

Dorothy Molter Museum Strategic Plan 2013 – 2017

Approved by the Board of Directors of the Dorothy Molter Museum on December 27th, 2012;
Updated March 25, 2014; Updated November 20, 2014; Updated December 16, 2015; Updated/Concluded December 4, 2017

Mission:

The Dorothy Molter Museum preserves and interprets Northwoods wilderness heritage through learning opportunities inspired by Dorothy Molter, the last non-indigenous resident of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW).

3/2014: northwoods changed to Northwoods; BWCA changed to Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW).

Vision:

The Dorothy Molter Museum is a dynamic and widely recognized educational organization. It is highly valued for its historical resources and educational impact. The museum inspires the next generation of Northwoods stewards through Dorothy's legacy. As we continue to remember Dorothy and keep her spirit alive, it is our hope that we all dedicate our lives to live as Dorothy did, in harmony with the environment, with great dignity, courage, helping humankind, and making a significant contribution toward a better world.

3/2014: northwoods changed to Northwoods.

12/4/17: Shortened to: Inspiring the next generation of Northwoods stewards to make a significant contribution toward a better world through Dorothy's legacy of perseverance, integrity and generosity.

Values Statement ADDED 12/4/17

*The Dorothy Molter Museum is a dynamic and widely recognized educational organization, highly valued for its historical integrity and educational impact. As we continue to remember Dorothy and keep her spirit alive, we strive to embody the same principles that she espoused:
Perseverance - To maintain long-term sustainability in an ever-changing social, political and financial climate.
Integrity - To maintain the highest degree of historical accuracy and visitor satisfaction.
Generosity - To be a positive, active and contributing member of the diverse communities we are a part of.*

Five Year Strategic Goals:

1. Preserve the collection through the use of professional museum practices
2. Utilize the collection to provide educational exhibits and programs
3. Expand support for the museum and its resources across all age groups
4. Ensure the viability of the museum as a 21st Century institution

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Focus Area	Strategic Objective	Time Frame
1. Collection	1.1 Create a Collections Plan and a Collections Management Policy - COMPLETED	2013
	Update 6/26/13: Grant Awarded	
	Update 3/20/14: Ready for Board review by May 9, 2014; Deadline June 3, 2014	
	Update 11/20/14: Collections Plan and Collections Management Policy completed; Board approved Sept. 24, 2014	
	1.2 Address collection storage concerns	2013
	Update 6/26/13: Grant awarded for storage containers; new shelves have been installed; the result is an improvement to the storage conditions of our most delicate objects but there is room for more improvement. Objects not used in the new Point Cabin exhibit have been moved to our new storage space at R&R; the space at R&R is less than ideal and is only short-term solution. Current priorities: keep up with incoming accessions and conduct detailed cataloging of photos	
	Update 3/20/14: Long term solution still needed; building addition or new construction to be discussed fall 2014; detailed photo cataloging in progress; basic archives processing planned for 2014 pending grant funding; keeping up with incoming accessions remains a challenge due to space and time constraints	
	Update 11/20/14: Long-term solution still needed; building addition or new construction tabled until reserve fund is established and funded; detailed photo cataloging in progress; received basic archives processing grant with a completion date of August 1, 2015; keeping up with incoming accessions remains a challenge due to space and time constraints; request to be submitted to collections committee to identify collection items to deaccession	
	Update 12/16/15: All objects except the 1967 Polaris snowmobile, that had been stored at R&R have been moved indefinitely to the basement of Frandsen Bank, an indoor, climate-controlled environment. Basic archives processing has been completed, all are digitized. Detailed descriptions with search terms for each photo and archive are in-process as staff time allows. (The snowmobile at R&R is being stored free of charge)	
	1.3 Record oral/video histories - COMPLETED	2013-2015
	Update 6/26/13: Mary has been collecting names for interviews from Peg; "Visitor History Worksheet" has been created; "Donuts with Dorothy" event August 4, 2013	
	Update 3/20/13: Sarah working on sample grant application as part of college coursework	

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Update 11/20/14: Sarah is currently drafting the grant to submit January 2015

Update 12/16/15: The oral history grant was received and recording of oral histories was conducted throughout the summer. Processing and transcribing is in-process

Update 2016: The Dorothy Molter Oral History Project is complete with transcripts and digital voice recordings in the Museum's Past Perfect database of collections

1.4 Continue to hire Curator on a contract basis 2013

Update 6/26/13: no longer applicable, see 1.5

Update 11/20/14: Collections Committee is drafting a new, part-time Collections Manager position

