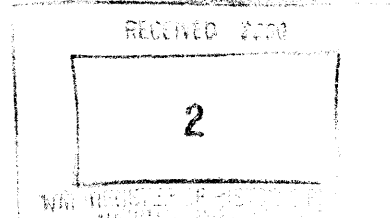


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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 *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Spruce Point Camps  
other names/site number Stevens Camp, Bearstow

2. Location

street & number 84 Bearstow Road N/A not for publication  
city or town Mount Vernon N/A vicinity  
state Maine code ME county Kennebec code 011 zip code 04352

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] 12/22/06  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Maine Historic Preservation Commission  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

[Signature] 2-9-07  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action  
Edson M. Beall

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

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
15	1	buildings
		sites
	1	structures
		objects
15	2	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

None

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC / Camp

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Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC / Camp

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

NO STYLE

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Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE

walls WOOD / Shingle

roof ASPHALT

other BRICK (chimney)

STONE (chimney)

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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SPRUCE POINT CAMPS

KENNEBEC COUNTY, MAINE

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## MATERIALS, continued

Foundation:	Wood (posts)
Walls	Wood / Weatherboard
	Wood (boarding)
	Wood / plywood

## DESCRIPTION

The Spruce Point Camps is a complex containing small cabins, a lodge, and a dining hall on the shores of Parker Pond in the Kennebec County town of Mount Vernon. Parker Pond is a 3½ by 1½ mile long body of water oriented essentially north to south with a long southeast fork and shorter cove in the west. The pond is located on the western border of the town and its shores contain clusters of residential and seasonal homes. The historic district measures 14.8 acres in total, much of which is undeveloped forest. The cultural resources occupy approximately three acres along the eastern shore of the pond. The shoreline is characterized by shallow granite ledges extending into the water and a mixture of hard and soft wood trees and low shrubs. At the south end of the property is a cove that dips to the southeast and contains a small sandy beach.

The historic district includes 15 contributing buildings, one non-contributing building and one non-contributing structure. The contributing buildings, which were erected between c. 1906 and 1938, include 10 cabins, 2 sheds, an employee cabin, a lodge, and a dining hall. The non-contributing building is a c. 1956 stable. The non-contributing structure is a level, grassy platform that formerly served as a tennis court and is now used as a game court and surface for outdoor performances. With the exception of the game court and stable, and the two sheds, (which are all positioned east of the parking area), all the remaining resources are strung in a line along the shore of the Pond. Dirt paths lined with birch bark logs meander along the shore and between the cabins. Another path crosses a small stream as it leads from the parking area past the employee cabin to the dining hall at the heart of the camp. In general, the lake front buildings are located between twenty-five and fifty feet from the water. From north to south the order of the buildings is as follows: Cabins 1,2,3,4; Dining Hall; Lodge; Cabins 5,6,7,8,9, and 10. The employee cabin is located one hundred feet east of cabin four. The dining hall, lodge and employee cabin are unique structures and will be described separately. However, the cabins can be broken down into three stylistic types with slight variations.

### **Cabins 5,6,7 and 8. Contributing. By 1917.**

Cabins 5,6,7 and 8 were the first sportsmens cabins constructed at Spruce Point Camps. Although they are clearly shown on a postcard postmarked 1917, they may have been built several years earlier. Based solely on the photographic evidence it is clear that the form of these buildings was altered during the period of significance, although the exact time frame of the alterations is

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unknown.

Each of these cabins are two-bay, gable-fronted, platform-framed structures with side wings and engaged front porches. The wings are attached to the north and south sides of the eastern half of the building, and feature low-pitched shed roofs. On the rear of the buildings are small, one-bay wide gable roof sheds which contain the shower and toilet. Each of the cabins are roofed with hexagonally shaped asphalt shingles and, with the exception of Cabin 8, the buildings are clad in wood shingles and trimmed with wooden corner boards and narrow rakes. There are no solid foundations, rather the cabins are supported by wooden posts set on stones. The porch supports and railings are either dimensional lumber or scantlings, and the porches are enclosed with screens.

