

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

276

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

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APR 08 2016

Nat. Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service

### 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Pine-Hickory Lakes Roadside Parking Area

Other names/site number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of related multiple property listing:  
"Federal Relief Construction in Minnesota, 1933-1943"

### 2. Location

Street & number: On Minnesota Highway 169, .25 mile north of 249th Lane

City or town: Farm Island Twp. State: MN County: Aitkin

Not For Publication  N/A Vicinity:  Aitkin

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_ national X statewide \_\_\_ local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A \_\_\_ B X C \_\_\_ D

<u>Barbara Howard</u>		<u>March 31, 2016</u>	
<b>Signature of commenting official:</b> Barbara Mitchell Howard, Deputy SHPO, MNHS		<b>Date</b>	
<b>Title :</b>		<b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>	
In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.			
<b>Signature of certifying official/Title:</b>		<b>Date</b>	
<b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>			

Pine-Hickory Lakes Roadside Parking Area  
Name of Property

Aitkin Co., MN  
County and State

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

*for Edson H. Beall*  
Signature of the Keeper

*5-23-16*  
Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	buildings
<u>    1    </u>	<u>                    </u>	sites
<u>    5    </u>	<u>    1    </u>	structures
<u>                    </u>	<u>                    </u>	objects
<u>    6    </u>	<u>    1    </u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register   N/A  

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**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

  LANDSCAPE/park    
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

  LANDSCAPE/park    
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Pine-Hickory Lakes Roadside Parking Area  
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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Other: NPS Rustic Style

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**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: STONE

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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### Summary Paragraph

Pine-Hickory Lakes Roadside Parking Area (RPA) is located along Minnesota Highway 169 about six miles south of Aitkin in southwest Aitkin County's Farm Island Township. The wayside rest was built in 1937-1938 on an isthmus between Little Pine and Hickory Lakes. It was developed by the Minnesota Department of Highways (also called Minnesota Highway Department or MHD). At approximately 35 acres in size, it is one of the largest wayside rests developed by the MHD during the New Deal. It was designed in the National Park Service (NPS) Rustic Style by prominent Minnesota landscape architect Arthur Richardson ("A. R.") Nichols, consulting for MHD. Collaborating with Nichols was engineer Harold E. Olson, longtime chief of the MHD Roadside Development Division. The property was built by the MHD, the National Youth Administration (NYA), and the Works Progress Administration (WPA). The property has a naturalistic site design and structures built of concrete and local stone. The wayside rest is still owned by the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT). It has continuously served as a state highway wayside rest since its construction and provides public swimming, fishing, and hiking, as well as boat access to Hickory Lake.

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### Narrative Description

See Continuation Sheet.



Pine-Hickory Lakes Roadside Parking Area  
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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT  
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1937-1938

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

See Continuation Sheet

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Pine-Hickory Lakes Roadside Parking Area (RPA), a state highway wayside rest built in 1937-1938, is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A, significance to the broad patterns of our history, and Criterion C, design significance, in the areas of Politics/Government and Landscape Architecture. The property meets the registration requirements of the "Waysides and Overlooks" subsection of "Social and Recreational Facilities" in the Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) entitled "Federal Relief Construction in Minnesota, 1933-1943." The property is a good example of the earliest and largest wayside rests built by the Minnesota Department of Highways (MHD) Roadside Development Division and represents the state's early efforts to improve highway safety and aesthetics and encourage the state's growing automobile tourism industry. It is a good example of the fruits of collaboration between the MHD, the National Youth Administration (NYA), and the Works Progress Administration (WPA). The property was designed in the National Park Service (NPS) Rustic Style by prominent Minnesota landscape architect Arthur R. Nichols collaborating with Harold E. Olson of the MHD Roadside Development Division. It embodies and illustrates defining characteristics of the NPS Rustic Style including the work of skilled craftsmen and the distinctive use of local materials. The property includes several types of stone structures that are rare in Minnesota. Pine-Hickory Lakes RPA has a state level of significance. The period of significance is 1937-1938, the period during which the wayside rest was built.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

See Continuation Sheet.

Pine-Hickory Lakes Roadside Parking Area  
Name of Property

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

See Continuation Sheet.

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### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

### Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: Minnesota Dept. of Transportation, St. Paul

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** AK-FIS-017

Pine-Hickory Lakes Roadside Parking Area  
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### 10. Geographical Data

**Acreeage of Property** approx. 35 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

#### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |              |            |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

**Or**

#### UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or  NAD 1983

- |             |                  |                   |
|-------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 15 | Easting: 443758  | Northing: 5143938 |
| 2. Zone: 15 | Easting: 443757  | Northing: 5143764 |
| 3. Zone: 15 | Easting: 443333  | Northing: 5143268 |
| 4. Zone: 15 | Easting : 443173 | Northing: 5143401 |
| 5. Zone: 15 | Easting : 443165 | Northing: 5143953 |



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**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary of the nominated property is shown by the dashed line on Sketch Maps A and B. All four sides of the boundary are aligned with current Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) right-of-way lines, which have not changed since 1938. The same state highway right-of-way lines informed the site boundary as depicted on the original plan sheet dated March 1938 (Figure 5).

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary encompasses the parcel of land historically associated with the wayside rest.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Susan Granger and Scott Kelly  
organization: Gemini Research  
street & number: 15 East 9th St  
city or town: Morris state: MN zip code: 56267  
e-mail: gemres@info-link.net  
telephone: 320-589-3846  
date: December 2015

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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Pine-Hickory Lakes Roadside Parking Area  
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### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### Photo Log

Name of Property: Pine-Hickory Lakes Roadside Parking Area  
City or Vicinity: Farm Island Township  
County: Aitkin State: MN  
Photographer: Scott Kelly

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

#### Photo 1 of 27

This photo looks from northwest to southeast across the center of the wayside rest. It shows Highway 169 bisecting the site. Hickory Lake is in the distance (facing southeast, October 2014).

#### Photo 2 of 27

The center of the site has mowed turf and groups of native trees in naturalistic patterns. The East Council Ring, at center, is the only stone feature visible from the highway. The main entrance to the east half of the site is in the right center of the photo near the steel sign (facing south, June 2015).

#### Photo 3 of 27

The East Parking Area and Hickory Lake (facing east, June 2015).

#### Photo 4 of 27

In 1958 concrete bollards were placed around the East Parking Area. It was originally edged with a Rustic style wooden guardrail (facing west, June 2015).

Pine-Hickory Lakes Roadside Parking Area  
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**Photo 5 of 27**

Looking across Highway 169 to the West Parking Area and Little Pine Lake. In 1958 the West Parking Area was paved with bituminous for the first time and partly outlined with concrete bollards, seen at left center, which replaced wooden guardrail (facing northwest, October 2014).

**Photo 6 of 27**

Picnic table in mowed turf area south of the West Parking Area, just north of the swimming beach. Historically there was probably a portable log and plank table at this location (facing north, June 2015).

**Photo 7 of 27**

The swimming beach. (Note towels; swimmers are out of sight.) The Ripple River, which links Little Pine and Hickory lakes, and the Culvert (Bridge 3911) are about 350' south of the beach (obscured by trees near the center of the photo) (facing south, June 2015).

**Photo 8 of 27**

South side of the East Council Ring and, in the upper right quadrant, the entrance to the east half of the site (facing south, June 2015).

**Photo 9 of 27**

The East Council Ring, which is located at the north end of the South Picnic Area (facing north, June 2015).

**Photo 10 of 27**

Typical landscape view near the center of the east side of the site. The Scenic Overlook is in the distance at the center of the photo (facing southeast, June 2015).

**Photo 11 of 27**

The Scenic Overlook on a rise overlooking Hickory Lake. It has a somewhat rectangular plan with a pedestrian opening (near the center of this view). It stands in a grassy area that is occasionally mowed (facing southeast, October 2014).

**Photo 12 of 27**

The lake side of the Scenic Overlook has a projecting curved lookout bay (facing southwest, June 2015).

**Photo 13 of 27**

The west half of the Scenic Overlook. The stones on all of the structures at the site were chosen and placed for visual interest; the quality of the masonry work is high (facing north, June 2015).

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**Photo 14 of 27**

The Scenic Overlook and its entrance. The mortared fire ring was added at an unknown date (perhaps the 1960s) (facing north, June 2015).

**Photo 15 of 27**

The footpath, northeast of the Scenic Overlook, that follows the shore of Hickory Lake (facing northeast, June 2015).

**Photo 16 of 27**

Overgrown picnic spot northwest of the Scenic Overlook in the southwest end of the East Picnic Area. At the base of the clump of young birch in the upper left quadrant of the photo is the remnant of a mortared stone fireplace (see Photos 21 and 22 for intact versions) (facing northwest, June 2015).

**Photo 17 of 27**

The remnant of a different mortared stone fireplace located near the south end of the East Picnic Area (facing north, June 2015).

**Photo 18 of 27**

Mortared stone Refuse Container for burning picnic trash. Located along the footpath near the shore of Hickory Lake in the East Picnic Area (facing north, June 2015).

**Photo 19 of 27**

Interior of the Refuse Container with its ash grate (facing north, June 2015).

**Photo 20 of 27**

The footpath along Little Pine Lake in the West Picnic Area (facing south, June 2015).

**Photo 21 of 27**

The West Fireplace, a mortared stone structure only missing its metal grill. It is located near the south end of the West Picnic Area (facing north, June 2015).

**Photo 22 of 27**

The North Fireplace. It is located near the north end of the West Picnic Area (facing west, June 2015).

**Photo 23 of 27**

The West Council Ring, sited on a point of land at the extreme northwest corner of the property (facing north, June 2015).

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**Photo 24 of 27**

Detail of the West Council Ring with Little Pine Lake in the distance (facing west, June 2015).

**Photo 25 of 27**

The west (upstream) side of the Dam Ruins near the south end of the site (facing east, June 2015).

**Photo 26 of 27**

The intact west side of the Culvert (Bridge 3911) on the shore of Little Pine Lake in the south part of the site. It is a double box culvert built in 1923 to carry the highway over the creek (facing east, June 2015).

**Photo 27 of 27**

The east end of the Culvert, added in 1964 when the highway was shifted to the east by 30' which required that the culvert be lengthened by the same amount. The east end lacks the beauty of the west end (Photo 26) but has a simple design that is not visually disruptive to the site (facing north, June 2015).

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



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**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Pine-Hickory Lakes Roadside Parking  
Area

Name of Property  
Aitkin County, MN

County and State

Federal Relief Construction in MN, 1933-1943

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number   7   Page   1  

**NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION**

The nominated property includes seven principal resources – six structures and one site. The structures are two Council Rings, a Scenic Overlook, a Refuse Container, Picnic Fireplaces (together counted as one), and a Culvert (Bridge 3911). The site is the designed historic landscape<sup>1</sup> itself, which includes a spatial organization, circulation system, natural water features, parking areas, picnic spots, a swimming area, topographical features, and vegetation; all resources are not individually counted per National Register guidelines. All of the resources are Contributing except the Culvert.

The site description below is organized following the general outline of the Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes.<sup>2</sup>

The description refers to the only surviving original plan sheet (Figure 5). It is labeled a "Tentative Study Sketch." The sketch is dated March 1938, although development of the site began during the 1937 construction season. Construction of the wayside rest generally followed the sketch with the exceptions described below. The final location of most structures and trails was evidently adjusted in the field for topography and other existing conditions, which was common for MHD wayside rests of the New Deal, especially those of this size.

**Setting and Topography**

Pine-Hickory Lakes RPA was built on an historically popular tourist highway in a part of Aitkin County dotted with lakes and forests. The property is located a few miles north of Mille Lacs Lake, one of the state's largest recreational lakes. Wealthwood State Forest, which was established in 1963 on the north shore of Mille Lacs Lake, is located nearby. Flanking the wayside rest are Little Pine Lake, which covers 220 acres, and Hickory Lake, which is 197 acres. The wayside rest has historically provided public access to about 2,000 feet of shoreline on each lake. Both lakes have historically been popular for fishing and swimming. They are part of an interconnected chain of lakes linked by the Ripple River that includes, from west to east, Farm Island, Little Pine, Hickory, and Spirit lakes.

The boundaries of the wayside rest have not changed significantly since 1938. The parcel has an irregular hour-glass shape (Figure 5, Sketch Map A). Much of the north boundary west of the highway is marked by a simple woven wire fence that was installed in 1974 and is screened by trees.

<sup>1</sup> A designed historic landscape is a type of historic landscape that was consciously laid out or designed, usually in a particular landscape style or tradition, and often by a professional or amateur landscape architect, master gardener, or horticulturist. See J. Timothy Keller and Genevieve P. Keller, *How to Evaluate and Nominate Designed Historic Landscapes*, National Register Bulletin 18 (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, ca. 1989). See also Charles A. Birnbaum with Christine Capella Peters, eds., *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1996), 5.

