



Metro

White Mountain National Forest officials mark 100th anniversary with vibrant exhibit



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The White Mountain National Forest in New Hampshire and Maine turned 100 years old on Wednesday.

By Elise Takahama

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The White Mountain National Forest, a longstanding gem in New Hampshire and Maine, turned 100 years old on Wednesday, and officials celebrated the milestone by unveiling a multi-faceted art exhibit to remember the rich history of the forest — and envision its future.

“We want to take time in this moment to look back on the past 100 years,” said forest spokesman Evan Burks. “We’re standing on the shoulders of all the conservation leaders that came before us and stewarded this land. We want to take a minute to celebrate that, where we came from.”

The two-floor exhibit, named “The People’s Forest: A Centennial Celebration of the White Mountain National Forest,” features a 100-year timeline, maps, photographs, paintings, music pieces, collections of forest sounds, and interactive activities encouraging the public to share their vision of the forest’s future, said Cynthia Robinson, the director of the Museum of the White Mountains at Plymouth State University.

The exhibit will be on display in the museum until Sept. 12, she said.

“It makes a lot of sense because we were thinking about how we learn and how we make connections between disciplines,” she said. “We wanted it to feel active and easy for people to see connections through their own lives and be motivated by it. Having those different kinds of approaches to the materials really helps with that.”

The 800,000-acre forest was established on May 16, 1918, when the land was still marked by ashy streams and eroding hills. Widespread fires and massive amounts of logging were destroying the landscape, but the passage of the 1911 Weeks Act and an executive order signed by President Woodrow Wilson put a stop to unsustainable practices, and the White Mountain National Forest was born.

“It was born out of a desire to preserve and protect water, since the logging practices of the time created a lot of erosion.” Burks said. “There was a great concern for having clean water