

79 Weeks State Park

200 Weeks State Park Road, Lancaster, New Hampshire



The Weeks State Park, formerly the John Wingate Weeks Estate, is located off US Route 3 in Lancaster, New Hampshire. John W. Weeks was an accomplished New Hampshire native who was a Congressman and Senator for Massachusetts, the U.S. Secretary of War under Presidents Warren G. Harding and Calvin Coolidge, and author of one of the most successful conservation acts in US history: the Weeks Act.

The Weeks Act permitted the federal government to purchase private land in order to protect the headwaters of rivers and watersheds in the eastern United States and called for fire protection efforts through federal, state, and private cooperation. The Act essentially created eastern National Forests and has protected almost 20 million acres of forestland to date.

Weeks was raised on a family farm located on Mount Prospect near Lancaster, New Hampshire. After a lifetime of achievements, he bought 420 acres of land, which consisted of several abandoned farms, in 1910. From the summit of his Mount Prospect property, one could enjoy the views of the Presidential Range of the White Mountains, the Green Mountains of Vermont, the Kilkenny Range, the Percy Peaks and the upper Connecticut River Valley.

Though it seemed unimportant at the time, before Weeks began construction on his now famous estate, he built a road that allowed cars to access the top of Mount Prospect. Prior to Weeks' road, the only road that had existed for almost a century was primitive and made travel to the top difficult. His car-accessible road enabled many more people the opportunity to reach and enjoy the spectacular 360-degree views from atop Mount Prospect.

Completed in 1913, the Weeks Estate was intended to be used as a summer home. The main house, or "lodge," was designed in the popular bungalow style and constructed of fieldstone and stucco with red terra cotta tiles adorning the gabled roof. The bedrooms were located on the first floor, while the second floor was dedicated entirely as a living room that features a number of large picture windows, an unusual feature for those days. In front of the main house stands a unique fieldstone tower which was originally constructed to function as an observatory and water tower. The tower was added to the National Historic Lookout Register in 1992 and

remains open to the public. Also located on the property are a pump house, a four-stall garage, and a modestly-sized servants' cottage. All structures have been maintained to reflect their original appearance.

The Weeks Estate hosted many distinguished gatherings, and as such, many famous guests visited the Estate, including President Warren G. Harding who spent several days on the property in 1921. Weeks died in July 1926 at his summer home atop Mount Prospect several months after suffering a stroke. After Weeks' death, his beloved estate remained in the family until his children gave it to the State of New Hampshire in 1941.

The Weeks Estate was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1984. The Weeks State Park is now maintained as a historic site and hosts various events and education sessions throughout the summer.

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