<sup>2</sup> Birnbaum with Peters.

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The property is surrounded by the two lakes on the west and east, by two forested residential properties (one on each side of the highway) on the north, and by well-screened residential properties and a campground on the south. The site's immediate setting has not changed significantly since 1938.

The topography of the wayside rest is quite varied. There are three high points, two highlighted by footpaths and one serving as the site for the Scenic Overlook. In the northwest part of the site is a wooded hilltop, elevation 1280', that is traversed by a footpath (see West Area on Sketch Map A). (For comparison, the elevation of the West Parking Area is 1265'.) In the northeast part of the site is a wooded summit, elevation 1292', which the original plan envisioned would be circled by a footpath lined with picnicking spots (see East Area, Sketch Map A). Farther south near the center of the site is a grassy knoll of 1278' on which the Scenic Overlook was built.

The property also has some low spots whose elevations are 20' to 34' below the hilltops. These low areas are inundated much of the year in a way that was evidently not anticipated in either the original planning or during construction, both of which occurred during the drought of the 1930s. The two most significant low spots, both at elevation 1256', are a peat bog that occupies part of the northeast portion of the site and prevents the footpath from being shaped as envisioned in the original plan, and a marshy area on the south side of the Ripple River that makes the south end of the site as drawn on the original plan essentially unusable. The size of the marshy area adjacent to the Ripple River has been exacerbated by the fact that the stop logs have been removed from the small concrete dam so it no longer holds back water, but this does not fully explain the inundation of the south end of the site.<sup>3</sup>

**Integrity.** The property's setting and topography have not changed significantly since 1938 except as just described.

### **Spatial Organization**

At 35 acres in size, Pine-Hickory Lakes RPA is one of the largest wayside rests designed by A. R. Nichols and Harold E. Olson for the MHD. Consistent with the NPS Rustic Style, the landscape design preserved the natural character of the landscape and made use of existing assets including the shores of two lakes, a small river, interesting topography, and deciduous forests and understory plants. The site design incorporated an existing highway and culvert, and was influenced by the availability of New Deal labor and funding. Characteristic of the Rustic Style, the spatial arrangement is naturalistic rather than formal or symmetrical. Because of the size of the property and its hilly, wooded landscape, the site plan is complex and most of the property's several use areas are not visible from one another. They are linked by meandering hiking trails and by Highway 169.

<sup>3</sup> According to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' *Lakefinder* website, the water level of Hickory Lake was 1254.11 feet in May 1937, six inches higher in May 1941 (1254.83 feet) after the dam was built, and the same in November 2008 (1254.85 feet) as in May 1941.

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To help describe the site's spatial organization, portions of the site have been identified as the West Area, East Area, and South Area (see Sketch Map A).

West Area. The West Area is located north of the West Parking Area. It has foot trails that follow the shore of Little Pine Lake and climb a wooded hill. At the west edge of the West Area is the West Council Ring (see Structures below) which had a stone fire ring with a cooking grate in its center. The West Area retains two intact fireplaces (see Structures below). As described under "West Parking Area," the original plan shows a northwestern parking area and adjacent well (depicted as a circle on the drawing), that would have served the West Area but were never built. Today the West Area is wooded. Footpaths are extant (Sketch Map A, Photo 20). The picnic spots overgrown and no longer used for picnicking.

East Area. The East Area occupies the northeast part of the site. The original plan shows a footpath that follows the shore of Hickory Lake and loops around a steep hilltop that is the highest point in the wayside rest. A large peat bog, the extent of which was evidently unanticipated in the original drawing, prevents the footpath and picnic spots from extending as far west as drawn. The East Area retains a stone Refuse Container and the remnants of at least two fireplaces (see Structures below). Today the East Area is wooded with a boggy area in the west. Footpaths are extant (Sketch Map A, Photo 15). The picnic spots are overgrown (Photo 16) and no longer used for picnicking.

South Area. On the original plan the South Area is shown with a looping footpath that leads south from the East Parking Area, crosses the Dam to the south side of the Ripple River, and returns to the north side of the creek via a small wooden footbridge. The Dam was conceived on the original plan as a stream crossing but judging by an historic photo (Figure 3), a 1939 aerial photo, and existing conditions, it never carried a footpath. The footpath did cross the stream on a small wooden footbridge, built in 1938, which was located about 110' east of the Dam. (The original plan shows the footbridge farther east.) The footbridge evidently replaced an earlier wooden footbridge that predated the wayside rest and is drawn on an early 1920s MHD right-of-way map.<sup>4</sup> The 1938 footbridge, which has been removed, was a very modest structure judging by its cost in a 1938 Roadside Development report where it is valued at \$25 compared, for example, to the site's wooden guardrail which was valued at \$816 (1938 dollars).<sup>5</sup> At the north end of the South Area is the East Council Ring (see Structures below) which has a fire ring, originally with a metal cooking grill. No other fireplaces or fireplace remnants have been identified in the South Area, but some may be hidden in the vegetation. The original plan shows a well (denoted by a circle) about half-way between the East Parking Area and the Dam. It was the site's sole well and was not built at the location drawn, but rather between the East Parking Area and the East Council Ring.<sup>6</sup> The well and its hand pump have

<sup>4</sup> Right-of-Way Map for Trunk Highway 169 in the vicinity of Pine and Hickory Lakes, Minnesota Dept. of Highways, ca. 1922 with updates.

<sup>5</sup> *Annual Report of the Accomplishments of Roadside Development Along the Trunk Highways in Minnesota*, Minnesota Dept. of Highways, 1938, 34.

<sup>6</sup> The pump shows in a circa 1938 photo of the East Council Ring by the MHD in Harold E. Olson, photo album, v1, p3, Site Development Unit, MnDOT.

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been removed. Today the South Area has only a limited trail system. The land south of the river is wet much of the year. As described in Topography above, this situation may not have been anticipated in the original plan and it is possible the south end of the South Area saw little use once the drought of the 1930s ended and water levels returned to normal. The South Area is overgrown and no longer used for picnicking.

Picnic Spots. The original plan shows picnic spots scattered throughout the regions labeled on Sketch Map A as the West, East, and South areas. Today they are overgrown and difficult to identify. According to the 1938 Roadside Development report, the site was furnished with nine picnic fireplaces which formed the focal points of the picnic areas.<sup>7</sup> Based on a study of existing conditions and the original plan, it is believed the fireplaces may have been distributed with two or three in the West Area, three or four in the East Area, and approximately three in the South Area. Extant fireplaces are described in Structures below. The 1938 Roadside Development report indicates the site was furnished with 27 picnic tables. The tables were likely distributed near the fireplaces per the original plan. The original tables, all of which have been removed, were likely a Rustic Style table of the type used by the Roadside Development Division statewide. An appendix in a 1943 final report by the National Youth Administration in Minnesota provides drawings and a photograph of a "Rustic Picnic Table" designed by the MHD and built by the NYA that was perhaps used on this site.<sup>8</sup> Today the site is generally furnished with one or two portable metal picnic tables near the parking areas.

Play Area Remnant. The original plan identifies a small play area, labeled as such and with a softball field symbol, on the east side of the highway near the center of the site. Today this spot is an open grassy area with an irregular shape. A. R. Nichols and Harold Olson included open play areas, sometimes labeled for "kittenball" (softball), in some of the larger MHD wayside rests of the period.<sup>9</sup>

**Integrity.** The wayside rest's spatial organization is generally preserved but has been altered by the fact that the picnic spots are overgrown and are no longer used for picnicking.

### **Circulation**

Roads. The property is bisected by Highway 169 which is aligned roughly north-south (Photos 1, 5). When the wayside rest was built in 1937-1938, the MHD-built highway was already in place, as was the Culvert (described below) that carried the highway over the Ripple River near the south end of the site. The highway had two 12' bituminous lanes and two 4' gravel shoulders. As part of the development of most MHD wayside rests of the New Deal, the ditches and slopes of the associated highway were shaped and planted to erase the scars of highway construction and improve drainage and appearance. This likely occurred as part of the construction of Pine-

<sup>7</sup> *Annual Report 1938*, 34.

<sup>8</sup> *Final Report, National Youth Administration for the State of Minnesota: Sept. 1935 to July 1943* (National Youth Administration, Minnesota, 1943), appendix.

<sup>9</sup> Examples include Cold Spring Roadside Parking Area where the play area is labeled on the site plan on file with the Site Development Unit, MnDOT.



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Hickory Lakes RPA but no details are known except that four acres were seeded with grass. In 1964, 26 years after the site was developed, the highway was realigned to its present location and slightly widened. The centerline was shifted about 30' to the east near the south end of the site at the Ripple River, and about 50' to the east near the center to the site at West Parking Area's entrance. The rebuilt highway had two 12' bituminous lanes and two 10' gravel shoulders. Today the travel lanes are the same width but the shoulders are surfaced with 8' of bituminous and 2' of gravel.<sup>10</sup> The 1964 change and the subsequent increase in shoulder pavement have altered the site somewhat but have not significantly diminished its integrity of design (including spatial arrangement, topography, and circulation pattern) or its integrity of feeling or association.

West Parking Area. Each half of the wayside rest has a parking area. The West Parking Area (Photo 5) was created from an informal pull-off that, in 1937, already existed on the west side of the highway.<sup>11</sup> In variance from the original plan, the 1937-1938 project used the preexisting pull-off as its West Parking Area rather than creating a new parking area as drawn in the northwest corner of the site. (The proposed parking area in the northwest part of the site would have made use of what was evidently a preexisting driveway and small clearing, likely the site of a building removed by the time the wayside rest was developed. There is no evidence that the parking area and an adjacent well, which is depicted as a circle on the original plan, were ever built.)<sup>12</sup> The West Parking Area retains its original dimensions of approximately 300' (north-south) by 65' (east-west). As part of the construction of the wayside rest, the parking area was edged with "rustic" wooden guardrail, probably made of logs and/or heavy timbers.<sup>13</sup> In 1958 the MHD paved the West Parking Area with bituminous and installed square concrete bollards along its edge, replacing what remained of the wooden guardrail.<sup>14</sup> In 1964 when the highway was shifted about 50' east at this location, the approach to the parking area was lengthened to accommodate the new alignment. Today the parking area is paved with bituminous and a few of the 1958 concrete bollards remain. Between the south edge of the parking area and the Swimming Beach is a small grassy picnic area with a portable picnic table (Photo 6).

East Parking Area. The East Parking Area, located near the shore of Hickory Lake, was built as part of the 1937-1938 development (Photo 3). Its original footprint is similar in shape to that of the Scenic Overlook with a curving bay on one side. The parking area was originally edged with "rustic" wooden guardrail.<sup>15</sup> In 1958 the guardrail was replaced by a set of square concrete bollards, about 30 of which remain today (Photo 4). Encroaching vegetation is obscuring the parking area's original footprint and it now appears more rounded. It retains its approximate original size of about 90' (north-south) by 75' and is still surfaced with gravel. Today there

<sup>10</sup> Construction Project Log Record for Trunk Highway 169, State of Minnesota Dept. of Highways Road Life Studies, Minnesota Dept. of Transportation (MnDOT).

<sup>11</sup> The preexisting pull-off is drawn on the ca. 1922 Right-of-Way Map.

<sup>12</sup> For example, they are not discernible on a Sept. 30, 1939 aerial photograph by the Farm Service Agency.

<sup>13</sup> *Annual Report* 1938, 34; Gemini Research speculates that about 610' of the 960' of the original rustic guardrail was used to edge the West Parking Area.

<sup>14</sup> Construction Plan for west parking area at Pine-Hickory Lakes Roadside Parking Area, which is a sheet titled "Roadside Development Project Near Aitkin," July 1958, State of Minnesota Dept. of Highways, Site Development Unit, MnDOT.

<sup>15</sup> *Annual Report* 1938, 34; Gemini estimates about 250' of the site's 960' of rustic guardrail was used for this parking lot.



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is an inconspicuous place along the east edge of the parking area that provides public boat access to Hickory Lake. Boats may have been launched from the vicinity of the East Park Area for many decades.

**Footpaths.** A series of footpaths or hiking trails curve throughout the wayside rest as shown on Sketch Map A. (On the sketch map, the paths that are less frequently traveled show as dashed lines.) Because it is evident the original trails were field-adjusted from the original plan (Figure 5) in response to existing conditions, it is not clear exactly how their routes have been altered since 1938. The original plan indicates the paths should be 6' wide. Today they vary in width from about 5' wide on the shore of Little Pine Lake (Photo 20) to about 8' wide northeast of the Scenic Overlook (Photo 15). The footpath along Little Pine Lake (from the West Parking Area to the council ring) was paved with bituminous to a width of 4' in 1974. Since then the bituminous surface has deteriorated and the trail is returning to its original dirt surface (Photo 20). In general, the location, appearance, and function of the site's footpaths convey much of the original design intent.

