

JOSEPH W. SOIT and The Establishment of POINT BEACH STATE FOREST

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By: Joseph W. Soit

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EDITOR'S NOTE: *Point Beach State Forest is a 2,903-acre area of forested ridges and swales, sand dunes and beaches, and developed camping and picnic sites located at Rawley's Point, six miles northeast of Two Rivers in Manitowoc County on the west shore of Lake Michigan. The area extends in a rectangular strip for over six miles along the lake with an average width of about one mile.*

A United States Coast Guard operated lighthouse, one of the largest and brightest on the Great Lakes, stands watch over the area as one has since 1853.

This pristine area with the cool summer temperatures attracted 247,798 visitors in 1987. 45,713 campers used the clean, well-maintained, wooded camping area. Promoters of tourism in Manitowoc County are pleased. Environmentalists and conservationists are happy that most of the forest is left in its natural unspoiled state.

Most of the wonderful things we enjoy today did not "just happen". They were the results of foresight, dedication, hard work and persistence by a group or individual.

JOSEPH W. SOIT represents these values and characteristics in his exemplary work in bringing about the establishment of Point Beach State Forest.

Born in Austria in 1890, Soit lived in Villach, Klagenfurt and Gratz learning the tailor trade. Migrating to the United States in 1913, he moved to Two Rivers from Milwaukee two years later. The young immigrant worked as a tailor for Schneider Clothiers, later opening his own shop.

An outdoorsman, he enjoyed skating, skiing, swimming and hiking, and became an outstanding bowler and golfer.

He faithfully served as a community leader in many organizations.

Happily, he was able to visit his Austrian home in later years.

Joseph W. Soit died in Two Rivers in 1968 at 78 years. His widow, the former Mary Belau, survives as do a daughter, Francis, of Two Rivers, and a son, Richard, of Portsmouth, Ohio.

On March 20, 1957, Mr. Soit was the recipient of the Two Rivers Lions Club First Distinguished Service Award for Conservation. The glowing words of praise and respect on the certificate best tell the story:

"Joe Soit put Point Beach State Forest on the map of Manitowoc County. This was the high point of two-score years of civic endeavor in this community. Vision, a rare brand of dogged persistence, resourcefulness, and courage were the qualities that changed a hopeful dream into a solid achievement. Thus Point Beach is an enduring monument to the enterprise of a fine citizen. Lions, Rotary, Elks, Chamber of

Commerce, Izaak Walton League, Two Rivers Golf Association, Congregational Brotherhood—all have profited from his labors and competence. A native of Austria, Joe brought with him the making of a successful merchant and a workman of exceptional skill. In our country, in our city, he became one of us, extending his interests beyond the confines of his home and his shop."

The certificate is signed by Irving C. Peterson, President; Ewald Schmeichel, Secretary; and Clarence W. Gesell, Chairman of the Committee.

A meticulous person in appearance and habit, Mr. Soit wrote out his speeches in neat longhand with fountain pen prior to delivery.

We are better able to "know the man" and even his Austrian background as we print "in toto" his handwritten copy of a speech he presented in 1963. It is an interesting story of the beginnings of Point Beach State Forest which is an important part of Manitowoc County's history. His speech appears here in its original unedited form donated from files of Winnifred Smith.

JOSEPH SOIT'S STORY ABOUT POINT BEACH STATE FOREST

"Back in 1937 we started Point Beach State Forest. That is, it was started twice before. I did not know anything about it. But both times fell by the wayside and one time the Federal Government appropriated \$10,000 to investigate for a possible National Park. I have not heard anything about it until I read some time ago in the 25 years column. I do not know what became of the \$10,000.

When one starts something there is always a little selfish interest in it.