The west facing facades of these cabins have two bays containing a door in the north bay and a two-over-two sash window in the south. In size, the cabins are small structures and each facet of the side elevations (including the wings) are one bay wide and contain either a two-over-two or six-over-six sash window, or a fixed six-light sash. A metal chimney pipe emerges from the southern plane of the roof at the west end of each building.

On the interior these cabins feature exposed stud walls and rafters. The plan of the interior spaces vary slightly; some wings are wider than others, and some feature partial divisions between the wings and the main room. Floors are generally douglas fir in the main sections and painted or unpainted wide pine in the wings. Remnants of previously exposed clapboards are visible near the rafters on the exterior walls of the main sections. Franklin stoves are situated along the west wall of the building. The interiors are furnished with cots or beds, dressers, tables and chairs. A small closet is built against the north wall behind the front door.

Cabin 8 is missing the wing on the north elevation, although patches in the siding may indicate that this element was removed rather than not constructed. In contrast to Cabins 5, 6, and 7, this building is sided with clapboards and wide wooden novelty siding. Whereas the interior walls of the rest of this group of cabins are left exposed to the studs, the interior walls of the wing of Cabin 8 are finished with 3 ½ inch horizontal pine boarding.

## **Cabins 1 and 2. Contributing. By 1922.**

Cabins 1 and 2, at the northern edge of the district, are similar to cabins five through eight in plan and materials. However, these two cabins are sided with novelty siding and the front porches are attached rather than engaged. In addition, the front facade contains two six-over-six windows and a window in the gable peak in addition to the front door. On the interior, neither of these buildings indicate a phased construction. The flooring is consistent throughout and the wing roof/side wall junction appear to reflect a single building episode.

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## Cabin 3. Contributing. C. 1920-22.

Situated between Cabin 2 and Cabin 4, the third cabin is the simplest of the gable-fronted camps. Unlike the previously described cabins, this building has no wings, nor do the wood shingled walls have corner boards as trim elements. The front facade, set behind the attached porch, contains only the front door. The interior is lit by one two-over-two window in the north wall, a pair of six-over-six windows in the south wall and another two-over-two window in the back wall. The building is framed with studs and scantlings, all of which, along with the interior sides of the exterior sheathing, are painted. Structurally the building appears to be comprised of two almost square units butted together - double side wall posts in the middle of the north and south elevations provide the clearest evidence for this hypothesis. A small shower and toilet annex is located off the northeast corner and the southeast corner contains a shelter for a hot water heater. The building has hexagonally shaped asphalt roof shingles and the foundation consists of large fieldstones. The Franklin stove is located in the southeast corner of the room.

## Cabins 9 and 10 (by 1920) and Cabin 4 (c. 1922). Contributing.

These three cabins are primarily differentiated from Cabins 1 through 8 by their orientation: each presents a long wall to the water rather than a gable end. Each features a hip-roof attached porch on the water side with scantlings for porch supports. Cabins 9 and 10 also have hipped roofs over the cabins.

Cabin 10. This building has the most "finished" interior of all the cabins. The interior space is divided into three approximately equal rooms by board wall partitions.<sup>1</sup> The interior of the external walls are clad with matched vertical boarding. The douglas fir floors are unpainted. The facade is four bays wide and contains, from the north, a window bay followed by the front door, and then two additional window bays. With the exception of the six-over-six window situated in the east side of the lean-to roofed bathroom shed, all the windows are two-over-two wooden sash. Unique to the district, the exterior walls are clad with board and batten. Wooden shingles are evident under the attached porch rafters, but the current covering is of asphalt shingles. The Franklin stove is centered on the east wall and a metal stove pipe protrudes through the roof.

Cabin 9. Similar in dimension, fenestration, and construction to Cabin 10, this building is sided with clapboards. On the interior Cabin 9 contains a partition wall only in the north end of the building. The remainder of the interior is an undifferentiated space. Stud walls, exposed rafters, and douglas fir flooring complete the interior finishes. As with Cabins 4 and 10, the bathroom is located on the eastern wall. This cabin presently has no stove.