Update 12/16/15: No movement on curator position

1.5 Create staff Curator position 2014

Update 6/26/13: year-round, 25 hour per week position created in March 2013

Update 3/20/13: need to analyze collection insurance coverage

Update 11/20/14: See 1.4; submit request for Collections Committee to analyze collection Insurance coverage

Update 12/16/15: See 1.4

1.6 Create a Long Range Preservation Plan 2014

Focus Area	Strategic Objective	Time Frame
2. Exhibits	2.1 Re-install Point Cabin exhibit and return Winter Cabin to historically accurate state	2013-2014

Update 6/26/13: New Point Cabin exhibit installed; lighting improvements needed; Potential for additional displays in the Point Cabin porch. Winter Cabin has seen slight adjustments; Winter Cabin porch and extra bedroom will remain "exhibit" areas and have a lot of potential for improvement

Update 3/20/14: new displays planned for remodeled interpretive center

Update 11/20/14: international paddle, guestbook and nursing school mini-exhibits installed for summer 2014

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Update 2016: The Winter Cabin photography was rearranged in the kitchen and north bedrooms to provide greater flow of information, interpretive signage was added to highlight collection items on display (e.g. barrel stove, 2-way radio, dollar bills on window)

2.2 Develop temporary off-site exhibits 2013-2015

Update 6/26/13: Forest Service and clinic displays in progress. Discussions underway with Ely Beautification Project regarding collaborative project; Brainstorming underway regarding a Boundary Waters History exhibit (has the potential to travel)

Update 3/20/14: Community Center display February 2014; VCC display in discussion phase; Two exhibits at Forest Service in 2014: 1) Dorothy Molter Museum kiosk and 2) 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act (includes showing of full-length DM documentary)

Update 11/20/14: 25,000 visitors passively and/or actively viewed the USFS exhibit

Update 12/16/15: Ely Public Library is currently displaying a small exhibit on Dorothy's love of Christmas with a few ornaments and decorations from the collection for the month of December 2015

Update 2016: Ely-Winton Historical Museum featured a small, temporary exhibit "3 Stars of the North" highlighting Dorothy Molter's role in Ely Area history along with Sigurd Olson and Bob Cary

2.3 Create Interactive guestbook 2014

Update 6/26/13: IMLS grant pending award date Sept 2013; this is a matching grant we will need to raise a significant amount of money if it is awarded

Update 3/20/14: grant declined. Display of book copies planned for 2014

Update 11/20/14: Color copies of original guest books printed and displayed for public access October 1, 2014

Update 8/2017: Investigation into uploading digital guestbook files to Google Docs or similar platform for public access via internet

2.4 Re-create Summer Tent 2014

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Update 6/26/13: Currently on hold. "Outdoor classroom" with bird focus may take precedence

Update 3/20/14: Seeking funding for screen tent for use during educational programming

Update 11/20/14: Currently on hold; Outdoor classroom with birding focus has taken precedence; Screen tent purchased but deemed impractical due to the labor/time to set up and inability to leave set up for the summer due to potential damage; Investigating options for sale of tent and purchase of new "pop up" screen tent

Update 10/6/17: An 18'x24' BSA canvas wall-tent is available for the museum to utilize to begin installation of a replica summer tent. A volunteer has offered to assist in the building of a platform with tent in-riggers to support the tent "as is" until more funding would be made available to adapt the tent to replicate Dorothy's.

2.5 Implement signage improvements throughout all public areas

Update 6/26/13: Winter Cabin and Interpretive Center signage improvements made in conjunction with new Point Cabin exhibit; all signage now has consistent look. IRRRB grant to be submitted this fall for outdoor site map, nature trail additions, and "bird board".

Update 3/20/14: IRRB grant was not submitted in fall 2013. Lake Country Power grant submitted February 2014 for bird area signage; Trail improvements underway; Visitor guide with map to be printed summer 2014

Update 11/20/14: Lake Country Power grant received, signage designed and will be ordered in spring 2015; Trail improvements continue; Visitor guide completed, printed and distributed – edits and second printing to be made spring 2015; Additional signage in all buildings added (safety, hours, etc.)

Update 12/16/15: Emergency exit and fire extinguisher signage has been framed or laminated; Educational resources have been made available in the Winter and Point Cabins; An interactive “Paint your Paddle” mini-exhibit was added to the Point Cabin porch; Additional interpretive cards on several objects have been added in the Winter Cabin; A new exhibit for the Cady Cabin is in development “Creating the Boundary Waters: 25 Objects, 25 Stories” to be reviewed by the board.