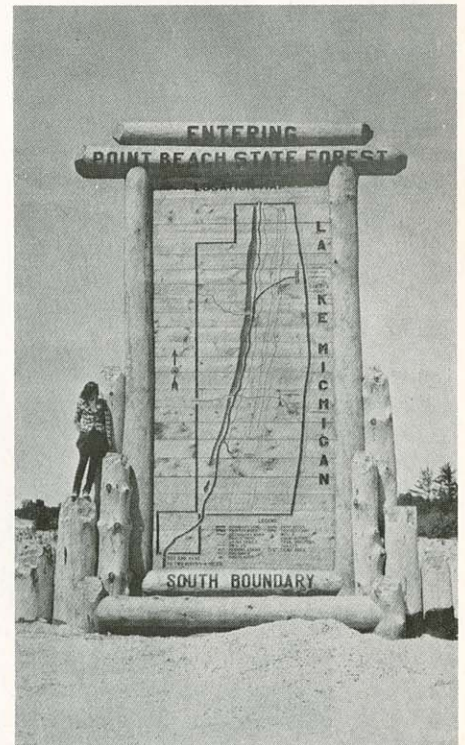
Wenzel Tomek came to me, he was in real estate business and knew something about it. He possibly thought he will promote some real estate but I think it did not work out that way and then it was Nels LeClair who owned some land up there and was on the conservation committee.

My selfish interest was, I was elected President of the Community Club (now Chamber of Commerce). I wanted to do something if possible. The story was circulated among the merchants that we do not have enough trading area to draw from. On two sides is water and to the west is Manitowoc. Possibly a recreational area may help some. It seems to help Sturgeon Bay.

It just so happened that the State Legislature appropriated \$75,000 for forest land in the Kettle Moraine region. The money was expected to be spent near

Milwaukee. The State Legislature was afraid that they would not be able to carry the vote for the appropriation, so they had to include Manitowoc County which they considered at the end of the Kettle Moraine and where the money could be spent.

We had nice forest land here to make a nice recreational area. We got together and decided to ask the state for \$20,000. We were told that if we ask for \$20,000 we can be sure that we will not get it. So we decided to ask for \$5,000 and made arrangements for a hearing with the State Finance Committee in Madison. Quite a group from here went to that hearing. As I recall there must have been about 10 or more of us. We presented our case. Mr. Harrington, Superintendent of State Parks and Forests, helped us. Wenzel Tomek and myself talked. We tried our best but when we got through we were turned down, no appropriation. We were discouraged but not altogether.



The early highly impressive sign formerly located at the south entrance to Point Beach State Forest.

A group of them went to see the assemblymen from our district and I remember I was in the group to see State Senator Schneider from our district. We talked to them and were quite pleased with what they promised us. It was possible to vote for and pass the appropriation over the Finance Committee's turn-down. We must have made a fairly good impression on the State Legislature when we were there. When it was proposed to the State Assembly, they voted 90 to 95 percent in favor of the \$5,000 appropriation and we were assured that the State Senatorial would pass it. We were happy for a while but the State Legislature adjourned before the Senate could vote on it. Well, that seemed the end of it. The Legislature met every two years. But, the Conservation Department and the Conservation Commission must have been quite impressed with the Assembly's vote and they undoubtedly heard that the Senate would vote favorably. The Conservation Department recommended and the Commission approved of spending up to \$10,000 to buy some 200 acres.

We were happy that we made a start to buy some of the Kaufman, LeClair and Schafer land. Because of previous talks of starting a park, Charley Broughton, editor and owner of the Sheboygan Press, an influential state and national man, was in contact with Washington and persuaded the Congress through his supporters to turn over to the State the surplus 80 acres that they had at the lighthouse, providing the state starts a park there.

Now we had about 280 acres. That was in 1937. We were happy about that. We had a park started. But not long after that Mr. Kaufman offered to sell some 350 acres at the prevailing price (about \$50.00 an acre) and then he would donate 100 acres of fine woodlands. We thought that would be something. We would have quite a park.

