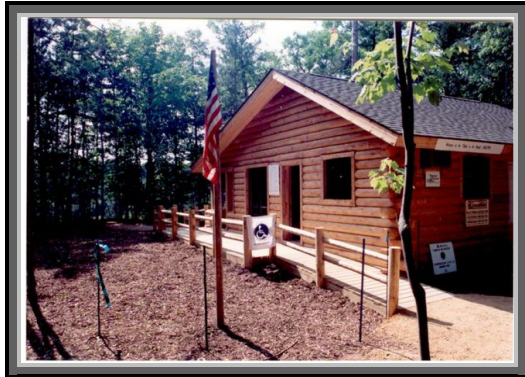


New Horizons Un-Limited

Serving Our Community Members with Disabilities Since 1994

Accessible Cabins Openings and Dedications Wisconsin State Parks

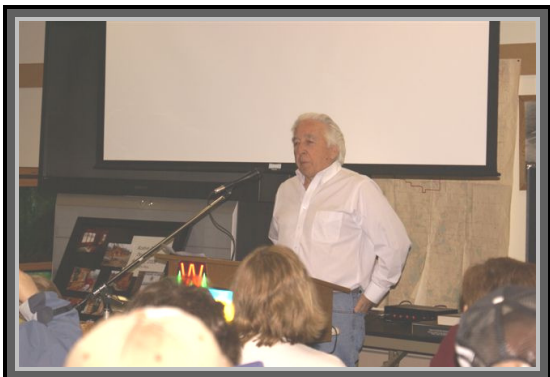


Mirror Lake State Park Accessible Cabin - 1991

In 1990, Arthur Miller, founder of New Horizons Un-Limited, became involved with the design of the first accessible cabin for people with disabilities for the Wisconsin State Parks at Mirror Lake State Park campground in the Wisconsin Dells area. Looking back to this time, he remembers, "We believed this was only the beginning and that five more should be built throughout the state." Constructed by the Telephone Pioneers of America, volunteers for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, this first project became the road map for future cabins. The cabin was built through the contributions of design, materials, furnishings, and volunteer labor provided by the Pioneers, the local Friends of State parks group and other community volunteers.

It was while involved on this first cabin Art Miller formed the idea for New Horizons Un-Limited, a non-profit organization for people with disabilities. He believed if people with disabilities were to be included in access to life opportunities, they needed to form a group that acting together, they could impact their collective futures. Three more cabins followed built by the Telephone Pioneers using the original design. Then in 2001, the State of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Accessibility Coordinator, Dotti Krieger, approached Art Miller to assist in standardizing the accessibility concept of the plans for the DNR's new "Cabin in the Woods" initiative. Through collaboration with the DNR, New Horizons Un-Limited, Miller Engineering Information Technologies Group and Strass-Maguire & Associates architects, they set forth a design directive for future Wisconsin state park accessible cabins. In 2004, the 5th accessible cabin, developed from these concept plans, was built at High Cliff State Park near Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. "The history of the Cabin in the Woods program is a tribute to the people of Wisconsin," Krieger said.

These initial cabins inspired the Friends Group of the J.M. Kohler-Terry Andrae State Parks near Sheboygan and the Kiwanis Club of Westosha-Salem for the Richard Bong State Recreation Area near Burlington, Wisconsin. In 2006, the groups approached the design collaboration team for assistance on their respective 6th and 7th cabins for the Wisconsin State Parks. In April 2008, New Horizons Un-Limited was very excited to announce and celebrate the completion and dedications of not one, but these two, new accessible cabins at their respective state parks.



At the cabin openings, Art Miller said, "What had started as a seed of an idea has grown now to include the 6th and 7th cabins for the Wisconsin State Parks. The original cabins have become the "Tom Sawyer's fence" that others have come to continue and expand upon. It has been particularly rewarding to see each group, led by people who had knowledge of disability, dream of expanding the vision of including people with disabilities in the outdoor experience." These last two cabins were led by individuals with construction experience and achieved their dreams in a way similar to the first cabin in the state parks, through perseverance and tremendous community support and effort for which we are very grateful.

Richard Bong State Recreation Area Accessible Cabin



On April 12th 2008, an accessible cabin opened in the Wisconsin State Parks at Richard Bong State Recreation Area. The cabin has been the dream of Dave Schultz, a resident of Raymond, Wisconsin who after seeking out and visiting the accessible cabin at Mirror Lake State Park with his son, Nick, looked for the opportunity to build a cabin closer to home. Nick's wheelchair had proven to be at a disadvantage in rough terrain on other family campouts and they found the cabin to be everything they needed to provide a great camping experience. Nick said he didn't realize on that first visit, that his dad, a builder, contractor was already dreaming of how to build a cabin at the state recreation area near their home.