Update 2016-2017: An IRRB grant for Birds' Landing provided new outdoor signage within the birding area, on all buildings and on the Discovery Trail, which provide ecological information tied to the story of Dorothy Molter and/or Northwoods ecology – completed in May 2017.

Update 10/2017: Signage in the Winter Cabin was improved to provide more information about Dorothy's childhood, cutting ice and her family.

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Updates not included in Strategic Plan

Update 2016: A grant request was submitted to the MHS for funding the “Creating the Boundary Waters: 25 Objects, 25 Stories” but was not awarded, a new grant proposal to the IRRB was submitted but did not meet the fiscal year date of the grant, a recommendation by the grant board to resubmit in fall 2017 was received

Update 12/2017: A grant proposal was submitted for the “Creating the Boundary Waters: 25 Objects, 25 Stories” exhibit for 2018 installation to celebrate the museum’s 25th anniversary and was awarded; the museum also received a \$5,000 matching donation from Elizabeth Crown.

Focus Area	Strategic Objective	Time Frame
3. Programming	2.1 Continue tours, Northwoods Passport program and Camp Kwitchurbeliakin	ongoing
	Update 6/26/13: Northwoods passport program discontinued by outside party; we are now offering guided nature walks in conjunction with Tuesday Night Live	
	Update 3/20/14: Community bird feeding area has been established with support from Lake Country Power, Ely Field Naturalists, Community Members; preschool children invited to plant flower boats; improvements to bird feeding area (fence, signage) currently pending grant funding; Manager of Visitor Services position created and filled	
	Update 11/20/14: Northwoods Passport program reinstated with redesigned cards and new task (DMM); Bird feeding area improvements ongoing with addition of feeder pole and landscaping plans; New museum tour guide interpretive manual created May 2014	
	Update 12/16/15: Passport to the Northwoods activity was again offered; New trail guide was created/dispersed with work in progress on developing a professionally designed and printed version; A multi-stage geocache was established on-site	
	Update 2016: Passport to the Northwoods activity was again offered; Tuesday Night Live events included Camp K and nature walks; Dorothy Day (June), Night at the Museum (July), Donuts at Dorothy’s (Aug) and Cocktails at the Cabin (Oct) continued, Dorothy Molter Canoe Experience launched with a full crew, this program was in partnership with Ely Outfitting Company, which outfitted this 4-day, 3-night canoe trip to Knife	

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Update 2017: *Passport to the Northwoods was discontinued by the Chamber and replaced with a city-wide scavenger hunt; Tuesday Night Live events included Camp K and nature walks; Dorothy Day (June), DM Women's Canoe Exp (June), Night at the Museum (July), Donuts at Dorothy's (Aug) continued; Cocktails at the Cabin is discontinued due to lack of visitation*

2.2 Create annual family day (pre-school, all ages) 2013

Update 6/26/13: *Dorothy Day on June 23rd was a success; over 200 people attended; 63 children received free copies of the Root Beer Lady coloring book*

Update 3/20/14 *Schedule of Community Events now includes Dorothy Day (June), Night at the museum (July), Donuts at Dorothy's (August), and Whirlwind! (February)*

Updated 11/20/14: *All community/family events completed and carried into 2015 program schedule; An evening, fall (October) event to be added to the schedule*

Update 12/16/15: *All community/family events completed and carried into 2016 program schedule including a new, fall October event "Cocktails at the Cabins"*

Update 2016: *Dorothy Day (June), Night at the Museum (July), Donuts at Dorothy's (Aug), Cocktails at the Cabin (Oct) and Whirlwind! (Feb) continued*

Update 2017: *Dorothy Day (June), Night at the Museum (July), Donuts at Dorothy's (Aug) continued with the change of focus to highlight the Bob Cary Office Exhibit prior to its closure for a new exhibit in 2018 – this event was called Donuts at Dorothy's & 'Beers with Bob; Cocktails at the Cabin is discontinued due to lack of visitation; These events are now considered annual events as is Whirlwind! during the Ely Winter Festival; a new event was offered for the 30th anniversary of Dorothy's passing: Memorial Snowmobile Ride with discussion of offering it again in 2018*

2.3 Create 13 week summer program (older children) – ON HOLD 2014

Update 6/26/13: *Not likely to be in place by 2014; however, the museum is participating in the Eco-Club, which is organized by Ely Community Resource. The Eco-Club meets year-round on Saturdays and is for students in 4th, 5th and 6th grades. Also, a grant for a nature journaling class is currently pending*

