

Introducing

Tannery Shores

A HISTORIC LANDING. A CONSERVED LANDSCAPE. A NEW CREATIVE FUTURE.

A landing shaped by the tannery era

In the mid-1800s, Forest City was home to a thriving tannery industry. Hemlock bark harvested from the surrounding forests was transported by lake and river to local tanneries, where hides were processed into sole leather for markets in Boston and beyond. The property now known as Tannery Shores served as a busy shoreline landing, connecting the tannery and nearby settlements with the workers, goods, and supplies moving through the St. Croix watershed. The Alice May, pictured here around 1890, reflects a time when the region's waterways served as its primary transportation routes, linking remote communities to one another and to markets beyond the region.



Alice May circa 1890

From industry to sporting tradition

As the tannery era declined in the late 19th century, the property entered a quieter period shaped by woods work and seasonal logging. By the early to-20th century, Spednic Lake was drawing people back for a different reason: its exceptional fisheries, undeveloped shoreline, and natural beauty. Sporting camps, guides, and anglers helped build a recreation-based economy centered on access to the water.

By the 1950s and 1960s, this landing (Tannery Shores) again served as an important gateway to Spednic Lake. Generations of visitors launched boats here, began fishing trips, and formed lasting connections to the lake. Around 1960, access to the original landing changed as private development expanded along the shoreline. The nearby public landing continued to serve the region.

Why the Trust purchased it

WWLT purchased the parcel in 2022 in order to ensure that the boating landing on the site would continue to be available to the public. The acquisition permanently protected 17 acres of shoreline and forest, the historic landing site, interior roads, and the camp area. Just as importantly, it gave the Trust a rare opportunity to preserve a piece of Forest City history while creating a place where people can experience the conservation story of Spednic Lake firsthand.

Honoring the past by giving the property a future

The Tannery Shores Project is WWLT's vision for carefully restoring the property as a place of access, learning, creativity, and connection. Future use will include paddling and lake-based programs, conservation education, gatherings, seasonal stays, and partnerships that bring new people into this remarkable landscape while supporting the Trust's mission and the local economy.

A central part of that future is an annual artist residency. Tannery Shores will offer filmmakers, writers, dancers, musicians, and other artists something increasingly rare: uninterrupted time in a remote conserved landscape. The 2027 pilot residency will bring artists to Forest City for two focused weeks of site-specific creative work, collaboration, and community connection - establishing a model the Trust hopes to grow in the years ahead.

THE FOLLOWING PAGES SHOW HOW WWLT PLANS TO BRING THIS VISION TO LIFE.

Phase 1:

The Canoe House

RESTORE. CONNECT. EXPLORE.

The first phase focuses on restoring the property's boathouse and improving the surrounding grounds. Once complete, the boathouse will become the heart of Tannery Shores—a gathering place for guided paddling trips, lake tours, conservation workshops, youth activities, educational programs, volunteer events, and community celebrations.



WWLT's classic canoe collection will be relocated to the site, making it easier to offer regular on-the-water programming and introduce visitors and residents alike to the incredible vistas and natural resources of Spednic Lake and the surrounding conserved lands.

Before

After



Phase 2:

Restore the *Heart* of Tannery Shores

HISTORIC CABINS. NEW MEMORIES.

The current vision is to restore two historic cabins to preserve the sporting camp heritage and create welcoming spaces for gathering, learning, and connections.

The Cottage will become an intimate retreat designed for artists, families, or conservation professionals seeking a quiet place to connect with nature. Renovations will include a welcoming living area, a compact kitchen, and a wood stove, creating a self-sufficient cabin that is both comfortable and timeless. Every detail will reflect the warmth and simplicity of a traditional Maine camp while offering the quality and amenities today's visitors expect.

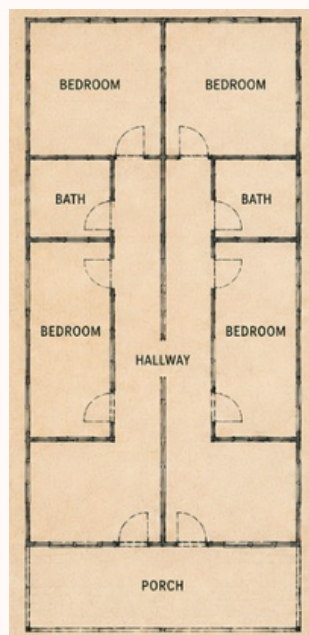
Before



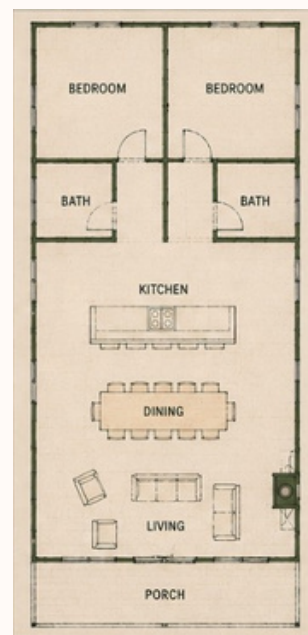
After



The Bunkhouse will be transformed into a flexible space designed for creatives, families, small groups, conservation partners, board retreats, and visiting organizations. The floorplan will be thoughtfully reconfigured by reducing bedrooms to create generous space for a full kitchen, large dining table, and an aesthetic wood stove. The space will encourage conversation and community while maintaining the feel of a classic Maine sporting camp.



Before



After



Woodie Wheaton
LAND TRUST

Donate Today

Every gift brings us closer to restoring these cabins and creating unforgettable experiences for generations to come.

Phase 3:

Looking Ahead



The current vision for the final phase is to replace the property's structurally unsafe third cabin with a flexible creative and community space. A large gathering area and bunk room would support artist residencies, dance and music, workshops, and creative collaboration. During other parts of the year, the space could welcome youth groups, conservation partners, and community organizations for overnight programs, environmental education, and outdoor recreation. This vision would make Tannery Shores a place where creativity, conservation, education, and community come together.



OUR VISION IS A PLACE WHERE NATURE, COMMUNITY,
AND CONSERVATION COME TOGETHER.

A SUSTAINABLE INVESTMENT

The estimated investment to complete all three phases is **approximately \$800,000**, including renovations, furnishings, infrastructure improvements, staff time, and the establishment of a long-term stewardship endowment.

That endowment is central to the project's success. Investment earnings will help fund routine maintenance and operating expenses, ensuring that income and program revenue can be reinvested into conservation, stewardship, educational programming, and future improvements rather than ongoing maintenance costs.

The WWLT is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, and all donations are tax-deductible. **The Tannery Shores Project is only possible through the generosity of individuals, businesses, foundations, and community partners who believe in preserving this special place for future generations.**

Current Structure



Future Vision