NOTE: *The story of Frank Kaufman is a unique part of rural Two Rivers history. Much controversy swirled about this conservationist who, in early years, owned the bulk of the acreage which went into Point Beach State Forest.*

Born in 1860, Frank Kaufman eventually became superintendent of the wood plant at Hamilton Manufacturing Company, a position he held for many years. With land obtained through his father's holdings (some reportedly questioned his methods) and purchases of tax delinquent properties, Kaufman ultimately owned about 850 acres and leased additional acreage, part of which was the beautiful nature area of Molarsh Creek. He had an 8 foot fence constructed around 350 acres of this land to contain a herd of whitetail deer, the product of breeding stock shipped in from a Virginia game farm. He planted a flock of wild turkey which flourished well enough until ultimately wiped out by poachers. He had fox and mink in pens. He planted duck potatoes, wild celery and rice to provide food for ducks.

While Kaufman hunted little himself, he



A dapper Joseph Soit (left) and a customer in his Two Rivers tailor shop, 1952.

offered hunting privileges to Hamilton Company executives and company clients.

"Frank Kaufman" was not a popular name among rural neighbors and hunters. The stories maligning Kaufman were many. These stemmed from his attempt to protect his deer from poaching and dogs invading his tract to chase deer.

Invading dogs might be shot and trapped or poisoned. "If one's dog ran into Kaufman's property, one was most apprehensive, as it might never return," a neighbor stated. Kaufman's aloof taciturn nature and his envied successful business position in the depression certainly added color to the "hunter horror stories". Not as much mention was made of the fence cutting and invasion of the Kaufmans by hunters. Turkey or venison, illegal or no, looked pretty good in scant depression larders and probably worsened the poaching situation.

Frank Kaufman died in 1943 leaving behind his beloved nature preserve to be enjoyed by outdoor people forever.

We, of course, could not ask the State to put any money in because they have put in \$10,000 and 350 acres would amount to \$17,500 and that was a lot of money 26 years ago. It doesn't seem so much now as it did at that time and yet we thought it was a bargain. We figured that if the city council of Two Rivers and the city council of Manitowoc each would appropriate \$4,000 and the county board \$9,500, it would be

fine. The County Board according to their law was not allowed to appropriate more than \$9,500. We invited the entire county board, Manitowoc mayor, engineer and council and, of course, our (Two Rivers) council and our group to inspect the proposed land. They were all very impressed and at the banquet at the Community House after the inspection, passed favorable remarks to acquire the land and they would vote the funds if they all chipped in—Two Rivers, \$4,000, Manitowoc \$4,000, and County Board \$9,500.

We appeared before the Two Rivers City Council and asked for the \$4,000. It was not handed over so easily and only if Manitowoc and the County Board chipped in. Then we appeared before the County Board. They did not hand it over too easily, but we did not have too much trouble, providing the city of Two Rivers and the city of Manitowoc put in each \$4,000.

We were quite jubilant because we were assured by the Manitowoc Mayor that it will pass by their City Council. But a few days before the Manitowoc Council met, the Mayor turned about face and they would not go and appropriate the \$4,000.

"The Sun Began to Shine in Our Faces"

By Manitowoc Council not appropriating the money, everything was dead and void. We didn't feel so chipper. But we had to start all over again which it was much harder.

The County Board would have been willing to put in the \$9,500 outright, but they were afraid that the next year we would ask for Manitowoc's share. We were at the County Board all day and at 4:00 o'clock Mr. Harrington, who helped us and was with us all day, had to leave. He shook his head and was afraid that it would not pass. Mr. Harrington told us confidentially that he was sure that the Conservation Commission would put in the \$4,000 but we did not dare tell that to the Board because it was only the Conservation Commission that has the authority, not the Conservation Department of which Mr. Harrington was the head, **and just before 5:00 P.M. the sun began to shine in our faces because the County Board voted to the appropriation outright.** The same evening I wrote to Mr. Harrington that the appropriation was OK. Mr. Harrington who was very much interested in this park and we all were very pleased. Of course we had to appear before our (TR) City Council to get the appropriation outright. It was not too much trouble and they passed the appropriation and the Conservation Commission put in the \$4,000.

Now, we had 720 acres within about one year. That was almost more than we expected and it was publicized in all the Wisconsin papers, including the Milwaukee Journal.