After Dave collaborated with New Horizons Un-Limited, Miller Engineering and Strass Maguire & Associates to design the cabin, he joined with the Kiwanis Club of Westosha-Salem to assist in raising the funds needed to build the cabin. Ken Anderson, DNR Southeast Region Construction Representative, coordinated the design and construction with the state. Michael Wagner, President of the Kiwanis, said that this project has been a community project. Everyone came together to make this happen, from fundraising, design, to building the cabin. He thanked New Horizons Un-Limited, Miller Engineering and Strass Maguire Associates for their donation to the project.



The cabin, originally called the K-cabin, was dedicated as "Nick's Place" in honor of Dave's son. At the opening, Nick Schultz spoke of how much this cabin has meant to his family and all those who worked on the project; also, how much it would mean to visitors with disabilities. Nick, a student at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside, while studying website design, created a website that journals the cabin's construction at <http://www.kcabin.org>.



Gloria McCutcheon, regional director of the Southeastern Wisconsin DNR was eager to point out that the "Cabin in the Woods" project has been very good to this region with the completion of five accessible cabins now in the southern area of the state. She accepted the key to the cabin on behalf of all of the people of Wisconsin.





The Richard Bong State Recreation Area accessible cabin cost \$150,000, along with volunteer labor and many donated materials. The Kiwanis raised over \$80,000. Several fraternal organizations were recruited by Karen Stiles, of the Catholic Knights and through a combined community fundraiser raised \$50,000 for the project. The Bong Naturalist Association President, Carol Samsa, said the friends group also raised money for the project and received a matching grant from the state. Laura Van Slykes, property manager, spoke of the wonderful asset this cabin will be for years to come.

The quality of the craftsmanship of interior finishes, attention to accessible detail and the homey touches of the furnishings reflect the group's effort and devotion to this project. The accessible cabin features numerous accessible amenities, ensuring that all people with disabilities can freely use the cabin without fear of hidden barriers. Features include a fully accessible bathroom and kitchen and an accessible sleeping porch.

Visitors at the opening were impressed with the accessible features of the cabin. All rooms are large enough to allow for people in wheelchairs to move freely about the cabin from the entrance ramps, doorways, undercounter space and a roll-in shower. Special furnishings include two hospital beds, a lift, and pedestal table. Furthermore, all fixtures and controls are accessible, including the faucets, toilet, door and cabinet handles and light switches. An accessible ramp allows visitors entrance to the cabin and is outfitted with a gate for delivering those in wheelchairs from vans equipped with lifts.



Richard Bong State Recreation Area with the assistance of the Kiwanis and local Boy Scout groups will continue to develop the space around the cabin for an accessible fire pit, outdoor picnic table and accessible trails which are planned to access other areas of the recreation area. The Schultz family believed Richard Bong State Recreation Area was the perfect place for an accessible cabin. The recreation area is close to many populated areas of Wisconsin, yet, it is in the middle of a large prairie land, so one can really enjoy being out of doors close to home.

The cabin is located in the Sunset Campground in the western reach of the recreation area. Richard Bong State Recreation area offers many other features for the disabled visitor including the following accessible amenities: campsites, restrooms and showers, picnic shelters and a playground at the beach, observation ramp, nature center, amphitheater, hunting blinds and a fishing pier. New Horizons Un-Limited, through memorial gifts from prior cabin participants, gifted accessible fishing gear and reversible rods and reels.

The cabin is taking reservations for the 2008 season and dates are going quickly. It can be rented for \$34 per night including fees. For more details on how a person with a disability can reserve the cabin or to download a reservation application, go to the DNR website at <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/parks/access/bigcabin.html> or call the park at (262) 878-5600.

As We Look to the Future. . .

Through these two new cabins, the Cabin-in-the-Woods project has been indeed as Dottie Krieger said, “a tribute to the people of Wisconsin” and community effort. The project, from the beginning, set forth to use quality materials, products and craftsmanship to build cabins that would endure far into the future.

Each team reviewed prior cabins for trouble spots in construction, methods and materials, accessibility issues, and the needs and concerns of those who have used the cabins. Improvements in the underlying design and integration of the sleeping porch were made to accommodate more people through the camping season. Consideration was made for materials that would offer the cleanest safest environment to reduce allergens. The most recent cabins have the benefit of new products, levers, and controls designed for universal use and camper tested materials for flooring, shower walls and decking materials. From the beginning continued the directive to use the most energy efficient equipment, quality materials, products and craftsmanship possible, while maintaining cost efficiency with so much dependent on donations.

New Horizons Un-Limited will continue to assist where needed to outreach to people with disabilities about accessibility in the state parks to ensure that all people will be able to access the Wisconsin State Parks without barriers. New Horizons Un-Limited remains committed to assisting in the Cabin-in-the-Woods project throughout the State of Wisconsin. We are also committed to encouraging other states to learn of the Wisconsin Cabin-in-the-Woods example and expand the program across the nation.

As we look to the future, we will encourage continued development of accessibility solutions, finding green building products, creating environmentally friendly, sustainable buildings and integrating the use of renewable energy sources while managing cost and continuing to encourage the building of quality enduring cabins.

For more information, contact us at: New Horizons Un-Limited Inc

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