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<sup>1</sup>When first visited in 2005 these partitions were constructed of fiberboard and battens, but have since been replaced by painted board walls.

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Cabin 4. In plan, Cabin 4 most closely resembles Cabin 9, and contains a single partition wall on the north end, as well as exposed platform framing. The flooring appears to be of southern yellow pine. The side gable roof differentiates this building from Cabins 9 and 10; as does the organization of the five bay west facing facade. Three windows are located south of the door, and one window is located north of the door. Each of these windows in this building contains either a six-over-six double hung sash or a six-light fixed sash. In addition to the two window bays and the bathroom on the east side elevation is a second exit door. The stove is centered on the east wall. The southern four-fifths of the porch is screened in, with doors exiting from the north and south ends.

## **Employee Cabin. Contributing. By 1938.**

Known as the employee cabin or help's quarters this one story, platform framed building is set behind the guest facilities. It faces south under an asphalt shingle front gable roof with exposed rafter tails, and is supported by wooden posts resting on stone or wooden blocks. The building is sheathed with vertical boarding faced on the interior with fiberboard. The two bay facade contains a door on the west and two-light awning window on the east. The northern elevation contains two window bays flanking a central door, and the east side contains four additional window bays. Each of these windows, with the exception of one three-light fixed sash tucked under the rafters at the south end of the east wall, are two-light awning windows. A door at in the southern corner of the east wall leads to a small closet. The east elevation contains four equally spaced fixed sash of six lights each. The interior of this cabin has a short board wall partition in the southeast corner (enclosing the closet and the bathroom). The floors are painted pine. This cabin, which is in poor condition, and has not been used in recent decades, has neither a porch nor a Franklin stove.

## **Dining Hall / Main Hall. Contributing. C. 1922**

The dining hall, or main hall, is located at the center of the camp complex, and is the largest building in the historic district. The ridge of this one and one-half story hip roof building runs parallel to the shore, and a short, narrow ell is attached to the northeast corner of the building. A shed roof dormer is affixed to the western plane of the roof. The building sits on a fieldstone foundation and is roofed with asphalt shingles. The exterior walls are sheathed with clapboards. The primary facade faces west, and is characterized by an attached, hip-roof screen porch on the southern half and three window bays on the northern half. A narrow shed roof addition is attached to the southwestern corner of the main hall and contains an exterior door and three six-over-six window sash. The south elevation features the external stone chimney flanked by a pair of casement windows.

The interior of this building is divided into the main hall in the south, and a large, industrial kitchen in the north, with additional kitchen storage and built-in coolers located in the ell. The main room has high ceilings with exposed rafters, exposed stud walls and a hard wood floor. A line of log posts provide extra support at the intersection of the hip roof and the western shed roof line. The partition wall between the dining hall and the kitchen is clad with vertical pine boarding. The focal point of the room is the large stone fireplace located at the center of the south wall.

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## **The Lodge. Contributing. By 1906, with additions c. 1917-1925.**

The earliest deed reference to a building on this site dates to 1906 and refers to a cottage. Photographic evidence from c. 1915-16 shows the building prior to the additions, which were constructed a few years hence.

The Lodge is a side gable, one and one-half story platform framed building with an attached porch on the west and south and a one story ell on the north. Affixed to the west and south sides of the ell are small shed roof enclosures that extend the side walls of the ell. (Visually, these enclosures appear to have been open porches on the ell which were then enclosed and the northern and western side walls of the ell removed. However, there are no photographs to confirm this structural evolution.) A large shed dormer sits in the western plane of the asphalt roof and a brick chimney protrudes through the eastern plane of the roof. The walls are covered with clapboards on the main house and wooden shingles on the ell and dormer. Foundation support is provided by wooden posts set on fieldstones. At the northeast corner of the porch a large glacial erratic precludes extending the porch supports, which are slender, peeled scantlings, from reaching the ground. Instead, they rest upon the rock, and the porch deck is scribed to the stone.