The Milwaukee Journal saw it different though. They severely criticized the Conservation Department and the Conservation Commission because the Journal thought that the Commission spent half of the \$75,000 in Two Rivers and they have not started to buy anything in the Kettle Moraine region.

Wenzel Tomek and I went to see the editor of the Journal to explain that it did not cost the State very much. It was the citizens of Manitowoc County that chipped in. After that he quieted down some, but he kept on harping that they want a park, too.

The reason that the Conservation Department did not start to purchase land sooner in the Kettle Moraine region and Terry Andre Park was that the property owners as soon as they found out that the State wants the land the prices went up by far beyond what the State judged right especially at Terry Andre Park. The land the State bought at Point Beach was, according to the Superintendent of Park and Forests, very reasonable and very good.

Then came the selecting of the name and the site of the recreation building and then the building of the road. The State has figured on several routes to the park. One was, the law says it must be the shortest stretch to a highway and that was from the lighthouse straight across through the swamp to Highway 42. It is about 3 miles and from there is about 6 miles to Two Rivers. We did not think it was so good, we wanted the road from Two Rivers on the Sandy Bay road and then through the woods which, of course, was about 5½ miles but it was much easier to build and possibly not cost any more.

"Mr. Impy was Mad"

We had hearings and the Department said if the road goes to Two Rivers they want to have it go through the woods as far as Molarsh Creek (that is that little bridge) which was very fine and we took a trip with State and County highway committees and others where the road might go. All the other property owners, except one, were glad to have the road go through. He would not want a road to go through his property and would not sell a right-of-way. He was willing to sell his 40 acres but the price was about twice as much as the prevailing price. I believe it was Ralph Scheuer that got the options from this person and a neighbor. The neighbor had some 34 acres and his option price was reasonable (at the prevailing price). At one of the hearings at Hotel Hamilton, another person who owned some land on the Sandy Bay road almost threw a monkey wrench in and spoiled it all. He told Mr. Impy, the State Highway Engineer, that he is not able to build a road the short way on account of the big swamp. I could see Mr. Impy was mad. I knew they could build a road through the swamp if they had to, but finally it was decided that the best way would be towards Two Rivers if it is possible.

One day Mr. Harrington, Mr. Impy and I do not know who else went to see the person holding out in regard to the right-of-way. They were sure that they will make satisfactory arrangements and they told me that they will let me know by about 4:00. But it was 5:30 when I closed the store. I was worried because I did not hear anything, so I went

to the Community House where I knew they will meet and when I got there they gave me the sad news that they could not get the right-of-way and the road will go through the swamp. I was there for a long time trying to persuade them that the road should go towards Two Rivers. They finally agreed that it would be possible if they buy the neighbor's 34 acres which was within reason but the Conservation Department had not that much money to spend at that time.

So finally we got to agree that if we raise \$500 to help buy the neighbor's property the road would go towards Two Rivers. The time was very short before the option expired and the neighbor said he would not renew it and we must raise the money at once. I got on the phone. That was the only time that I remember that I missed my supper because I was too excited. Ervin Orlebeck was the President at that time and got a group together by 8:00 at the Elks Club, about 15 or more to decide how to raise the \$500. By 9:00 it was decided that the money will be raised one way or other. First it was decided to get it from the City Council. I did not go to the City Council with the group because one of the Councilmen had no love for me because I stepped on him at one of the hearings. He was on the other side. They were turned down even though they were told that they have saved more than \$4000 what they have given toward the park because the city's unemployment and on relief were on the WPA project in the park instead of the city supporting them.

So it was up to Orlebeck and his group to get the \$500 and they got it in no time,



In 1957, Joseph Soit (right) receives Lion's Award from Donald Bero, Two Rivers attorney. (Bero and wife died in a light plane crash soon after.)

not probably so easy. I had nothing to do with that. Orlebeck can tell you more about it. According to a newspaper article that I have the Conservation Department had no money at that time so the Community Club loaned the Conservation Department \$500 for 60 days in order not to delay the project. As soon as the money was assured, Mr. Harrington was notified, then the neighbor's option was taken up and the road towards Two Rivers was assured.