**Integrity.** The wayside rest's circulation system is generally preserved. Highway 169 retains its basic location and function although it has been slightly realigned and widened and the roadway shoulders have been paved. Site entrances and parking areas retain their original size and location. The West Parking Area has been paved. Footpaths are overgrown and those at the south end of the wayside rest have been lost to wetlands.

### **Water Features**

The wayside rest was designed to take advantage of three natural water features: Little Pine Lake, Hickory Lake, and the Ripple River, which is the creek or channel that connects the two lakes. A. R. Nichols and Harold E. Olson made use of all three water features in his landscape design. As part of the site development, a small concrete dam was built across the creek to help control the water level of Little Pine Lake. The Ripple River historically served as an important walleye spawning area and fishing spot. The site's concrete Culvert and the abutments of the Dam all provided excellent locations for bank fishing. Today the Dam's abutments are still popular for fishing.

As part of the wayside rest project, a small swimming beach was developed on the shore of Little Pine Lake between the West Parking Area and the Ripple River. It is referred to as a "wading pool" in the 1938 Roadside Development Division report that contains details about the site.<sup>16</sup> Today the small sandy beach is extant (Photo 7). It is still marked with swimming buoys and remains one of seven public swimming spots in Aitkin County.

**Integrity.** The wayside rest's water features are generally intact.

<sup>16</sup> *Annual Report* 1938, 34.

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**Vegetation**

The surviving original plan shows a naturalistic mix of forested areas and open clearings. The original plan and historic photos (for example, Figures 1, 2, 3) suggest much of the vegetation was preexisting. The 1938 Roadside Development report indicates the MHD and NYA cleared eight acres of existing vegetation and seeded four acres with grass. Because the report lists no planting or transplanting, it is likely no new plants were added to supplement the existing vegetation.<sup>17</sup>

Today the wayside rest has several areas of turf that are occasionally mowed and shaded by scattered groups of trees. These grassy areas are concentrated in the center of the site including around the West Parking Area and south past the Swimming Beach; from the Scenic Overlook south past the East Parking Area; and close to the highway for the length of the site (Photos 1, 2, 6 and others).

The rest of the site is forested with a mix of deciduous and coniferous trees, many of them native to the area (see most Photos). The trees include maples, oaks, basswood, American elm, birches, ash, pines, spruces, tamarack, and others. Beneath the canopy are deciduous shrubs such as smooth sumac, dogwoods, and elderberry, and a wide range of herbaceous groundcover plants. The wet area in the south has cattails and other marsh plants, and the boggy areas in the northeast have plants such as labrador tea, leatherleaf, mosses, and ferns.

**Integrity.** The historic integrity of the wayside's vegetation is generally good but the site is overgrown, which may be considered poor condition rather than an alteration. The picnic spots are overgrown and the south end of the site is marshy. While volunteer growth has added more trees and shrubs to the site, the baseline forests and many grassy clearings remain in the same location as they were historically and no new plants have been intentionally added to the site.

**Structures**

The wayside rest has two resources made of reinforced concrete – the Culvert and the Dam ruins – and a number of Rustic style structures designed by A. R. Nichols and made of local stone. Most of the stone structures are built of whole and split boulders, many of them granite. Some structures also exhibit small amounts of cut granite quarry rubble. The stones in each structure were obviously chosen and placed for visual interest. The quality of the craftsmanship is high.

The original plan also shows a pair of privies in the northeast corner of the site and another pair near the center of the south property line. There is no evidence they were built; the list of construction details and quantities in the 1938 Roadside Development report does not mention privies.<sup>18</sup> The MHD may later have placed a wooden privy near one or both parking areas as it did at some wayside rests. There are no privies on the site today.

<sup>17</sup> *Annual Report 1938*, 34.

<sup>18</sup> *Annual Report 1938*, 34. Privies were drawn in similar positions on the Roadside Development Division's plan for another

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Scenic Overlook. (One Contributing Structure; built by the NYA.) The Scenic Overlook is located near the center of the east half of the site (Figure 1, Photos 11 through 14). It stands on a grassy knoll overlooking Hickory Lake and surrounded by patches of woods. The trees have not recently been cut back so the view of the lake is obscured during the summer months but somewhat open after the leaves drop. The structure measures about 34' (north-south) by 18'. It has a rectangular footprint with a curved bay that projects to the southeast. (The formal curve in the footprint is a motif used by A. R. Nichols in several structures on MHD wayside rests of the period.) The Scenic Overlook has a 5'-wide pedestrian opening on the northwest side. The structure is made of randomly laid mortared stone. The walls are 18" thick, about 30" tall, and anchored at intervals by 24"-square piers. A 5'-diameter mortared stone fire ring was built in the center at an unknown date (perhaps the 1960s). Its stone is visually compatible with the original structure. The overlook is missing a few stones, and circa 1975 a thin layer of cement mortar was placed on the upper surface to stop water infiltration.<sup>19</sup> The Scenic Overlook is otherwise unaltered and is Contributing to the property.

East Council Ring. (One Contributing Structure; built by the NYA.) The East Council Ring is located on an open grassy knoll near the center of the east half of the site (Figure 2, Photos 2, 8, 9). It is the only stone feature clearly visible from Highway 169. It is made of randomly laid mortared stone. The ring is about 24' in outside diameter and the walls are about 18" thick and 24" high. There is a pedestrian opening on the south side. In the center is an original mortared stone fire ring, about 5' in diameter, that was built with a metal grill on top and a small vent hole in the side.<sup>20</sup> Around 1975 a thin layer of cement mortar was placed on the council ring's upper surface. The structure is missing a few stones and soil has accumulated against its walls through the years. The East Council Ring is otherwise unaltered and is Contributing.

West Council Ring. (One Contributing Structure; built by the NYA.) The West Council Ring is hidden in the woods and discovered only by following a footpath through the northwest part of the site (Photos 23, 24). The structure is sited on a point of land projecting into Little Pine Lake. The council ring is built of randomly laid mortared stone. It is about 24' in outside diameter and the walls are about 18" thick and 24" high. There is a pedestrian opening on the south side. An original stone fire ring has been removed from the center. The council ring is missing a few additional stones and soil has accumulated against its walls through the years. Except for these changes, the West Council Ring is otherwise unaltered and is Contributing.

Refuse Container. (One Contributing Structure; built by the NYA.) Near the shore of Hickory Lake in the East Area is a mortared stone Refuse Container designed as a place for picnickers to burn their trash (Photos 18, 19). The structure is about 45" square and 3' tall. Its wall are about 9" thick. Inside, there is an metal grate near the

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fairly large wayside rest, Cold Spring Roadside Parking Area in Cold Spring (built 1936, designed by A. R. Nichols and Harold E. Olson); those privies were also not built.

<sup>19</sup> MnDOT plans to repair the structures and remove the concrete topping during a proposed rehabilitation of the wayside rest.

<sup>20</sup> The metal grill is hard to see in Figure 2 of this nomination form, but is clearly visible on another photo of the council ring. It is a 1938 photo, taken by the MHD, which is located in a photo album compiled by Harold E. Olson; see Harold E. Olson, photo album, v1, p3, Site Development Unit, MnDOT.

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bottom made of 4 pieces of 2"-diameter iron pipe. A thin layer of cement mortar was added to the top of the Refuse Container circa 1975. The structure is otherwise unaltered and is Contributing.

Picnic Fireplaces. (One Contributing Structure; built by the NYA.) The wayside rest has two fireplaces that are missing only their metal grills. They are located in the West Area (Sketch Map A). The West Fireplace is near the shore of Little Pine Lake (Photo 21) and the North Fireplace is near the north edge of the site (Photo 22). The latter, which is a considerable distance from either parking area, appears by its condition to have had little use. The fireplaces appear to match drawings for an MHD-designed stone fireplace included in the appendix of a 1943 final report of NYA accomplishments in Minnesota.<sup>21</sup> Each fireplace is a mortared stone structure about 12" tall with a 4' by 2' footprint. The "firebox" is open to the front and back. Evidence in the mortar indicates metal cooking grills are missing. Remnants of two fireplaces have been identified in the East Area near the south end (Photo 17) and the west end (Photo 16). There may be other fireplaces or remnants on the site; a total of nine fireplaces were built. Together the site's extant fireplaces and remnants are counted as one Contributing structure.

Culvert (Bridge 3911). (One Noncontributing Structure; built by the MHD.) Bridge 3911 is a reinforced concrete, double box culvert that carries Highway 169 over the Ripple River near the south end of the site. The Culvert was built by the MHD in 1923. It has simple shapes, a concrete cap across the top of the west headwall, and unpainted surfaces. The concrete on the west end of the Culvert retains the imprint of the original form boards (Photo 26). The Culvert is a simple utilitarian structure that is low-lying – almost hidden beneath the road from most vantage points – but a visually prominent feature along the wayside rest's Little Pine Lake shoreline (Photo 26). Designers A. R. Nichols and Harold E. Olson incorporated the preexisting culvert, river, and road into the design of the wayside rest. The 1937-1938 project improved the Culvert and visually tied it to the rest of the site by edging the top with 50' of rustic wooden guardrail. (The guardrail may also have made the Culvert safer for fishing.) The Culvert was originally 53' long (east-west) but in 1964 was extended its current length of 83' (east-west) when the highway was slightly realigned. The 1964 expansion produced a new east end whose simple design is visually compatible with the original and does not significantly interfere with the wayside rest's ability to convey its historic character and significance (Photo 27). The wooden guardrail was probably removed in 1964 and replaced by a guardrail comprised of wooden bollards and steel cables. Today's guardrail dates from circa 2010 and is composed of steel rails and wooden posts. The Culvert is categorized as Noncontributing to the property.

Dam (Ruins). (Not separately counted; built by the WPA.) The poured concrete dam was built during the first construction season, 1937, to control the level of Little Pine Lake (Photo 25). The Dam was built by men employed by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) under supervision of the Minnesota Department of Conservation. It is a "Type C" dam; the nickname "Type C" refers to the "C" shape created by each abutment and its perpendicular wing walls.<sup>22</sup> The Dam's overall footprint is about 32' (north-south) by 12' (east-west). It has 9' wing walls and 14' between abutments. There are two concrete piers between the abutments which, along the

<sup>21</sup> *Final Report, National Youth Administration*, appendix.

<sup>22</sup> Sigrid Arnott, et al., *Evaluating Minnesota's Historic Dams: A Framework for Management*, prepared by Archaeo-Physics, LLC, for the Minnesota Historical Society, Dec. 2013, 71.



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abutments themselves, supported an approximately 4'-wide concrete platform. The platform, which is missing, was used by the dam operator to adjust the stop logs (Figure 3). The stop logs (heavy planks or timbers) are missing but the Dam retains steel slots into which the stop logs slid. The Dam ruins also retain parts of the original steel pipe handrail. The ruins retain unpainted concrete surfaces with the clear imprint of the original form boards.

A recent context study on historic dams in Minnesota explains that the Minnesota Department of Conservation's Type C dams, often built by the WPA, were small, standardized, poured concrete structures with heads (drops) from 2' to 6'. Like the dam at Pine-Hickory Lakes RPA, the dams had a narrow operator's platform and pipe railings. In some park settings footbridges were built over the top of Type C dams.<sup>23</sup> According to historian Rolf Anderson, hundreds of small conservation dams were built across the state during the New Deal, many by the WPA. Anderson writes, "The most common dam was the 'Type C,' a small structure usually constructed at the outlet of a lake."<sup>24</sup>

The original plan for the wayside rest, drawn in March 1938 after the Dam was completed, proposes that the structure serve as a place for a footpath to cross the Ripple River. A. R. Nichols' sketch was evidently drawn with a misunderstanding or inaccurate information because the Dam was built with no provisions for crossing (the pipe rail blocked public access to the platform) and there is no evidence it ever served this purpose. A September 30, 1939 aerial photo shows one of the wayside rest's most well-used footpaths led to the north end of the Dam but shows no corresponding path on the south end.

Today the Dam is in ruins. The abutments are being undermined by water and are tilting. Stone riprap that was originally placed on the bank on the west (upstream) side of the structure is missing (likely fallen into the water). The Dam abutments – particularly the north abutment – remain popular fishing spots. The Dam ruins are not individually counted but are considered a substantive element within the designed historic landscape, which is a Contributing site.

**Integrity.** All of the wayside rest's original structures and furnishings are extant except the following: Of nine original picnic fireplaces, two intact fireplaces and two remnants have been identified. Other fireplaces, both intact or in pieces, may have been missed during preparation of this nomination and may be hidden in the woods. The portable picnic tables have been removed. The site's small wooden footbridge and drinking water well (with its hand pump) have been removed. The wayside rest probably had a wooden identification sign which has been removed. The Roadside Development Division used a standard design statewide consisting of a timber, hanging-arm sign installed on the edge of the highway. The signs were painted dark brown and the hanging sign boards had routed letters reading "Roadside Parking Area."

