and camp grounds forms a loop around the peninsula. Parking is east of the building.

Red Pine Plantation P-15

When the Chequamegon and Nicolet Forests were created in 1933, the dire need for reforestation was obvious. Forest areas across the Great Lakes Region had been clear-cut leaving them void of mature trees that would allow for natural reforestation. Repeated burns depleted the soil of nutrients necessary for seeds to grow. Seed sowing efforts proved to be unsuccessful in large scale reforestation programs. The resolution to this dilemma was artificially raised seedlings – millions of them!



Nurseries were established across the Great Lakes Region and seedlings were shipped to nearby CCC camps. Locally, the Perkinstown Camp (F-16) and Mondeaux Camp (F-18) received seedlings from nurseries in Hayward and Butternut. Thousands of seedlings were planted for days on end as work crew supervisors logged accomplishments and weather conditions. Over the years, the plantations were inspected to determine survival and growth rates. Drought, frost damage, and deer and rabbit browsing sometimes called for 2 or 3 replantings of these stands.

The initial planting of Plantation P-15 took place between September 8th and October 29th of 1937 by CCC Company 1692 of Perkinstown Camp. Planting records on file at the Medford Ranger Station reflect that 90,484 Red Pine seedlings supplied by the Butternut nursery were planted using the “Inverted V” planting method. An inspection was made of the pine in the SE ¼ of Section 6-T31N-R1W on May 29, 1940. The Perkinstown Camp Superintendent noted “This plantation at first appeared to be a failure largely due to rabbit damage. Further investigation shows excellent survival and fair growth. A tally of 125 trees taken at random showed 80% survival.” Fill-in planting took place later that fall.

Today, the pine in the stand along Forest Road 116 (Perkinstown Avenue) reach for the sky in testimony to the hard efforts of the CCC boys who did their part in bringing this barren land back to life.

Directions: Travel 4 miles north of Medford on Highway 13. Turn left (west) on CR-M and proceed for 8.2 miles. Turn Left onto Division Drive (FR 116) and travel 1 mile. Take the first right onto Perkinstown Avenue (continuation of FR 113) and travel 2.2 miles. Pull carefully to the shoulder of the road near Red Pine Drive.

Medford Administrative Site (Luepke Way)

The newly-developed Nicolet National Forest incorporated the Medford Ranger District into its boundaries in 1932. It was transferred to the Chequamegon National Forest in 1934. Between 1934 and 1936, the CCC crew stationed at Camp Perkinstown constructed the Medford Administrative site. The five buildings included an office, Ranger's Dwelling, garage, oil house and a warehouse. The site officially became recognized as the Medford Ranger District in 1939.



The site was built in accordance with standard plans for Forest Service ranger district administrative sites. The Medford site is very rare in the authenticity of its buildings. These Depression Era buildings have not seen any change in the style since 1946. The photo above depicts the Medford Administrative Site as it appeared July 22, 1935.

All but the Ranger Dwelling can be seen to this day. In 1997, the house was sold to a community member in Medford and removed from this site to its new home across town. The Ranger's garage has seen the wear of the years and is intended to be removed. The other three buildings have had continuous use since they were constructed. The former office now serves as a Forest Service employee bunkhouse, the oil house is used to store herbicide used in a program controlling invasive species in the area, and the warehouse is used for storing Forest Service vehicles and equipment.

Directions: From the intersection of Highways 13 and 64 in Medford, go west on Highway 64/Broadway Avenue .8 miles. Immediately after crossing the bridge over the Black River, turn right onto Luepke Way and travel ½ city blocks. The former Medford Administrative site is on the left and ample parking is along the River Walk on the right.