I was accused that I did some underhanded work in taking the options of the two people. It was said that these options did not read that way. I had nothing to do with that.

There are so many that have helped that it is hard to mention everyone I had committees with but they varied as time went on. I called for support as we needed it. Some times some committee man did not want to come out in the open for business reasons even though they approved what we were doing. The most support of course was from Seymour Althen (Editor of the Two Rivers Reporter) and his paper. If he had not supported that much, the project might have been a flop.

WPA Started

Sometime after the land was purchased a CCC camp was to have been established but it did not work out. Then the WPA project was organized. Even with that we had trouble in the beginning. The story that the Conservation Department had, there was no labor available in Two Rivers even though we had many men unemployed and on relief. A committee went to see Mr. Harrington and soon after the WPA project was under way to clear the underbrush and what else was needed.

NOTE: WPA was an acronym for "Works Progress Administration" (1935-43) a federal governmental agency for instituting and

administering public works in order to relieve national unemployment. The park project gave some hope and modest relief and constructive activity to at least a few depression weary workers in the Two Rivers area.

Plans were made for the road and recreational building. There were quite a few unemployed in Two Rivers and vicinity. At one time there were some 12 workers on the WPA project. August 1940 the administration building was completed and also the road built (not black-topped as it is now).

Mr. Harrington, of whom we thought a lot of, planned for a much larger park in the years to come.

For a couple of years things were a little quiet. Then Mr. Kaufman passed away. I believe it was 1943 and Mrs. Kaufman wanted to get rid of some of the land. We went to see Mr. Harrington and proposed some 400 acres in the Molarsh Creek area which is the most scenic part of the forest. Some in the group thought that the State is not interested, but I could see that the State wanted the land, but they also wanted to know who is back of it. My say, or my committee's, did not mean so much, so we had to get some other backing.

"To My Idea He Had Cold Feet"

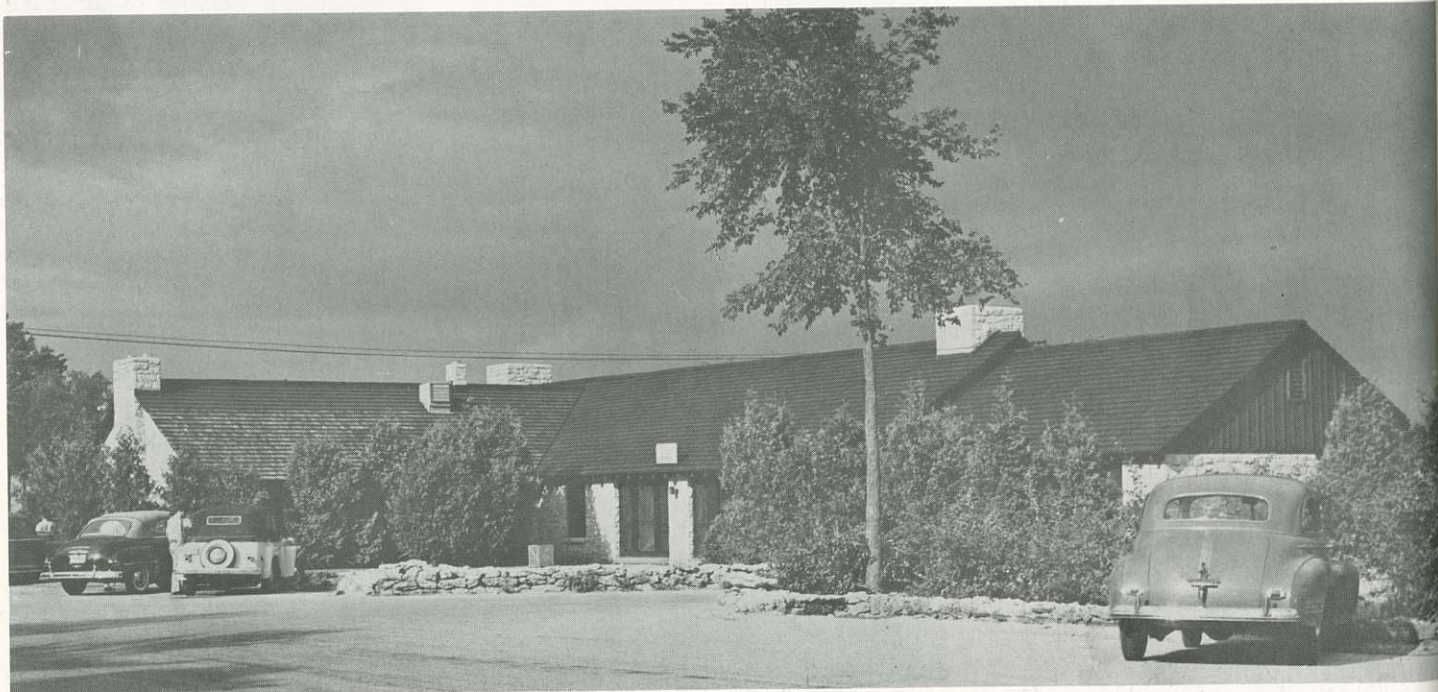
We wanted to appear before the Manitowoc County Izaak Walton League for moral support. I was afraid that I was not good enough a speaker to ask for support. I have asked one man (I won't mention his name) to be the speaker and he promised, but in the afternoon the day before the meeting he called me and said that he had a bad cold and cannot talk. To my idea he had cold feet and was afraid that the Izaak Walton League would not support, so I had to prepare