<sup>23</sup> Arnott et al., 71.

<sup>24</sup> Anderson 1990/1993/2002, F.17.



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**Overall Historic Integrity**

As described above, the wayside rest retains integrity in the six elements identified in the Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes as key to understanding historic landscapes and their character-defining qualities: topography; spatial organization; circulation; water features; vegetation; and structures, site furnishings, and objects.<sup>25</sup> According to *How to Evaluate and Nominate Designed Historic Landscapes* (National Register Bulletin 18), a historic landscape's vegetation is particularly vulnerable to change. Vegetation is ever-growing and subject to old age, disease, and other natural forces. The bulletin advises that, despite change, the existing vegetation must reinforce or support the original design intent.<sup>26</sup> Regarding structures, site furnishings, and objects, the most important structures – the Scenic Overlook, two Council Rings, two Fireplaces, and the Refuse Container – are present and retain historic integrity. The Culvert has been altered somewhat, the Dam and two Fireplaces are in ruins, and five Fireplaces are missing. Site furnishings and structures with a shorter life expectancy because of their wooden construction are also missing: the portable wooden picnic tables, the rustic wooden guardrail around the parking areas and on top of the Culvert, and a possible hanging arm sign.

The property also retains integrity in the seven aspects of integrity identified by National Register guidelines: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The property's location and setting both retain strong integrity. Integrity of materials found in extant recourses is good, although the site is missing some of its original stone elements. The West Parking Area has also been paved with bituminous. Integrity of workmanship, particularly represented by the high level of craftsmanship in the stone structures, remains good. The property retains good integrity of feeling and association because of the integrity of the landscape elements and aspects listed above. Integrity of feeling and association is strengthened by the fact that there are no modern intrusions.

<sup>25</sup> Birnbaum with Peters, 15-16.

<sup>26</sup> Keller and Keller, 7.

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**ARCHITECT/BUILDER, CONTINUED**

Nichols, Arthur Richardson (Landscape Architect)  
Olson, Harold E. (Engineer)  
National Youth Administration (Builder)  
Works Progress Administration (Builder)  
Minnesota Department of Highways (Builder)

**NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE AND DEVELOPMENTAL HISTORY**

The National Register eligibility of Pine-Hickory Lakes RPA was evaluated using the registration requirements in the Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) entitled "Federal Relief Construction in Minnesota, 1933-1943" under the subsection "Waysides and Overlooks." "Waysides and Overlooks" falls within the property type "Social and Recreational Facilities" in Section F of the MPDF.<sup>27</sup> Pine-Hickory Lakes RPA was built with federal funds and completed before the end of 1943, thereby meeting the MPDF's Registration Requirements 1 and 2 under "Social and Recreational Facilities."<sup>28</sup>

National Register Criterion A. The property meets Requirement 1 of the "Waysides and Overlooks" subsection of the MPDF<sup>29</sup> by being the largest state highway wayside rest believed to have been built by the National Youth Administration (NYA) in Minnesota.

Pine-Hickory Lakes RPA meets Requirement 2 by being one of the largest state highway wayside rests designed and built by the Minnesota Department of Highways (MHD) Roadside Development Division. As such, the property is an important example of the way the Roadside Development Division met early MHD goals of improving highway safety and aesthetics, encouraging the state's automobile tourism industry, and providing roadside amenities for travelers in the years before gas stations and convenience stores became common.<sup>30</sup>

National Register Criterion C. The property meets sub-requirement "a" of Registration Requirement 4 in the "Waysides and Overlooks" subsection of the MPDF by being one of Minnesota's largest state highway wayside rests designed and built in the National Park Service (NPS) Rustic Style (and the largest MHD wayside rest that retains integrity). The property displays the defining characteristics of the NPS Rustic Style including distinctive use of indigenous materials. The property also contains examples of specific types of wayside rest structures rare in Minnesota.

<sup>27</sup> The Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) is Rolf T. Anderson, "Federal Relief Construction in Minnesota, 1933-1943," Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF), Oct. 9, 1990; amended by Anderson Aug. 30, 1993; amended by Gemini Research 2002, cited herein as Anderson 1990/1993/2002; Registration Requirements 1 and 2 for "Social and Recreational Facilities" are on page F.27.

<sup>28</sup> See Anderson 1990/1993/2002, F.27 for these requirements.

<sup>29</sup> See Anderson 1990/1993/2002, F.41-F.42 for these requirements.

<sup>30</sup> See Anderson 1990/1993/2002, E.96-E.97 and F.39-F.40, for information on the purpose and goals of the MHD roadside development program and how wayside rests helped meet those goals.

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The property also meets the historic integrity guidelines outlined in the “Waysides and Overlooks” subsection of the MPDF.<sup>31</sup>

***Design and Construction***

Pine-Hickory Lakes RPA was developed in association with the MHD’s 1937 improvement of Highway 169 in northern Minnesota at a time when both northern Minnesota recreation and automobile tourism were becoming increasingly important in the region.

North central Minnesota’s Aitkin County is populated with lakes and forests. Located just north of Mille Lacs Lake and a few miles east of the Brainerd lakes region, Aitkin County is located in the heart of one of Minnesota’s most popular recreational areas. The northern Minnesota tourism industry was very small until the 1920s when the construction of the new state highway system began and automobiles became more affordable to the middle class. In the 1920s and 1930s state government, civic groups, and private interests began to actively promote recreational development in northern Minnesota. This effort was, in part, a tool to help revive a regional economy that had crashed after 30 years of intensive white pine logging ended around 1920. In the early 1930s the State of Minnesota, through agencies such as the State Highway Department and the Department of Conservation’s divisions of Tourism, Forestry, State Parks, and Game and Fish, began a decades-long campaign to build highways to and within northern Minnesota, create state parks and state forests on tax-delinquent land, and build wayside rests, camp sites, and picnic grounds. The State of Minnesota also leased state-owned lakeshore lots for private summer cottages, and advertised the region’s recreational resources to a growing population of automobile-owning tourists.<sup>32</sup> The roadside development activities of the Minnesota Department of Highways were part of this broad effort, as was the 1935 establishment of Mille Lacs State Forest a few miles south of the future Pine-Hickory Lakes Roadside Parking Area. (Mille Lacs State Forest was later dissolved and now Wealthwood State Forest, formally established in 1963, is located near the wayside rest.)

In the 1930s and 1940s, as roads were improved, cars became more reliable, and middle class incomes rose, increasing numbers of Twin Cities residents began visiting the Mille Lacs-Brainerd-Aitkin region on weekends. The principal road from the Twin Cities was present-day Highway 169. The portion of Highway 169 between Mille Lacs Lake and the town of Aitkin was first called Minnesota Highway 35. This segment of highway was part of Minnesota’s first trunk highway system established in 1921. The narrow, pre-existing road was first improved by the state in 1923. Pine-Hickory Lakes RPA was built on excess right-of-way land purchased for the 1923 road construction project. In 1931, Highway 35 also became part of the five-year-old federal highway system and was given the number U.S. Highway 169. In 1934 the state highway number – 35 – was changed to 169 so it corresponded with the federal highway number.

<sup>31</sup> Anderson 1990/1993/2002, F.42-F.44.

<sup>32</sup> Thomas J. Baerwald, “Forces at Work on the Landscape,” in *Minnesota in a Century of Change: The State and its People Since 1900*, ed. Clifford E. Clark, Jr. (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1989), 35-36; See also David Lanegran with Carol L. Urness, *Minnesota on the Map: A Historical Atlas* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2008), including 178-179.

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The 1923 highway past Little Pine and Hickory lakes was surfaced with gravel. In 1931 it was upgraded to oil-treated gravel. In 1937 the highway was first paved with bituminous. The wayside rest was built in 1937-1938 in association with this improvement.

At about 35 acres, Pine-Hickory Lakes RPA is one of the largest MHD highway wayside rests of the New Deal era. A statewide cultural resources survey conducted in 1998 inventoried 72 New Deal roadside development properties owned by the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT). Half were less than 3 acres and another 11 ranged from 3 and 8 acres. Of the 15 remaining sites, 6 no longer retain historic integrity and 3 are unusually large state-owned parcels of more than 100 acres with the actual wayside rest site design comprising only a small portion. Of the remaining 6 sites that retain historic integrity, Pine-Hickory is by far the largest at about 35 acres. The others that retain historic integrity are Mendota Overlook (20 acres), Willow Lake RPA (15 acres), Cold Spring RPA (14 acres), Orr RPA (10 acres), and Inspiration Point Wayside Rest (9 acres).<sup>33</sup>

Pine-Hickory Lakes RPA was built by the MHD in partnership with the National Youth Administration or NYA. Also participating in the project was the Works Progress Administration (WPA), the NYA's parent agency. Workers from the WPA built the property's small concrete dam as part of the initial site work. The Dam construction was sponsored by the Minnesota Department of Conservation. The Dam was probably built by the WPA, rather than by the NYA, because of the construction of the Dam was more complex than that of the other wayside rest structures and because the WPA during this period was building a number of small concrete dams for the Department of Conservation in the region.

One member of the MHD supervisory staff has been identified. He was George Jenks, a civil engineer and MHD employee engineer who lived in Aitkin. Jenks was born and raised in the Mora area. According to federal census records, in 1920 he was living in Mora and working as the surveyor for Kanabec County. In 1930 he was a civil engineer living in Aitkin. During the New Deal Jenks supervised construction of MHD roadside development projects at Pine-Hickory Lakes as well as on the shore of Mille Lacs Lake. The Mille Lacs Lake projects included wayside rests near Garrison and a granite bridge at Whitefish Creek. The Mille Lacs Lake projects were designed in the NPS Rustic Style and built by the MHD and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC).<sup>34</sup>

Because the quality of the masonry work at Pine-Hickory Lakes RPA is high and the young NYA crew was unskilled, supervisors undoubtedly included one or more skilled stonemasons. Unfortunately, the names of these men are not known. Details about the NYA crew are also not known. The crew was likely composed of young men from the Aitkin area. Aitkin County projects were administered from the NYA district headquarters office in Brainerd.

<sup>33</sup> Susan Granger et al., *Historic Roadside Development Structures on Minnesota Trunk Highways*, prepared for the Minnesota Dept. of Transportation by Gemini Research, Dec. 1998, 4.4-4.6. The Mendota Overlook does not have a site design that makes use of the entire parcel. Orr RPA is listed on the National Register (NRHP) and Inspiration Point Wayside rest has been nominated for the NRHP.

<sup>34</sup> Federal census population schedules; "Recreation Field Picnic Grounds," *Brainerd Dispatch*, Sept. 10, 1937.



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A September 1937 article in the *Brainerd Dispatch* reported on the project. The article indicates the Aitkin Lion's Club was a local sponsor and would assume maintenance once the site was completed. This type of cooperative agreement between the Roadside Development Division and local governments and civic groups was common in the 1930s and 1940s.<sup>35</sup> It is not known how long the Aitkin Lion's Club helped maintain the site.

The *Brainerd Dispatch* article reads as follows. (Note that the final wayside rest differed in some details from the article's description.)

Through the cooperation of the highway department and the National Youth Administration a public recreational grounds is to be located on Hickory and Pine lakes, seven miles south of Aitkin. The project, which will provide the only publicly owned picnic and bathing facilities within less than 15 miles [from the?] shore of Mille Lacs Lake [or?] from Aitkin, is being sponsored by the Aitkin Lions Club which, upon completion of the project, will have charge of maintenance and supervision.

The highway department obtained 1,000 [sic] feet of shoreline on Pine Lake and 1,000 [sic] feet on Hickory Lake, which will provide an ideal bathing and swimming beach. An adequate parking space will be developed within a reasonable distance of the highway and a lookout station 40 feet above Hickory Lake will furnish a view to the south and the east. Winding paths will lead to picnic tables on the grounds, which will be properly landscaped. A small recreational field adequate for field ball and softball will be developed together with a council fire ring of concrete.

The planning and designing of the grounds has been completed by Harold Olson of the highway department and work, which is already underway, is under the supervision of George Jenks, who had charge of the highway beautification project at Garrison.<sup>36</sup>

It is likely the construction project closed down for the winter of 1937-1938. The surviving plan sheet, entitled a "Tentative Study Sketch," is labeled March 1938 and much of the work was accomplished in the 1938 construction season.

The highway department's *Annual Report of the Accomplishments of Roadside Development Along the Trunk Highways in Minnesota* for the year 1938 summarizes the completed project, indicating "The area is well timbered and offers an attractive rest point for the traveling public." The report's "Statement of Quantities" for the project includes the following:

<sup>35</sup> Granger et al. 1998.