The Lodge faces west, and under the porch are two large two-over-two wooden sash windows flanking a double, six-panel, ovolo moulded door at the center. The dormer contains a pair of four-light casement windows, and the gable ends each contain a pair of nine-over-six double hung sash windows under the peaks and two-over-two sash on the lower story (south end only). The north elevation and the east elevation contain irregular fenestration with a mixture of fixed and double hung sash. A portion of the gable roof ell projects east beyond the wall of the main house and a back door is located on the south side of this projection. A third exterior door is located under the shed roof at the far northern edge of the east elevation.

The interior of the lodge is currently configured as a large open space with a ladder-type stair along the west wall and a small bathroom in the northwest corner. The exposed brick chimney and fireplace with Franklin insert is built against the west wall opposite the front doors. The interior is finished with narrow pine flooring in the main section and random width pine in the ell. The walls and ceilings are covered with fiberboard panels and battens. The second floor is divided into two small bedrooms by a board partition wall.

## **Wood Shed and Tool House. Contributing. By 1938.**

Located at the northwest corner of the parking lot are two utilitarian sheds. Each wood frame building measures about eight by ten feet under an asphalt gable roof. They sit on fieldstone foundations and are sided with plywood and pine sheathing. The facades of each face west and contain a single door. Originally a third structure, which functioned as an ice house, was positioned between the woodshed on the north and the tool shed on the south.

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## **Stable. 1956/7. Non Contributing.**

Located along the camp access road just east of the parking lot, the horse stable was built in 1956/57. According to the camp's owner, who built the stable, the form of the structure was inspired by the Kaiser Franz II von Österreich and Maria Theresa's hunting lodge in Vienna. The plan of the stable is an obtuse "U" shape, with single story, open air stalls opening off a one and one-half story enclosure containing a tack room and hay room. The building is constructed of heavy timbers, sided with unpainted pine sheathing and roofed with asphalt shingles. This structure is considered non-contributing because its construction date is outside of the period of significance.

## **Game Court. Non Contributing.**

East of the stable, upon a small plateau, is a flat, grassy plane heavily shaded by the surrounding forest. Prior to 1940 a tennis court was located on this site; now it is utilized as a small playing field and as an outdoor performance stage. It is considered non-contributing because all remnants of the tennis court have been removed save for the compact foundation that provides the current field surface.



**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.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

ENTERTAINMENT / RECREATION

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

**Period of Significance**

C. 1915 - 1940

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

**Significant Dates**

1915-1922

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

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

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

**Architect/Builder**

Stevens, Charles E. (ascribed)

\_\_\_\_\_

**Criteria Considerations**

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

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
    - Federal agency
    - Local government
    - University
    - Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

One of the oldest and most enduring characterizations of Maine is that of a state of abundant wild lands and scenic geography. Since Thoreau first recorded his travels through the Maine woods, visitors and residents alike have availed themselves of the state's outdoor opportunities. Significant in the development of Maine's outdoor image were the sporting camps that began catering to those who sought an authentic "wilderness experience" in the later decades of the nineteenth century. These camps, which were invariably located upon rivers and lakes, or set in vast tracts of forest, helped to foster this image by developing isolated retreats that offered excellent hunting and /or fishing. While the level of amenities offered by the camps varied from rustic cabins with open fire cooking to upscale lodges with refined dining rooms, each promised abundant fresh air, relaxation, spectacular scenery and unparalleled hunting or fishing with trained guides. The Spruce Point Camps were established on Parker Pond in Mount Vernon by 1915, first as Steven's Camps and later renamed Spruce Point Camps in 1922. The survival of this small outfit (just ten cabins) and their location in the southern section of the state add to their significance as an example of this recreational form, and expand our understanding of its distribution throughout the state. Spruce Point Camps are nominated to the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion A as a significant example of a recreational complex in the tradition of the Maine sporting camp.

