

Historical Clippings

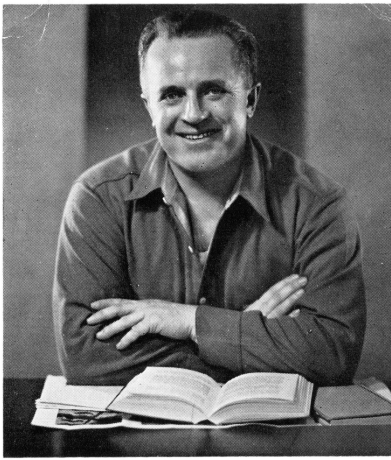
Three Lakes Museum

July 2022

Sam Campbell

Philosopher of the Forest

"This will be a day on the trails, then. Let us pack our lunch. fill canteens with water. Get out the binoculars, cameras, the magnifying glass....let's look closer at things than we ever have before, for if we see things well, we shall understand them, and if we understand them, we shall appreciate them."



SAM CAMPBELL, writer, lecturer and photographer, is known throughout America.

Sam Campbell was born August 1, 1895 to city life in Watseka, Illinois. As a child, camping with his parents and visiting his grandparents farm, he developed an early and keen interest in the outdoors. At the age of 20 he began writing articles on nature for newspapers and magazines and in 1929 he made his first films on animal life which he presented to the public. Of course the central theme of his work was conservation.

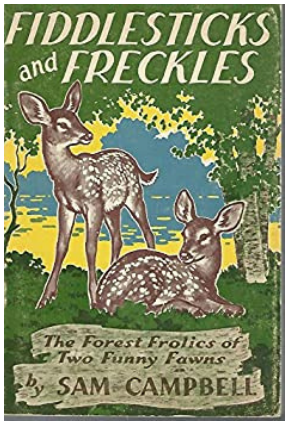
In the 1920s and 1930s, Campbell was part of America's emerging environmentalist movement, forging close friendships with some of its leading figures.

Sam's writing and nature talks, with the use of a movie camera to capture the animals of the forest in action, caught the attention of the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad and he became their official lecturer promoting travel by rail. Convincing people to take the train to see this beautiful country for themselves, he held that position for 22 years.

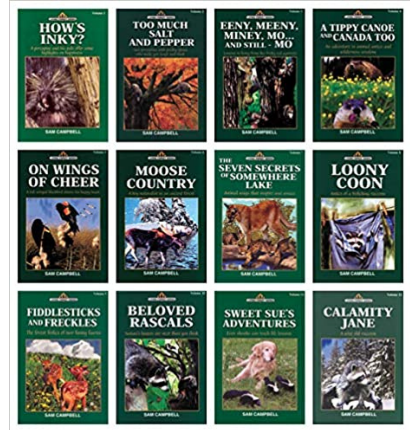


While he conducted tours throughout the world, he and his wife Giny maintained a summer home on an island in Four Mile Lake, northeast of Three Lakes, known to the many who have heard his lectures, read his books, or seen his movies as "The Sanctuary of Wegimind." It was here that he prepared most of his essays on nature and the photos and film to illustrate his work. During the course of his career, he gave about 10,000 public lectures and produced nearly half a million feet of colored film.

Sam passed away in 1962 but remains a large part of Three Lakes history.



Writing for both children and adults, Sam created a popular set of twelve books known collectively as *The Living Forest*. Written in the 1940's and 50's, this sought after collection of animal characters and their antics, based on Sam and Giny's encounters at their retreat on the island in Four Mile Lake remains a "profound yet whimsical nature observation" and although they seem old-fashioned now-a-days, they are delightful get-aways.

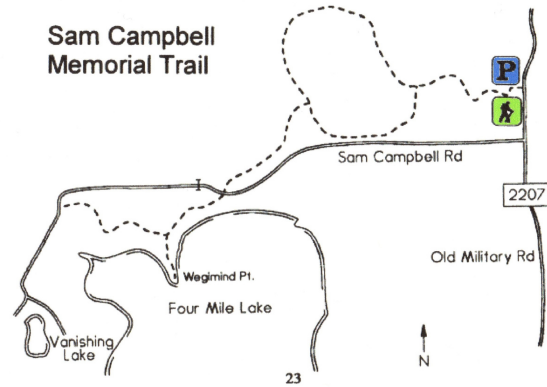


Sam and Giny's island is now privately owned, but the remainder of the land became part of the Nicolet National Forest. In a partnership between the Three Lakes Historical Society and the US Forest Service, plans were undertaken to create the Sam Campbell Memorial Trail and the complex was dedicated on June 29th in 1989. The almost two mile trail runs through a variety of forest types and a section of the trail leads to Wegimind Point and Vanishing Lake, a focal point in many of Sam's writings and lectures.

At the dedication ceremony on that day in 1989, Larry Henson, associate deputy chief of the US Forest Service, Washington, D.C. said, "Sam saw this land early when it was ravaged and before it was made a National Forest in 1933 ... This forest land is now better than it was ... and he helped it happen."

Sam Campbell -
a Three Lakes treasure

Nicolet National Forest Trails



This trail is named in honor of nature enthusiast, philosopher, and writer, Sam Campbell. It leads through a forest of pines, balsam, and hardwoods, and offers a variety of spring birds and wildflowers. A self-guiding brochure available at the trailhead interprets the area using the writings of Sam Campbell. A section of the trail leads to Wegimind Point and Vanishing Lake, a focal point in many of Campbell's writings and lectures. The Three Lakes Historical Society is a partner with the Forest Service in managing the trail. Benches are provided.

Directions: From Three Lakes, take State Highway 32 east for 4 miles to Military Road (FR 2178). Turn left and go north 4-1/2 miles to Old Military Road (FR 2207). Take left fork onto Old Military Road and proceed north 1 mile to the trailhead. Parking is available for 3 vehicles.

Trail Length: 1-3/4 mile loop.

Difficulty: Gently rolling terrain, some short steep grades.



Vanishing Lake