

# Eagle Island Group Camping, Restoration Project Underway

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The Town Board of Santa Clara has voted unanimously to amend the local Land Use Code to reestablish group camping on Eagle Island, located on Upper Saranac Lake.

Friends of Eagle Island (FEI) has been in discussions with the Town of Santa Clara to reestablish group camping on Eagle Island through a petition to amend the Land Use Code thereby enabling the camp to re-open. This multi-step process has involved; preparing and filing a petition for an Amendment with the Town Board, review of the Amendment by the Planning Board, a Public Hearing and the vote by the Town Board.



The resolution adopting the amendment set forth specific restrictions to limit the use to the “historic uses” which include: traditional summer camp, family camp, work and women’s weekends, low impact water activities, with limited/scheduled access for historic tours.

Friends of Eagle Island, Inc. has announced that it was recently awarded a \$498,825 Grant through the 2016 Regional Economic Development Awards from the State of New York for the Preservation and Restoration of Eagle Island Camp, that is located on Upper Saranac Lake. This is one of the 77 projects totaling \$61.4 million within The North Country Economic Development Council.



This matching grant is expected to enable FEI to move towards meeting its fundraising goal to reopen this historic youth camp. The capital needs are projected to be \$1.5 to 2M and include a new water supply system, septic upgrades, a new electrical supply, foundations, roofs, and kitchen upgrades.

Eagle Island is a 30-acre property located on Upper Saranac Lake in Santa Clara. It was designed in 1903 by Adirondack architect William Coulter for Levi Morton, who served as both New York Governor (1895-96) and United States Vice President (1889–93). Eagle Island has been described as a quintessential and highly intact example of an American Adirondack Camp, described by some as perhaps the finest example of Coulter’s work.

In 1910, Morton sold the camp to Henry Graves, an industrialist from Orange, New Jersey. In 1937 Henry and his wife, Florence, gifted the property to the Girl Scouts of the Oranges in memory of their sons, with the intention that Eagle Island be “a place to keep the spirit of childhood alive.” From 1938-2008, the island was the summer home for generations of young campers. The local New Jersey Girl Scout council discontinued use of the island in 2009 and decided to sell the camp in 2010.

In October 2016, Friends of Eagle Island, Inc. was awarded a \$10,000 grant by the National Trust for Historic Preservation from the Hart Family Fund for Small Towns. These grant funds will be used to match local funds to help support the Architectural Drawings for Eagle Island Camp project.



Grants from the National Trust Preservation Funds range from \$2,500 to \$10,000 and have provided over \$15 million since 2003. These matching grants are awarded to nonprofit organizations and public agencies across the country to support wide-ranging activities including consultant services for rehabilitating buildings, technical assistance for tourism that promotes historic resources, and the development of materials for education and outreach campaigns.

For more information on National Trust for Historic Preservation's Preservation Fund grants, visit their [website](#).

Friends of Eagle Island, Inc. (FEI) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit entity that was incorporated in April 2011 for the purpose of acquiring Eagle Island and returning it to use as a youth camp. FEI purchased Eagle Island in November 2015 for \$2.45 million through the contribution of an anonymous donor.

*Photos from above: Eagle Island Youth Camp and Eagle Island Main Lodge, courtesy Friends of Eagle Island Inc., and Eagle Island Main Lodge, circa 1910, courtesy Saranac Lake Free Library.*