### **Maine Sporting Camps: Historical context.**

Although Maine's sporting camps were found throughout the state the best known of the facilities were in the Moosehead, Katahdin, and Rangeley Lakes regions or in the North Woods. Many of these camps had a symbiotic relationship with the Bangor and Aroostook Railroad: passengers used rail to access the station closest to their camp and the B & A advertised the camps through its publication *In the Maine Woods*. To this day guided hunts and fishing expeditions continue to be features at camps such as Spencer Pond Camps in Middlesex Township or the Cobbs Pierce Pond Camps in North New Portland.

The following information is excerpted from an architectural survey of Maine Sporting Camps written by Stephen Cole. This thematic survey was sponsored by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission between 1990 and 1994.

The institution known as the sporting camp thrived in every region of Maine from the 1870s through the 1950s, and exists even today in more modest scope and number. Simply described, a sporting camp is a complex of structures situated on a lake or river erected to serve as accommodations for sport fishermen and to a lesser degree, hunters. The feature which defines the classic sporting camp is its juxtaposition of single and multi-purpose buildings: individual camps or cottages in which sports sleep and relax flanking the central lodge, where meals are prepared and served and where sports socialize. Other buildings within the complex may vary, but camps and a central

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lodge will always be found. This applies whether the complex is a commercial venture open to the public, privately held for the use of family and guests, or owned collectively by members and serving as a club....Commercial sporting camps are believed to have originated in the Rangeley Lakes region during the decade beginning 1870. While commercial sporting camps continued as popular recreational accommodations into the 1950s, the latest sporting camp complex known was constructed in 1928.

Due to its size and geographical location the fishing camps on Parker Pond have never been as well known as those in the North Woods, yet they were not unique in a region that also includes the better known Belgrade Lakes. According to one estimate, there were two dozen similar camps in the area in the 1930s and 40s. (Arlen, p. 51). Parker Pond, on the border of Mount Vernon and Livermore, is located less than 18 miles northwest of Augusta (the state capital) and 31 and 25 miles respectively from the industrial communities of Waterville and Lewiston. Although Spruce Point Camp is the only known fishing camp to have existed on Parker Pond, several facilities of similar size and age were located on the Belgrade Lakes, including the Bear Springs Camps and the Alden Camps, both in Oakland, and Castle Island Camps in the town of Belgrade Lake. (Arlen, 1994). The following passage describes the Belgrade and Kennebec Lake Regions as of 1951, eleven years after Spruce Point Camps closed. Depending on the source, Parker Pond can be grouped with either region.

The contrast between this region and the others...is about as great as anyone could imagine. The others are in or near the forest, or off the beaten path. The Belgrade Lakes - Kennebec Lakes Region, being in south-central Maine, is close to the state's center of population with four of the state's largest cities - Lewiston, Auburn, Augusta and Waterville - on its perimeter. Roads criss-cross the region in every direction so that it is possible to reach many points on each lake by car. The shoreline of many of the lakes is wooded, but most of the territory between and around them is farm land. In the area are a dozen good-sized towns, many of which derive most of their income from the vacation trade. Consequently the lake shores in this region are liberally sprinkled with both public and private vacation buildings.

It is one of Maine's most popular vacation regions and each year it is patronized by thousands of vacationers, mostly family groups, from other states. The area has so many resort hotels, inns, sporting camps, overnight camps, tourist homes and housekeeping camps that they are past listing..." (Doucette, p. 237-38).

The precise history of Spruce Point Camp is unknown, although documentary evidence is useful in establishing a chronology. A twelve acre parcel of land on the east shore of the pond was sold by Harriet Wentworth to Daniel Folsom in 1866, and Folsom sold it to Hiram Comstock in 1899.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>The recorded boundaries of the parcel have not changed over the years, however, the current acreage of the parcel is measured at just under 15 acres.

