

Deer House (6)

This building was removed in 1947 because of termite damage but is worth mentioning. The Deer House is where the Connell family stored feed for their personal pet deer herd. At the turn of the last century deer had been hunted to the brink of extinction in Pennsylvania and wealthy individuals kept them as exotic pets. A four mile long fence was built around Lacawac using wire mesh and chestnut posts (American Chestnut Trees - ask us about those) to keep deer in and poachers out. Eventually the fence gave way and Connell's deer - along with New Jersey Governor Charles Worthington's private deer near the Delaware Water Gap - helped repopulate the northeast.



Col. Louis Watres - greets guests.

Deagan Chimes (7)

The chimes seen here on the small tower are not original to Lacawac. They are a set of very rare musical chimes that previously hung in a tower above the estate of Col. Louis Watres in Scranton. When the estate burned in the 1930's the chimes themselves were brought here and stored by his grandson, Arthur. Lacawac volunteers erected them in this temporary setting so they can be viewed and heard once again. A separate informational flyer is available for this.

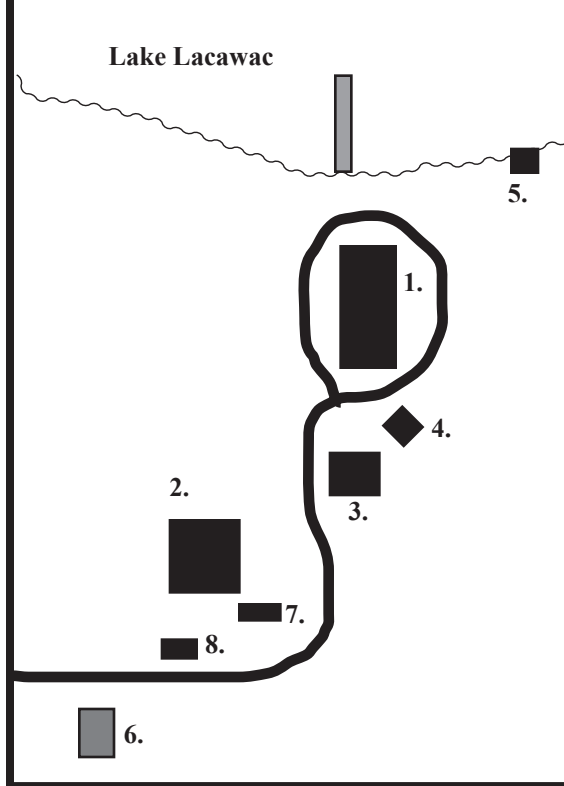


Lacawac and Watres Lodge are available for meetings, conferences, workshops, reunions and special family events. Income from rentals goes to maintain buildings and protect the forest.

Lacawac is supported by your donations, memberships, and volunteer hours. We receive no government operating support. Ask how you can help today!

Map Legend

1- Watres Lodge, 2- Carraige House, 3- The Ice House, 4- Coachman's House, 5- Spring House, 6- site of former Deer House, 7- Deegan Chimes, 8- modern composting toilets.



**Interior visits to the lodge on scheduled tour days is subject to the buildings being vacant.*

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Historic Lacawac



Visitor's Guide to the Great Camp



Welcome To Lacawac Sanctuary

In addition to its position as an outstanding nature preserve and ecological research station, Lacawac is notable for its beautiful old group of historic buildings built in 1903 with an interesting history and some fascinating architectural features.

You may ask to visit the exterior of the buildings anytime the sanctuary Visitor's Center is open or at any time there is an event or program scheduled. Regular tours of the complex including the interiors are also available – check with us for current schedule. Groups and schools may request a personalized tour by appointment.

Lacawac's buildings are on the National Historic Registry. Built in 1903, it's widely regarded as the first of the original Pocono Mountain vacation homes. The buildings are in a rustic style popular at the turn of the last century and similar to the large country estates owned by wealthy industrialists in the Adirondack and Berkshire Mountains. This rustic natural wood style is known as "The Great Camp" school of architecture.

History of Lacawac

When you tour the Lodge at Lacawac you will be surprised at the astonishing quality of workmanship for this building in the middle of the woods. The property was originally owned by the family of William Penn, who sold the land to Burton G. Morss of Ledgedale. Morss cut timber, fished, and cut ice from the lake. His nearby mill and tannery burned in 1895, and the family sold the Lacawac lands to William Connell. Connell was a very wealthy coal mine operator who also ran several industrial mills in Scranton. He was deeply involved in politics and served as a congressman and lieutenant governor.

