



The Lure of the North Woods: Cultivating Tourism in the Upper Midwest

Aaron Shapiro

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In the late nineteenth century, the North Woods offered people little in the way of a pleasant escape. Rather, it was a hub of production supplying industrial America with vast quantities of lumber and mineral ore. This book tells the story of how northern Minnesota, northern Wisconsin, and Michigan's Upper Peninsula became a tourist paradise, turning a scarred countryside into the playground we know today.

Stripped of much of its timber and ore by the early 1900s, the North Woods experienced deindustrialization earlier than the Rust Belt cities that consumed its resources. In *The Lure of the North Woods*, Aaron Shapiro describes how residents and visitors reshaped the region from a landscape of exploitation to a vacationland. The rejuvenating North Woods profited in new ways by drawing on emerging connections between the urban and the rural, including improved transportation, promotion, recreational land use, and conservation initiatives. Shapiro demonstrates how this transformation helps explain the interwar origins of modern American environmentalism, when both the consumption of nature for pleasure and the work of the Civilian Conservation Corps in the North Woods and elsewhere led many Americans to cultivate a fresh perspective on the outdoors. At a time when travel and recreation are considered major economic forces, *The Lure of the North Woods* reveals how leisure—and tourism in particular—has shaped modern America.

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