



Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest

New Century Snapshot

UW-SP Students partner with FS to interpret Butternut-Franklin lakes Historic District trail

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Eagle River and Florence, Wis. – Archaeologists on the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest have once again turned to graduate students at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point (UWSP) to help interpret history.

The Butternut-Franklin lakes area on the Eagle River-Florence Ranger District is distinguished by its scenic beauty. Increasingly, hikers are drawn to the area and to accommodate access, the Hidden Lakes Trail was developed. The 13 mile trail circles the Butternut-Franklin lakes area and passes through numerous scenic vistas.

Though largely unknown to trail users, it also crosses through 20 archaeological sites found to represent 4,000 years of Native settlement. An archaeological phenomenon of this nature is rare and consequently it was designated the Butternut-Franklin Lakes National Register of Historic Places Archaeological District.

The need for interpreting its history became clear with National Register designation. To do so, as before, The Forest turned to UWSP for help with developing heritage interpretative media. UWSP's Dr. Brenda Lackey enthusiastically accepted the Forest's request for help and handed the task to two of her graduate students – Theresa Ford and Rainey Kreisa – both enrolled in her interpretive media course.



UW-Stevens Point graduate students Rainey Kreisa (left) and Theresa Ford hike along the Hidden Lakes Trail as it crosses the outlet of Butternut Lake.

To further ensure the Native perspective is honestly reflected in the interpretive media, the Forest approached Ms. giwewgiizhigookway Martin, Lac Vieux Desert Tribal Historic Preservation Officer to serve as project consultant.

Ford and Kreisa will complete their plan in May with plan implementation to begin in June through funding assistance provided by the Butternut-Franklin Lakes Home Owners Association. If all goes as planned, interpretive media will be fabricated and installed along the Trail this summer.

Clearly, this project will be a success, but only because of the enthusiasm and creativity of UWSP students and faculty, the willingness of the Lac Vieux Desert Band to ensure their story is told accurately and respectfully, and the generosity of the Butternut-Franklin Lakes Home Owners Association.

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