



Get your local daily news, special offers  
& more delivered right to your inbox!  
**SIGN UP NOW >**

NEXT UP



Family gathering gives sendoff to U.S. Army Reserve platoon

Lt. Col. Jerry Mastan advised 962nd Ordnance Company of P...

## Friends group plans comeback of historic Adirondack camp

Feb 22, 2017 Updated Feb 22, 2017



PHOTO PROVIDED One of the iconic structures on Eagle Island in the Town of Santa Clara. Adirondack architect William Coulter designed the buildings in 1903 for former governor and U.S. Vice President Levi Morton. The Friends of Eagle Island, now owner, intend to re-estimate a youth camp there.

SANTA CLARA — Three is the lucky number for preservationists committed to prudently sharing access to Eagle Island and re-establishing a youth camp there.

Friends of Eagle Island Inc. was recently awarded nearly \$500,000 in infrastructure-upgrade funding and another \$10,000 for architectural work to restore and upgrade the 30-acre property.

It also gained permission from the Town of Santa Clara to again provide group camping on Upper Saranac Lake, which the group hopes to restart in 2018.

The nonprofit bought the property for \$2.45 million in November 2015, seven years after the Girls Scouts of Orange County, N.J., closed the youth camp and ended a tradition started in 1938.

## **SPIRIT OF CHILDHOOD**

Eagle Island was designed by Adirondack architect William Coulter in 1903 for former governor and U.S. Vice President Levi Morton.

It gained the reputation as “a quintessential and highly intact example of an American Adirondack Camp and as perhaps the finest example of Coulter’s work,” according to a Friends news release.

Morton sold it to industrialist Henry Graves in 1910, who donated it in 1937 to the Girl Scouts in memory of their sons as “a place to keep the spirit of childhood alive.”

It was used a summer youth camp from 1938 to 2008; the Friends bought it for a summer camp for “youth of diverse socio-economic backgrounds,” the release states.

The group also intends to preserve and protect the island's character yet allow educational tours “to promote public understanding, appreciation and stewardship of Adirondack heritage.”

Refurbishment and upgrades are estimated at \$1.5 million to \$2 million.

## **OPENS DOORS**

The agency was recently awarded \$498,825 from the North Country Regional Economic Development Council for a new water-supply system, septic system and electrical service, as well as

foundation and kitchen upgrades and new roofs.

In January, the Santa Clara Town Council amended its land-use code to allow group camping after the Friends mounted a successful petition.

Permission is limited to historic uses, such as traditional summer-camp activities, family camp, work and women's retreats, low-impact water activities and limited, scheduled tours.

"This action opens many doors for fund development and future partnerships," the release states.

## MUCH WORK AHEAD

Friends members are "thrilled," though "there is still major work to be done and funds to be raised in 2017 to transition from the planning stage to a work phase."

Last October, the Hart Family Fund for Small Towns, administered through the National Trust for Historic Preservation, awarded Friends of Eagle Island \$10,000 "to help preserve an important piece of our shared national heritage," Trust President Stephanie Meeks said in the release.

Such funds "ensure that communities and towns all across America retain their unique sense of place."

### Tags

Friends Group Finance Economics Politics Company Council Santa Clara William Coulter Town Council  
Levi Morton Eagle Island

We have recently upgraded our commenting system. If you wish to comment please login using your social ID or create a new account.

0 comments

Sign in

1 person listening

+ Follow

Share Post comment as...