

Ernest Hemingway's Idaho house listed on national register

By KEITH RIDLER, Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — An Idaho house where Ernest Hemingway wrote his last works before killing himself in the main entryway in 1961 has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Nature Conservancy owns the two-story, 2,500-square-foot house in the central Idaho resort town of Ketchum and announced the listing Tuesday.

"We're looking at ways to honor and also build on the literary legacy that Hemingway brought," said Lou Lunte, the group's deputy state director.

Hemingway experts say the famed author worked on "A Moveable Feast" and "The Dangerous Summer" at the house he owned from April 1959 until his suicide in July 1961 at age 61 when, biographers say, he feared he had lost the ability to write to his standards.

The National Park Service, which manages the National Register, said the Ernest and Mary Hemingway House was listed because of its ability to provide insights about Hemingway. The Nobel Prize winner was drawn to the region for its hunting and fishing, said Paul Lusignan, a historian with the National Register.

The death of Hemingway wasn't a deciding factor to include the house, but Lusignan said it did play a role.

The house is "associated with a part of his career in which he had lost the ability to write as he previously had," Lusignan said. "He lived a full life and he was going out on his own terms. I think that reflects the persona that he created for himself."

The 1950s house contains an astonishing array of the author's personal possessions rarely seen by the public. Because of zoning restrictions, The Nature Conservancy allows visits to the house by invitation only.

Mary Hemingway, who died in 1986, gave the house to The Nature Conservancy. The group used it as a field office for a time before outgrowing it and moving to other offices. The house has an astonishing array of the author's personal possessions and mid-1950s decor.

"It's sort of frozen in the mid-century time period," said Tricia Canaday of Idaho's State Historic Preservation Office. "It's got all his stuff in it, that's what's so amazing. His boots are sitting by the fireplace and his travel trunk where he painted 'Hemingway' on it."

Lunte said The Nature Conservancy hopes to start a writer-in-residence program at the house and is also collaborating with The Community Library to link Hemingway to sites and stories in the area where the literary giant first arrived in the 1930s.

Lusignan said there are now five homes in the U.S. listed on the National Register due to Hemingway having lived or spent significant time in them. One of the most visited is Hemingway's former home in Key West, Florida.

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