Update 3/20/14: *journaling class grant declined. Possible partnership with Wild Within this summer for Saturday day camp; Eco-Club participation still planned*

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Update 11/20/14: Summer program partnership with Wild Within attempted with little participation; Established an ongoing partnership Eco-Club/ECR; No plans for a 13-week camp/program in 2015 due to staffing

2.4 Create community education class (adults) 2015

Update 6/26/13: Over 100 people attended April screening of “Living in the Boundary Waters”; Next proposed video screening: Wind Sled film, date TBD. Moving towards adding special topic tours during the summer; discussions are underway for a container gardening class

Update 3/20/14: class idea on hold; work study student or interpreter to be hired to help develop special tours, etc.

Update 11/20/14: Developing plan to hold video screening of Wind Sled film in March 2015 at VCC

Update 12/16/15: Ely Folk School approached staff about a root beer making class. Staff did not have the hours available but asked the school to contact the museum for the 2016 calendar

Update 9/2017: Submitted proposal for two homemade root beer making classes with the Ely Folk School for its winter 2018 course offerings, which were accepted and will be held in February 2018

2.5 Create school program (elementary school children) 2016

Update 6/26/13: Discussions underway about museum staff visiting kindergarten classes and field trips to the museum from 1st graders, as well as from high school art and special education classes

Update 3/20/14: New Manager of Visitor Services has already received inquiries from teachers

Update 11/20/14: Investigating options for accommodating school groups October-May, many obstacles remain including snow removal and heating; Group (8 or more) rates have been more prominently advertised on the Website and in print

Update 12/16/15: Peg Rosett presented Dorothy's Story to elementary school children at Washington Elementary

Update 9/2017: As sponsor for the Ely Marathon's Kid's Race “Dorothy's Root Beer Run” the museum is offering the class/homeschool group with the most students completing the kid's marathon a complimentary, in-class Dorothy Molter Program and root beer float party; awaiting results

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Focus Area	Strategic Objective	Time Frame
4. Public Relations	<p>4.1 Continue presence in local, regional and social media, as well as at local events and festivals</p> <p>Update 3/20/2014: increased number of press releases has resulted in increased media coverage; A binder of press coverage is available for review</p> <p>Update 11/20/2014: Maintained presence at Blueberry Arts and Harvest Moon Festivals as well as hosted two community events for local groups (book launch and PEO Sisterhood); Sarah presented at an Ely AAUW meeting in October 2014; Expanded marketing reach through a major Duluth publication for 2015; partner program with International Wolf Center discussed with IWC education staff</p> <p>Update 12/16/2015: Maintained presence at Blueberry Arts and Harvest Moon Festivals; Expanded marketing reach through a major Duluth publication; Partnered with International Wolf Center during Winter Festival for a snowshoe/guided tour program; Participated in VCC new student events; Continue to utilize Facebook as a recruitment/advertising/educational tool</p> <p>Update 2016: Continued all 2015 updates; Implemented a new, seasonal museum internship position (summer); The staged reading of Root Beer Lady: the Musical in November provided marketing and promotion for the Dorothy Molter Museum as well as through a merchandise table at the reading</p> <p>Update 2017: Continued all previous updates; Partnered with Ely Igloo Club for the Dorothy Molter Memorial Snowmobile Ride commemorating the 30th anniversary of Dorothy's passing and first memorial ride; Partnered with Stone Soup Events for a Root Beer Run children's marathon race during the Ely Marathon Event in September; The full production of Root Beer Lady: the Musical premiered in August with promotion for the Dorothy Molter Museum provided through its advertising-and introduction/conclusion of each performance (4) as well as through a merchandise table at most performances. Co-sponsored the annual Minnesota Association of Museum conference in Ely with an evening reception at the Dorothy Molter Museum "Cocktails at the Cabins" and a cultural and historic "Pub Portage" in Ely.</p>	ongoing
	4.2 Create events, programs and publicity to celebrate 20th Anniversary – COMPLETED	2013
	Update 6/26/13: Film Showing April 2013, Dorothy Day June 2013, Donuts with Dorothy August 2013; Special poster; new 20 th anniversary logo and pins; Ely Times article; Ely Times ad, Boundary Waters Journal ad; MPR ad/news story	
	4.3 Expand current advertising to include MPR radio	2013

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Update 6/26/13: Ad ran prior to Dorothy Day

Update 3/20/14: ad led to MPR story which was picked up by the Associated Press

Update 11/20/14: Sarah participated in a live broadcast on MPR regarding the 1964 Wilderness Act anniversary and its effect on Dorothy's life