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When Comstock sold a portion of the property to his son Wesley in 1906 the deed referenced an existing cottage with regards to the right to access an adjacent spring. This same cottage was again mentioned when the Comstocks sold the entire 12 acre parcel to Charles E. Stevens in 1915, along with the furnishings of the cottage.

Stevens, a carpenter by trade who lived in nearby Fayette, was the first owner of the property who can be positively identified as running a fishing camp. Neither advertisements, correspondence, or local directory listings have been found for the camp, but postcards and photographs help to chart the property's evolution and ownership. A postcard dated 1917 and addressed to Mrs. Stevens in Mt. Vernon, from her son Guy, clearly depicts two cottages and the lodge as seen from the water. On one of two additional postcards from the same year are shown four cabins (Cabins 5,6,7, & 8) prior to the addition of their wings and porches. The other photograph depicts the Lodge. In this photograph the Lodge has its side ell, but not the shed roof expansions. A similar photograph was published in the booklet "Parkers Pond Camp." In this photograph the Lodge, ( or "Camp", as it is labeled) has not yet had the ell constructed. This suggests that the camps were established shortly after Stevens acquired the property in 1915, and that the ell was added prior to 1917. This booklet also shows the four existing cabins ("the sleeping cabins are well furnished and heated and each designed for two people"), and promises that "two large cabins for family parties will be ready for use July first". The booklet boasted of 14 ½ pound salmon, 101 black bass caught in a day by one party, and fine spring drinking water. Offered as references were former patrons from Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Washington, D.C., and instructions for taking the Maine Central Railroad to nearby Readfield were included.

In 1922 Stevens sold the property to Webster Chester, a biology professor at Colby College, who ran the establishment seasonally through 1938. Chester renamed the camps Spruce Point, and he expanded the property, both by adding new buildings (including the dining hall/main hall, and the cabins to the north of the dining hall) as well as adding the wings and porches to the earlier cabins. A small dorm was built for "the help," and in the 1930s a tennis court was installed to expand the recreational opportunities. During Chester's tenure, some of the cabins were rented by the season, others by the week. Fishing remained the predominate attraction. At the end of 1938 Webster tried to sell the property to Muriel Dunham, who managed to bring electricity to the site before she defaulted on her mortgage. According to the current owner, the camps ceased operation in 1940, and remained closed during World War II. In 1945 the property was purchased by Ruth Grauert of New Jersey.

## Architectural typology of Maine Sporting Camps

Although most of the sporting camps found in the Maine featured buildings of log, rather than frame construction, Cole identified additional elements common to sporting camps throughout the state:

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The configuration of rooms did not vary greatly from camp to camp, although the size of the rooms and buildings and the degree of privacy offered was generally greater at expensive sporting camps. Almost all camps featured a central lodge housing a dining room, living room or combination thereof, the kitchen and camp office...

Sleeping camps often consisted of a single room holding bunks or beds for as many sports as the building was meant to sleep as well as a stove or fireplace and some chairs in a sitting area. A large camp might contain a loft sleeping area. In posh sporting camps, sleeping accommodations would entail individual bedrooms and a separate sitting room within a camp large enough for the entire visiting party...As with dining rooms, the size of these buildings varied. (Cole, p. 19- 20.)

Each of the cabins at Spruce Point was planned for guests to sleep in and relax around. None of the cabins contain kitchen facilities; all meals were taken in the dining hall or lodge. The interiors of the camps are relaxed and rustic and most of them are simply furnished with beds or cots, tables, chairs and dressers. Holes can still be found in the floors of many of the cabins which indicate the former location of drains for the ice boxes that were designed to hold each day's catch.

The layout of the Spruce Point Camps evolved over several years, but by placing the guest quarters near the water on either side of the main lodge, the proprietors were following an established precedent.

The physical setting chosen for constructing a sporting camp was not arrived at by whim. As noted in *A Word from the Maine Woods*, published by the Debsconeag Fish and Game Club, "The buildings are so placed so as to obtain two essentials -- plenty of free moving air and a good view."<sup>3</sup> For both these reasons, camp complexes were often placed on gently elevated terrain above a lake or stream, the line of buildings following the contour of the shore.

