

CCC Tour - Washburn Ranger District

Mount Valhalla Recreation Area

Mount Valhalla has a rich history and was developed as a Winter Sports Complex in the early 1930's. The complex consisted of ski hills, ski jumps, a bobsled run and numerous buildings. The U.S. Ski Association had a special use permit for the area from the late 1950's until 1969. The Association used the area as an alternate site to practice for Olympic ski competitions. The parking lots were often full of spectators out to watch the ski jumping competitions and practices.



US Ski team early 1960's



In the early 1970's, after the era of ski jumping declined, the Forest Service developed 20 miles of snowmobile trails with the Valhalla Chalet as the hub. On January 13, 1974, the chalet was destroyed by fire. A new chalet was rebuilt by volunteers later that year for a total of \$2,145.39. The logs came off the Forest and were sawed free of charge by local lumber mills. The largest expenses were the cement floor and the fireplace.

In 1976, the first two loops of Valkyrie cross-country ski trails were built. They receive an estimated use of over 8,000 skiers per season. In 1977 and 1978 more ski trails were built, expanding the

system to 17 miles.

Significant landscape features associated with Depression Era development are still present. The foundation of at least one building and fireplace is visible. The only time the area was in disuse was during World War II. Today, Valhalla is still a popular winter sports area with snowmobile trails, ski trails, a sledding hill, the chalet, and a warming room for skiers. In the summer, Valhalla is a hub for ATV users and is often utilized for hiking and mountain biking.

The recreation site is a fee area and is located in the Bayfield Peninsula off of County Highway C between Washburn and Cornucopia, WI.

Directions: Follow County Highway C (north) out of Washburn and drive 8.5 miles the trail head.

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Old Maid Pine Plantation

During the spring of 1933, the Old Maid Plantation (as it was originally named) consisting of 160 acres was planted to red and jack pine. The planting stock was secured from the Cass Lake Nursery and the seedlings were transported by a 1 ½ ton stake body Ford truck for a cost of \$26.03 (which includes salary/ expenses of two men and gasoline!).

The summary of the cost for the entire plantation including transportation, ground preparation, planting, supervision, mess, and equipment was a mere \$512.47 or \$3.20 an acre. It was noted that “mess” was low due to the large crew being fed at Camp Brinks. A total of 252 meals were served during the plantation period at an average cost of 23 cents per meal.



The plantation was monitored for seedling survival and, in 1937, the plantation was spot replanted with some additional red pine. The plantation has been thinned several times since, but you can still see some of the original plantings and the furrows they were planted in.

The Old Maid plantation is located in the Bayfield Peninsula off of County Highway C between Washburn and Cornucopia, WI.

Directions: Follow County Highway C (north) out of Washburn; turn left on Forest Road 236; the plantation is approximately 3 miles on the right or north side of the road where it is marked with a rock monument.

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Brinks CCC Camp

In 1933, Camp Brinks was one of the first companies formed at Fort Sheridan Illinois, to be sent north into the 640th Company of the CCC. Camp Brinks may justly claim to be one of the oldest units in the state of Wisconsin!

With an average of 190 men (mainly from Milwaukee) at Brinks, certain pioneering hardships were encountered in the early months. The enrollees were housed in 6 of the long 40- man tents and ate regularly from their mess kits. Work at the camp in those early days was varied but road construction and tree planting were the major projects in the summer and fall of 1933.



During a period of 18 months spent by 640th Co. at Camp Brinks, they planted 4703 acres of land, constructed 20 miles of telephone lines, completed 512 acres of timber stand improvement, made 44 miles of FS truck trails, and planted 144,500 fish in area lakes.

Between 1933 and 1937, Camp Brinks moved multiple times (mostly for winter) and joined other companies. The company spent the winter at Camp Morse, Camp Drummond on Pigeon Lake, Camp Taylor near Grandview and Camp Cable. They also moved to Camp Horseshoe located near Moquah where their projects included planting jack and red pine seedlings, fire hazard reductions, and preparation for future planting.

During the summer months of 1936 there were several severe forest fires in the region surrounding the camp. The most destructive of these fires was the Moquah fire that started near Iron River and spread rapidly into the forests of Moquah. Acts of heroism and endurance were so common during the various fires that they were passed over as merely a part of the day's work.

On May 3, 1937 the company moved back to Camp Brinks for the last time and began planting trees. They presumably stayed in this location until 1941. Unfortunately, today, numerous foundations are the only thing left of the bustling Brinks Camp. The Brinks Camp Area is mostly used today as a quiet dispersed camping spot for hunters.

Camp Brinks is located in the Bayfield Peninsula off of County Highway C between Washburn and Cornucopia, WI.

Directions: Follow County Highway C (north) out of Washburn; turn left on Forest Road 236; approximately 4 miles southeast on 236 Camp Brinks is located on the north side of the 236 just west of the intersection of Forest Road 251.

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Bass Lake or Delta CCC Camp

The Delta CCC Camp was built on the location of the historic White River Lumber camp which operated in 1899 or 1900. This lumber camp was located near Bass Lake since all of the logs from around Beaver Lake were sleigh-hauled down across Bellevue Lake and then Bass Lake to the White River for transport.

The Delta CCC Camp was built on this site in September of 1934 and operated until July, 1942. The Camp Delta crew planted a large portion of the Moquah Barrens to



jack pine in the mid 1930's.

Today, Bass Lake is a quaint recreation area that includes a small parking area, outhouse, and boat launch for Bass Lake. This small recreation area is typically used for picnicking and fishing. There are at least 16 structural features still visible today including: pits, tower footings, concrete pads, wall remnants, depressions, and an earthen platform. The concrete entry posts are the most impressive and are located at the junction CCC Camp Road and the Delta Drummond Road.

Directions: The Bass Lake recreation area is located 8 miles north of Drummond WI. From US 63 in Drummond, take Delta Drummond Road north approximately 8 miles; the recreation area is off the CCC Camp Road on the right (east) side of the road.

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Lake Owen Shelter-Bathhouse/Picnic Shelter

The Lake Owen Shelter – Bathhouse is located within a beautiful location nestled between towering pines, adjacent to the northeast shore of Lake Owen in Drummond, WI. The site consists of a CCC-era wood frame shelter, picnic area and swimming beach. The bathhouse was originally built with a sandstone fireplace and changing rooms for men and women. Due to the sandy beach and nice picnic grounds, it was a popular spot for swimming.



In 1960, significant structural improvements were made to the shelter which, unfortunately, made it ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places. However, it is still a great example of CCC handiwork.



Today, the beach area is still a local favorite spot for swimming, hiking and relaxing. There are picnic tables and a cooking fireplace inside the shelter. Another highlight at this site is the North Country National Scenic Trail, accessed from the parking area. When completed, the trail will be the longest continuous hiking trail in the United States. The trail links scenic, historic, and cultural areas across seven states allowing visitors to experience a variety of northern landscapes.

The Lake Owen recreation site is a fee area. The shelter is 3 miles from Drummond, WI.

Directions: Take North Lake Owen Drive (FR 213) south off of Highway 63; picnic area is on the right (south) side of the road.