<sup>36</sup> "Recreation Field Picnic Grounds," *Brainerd Dispatch*, Sept. 10, 1937; the "highway beautification project at Garrison" likely refers to components of the Mille Lacs Lake Highway Development Plan (1937-1940), an extensive state highway roadside development project near the shore of Mille Lacs Lake cosponsored by the MHD, the National Park Service, and the Civilian Conservation Corps. The Garrison Concourse, listed on the NRHP, was built as part of the development plan.

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Stone masonry overlook	40 cu. yds.
Council ring	2
Excavation (earth)	6,150 cu. yds.
Picnic tables	27
Fireplaces	9
Clearing	8 acres
Well	1
Trail construction	4,736 lin. ft.
Seeding	4 acres
Rustic footbridge	1
Rustic guardrail	960 lin. ft.
Cleanup	1 acre
Project marker	1
Excavation for wading pool	100 cu. yds.

The report indicates the total cost was about \$6,095.88 with the state paying 56.8% of the total.<sup>37</sup> The Dam is not included in the report's statement of costs and quantities because it was financed under the Minnesota Department of Conservation.

A final report by the National Youth Administration on its accomplishments in Minnesota over the course of the New Deal indicates that Pine-Hickory Lakes RPA was one of 20 projects the NYA and the MHD collaborated on during the late summer of 1937. Nearly all were state highway wayside rests and they were located in more than one dozen counties.<sup>38</sup> According to the final report, NYA construction projects provided youth with real work experience in addition to financial assistance. Many of the youth had little experience using tools or working on construction. Those working on stone masonry projects learned about geology, types of stone and their uses, and a variety of stone cutting and stone construction techniques. According to the report, "Quality and beauty of construction using native materials was stressed."<sup>39</sup>

Pine-Hickory Lakes RPA is believed to be the largest state highway wayside rest built by the NYA in Minnesota. The other MHD roadside development properties that were built by the NYA and retain historic integrity are three small wayside rests with historic markers – Craigie Flour Mill, Fort Beauharnois, and National Grange; five with scenic overlooks – Glenwood, Lake City, Lake St. Croix, Mendota, and Reads Landing; and a series of about one dozen stone monuments welcoming tourists to Minnesota at principal state highway entry points. The largest of the NYA wayside rests that no longer retain historic integrity are Babcock Memorial Park (16 acres), Christmas Lake (16 acres), and Frontenac/Maiden Rock (14 acres); Pine-Hickory Lakes is twice the size of these properties.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>37</sup> *Annual Report 1938*, 34.

<sup>38</sup> Four or five of the projects, including Pine-Hickory Lakes RPA, are either listed on, or eligible for, the NRHP.

<sup>39</sup> *Final Report, National Youth Administration*, 38, 51, 100.

<sup>40</sup> Granger et al. 1998 and Granger et al., *Supplement to Historic Roadside Development Structures on Minnesota Trunk Highways*, prepared for MnDOT by Gemini Research, 2005. The Mendota Overlook has a large 20-acre parcel but does not



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*National Youth Administration*

The National Youth Administration was established in June 1935 as part of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal, a broad set of federal programs designed to alleviate the devastating consequences of the Great Depression. The NYA was established as a subsidiary of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) – a work program geared to adults – and remained part of the WPA until 1939, after which it operated as a separate program. The first director of the NYA in Minnesota was George A. Selke, president of St. Cloud State Teachers College (later St. Cloud State University) from 1926-1946; he served as director of the NYA from 1935-1939. Minnesota had a state NYA advisory board consisting of business leaders, members of the public, and faculty and administrators from several schools and colleges.<sup>41</sup>

The NYA was designed to relieve the despair that poverty, unemployment, and economic collapse had created among youth. Among the program's aims were to counteract rising juvenile delinquency and homelessness. The NYA served young men and women between the ages of 16 and 25, most from poor families who were receiving federal relief payments. In 1936 less than one-quarter of Minnesota's enrollees had an eighth grade education. The NYA provided part- and full-time jobs, job training and counseling, and meaningful leisure activities. Health care was also an important part of the program – in Minnesota a significant number of enrollees were underweight or malnourished and suffered from a host of untreated medical conditions ranging from poor eyesight and bad teeth to more serious ailments.<sup>42</sup>

A goal of the NYA was to educate and train a future work force while at the same time encouraging youth to remain in school rather than dropping out and competing with adults for scarce jobs. NYA projects involved professional and clerical tasks, homemaking, public service, recreation, soil conservation, factory work, and construction projects. Wages were minimal and hours were limited so the funding could reach as many people as possible. Just prior to and during the first years of World War II, the program focused on war readiness and defense-related manufacturing.

The NYA's construction program in Minnesota began in 1936 and grew significantly in 1937. Construction projects were simple at first – conservation landscaping and building playground equipment, for example – and soon grew to include the construction of park shelters and other small buildings. The NYA was careful not to use its crews in projects that would displace adult workers. Many construction projects built or improved facilities that were used by children such as schools, playgrounds, parks, athletic fields, and swimming pools. The MHD wayside rests – essentially small parks – fit this strategy, and the NYA and the MHD Roadside Development

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have a complex site design that makes use of the whole parcel as does Pine-Hickory Lakes RPA. The state line markers do not have places to park (hence are not wayside rests). Craigie Flour Mill Historical Marker, Reads Landing Overlook, Lake St. Croix Overlook, and Hinckley State Line Marker are listed on the NRHP.

<sup>41</sup> See Anderson 1990/1993/2002 for more on the NYA.

<sup>42</sup> *Final Report, National Youth Administration*, 157-161. Most of the information in this section comes from this report. The report provides details on the goals, administration, and accomplishments of the NYA and details on many projects. Pine-Hickory Lakes RPA is not one of the sample projects described, but the report provides information on similar MHD wayside rests built by the NYA.

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Division were frequent partners.<sup>43</sup>

A national overview of the NYA written in 1939 describes NYA construction projects across the country. A section on Minnesota focuses on MHD wayside rests. The authors write:

About 1,000 NYA boys in this state, under the sponsorship of the Minnesota Highway Department, are developing roadside parks with recreational facilities for Minnesota's own people and for the large number of summer tourists who flock to its lakes and woods. . . . One roadside park that we visited at Stillwater extends for two miles along the St. Croix River. Groups of NYA boys had changed a mass of weeds and general debris into an area that hikers and motorists can enjoy for many years. First, the land was cleared, graded, and planted with grass and shrubbery. Then the boys built side roads [entrance drives] with cement curbs and stone-walled overlooks giving motorists and pedestrians long vistas up and down the river. We saw trails and paths, stone steps leading to the river, a stone and log bridge across a creek, stone fireplaces and ovens, picnic tables and benches – all built by NYA youth. One fireplace was encircled by a stone council ring, seating 40 to 50 people. We were told that many Minnesota NYA-built [roadside] parks have these council rings, and that they are popular with girls' and boys' clubs as well as with adults who gather around the fire for cooking, singing, story-telling, and games.

The State Highway Department furnishes all materials, equipment, and supervision for this NYA roadside park work. . . . Economically these roadside parks are valuable to a state that considers summer tourist trade an important source of income. The boys who build the parks secure sound experience in roadmaking, landscaping, carpentry, masonry, and the operation of road-building machinery.<sup>44</sup>

The NYA operated several vocational shops throughout the state where youth learned woodworking, metalwork, mechanics, and other disciplines. The first NYA metalwork shop in Minnesota was established in 1937 in St. Paul. Among the first objects made by the young people were metal signs and fireplace components for Minnesota state parks. NYA vocational shops also built Rustic Style tables, signs, and other furnishings for the MHD wayside rests. In 1938 and 1939, for example, NYA centers built 400 picnic tables, 188 metal refuse containers, 122 fireplace grates, dozens of signs, 6 stoves, 4 sod cutters, and 3 tree knives for the MHD. A short-lived NYA residential training center was operated in Aitkin from the fall of 1940 to August 1941.<sup>45</sup>

Minnesota's average monthly enrollment in the NYA varied through time. In March 1937, for example, there were 4,360 youth employed, and in December 1938 there were 6,100. There was usually a waiting list for the program. During the peak years, about 10% of unemployed youth in Minnesota were reached by one of the

<sup>43</sup> *Final Report, National Youth Administration*, 20-22, 35; Betty Lindley and Ernest K. Lindley, *A New Deal for Youth: The Story of the National Youth Administration* (New York: Viking Press, 1939), 25

<sup>44</sup> Lindley and Lindley, 27-28. The wayside rest described is the St. Croix Boomsite Roadside Parking Area (RPA), designed by A. R. Nichols and Harold E. Olson and built in phases by the NYA in 1936-1939. The council rings are the same size as those at Pine-Hickory Lakes RPA. St. Croix Boomsite RPA has lost historic integrity.

<sup>45</sup> *Annual Report 1938*, 1, and *Annual Report of the Accomplishments of Roadside Development Along the Trunk Highways in Minnesota*, Minnesota Dept. of Highways, 1939, 1; *Final Report, National Youth Administration*, 25, 198.

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NYA's programs. Just before World War II began, there were 2,678 Minnesota youth enrolled in the regular, non-defense-related NYA program. These workers were divided between construction projects (about 1,000 workers), production projects (about 1,400), and professional and clerical projects (about 260).<sup>46</sup>

In all, about \$14 million were spent on NYA activities in Minnesota, equivalent to about \$329 million in 2012 dollars. Nationwide about 4.8 million youth were enrolled in the NYA during its eight-year history. The NYA program ended on June 30, 1943.

***Works Progress Administration***

The Works Progress Administration (WPA) was established in May of 1935. The WPA actually consisted of two consecutive programs, both of which were known by the initials "WPA." The first, the Works Progress Administration, operated from May 1935-July 1939. The second, the Work Projects Administration, ran from July 1939 until June 1943. The combined WPA became the federal government's largest work relief program in both funding and scope. The National Youth Administration was a subsidiary of the WPA until July 1939.

Federal, state, and, most often, local government agencies served as sponsors for WPA projects. The sponsors supplied materials while the WPA paid the workers. During the eight-year history of the combined program, about 77% of WPA funds nationwide were spent on construction projects, particularly on roads, public buildings, and public utilities. However, the scope of the WPA was the most broad of the New Deal work programs and, in addition to construction jobs, WPA enrollees worked in white collar fields such as education, health care, government administration, and the arts. The MHD acted as the sponsor for many WPA construction projects. Men employed by the WPA worked on at least 20 extant MHD roadside development projects.<sup>47</sup>

Enrollment in the WPA peaked in the fall of 1938. After Pearl Harbor was bombed in December of 1941, the program began to support the war effort by shifting workers to defense-related projects. By the time the WPA program was ended on June 30, 1943, approximately 8.5 million people – or one-third of the nation's unemployed – had worked for the WPA.<sup>48</sup>

***Design Significance***

Pine-Hickory Lakes RPA is an important example of the NPS Rustic Style as applied to a wayside rest by being the largest state highway wayside rest in Minnesota designed in the style that retains historic integrity and by containing rare types of structures. The landscape design process made use of the site's positive assets as well as to responding to inevitable constraints such as the parcel's size, shape, hydrology, and the existing highway, as well as to available funding and labor. The size of the site provided the opportunity for a range of uses including picnicking, hiking, fishing, swimming, and gathering around campfires, and the designers applied the

<sup>46</sup> *Final Report, National Youth Administration*, 145, 190, 262, 283.

<sup>47</sup> Granger et al. 1998 and Granger et al. 2005.

<sup>48</sup> Anderson 1990/1993/200, E67; see Anderson for more on the WPA.

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fundamentals of the NPS Rustic Style to preserve scenic values while providing a public roadside park that fulfilled the goals of an MHD wayside rest.

Consistent with the NPS Rustic Style, the site's spatial organization, circulation system, and vegetation capitalized on existing assets while preserving natural resources and scenic values. The types of man-made structures are consistent with those found in NPS Rustic Style national parks, state parks, and local parks built with New Deal federal relief assistance. Because of their environmentally compatible design, use of local materials, and high quality craftsmanship, the structures are distinctive – that is, readily recognizable as designed and built in the NPS Rustic Style by a federal relief construction project.