my speech in that short time.

When I got through the Izaak Walton League approved 100 percent. After that I did my own talking. Of course I had help from other various committees who appeared before the County Board, Manitowoc City Council, Two Rivers City Council and many other organizations for moral support. One of the organizations that we appeared before I was almost afraid and that was the Manitowoc Civic Council where all the organizations have representatives. I was introduced and the President told the group that I will tell them something about my hobby. I presented my case well enough, but the next day I received a letter from the Secretary asking me what they could do to help. I wasn't bashful about telling them.

All in all with the other groups some 24 resolutions were sent to the Conservation Department and Conservation Commission with some individuals (Charlie Broughton, Guido Rahr, LaFond) helping. Through that effort the State added 466 acres instead of what we thought at first some 400 acres.

All purchases recommended by the Conservation Department and Commission have to be approved and signed by the Governor and at no time in the past the Governor has refused to do so. But Frank Gross from Sturgeon Bay, Governor Goodland's secretary, who was interested only in Sturgeon Bay and the Peninsula was trying to do all in his power not to have Governor sign the bill because Frank Gross thought our park was getting too big and would interfere with the tourist trade in Sturgeon Bay. He had many excuses for the Governor not to sign it. We made an appointment with the Governor and Frank Gross and with much talk and correspondence the Governor signed the bill. In 1944 we had some 1400 acres.



Point Beach Recreation Building built by WPA labor—a welcome project during Depression years.

Then we had a hearing for an outlet north from the forest. The state, county and the city were represented to look over the possibility. There were differences of opinion of where the road should go, but finally settled for the road where it is now.

NOTE: This road passes the Rahr Memorial School Forest located north of and adjacent to Point Beach State Forest. This 257-acre school forest, owned by the Manitowoc Public School District and purchased through the generosity of the Rahr Foundation in 1955, is another example of local leaders, foresight and dedication.

The Conservation Department around that time thought we had a nice park and they made a boundary line and said that they will not purchase any land beyond that.

But in 1945 the State Legislature passed a law to instruct the State Planning Board to ask all counties and cities on the shore of Lake Michigan to propose any land suitable for recreation. Manitowoc mayor, County Board, and our City Manager Hoffman got those letters. Our City Manager gave the letter to me to see what I can do. That gave me an idea that we can widen the boundary line from what the Conservation Department originally made. The hearing for the proposals was to be in Green Bay in March 1946.