Update 2016: An early December press release was sent out to Minnesota, Arnold, PA and Chicago, IL media outlets discussing the 30th anniversary of Dorothy's passing (Dec 1986)

Update 2017: Several stories related to the 30th anniversary of Dorothy's passing (Dec 1986) were published/recorded via media outlets including MPR, Mpls Star Tribune, KFAN Radio, Fox21 Duluth, Duluth Public Television, Duluth News Tribune; Sarah Guy-Levar was interviewed for the USFS FireWise Community video production; MPR celebrated the 50th anniversary in July at Whiteside Park with free booth space for the museum and brief air-time (free)

4.4 Expand annual membership drive 2013

Update 6/26/13: Now sending renewal letters monthly

Update 3/20/14: Currently working on business paddler membership drive and community benefits statement. Sarah and Mary attending membership marketing webinar from the Association for State and Local History; Membership form added to newsletter; extra donation blank added to renewal form (\$130 in two months); Membership up 9% from Sept. 2012 (210 members in 2012; 231 members in 2014); new member promotions planned (membership in a 6 pack, Kwitchurbeliakin puzzle)

Update 11/20/14: Member appeals sent out November 16 requesting that current members 1) return their proxy letters, 2) make a contribution to the educational programming fund and 3) purchase a half-price individual or family membership for a gift to a new member; Planning 2015 new member premium promotions for memberships purchased during museum visits

Update 12/16/2015: Implemented a "come back to us" campaign for lapsed members and a new member solicitation for Ely businesses; Offered ½ price new memberships at the end of 2014 as well as in December 2015

Update 2016: Discussing a restructure of the membership program to include rate increases and premiums in 2018

Update 2017: Established a restructure of the membership program to include rate increases, premiums will be determined, alerted membership via renewal letters, newsletters and at rootbeerlady.com

4.5 Expand web site 2013

Update 6/26/13: Currently working to expand on-line shop; improvements to Educational content will follow and will ultimately include a bird cam

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Update 3/20/14: Bird cam no longer planned; Education content improvements slowly underway;
Plans to work with outside web designer (Emily Quick); Some new merchandise has been added to on-line store

Update 11/20/14: A variety of content updates to Website in all sections including added imagery and edited/streamlined text; New online gift shop through Volusion established, and being designed and populated by Jess; Graphics update to Wordpress site planned for winter 2015

Update 12/16/2015: New Volusion storefront created in early 2015; New rootbeerlady.com contract implemented for brand-new website December 2015, which will integrate with Volusion storefront – new site will have improved navigation, visual presence and appeal, and work properly

Update 2016: New and improved rootbeerlady.com was designed and launched with web design firm Art Unlimited; Volusion online gift shop up and running with over \$400 in sales

Update 12/2017: store.rootbeerlady.com (Volusion online store) design is being updated with a color palette to match the main site and to be responsive on smart devices (changes size based on screen size for smart phones and tablets)

Focus Area	Strategic Objective	Time Frame
5. Business Practices	5.1 Continue expanding root beer market and merchandise	ongoing
	<i>Update 6/26/13: New branded merchandise is available in shop</i>	
	<i>Update 11/20/14: Obtained one additional root beer customer (retailer); Reestablished relationship with Shopko, Ely</i>	
	5.2 Continue seeking additional funding to carry out strategic objectives	ongoing
	<i>Update 6/26/13: Grants applications planned for Legacy Fund, IRRRB, State Arts Board, Shopko, Rotary Club, Northland Foundation, IMLS</i>	
	<i>Update 3/20/14: See separate summary of current grant activity. Relationship building underway with two private donors; Need to discuss seeking funds from controversial sources</i>	
	<i>Update 11/20/14: See separate summary of current grant activity; Decision made to not seek funding from entities that may elicit controversy</i>	
	5.3 Hire a Retail Manager on a project basis	2013
	<i>Update 6/26/13: Interpretive Center remodeled; Dayna Mase hired as contractor to order new merchandise and re-order as needed</i>	

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Update 3/20/14: Most of these duties will be covered by newly hired Visitor Services Manager; Dayna will still be hired as contractor for training and occasional merchandising

Update 11/20/14: Dayna will continue to be hired as contractor for continued training and occasional merchandising

Update 2016: Retail contract no longer implemented

5.4 Create a written Operations Manual	2014
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Update 11/20/14: Completed with ongoing updates and revisions

5.5 Repeat Strategic Planning Process	2017
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Update 10/2017: Strategic planning session held and draft created for 2018-2023 plan