Viewed from water, the sporting camp complex often appeared tripartite: the lodge commanding a central location flanked by a line of camps on either side. The location of all of these buildings, which served guests directly, was meant to provide the requisite views and fresh air. The proximity of the cabins to the lodge ensured easy access for patrons who dined, socialized, conducted business and met fishing guides at this location. While food preparation and serving rooms were often attached to the lodge, other ancillary structures were discreetly placed at the rear of the complex (except for the boathouse, which sat at the shore). These included lodging for guides, kitchen help and other employees, and buildings where various commodities such as ice and wood were stored. (Cole, p. 22-23.)

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<sup>3</sup> Debsconeag Fish and Game Club, *A Word from the Maine Woods* (Debsconeag, ME, 1903), pp.8-9.

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It is clear that in their spatial arrangement the facilities of the Spruce Point Camps are a good example of the Maine Sporting Camp as described by Cole. This property is especially notable for its survival in light of its modest size, ongoing 20<sup>th</sup> century development pressures, and its geographical location.

Since 1945 Grauert, a well respected stage lighting designer, has operated the property as a summer camp specializing in movement, dance, and the arts in a non-competitive atmosphere. Known as Bearstow ('childs place') the camp has alternately served children or professional dancers, either as a day camp or in week long sessions. Under Grauert's leadership the facilities have been maintained but otherwise altered only minimally (i.e. screens have been added, plumbing and dining facilities have been updated). While the period of significance for this property ends prior to the transformation of Spruce Point Camps into Bearstow, this is in recognition of the fact that the historic significance of the latter establishment has not yet been evaluated within its proper context. In the future this nomination should be revisited if necessary and the period and areas of significance expanded if warranted.

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## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Arlen, Alice. In the Maine Woods. (Hallowell, Maine: Alice Arlen), 1994.

Cole, Stephen A. "Maine Sporting Camps: A Phase One Survey." Survey report prepared for the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, 1990. Copy on file at the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Augusta, Maine.

Doucette, Earle. The Fisherman's Guide to Maine. (New York: Random House), 1951.

In the Maine Woods. (Boston: Bangor and Aroostook R.R. Co.), 1934

In the Maine Woods. (Boston: Bangor and Aroostook R.R. Co.), 1940

In the Maine Woods . (Boston: Bangor and Aroostook R.R. Co.), 1905

Photographs and postcards, c. 1915-1925. Bearnstow Archives, Mount Vernon, Maine. Copies on file at the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Augusta, Maine.

The Maine Arrow Guide, Vol. II. (Portland, Maine: Fred L. Tower Companies), 1940.

Thompson, Winfield M. In the Maine Woods (Boston: Bangor and Aroostook R.R. Co.), 1900.

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 14.8 acres

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 9	4 1 9 0 5 2	4 9 2 7 5 5 8
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2	1 9	4 1 9 2 1 2	4 9 2 7 5 5 3

3	1 9	4 1 9 2 1 1	4 9 2 7 2 1 2
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4	1 9	4 1 9 0 2 1	4 9 2 7 2 1 4

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title CHRISTI A. MITCHELL, ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

organization MAINE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION date 20 October 2006

street & number 55 CAPITOL STREET, STATION 65 telephone (207) 287-2132

city or town AUGUSTA state ME zip code 04333 -0065

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name \_\_\_\_\_

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

**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. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.



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### **VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The boundaries of the nominated parcel are fully described by the Town of Mount Vernon tax map R-4, lot 25. Reference is made to the attached district map entitled "Spruce Point Camps, Kennebec County, Maine" for more details.

### **BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The boundaries of the nominated parcel represent the historic limits of the Spruce Point Camps as it existed between 1915 and 1940. Additional acreage is currently associated with the property, now run as a camp called Bearstow, but this mostly forested land was not historically associated with the fishing camps and is not included in this nomination.