Thinking that the City of Manitowoc and the County had nothing to propose, we asked them to help us to propose some 900 acres north and south of the then existing park. They were glad to support and came with us to Green Bay. In order to know what and how to propose we have asked the Manitowoc mayor and the engineer, county chairman, and the highway chairman, etc. to a luncheon at the Hotel Hamilton the day before the hearing in Green Bay. They all came and we made plans for the hearing.

I had a map to outline the proposal. Manitowoc mayor, county chairman and Butch LaFond supported my proposal. State Planning Chairman Torkelson seemed to have been pleased with our proposal because he asked me for a lot more information after the meeting. Then Kewaunee proposed something and after that three men from the city of Manitowoc, I don't remember their names, but one of them was a past district attorney of Manitowoc County, proposed something in Manitowoc. The mayor and the engineer did not know anything about it. They were with us. When the report came out in 1946 Manitowoc was not even mentioned, neither was Kewaunee, but the Planning Board investigated our proposal and recommended very strongly to acquire the land and to develop it for recreation. They also recommended to change the name from Point Beach State Forest to Point Beach State Park because it is much more suitable for a park.

Originally we all called it "Park" but we had to change to "Forest" because we acquired it under the forestry law. The park law had no money. Now I believe the law has changed and the park and forest are

combined.

Some time around 1947 Mrs. Kaufman who had some 250 acres of forest passed away and heirs offered the land to the Conservation Department for sale through the East Wisconsin Trust Company but the State was not interested in buying the land. I found that out and inquired about it. That was part of the land we proposed at the hearing in Green Bay. A committee of us went to see Mr. Harrington and persuaded him to acquire that land. Indirectly I understood that the Conservation Department would buy, that is, with our help. Again we solicited the help of Two Rivers and Manitowoc City councils and other organizations for moral support (not financial support). In 1948 the State purchased some 250 acres.

Then came the zoning to prohibit the billboards and buildings put too close to the road. John Hoffman, our city manager, several years before without my knowing has asked the County Board to put in a zoning law, but it did not pass, it fell by the wayside. Then in 1949 we organized to put a zoning law through. My committee has secured the signatures of some 90 percent of the property owners in favor of the zoning. Those

in the extreme north end were very much against it because they claimed their lots were not deep enough. John Hoffman, the city manager, and myself appeared before the County Board twice. I remember the opposition gave me a fine compliment. One of the property owners said, "If you were on our side I am sure the ordinance would not pass", but we finally got the ordinance through in 1950. The Conservation Department made long range plans for developing the land. They planned a feeder way from Sandy Bay Road along the Molarsh Creek which is the most scenic way to the lake so that the people could use the beach which is the nicest beach at the end of Molarsh Creek. There was a parcel of land in the way and had to be bought up and the Conservation Department needed financial help.

I remember it was on a Friday evening. I was to appear before the City Council, but I did not have time. The stores were open on Friday evenings so I asked Butch LaFond to take my part at the City Council.

The City Council appropriated funds for the necessary land.

Road Along Molarsh Creek Fails

Manitowoc Izaak Walton League and Manitowoc Fish and Game Association found out that Butch LaFond was back of that movement. The two organizations hated Butch like poison, they always had trouble and fights. While up to that time both organizations were with us and helped us but from then on they were against everything and against a road along the Molarsh Creek. They wanted the Molarsh Creek for duck breeding and duck hunting.