Among the precedents for parks such as Pine-Hickory Lakes RPA designed in the NPS Rustic Style were large landscape parks or “scenic reservations” built in the U.S. in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These parks evolved from 18th century English and German landscape “gardens” or parks. According to landscape historian Ethan Carr’s study of the NPS Rustic Style, the designers of quintessential early 20th century scenic reservations were inspired by the landscape itself (Carr quotes the phrase ‘the genius of the place’) and sought to preserve existing scenery “unimpaired.” The parks “featured curvilinear drives and paths that conformed to the topography and offered constantly shifting views in a considered sequence.” Such parks also featured “decentralized services for camping, hiking, and other activities, and minimal alterations to the existing landscape.” Scenic “views were carefully considered in the placement of roads, buildings, and other facilities, and response to indigenous landscape character and features determined the particulars of site planning. And since the appreciation of landscape scenery remained the primary purpose of these parks, all construction – whether of a simple guardrail or of a large hotel – was designed to remain a consonant, subdued element in perceived landscape compositions.” Carr writes that in landscape parks developed in Boston in the early 20th century, “comfort stations [restrooms], shelters, and other buildings necessary for day-trippers and weekend tourists were not allowed to overwhelm the primary purpose of the scenic reservations, which was to provide the free and public opportunity for the appreciation of large-scale landscape beauty.”<sup>49</sup>

Landscape architects and civil engineers employed to design America’s first national parks applied the principles of the NPS Rustic Style to accommodate growing numbers of visitors arriving by automobile in the early 20th century. The development of the automobile increased park visits by the middle class since driving by car and camping outdoors was much less expensive than traveling by train and staying in a hotel. The challenge for park designers was to create roads, parking areas, scenic overlooks, picnic grounds, and footpaths that gave new crowds of tourists access to special places, but also controlled this access and constrained visitors’ activities so that outstanding landscapes were not inadvertently damaged. According to Carr, “[National] Park Service landscape architects, engineers, and architects invented [the NPS Rustic Style,] a unique idiom of landscape architecture (and architecture as well) that succeeded in many of these goals.” During the New Deal the doctrine of the NPS Rustic Style was spread to Minnesota state parks and state highway wayside rests via the National Park Service’s state parks assistance program. The same process occurred nationwide and, Carr writes, “For

<sup>49</sup> Ethan Carr, *Wilderness by Design: Landscape Architecture and the National Park Service* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 48-49.



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millions, Park Service landscape architecture of [the 1920s and 1930s] continues to epitomize what state and national park development should aspire to be.”<sup>50</sup>

Important to disseminating the NPS Rustic Style was the publication *Park and Recreation Structures* issued by the National Park Service in 1938 after some of its content was distributed in previous years. The heavily illustrated three-volume set served as a design handbook and guide to exemplary examples of parks and park structures built in the style. *Park and Recreation Structures* emphasizes the basic philosophy that all manmade structures are intrusive in natural settings, their use should be limited, and they should be designed to visually blend in. The guide describes the importance of native materials, muted colors, low silhouettes, rugged textures, hand-built or “primitive” construction, and naturalistic plantings to park design and the preservation of scenic values.<sup>51</sup>

The Scenic Overlook at Pine-Hickory Lakes RPA is a rare example of a particular type of scenic overlook on MHD wayside rests of the New Deal. This type is visited on foot, rather than being accessed by cars. One of its functions was to serve a destination that enticed tired drivers to stretch their legs by taking a short walk. Only two other MHD wayside rests of the period are known to include such overlooks; Cold Spring Roadside Parking Area in Cold Spring and Granite Falls Overlook in Granite Falls.<sup>52</sup> At Pine-Hickory Lakes RPA, the fire ring in the center of the overlook is an addition that is inconsistent with the structure’s original purpose – the fire ring would allow a party of visitors to commandeer the structure for a long period of time rather than it being available for short-term visits by walkers. *Park and Recreation Structures* discusses this type of scenic overlook in a chapter devoted to “trailside seats, shelters, and overlooks.” The chapter references simple stone overlooks similar to that at Pine-Hickory, along with a discussion of seats placed along trails to provide rest and a special view; tall wooden or stone observation towers (which, the author warns, can easily be obtrusive); and roofed gazebo-like trail shelters. The author writes, “The modest overlook structure has been designed in many pleasing forms, examples of which are shown . . . . It will be found that the most admired have an ingratiating lack of pretentiousness.” He advises against excessively clearing vegetation around the structure to open the view.<sup>53</sup>

Council Rings are among the most compelling structures built on MHD state highway wayside rests of the New Deal. Their low profile and native materials help them visually blend with the surrounding forest, but their formal, circular form also contrasts with the natural setting in an interesting and inviting way. The use of council rings in American parks was promoted in the early 20th century by landscape architects such as Jens Jensen (1860-1951) as a way to encourage the public to use parks for singing, storytelling, discussion, and quiet contemplation.<sup>54</sup> *Park*

<sup>50</sup> Carr, 7, 92. See also Rolf T. Anderson, “Minnesota State Park CCC/WPA/Rustic Style Historic Resources,” Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF), Sept. 3, 1988, E.11-E.11, for a discussion of NPS Rustic Style landscape design and architectural design in Minnesota state parks.

<sup>51</sup> Albert H. Good, ed., *Park and Recreation Structures* (Washington, DC, 1938; rpt. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999). See Anderson 1988 for more on the NPS Rustic Style and its expression in Minnesota state parks.

<sup>52</sup> Granger et al. 1998, 5.30-5.34, and Granger et al. 2005, 3.7. Both the Cold Spring and Granite Falls sites are located within small towns rather than in rural settings. Both properties have been recommended eligible for the NRHP.

<sup>53</sup> Good, v2, 89.

<sup>54</sup> Robert E. Grese, “Jens Jensen: The Landscape Architect as Conservationist,” in *Midwestern Landscape Architecture*, ed.

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*and Recreation Structures* describes them as a “place in the open around the community campfire, where the evening hours may be passed with song and story in the warmth of good comradeship and the friendly fire.” While *Park and Recreation Structures* references council rings in a chapter on “campfire circles and outdoor theaters,” it does not provide illustrations of the type of simple and elegant council ring designed by A. R. Nichols for the MHD, suggesting they may be uncommon in state and national parks. Instead, the design guide focuses on part-circle amphitheatre-like structures with tiers of seating facing a small stage.<sup>55</sup> The council rings at Pine-Hickory Lakes RPA are uncommon statewide. There are no known council rings in Minnesota state parks and there are evidently few in the Minneapolis and St. Paul park systems. Several Nichols-designed MHD wayside rests originally had council rings, but today they are rare among wayside rests that retain sufficient integrity to be eligible for the National Register.<sup>56</sup>

Refuse Containers were rarely built on MHD wayside rests of the period, and Pine-Hickory Lakes RPA has the only known extant example.<sup>57</sup> *Park and Recreation Structures* refers to this type of structure as an “incinerator.” It suggests they were somewhat impractical for public parks because the public would not often comply by burning their trash in them. (The guide suggests it may be better for maintenance staff to burn the park’s trash.) According to the book, key design considerations include proper capacity, use of heat-resistant materials, proper draft, and a way to handle the ashes. It suggests an incinerator should be sited so it is convenient to intensive use areas but placed so smoke and odor are not a nuisance. The guide advises that a design with an open top (like that at Pine-Hickory) may not produce sufficient draft to reduce annoying smoke compared to a model with a chimney, but that an open design helps accumulated wet refuse dry out so it will burn more readily. *Park and Recreation Structures* provides photos and drawings for two incinerators similar to the one at Pine-Hickory and also includes four larger structures for the mass burning of refuse in a park by staff.<sup>58</sup>

In an extensive section on Picnic Fireplaces, *Park and Recreation Structures* describes design criteria and their implications and illustrates a variety of models. Most are low, simple structures but a few have tall chimneys and/or are somewhat enclosed. *Park and Recreation Structures* discourages the use of too many fireplaces in a

William H. Tishler (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 128-129, 139-140.

<sup>55</sup> Good, v2, 197-212. The fact that stone council rings may be uncommon in these parks is also suggested by their absence from extensive overviews of Rustic Style structures in national parks such as Linda Flint McClelland’s *Presenting Nature: The Historic Landscape Design of the National Park Service, 1916-1942* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1993).

<sup>56</sup> The National Register MPDF on Rustic Style resources in Minnesota state parks (Anderson 1988) cites no extant council rings. In June 2015 communications with Susan Granger during preparation of this Pine-Hickory Lakes NRHP nomination, Anderson confirmed his understanding that few council rings were built in Minnesota state parks and that few, if any, exist. Minneapolis city parks contain very few, if any, council rings per David C. Smith, *City of Parks: The Story of Minneapolis Parks* (Minneapolis: Foundation for Minneapolis Parks, 2008) and Smith’s extensive website on the history of Minneapolis parks. For council rings on MHD wayside rests see Granger et al. 1998, 5.7-5.8, and Granger et al. 2005. Cold Spring Roadside Parking Area is the only other wayside rest on current state highway right-of-way that contains a council ring and may retain sufficient historic integrity to be NRHP-eligible. A rare example of a local park with council rings is Pine Grove Park in Little Falls, likely designed by A. R. Nichols and developed in the 1930s with WPA assistance.

<sup>57</sup> Granger et al. 1998 and Granger et al. 2005.

<sup>58</sup> Good, v1, 151-154.



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given park and recommends they be spaced to reduce congestion among picnickers, provide good air circulation, and avoid setting fire to the trees. When describing fireplaces similar to those at Pine-Hickory the author writes, "Simplification seems to have become the watchword in fireplace design, once the chimney is shaken off. . . . In many parks a fireplace having side walls only and a firebox open in front and back evolved. A fireplace with no rear wall to join the sidewalls together has points of advantage. It will take a wider variety of fuel than more enclosed structures. It will cool more quickly and is less susceptible to breaking as it cools or as the grate expands under heat." The guide suggests that hinged or removable grates may make the fireplaces more durable than those with iron bars permanently set with mortar.<sup>59</sup> The fireplaces at Pine-Hickory are similar to those built during the New Deal at several other MHD wayside rests of the period. Extant, intact examples have now become rare, and the fireplaces at Pine-Hickory Lakes RPA are among very few well-preserved fireplaces of this style on MHD wayside rests of the era.<sup>60</sup>

The NPS Rustic Style was rarely used after World War II. According to historian Rolf Anderson, the characteristics that made rustic style successful were also responsible for its demise. Anderson writes, "It required large amounts of labor, including skilled and unskilled workers and highly trained professionals. Intensive labor projects [eventually] became uneconomical and, even when they were affordable, stone masons and log builders were difficult to find. . . . There was also a gradual rejection [after World War II] of the romanticized rustic design and an [increased] emphasis on simplicity, structural honesty, and more economical construction."<sup>61</sup>

### Designers

Arthur R. ("A. R.") Nichols was a prominent Minnesota landscape architect who served from 1932 to about 1942 as the first Consulting Landscape Architect for the MHD Roadside Development Division. Unlike most landscape architects at the time, Nichols had a strong background in civil engineering. He studied engineering, architecture, and landscape design at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and in 1902 was the first person to graduate from MIT's newly created landscape architecture program. Morell and Nichols, established by A. R. Nichols and Anthony Morell in Minneapolis in 1909, became one of the state's leading landscape architecture firms, designing parks, parkways, urban plans, estates, gardens, cemeteries, colleges, and country clubs. An early commission was the design of scenic roadways in Montana's Glacier National Park, as well as the grounds of the popular Glacier Park Hotel (1913) built by the Great Northern Railway just outside the national park boundaries. A. R. Nichols led the firm after his partner's untimely death in 1924. Nichols played an important role in establishing the field of landscape architecture in Minnesota and over a long career was one of the state's most prolific designers. During the Depression, he was a coauthor of the State of Minnesota's first comprehensive state park planning document, the *Minnesota State Park and Recreational Area Plan* (March 1939). After World War II Nichols designed postwar improvements to Minnesota state parks. In 1944-1950 he redesigned the Minnesota State Capitol Approach. Nichols retired in 1960 at the age of 80 and passed away in 1970.

<sup>59</sup> Good, v2, 27-40.

<sup>60</sup> Granger et al. 1998 and Granger et al. 2005.

<sup>61</sup> Anderson 1988, E.41-E.42.

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Harold E. Olson had been an engineer for the state highway department for 10 years when, in 1932, he organized the MHD's new Roadside Development Division. Olson led the division for the next 30 years and collaborated with A. R. Nichols on the MHD's first generation of wayside rests. During the Depression Olson helped arrange many partnerships between the MHD and New Deal agencies including the NYA, Civilian Conservation Corps, and Works Progress Administration. Olson also worked closely with a variety of federal, state, and local agencies. He served as the Roadside Development Division's primary ambassador to state and national conservation groups; civic, tourism, and development associations; and groups concerned with scenic highways and roadside improvement. Beginning in 1938 he was a national leader in the establishment of the Mississippi River Parkway, later named the Great River Road, which follows the Mississippi River from its headwaters in northern Minnesota to the Gulf of Mexico. Olson retired from the Roadside Development Division in 1963 but continued to work for the MHD until January 1968.

