



E. M. GRIFFITH
1872-1939

Citation

In recognition of ten years (1905-1915) of service as Wisconsin's first Chief State Forester. His pioneering spirit and foresight in forestry led to the development of forest reserves in northern Wisconsin, the beginning of farm woodlot research, recognition of the recreational value of Wisconsin's forests, the establishment of a State Game Preserve and development of a State Parks System.

Inducted into the Wisconsin Forestry Hall of Fame
October 19, 1984

Edward Merriam Griffith was born in Brooklyn, New York, February 8, 1872. His early education was in various schools in Connecticut. He entered Yale University with the Class of 1895 as an engineering student, but left school in his senior year to study forestry in Germany, since there was no School of Forestry in America.

In October of 1898, Griffith was hired by Gifford Pinchot, the then chief of the Division of Forestry in the Department of Agriculture, to promote the concept of management on the National Forest Reserves.

Wisconsin enacted its first comprehensive forestry law in 1903. It provided for a Forestry Commission with power to appoint a State Forester whose professional qualifications required certification by the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture. Seeking opportunity for achievement in a profession to which he was devoted, E. M. Griffith came to Wisconsin as its first State Forester at a salary of \$2,500.

With the enactment of a Forest Fire Control Program (Griffith steered through the legislation against the wishes of an often times hostile citizenry), he turned his attention to forest taxation which he viewed as the primary obstacle to forestry.

During the period 1911-1915, Griffith established the first forestry headquarters and nursery at Trout Lake, hired the first staff of rangers, secured for the state all the unsurveyed and unallocated islands in inland lakes north of Township 33, added an additional 183,000 acres of forest to the Forest Reserves and approved the establishment of the Star Lake plantation in Vilas County; the first state plantation.