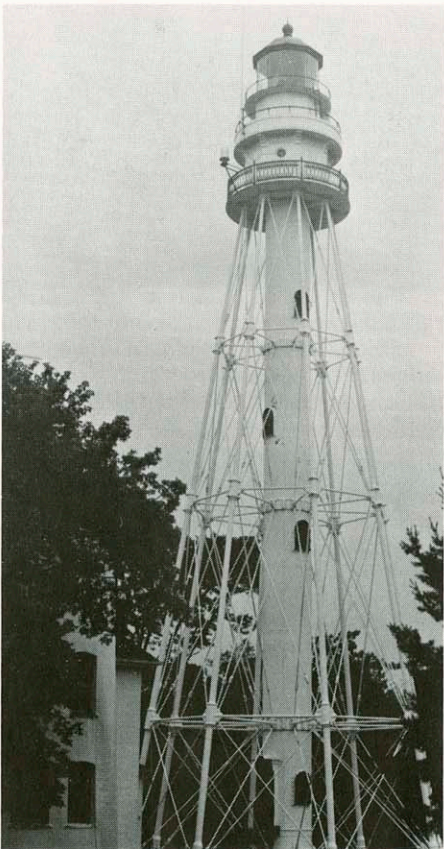
Nothing became of the scenic road. The two organizations appeared in a large group before our City Council to object of appropriating the money. But the Council appropriated anyhow, but they had more influence at the Conservation Department and Commission and there is no road so far. They exaggerated, if we build a road, eventually there would no more trees because all the trees would be cut.

NOTE: Naturalists and outdoor enthusiasts still blanch at even the thought of cutting a road along Molarsh Creek and upsetting the ecosystem in this part of the forest. But one must remember that tourism was the main goal of these steadfast fighters and they wanted to do everything possible to accommodate and attract them.

Tree Planting and Other Activities

Records show that by 1958 the State and various organizations planted some 587,700 trees. In 1957 Manitowoc Schools wanted to plant some trees in the forest. I helped them to organize and they were planting trees until Guido Rahr bought for Manitowoc Schools a school forest north of Point Beach State Forest.

In 1957-58 the squabble started about hunting in the forest. Even ardent hunters



The United States Coast Guard operated lighthouse at Point Beach was built in 1894 to aid lake navigation off Rawley's Point, the scene of numerous lake shipwrecks. The steel tower, 113 feet high, was made in France and was part of the French exhibition at Chicago World's Fair, 1893. The lighthouse has a beacon light visible up to 20 miles away. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1984.



Molarsh Creek meandering through the forest to Lake Michigan. A "Scenic Road" beside it was never built. Many were relieved.

told me that they are afraid to walk in the woods because there are too many kids with 22 rifles and it is too dangerous. We wanted no hunting in the state forest because it is nice to see some wild life. I had quite a fight. Some 23 public debate columns were written on it. Most of the people were with me including hunters but they did not want to come out in the open. The net result was at least there is no hunting from April to October.

This gives you a little idea what happened to Point Beach State Forest.

I have been on it for 25 years. I quit about 2 years ago. Leonard Stangel is the new chairman. We have now some 2500 acres."

...And so Joseph Soit ended his Address.

Epilogue: However appealing and lofty the goals of a project, the road to achievement is never smooth. There can be serious disagreements among its supporters. Point Beach State Forest was no exception, but Mr. Soit and his workers made it!

The hunting issue would continue. The road along Molarsh Creek was never built which pleased many. The ultimate State Forest goal is 3,061 acres as private parcels

within Forest boundaries are hopefully purchased. Point Beach would receive many honors and awards as an outstanding, efficiently-run recreation and natural area.

Leonard Stangel, long-time community leader in Two Rivers, and often part of the fight states, "Joe Soit took many, many hard knocks to get our State Forest." Larry Ketchbaw, Superintendent of Point Beach since 1971, says, "I'm very thankful for people such as Joe Soit who had the energy and foresight to preserve this unique area for the enjoyment of future generations."

Joseph Soit would be the first to admit that his goal was not "conservation and preservation". It was to enhance the economy of the area through tourism. He accomplished it all.

Manitowoc County businesses enjoy increased revenue as a result of Point Beach visitors each year. Campers, hikers and skiiers, nature lovers, birders and hunters, swimmers and beach combers delight in the area's natural beauty. Wisconsin tourism leaders and area residents are proud of this fine recreational area on the shores of Lake Michigan.

What a wonderful everlasting natural memorial to Joe Soit and the many far-sighted leaders and workers who made the impossible happen—the establishment of Point Beach State Forest.

**MANITOWOC COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

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