***Conclusion***

Pine-Hickory Lakes Roadside Parking Area, a state highway wayside rest built in 1937-1938, is a well developed example of the wayside rests built by the MHD Roadside Development Division during its formative years, the 1930s and early 1940s. The site was built by the MHD and the NYA, in cooperation with the WPA. The property exemplifies the way such partnerships succeeded in creating needed public infrastructure while at the same time providing jobs and training for the poor and unemployed. Pine-Hickory Lakes RPA is one of the largest wayside rests built by the MHD during the New Deal, and the largest example that retains integrity. It is believed to be the largest state highway wayside rest in Minnesota built by the NYA. The property illustrates the principles of the National Park Service Rustic Style and contains examples of a scenic overlook, council rings, a stone refuse container, and picnic fireplaces believed to be rare in Minnesota. Pine-Hickory Lakes RPA is still owned by the State Highway Department and continues to serve the public as a highway wayside rest and a place for public swimming, fishing, hiking, and boat access.

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- Figure 2. The East Council Ring with Hickory Lake in the distance (circa 1950 photo, L. L. Cook Company postcard, Minnesota Historical Society).
- Figure 3. The upstream (west) side of the Dam, photographed on August 2, 1937 soon after completion (Minnesota Historical Society).
- Figure 4. Property location on USGS topographical map (map is from The National Map, USGS website, <http://nationalmap.gov>; vertical UTM grid marks labeled by Gemini Research for reference).
- Figure 5. Original construction plan for the wayside rest entitled "Tentative Study Sketch" and dated March 1938 (Minnesota Dept. of Highways, Site Development Unit, MnDOT, St. Paul).

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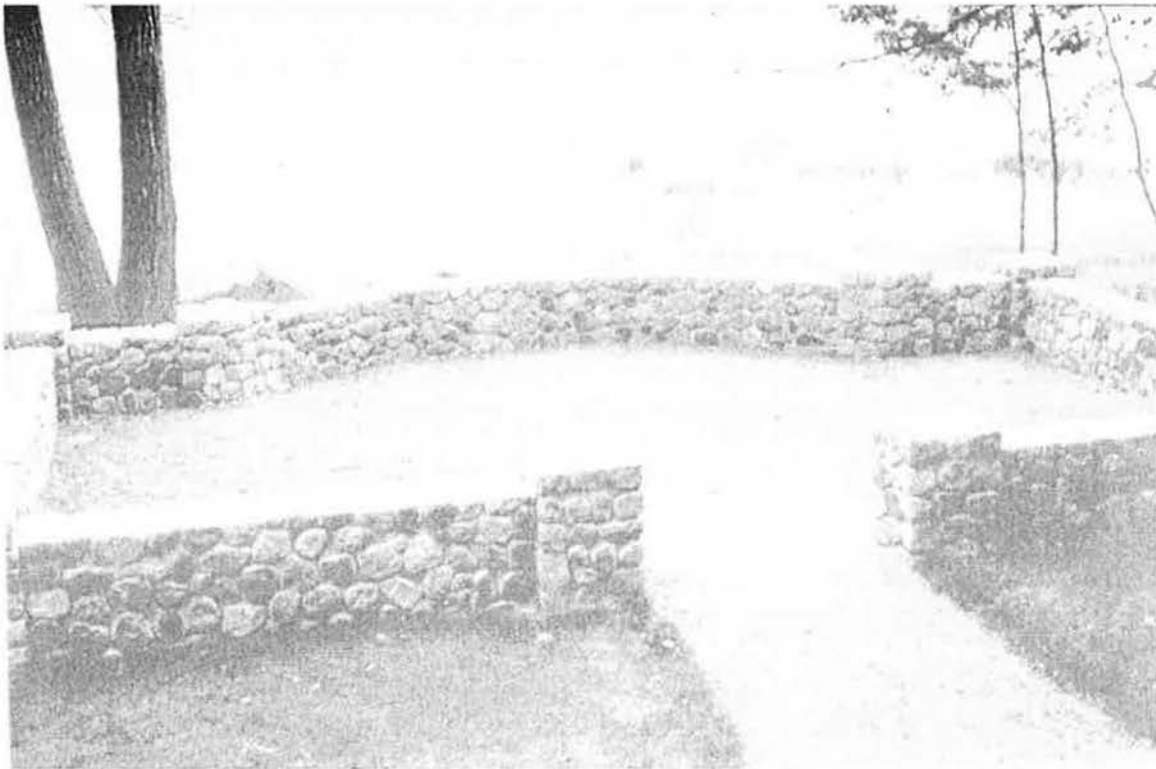


Figure 1. The Scenic Overlook at completion, with a view of Hickory Lake (circa 1938 photo, probably by A. R. Nichols for the Minnesota Dept. of Highways, A. R. Nichols photo album, v1, p16, Site Development Unit, MnDOT, St. Paul).

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Figure 2. The East Council Ring with Hickory Lake in the distance (circa 1950 photo, L. L. Cook Company postcard, Minnesota Historical Society).

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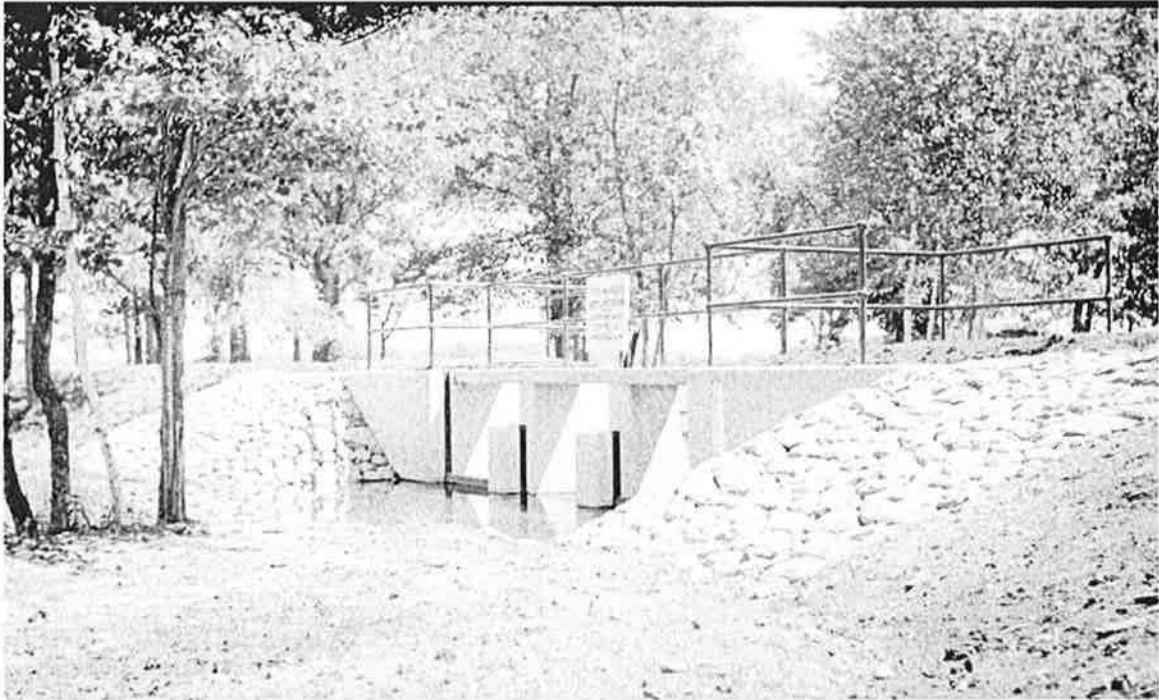


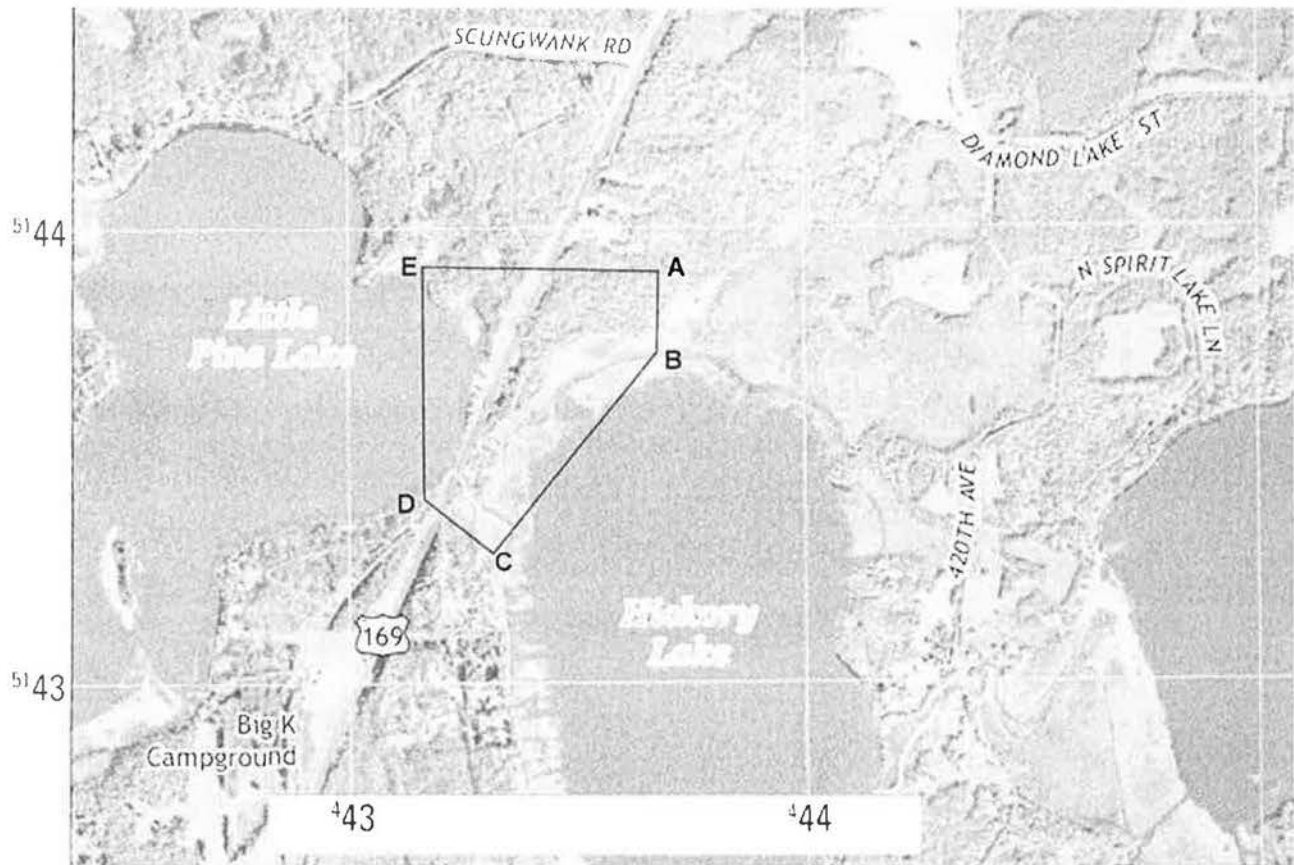
Figure 3. The upstream (west) side of the Dam, photographed on August 2, 1937 soon after completion (Minnesota Historical Society).

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Produced by the United States Geological Survey  
North American Datum of 1983 (NAD83)  
World Geodetic System of 1984 (WG584). Projection and  
1 000-meter grid: Universal Transverse Mercator, Zone 15T  
10 000-foot ticks: Minnesota Coordinate System of 1983 (central  
zone)

Figure 4. Property location and UTM points bounding box on a USGS topographical map (map is from *The National Map*, USGS website, <http://nationalmap.gov>; labeling of the vertical UTM grid marks added by Gemini Research for reference).