Connell built the original complex which included the lodge, carriage house/barn, ice house, coachman's house, boathouse, spring/pump house and a deer house (the boat house and deer house were removed in 1947). During his years here the estate was called "Connell Park."

After Connell's death the family sold the property in 1913, to Col. Louis A. Watres. Watres was a state senator who also served as lieutenant governor. A very ambitious, self made man he rose from poverty to own banks, newspapers, insurance companies and ultimately organized the infant electric utility company which built Lake Wallenpuapack.

At first the Watres family used Connell Park as a summer home, but later his daughter and grandson, Isabel and Arthur Watres lived here full time. It was Arthur and Isabel – pioneers in the conservation and land preservation movement - who created Lacawac Sanctuary. In 1966 they established a non-profit entity to manage the preserve and donated the estate to it.

Watres Lodge (1)

The lodge is made of all southern yellow pine including exterior shakes and interior wall, floor and ceiling treatments. Local oak was used for the trim and exterior features such as railings and columns. It features 13 separate gables! A large, open sitting porch faces the lake. There are 9 bedrooms, a summer sleeping porch, 3 bathrooms, a large kitchen, pantry, walk in ice box, seasonal breezeway, dining room and parlor. Large screened wrap-around porches formerly adorned the exterior but were removed as a result of extensive termite damage (when funding is available the Sanctuary intends to restore these).

Interior highlights include the inglenook fireplace surrounded by an expansive double staircase in the parlor. A window wall and door lead outside to the large lake fronting porch. Hatch doors allow passing fire wood directly into storage boxes by the fireplace. The expansive dining room - which today can seat over 35 people for dinner - has its own fireplace and built-in oak china cabinets. The bisecting breezeway provides cool air in summer between the kitchen and the rest of the house. Off the kitchen is a large pantry with built in oak cabinets but missing are the original 3 stone wash sinks used by the servants and the big coal stove.



The Carriage House (2)

This building is now used as lecture hall and performance venue by Lacawac. It was built to house the horses and wagons needed to operate the estate and transport the residents here from the train station 7 miles away in Lake Ariel. Today, the upstairs hay loft has been remodeled to serve as laboratories for ecological research conducted on the lake. The downstairs remains almost entirely intact and you can even still see the individual horse stalls and antique fittings.



The Ice House (3)

This building is named for its original function - storing ice year-round. Earlier, ice harvesting on Lacawac in winter was a commercial venture but in latter years the hired help cut the ice blocks only for use in the lodge - storing them in the ice house. The walls are so thick and the building so well insulated that large blocks of ice could be stored here in a bed of saw dust for up to a year - requiring no electricity or energy. The blocks were ultimately carted across the yard and hoisted by a built in crane to a loft above the walk-in ice box that served the lodge's kitchen. The building was so cold local residents often used it to hang and store game for consumption later in the year.

The windows and second interior floor were added in the 1950's when the structure was converted to a winter cottage for use by Arthur and Isabel Watres. Today the Ice House is used to house students, researchers and interns.

Coachman's House (4)

This small auxiliary building had a dual use. It provided bunk space for the coachmen who transported the family and it housed the gas generator from which servants made acetylene gas. The gas was piped to the lodge where it was used for lighting. Copper gas pipes ran through the interior lodge walls serving the lamps in each room. You can still see some vintage gas lamps in the lodge! The Sanctuary is looking for a duplicate of the original generator in hope of restoring the coachman's house to its original function and appearance.



Spring House – Pump House (5)

Water for the household was drawn directly from Lake Lacawac. While we wouldn't do so today – the lake is so pure that residents at Connell Park drank from lake with no treatment. To insure purity all sewerage from the Great Camp was/is pumped some distance up and over the glacial ridgeline and into the Wallenpuapack watershed – rather than Lacawac – for treatment and dispersal.

Water from Lake Lacawac was allowed to flow over a stone barrier into a settlement basin in the spring house. From there it was drawn by a steam powered pump in an adjoining shed and fed up to a storage reservoir inside the second floor of the house. There it fed sinks and faucets via gravity. While the steam pump is no longer present, Lacawac hopes to be able to locate a similar steam engine and antique pump to put back on display.