



Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest

New Century Snapshot

Forest Lodge – A Legacy in Conservation Partnerships

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Rhinelander and Park Falls, Wis. – Once upon a time, long ago, a young girl lived in a rustic cabin set among the trees in northern Wisconsin's Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest. She spent her days exploring winding pathways and peering into old pine stumps to see what lived there.

Mary Griggs Burke, the young girl, grew up spending every summer and part of some winters at Forest Lodge in Cable. Her wish to see it preserved compelled her to donate the beautiful estate and surrounding 872-acres of mature forest to the American people. Forest Lodge is a story of vision – and partnerships.

The Trust for Public Land, a national non-profit land conservation organization, led the donation's collaborative effort. In 1999, the Forest Service received the gift of Forest Lodge. The property includes over 3½ miles of undeveloped shoreline on Lake Namekagon, headwaters to the St. Croix-Namekagon National Scenic Riverway.

Mrs. Burke retains a life estate on just over 100 acres. While public use is not permitted in this area, the Forest Service and partners plan for future programs throughout the 18 historic buildings and structures. The remaining property is open for non-motorized recreation under congressionally designated direction. Also open for use is the Forest Lodge Nature Trail, managed in cooperation with the Cable Natural History Museum.



Guest house at Forest Lodge near Cable, Wis.

Photo courtesy Elizabeth Bouchard

An endowment fund will help to maintain the buildings and grounds after the life estate closes. The Forest Lodge Advisory Council, a public-private committee sponsored by The Saint Paul Foundation in St. Paul, Minn., shares in planning and will recommend endowment distributions. This past August, the Council met at the Forest Lodge estate, using its secluded retreat setting as inspiration for programs and partnerships with the community and others.

Forest Lodge inspires an appreciation of the northern forests and more. Mary Griggs Burke's generous gift lives through the beautiful estate, now listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. Future programs will highlight environmental education and the arts, conservation leadership, and historic preservation.

Who would have guessed a young girl's explorations would evolve into a public land treasure?

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