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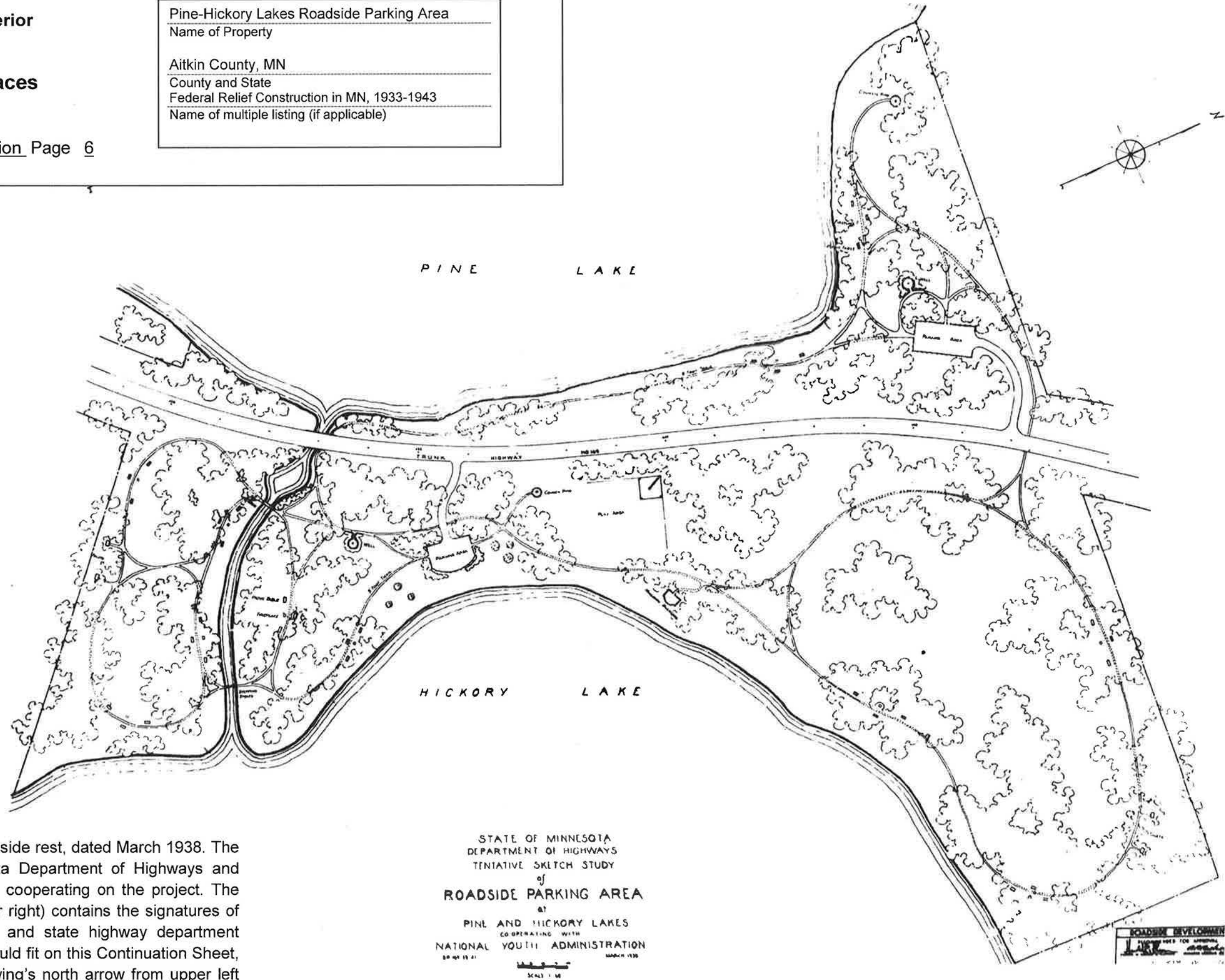
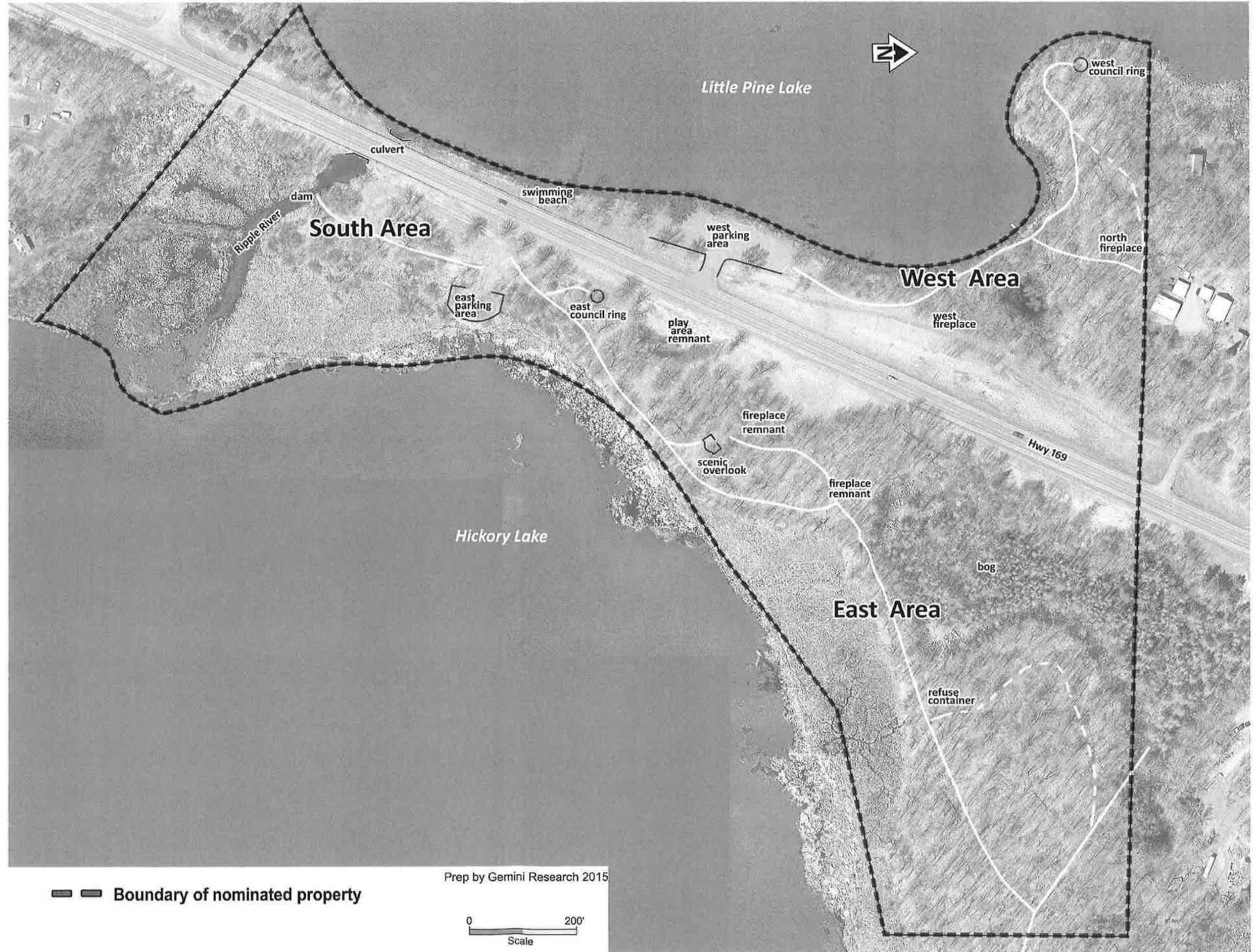


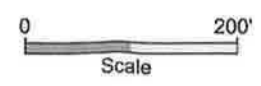
Figure 5. Original plan for the wayside rest, dated March 1938. The title block indicates the Minnesota Department of Highways and National Youth Administration are cooperating on the project. The signature block (obscured at lower right) contains the signatures of Harold E. Olson, A. R. Nichols, and state highway department officials. To create a figure that would fit on this Continuation Sheet, Gemini Research moved the drawing's north arrow from upper left to upper right (Site Development Unit, MnDOT, St. Paul).

**Sketch Map A**  
Pine-Hickory Lakes R.P.A.  
Aitkin County, Minnesota



Boundary of nominated property

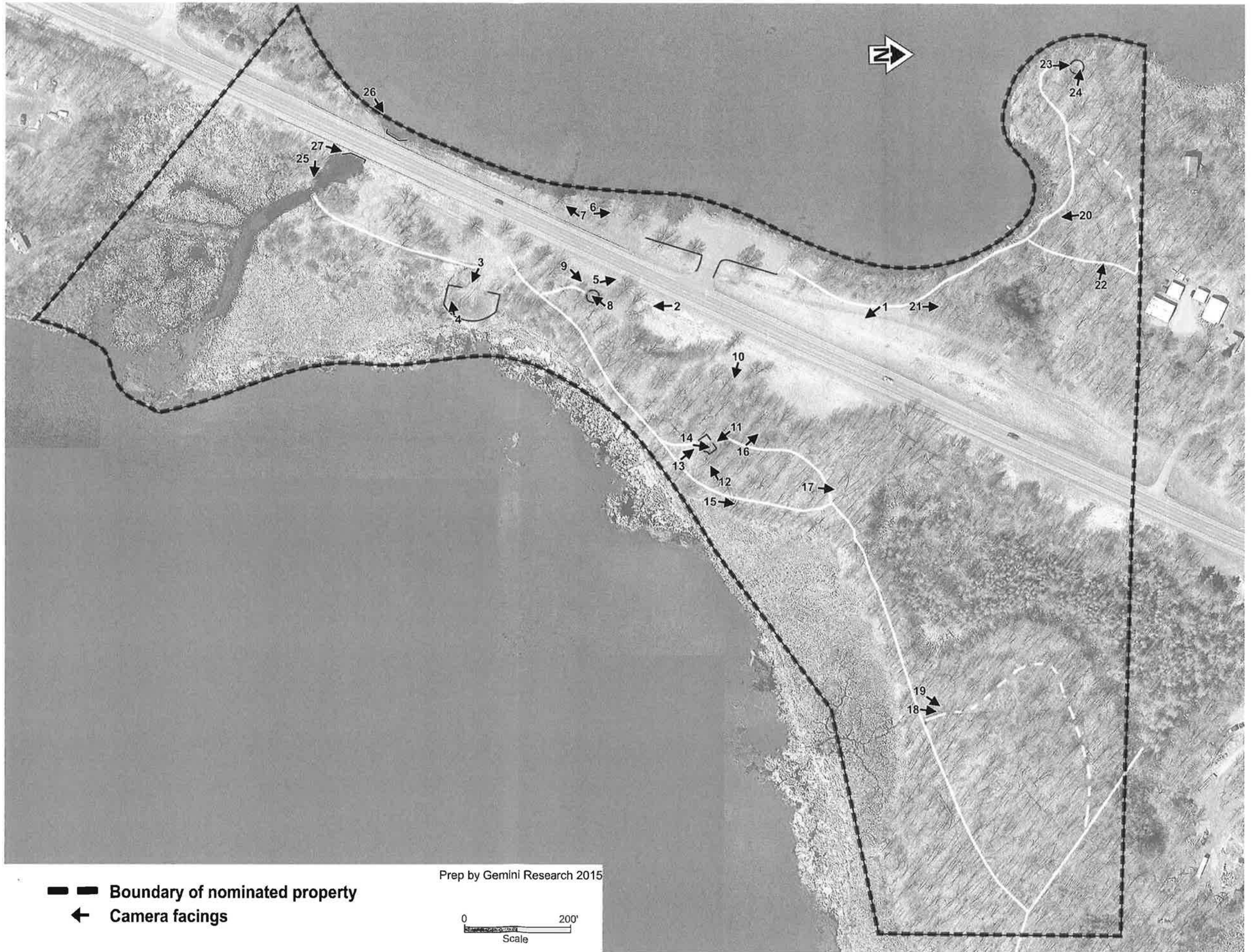
Prep by Gemini Research 2015



2015 base map data:  
Google, DigitalGlobe.



**Sketch Map B**  
Pine-Hickory Lakes R.P.A.  
Aitkin County, Minnesota



**—** Boundary of nominated property  
**←** Camera facings

Prep by Gemini Research 2015



2015 base map data:  
Google, DigitalGlobe.















































































































UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Pine--Hickory Lakes Roadside Parking Area

MULTIPLE NAME: Federal Relief Construction in Minnesota, 1933-1943

STATE & COUNTY: MINNESOTA, Aitkin

DATE RECEIVED: 4/08/16 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 4/29/16  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 5/16/16 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 5/24/16  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 16000276

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT  RETURN  REJECT 5-23-16 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in  
The National Register  
of  
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_ DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

Minnesota Historical Society  
State Historic Preservation Office  
345 Kellogg Blvd West, St. Paul, Minnesota 55102  
651-259-3451

RECEIVED 2280

APR 08 2016

Nat. Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service

**TO:** Stephanie Toothman, Keeper  
National Register of Historic Places

**FROM:** Ginny Way

**DATE:** March 31, 2016

**NAME OF PROPERTY:** Pine-Hickory Lakes Roadside Parking Area

**COUNTY AND STATE:** Aitkin County, Minnesota

**SUBJECT:** National Register:  
 Nomination  
 Multiple Property Documentation Form  
 Request for determination of eligibility  
 Request for removal (Reference No.     )  
 Nomination resubmission  
 Boundary increase/decrease (Reference No.     )  
 Additional documentation (Reference No.     )

**DOCUMENTATION:**

- Original National Register of Historic Places Registration Form
- Multiple Property Documentation Form
- Continuation Sheets
- Removal Documentation
- Photographs
- CD w/ image files
- Original USGS Map
- Sketch map(s)
- Correspondence
  - Owner Objection
    - The enclosed owner objections  
Do  Do not  constitute a majority of property owners

**STAFF COMMENTS:**