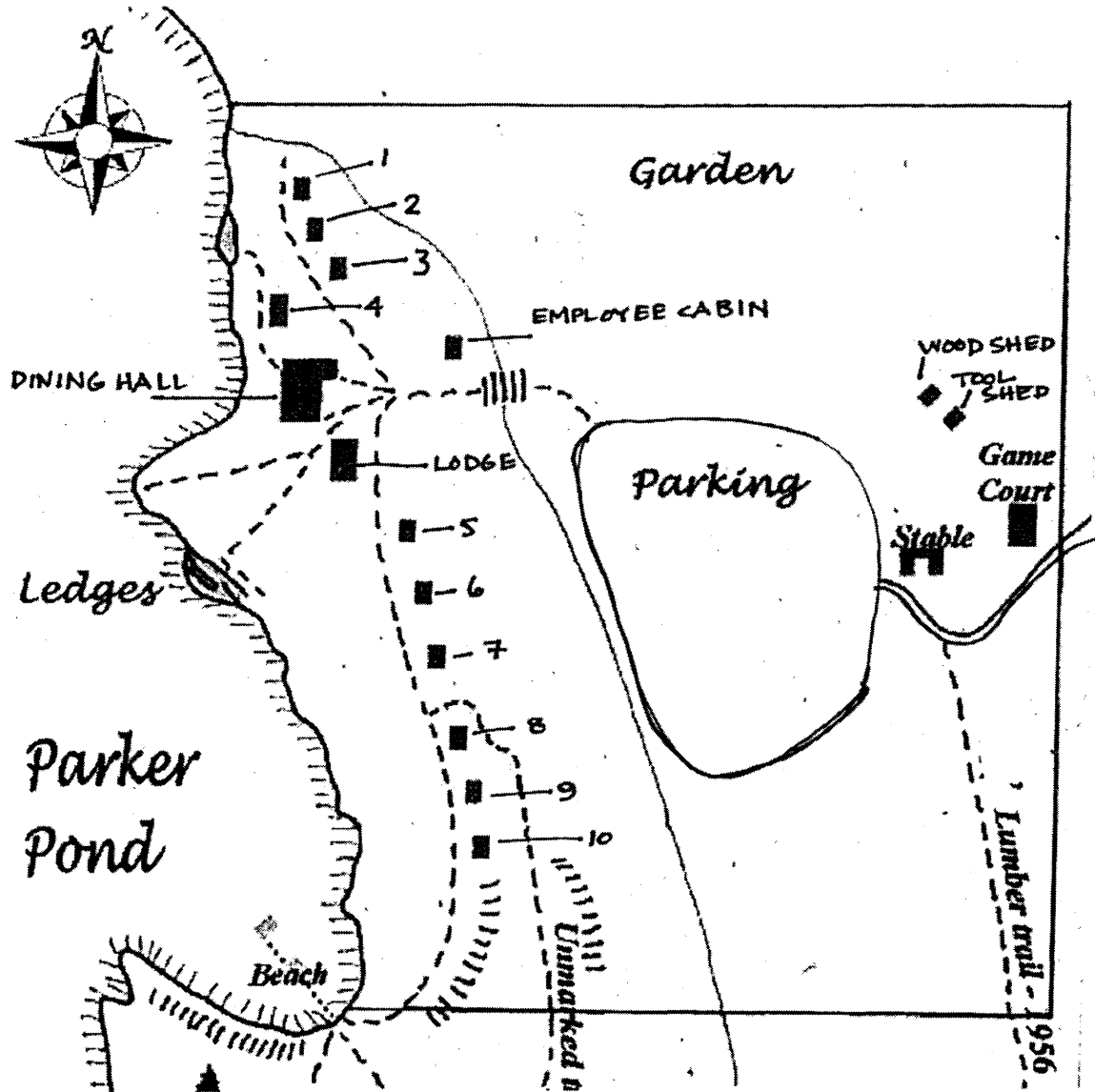
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Spruce Point Camps  
Mt. Vernon, Kennebec County, Maine

*Resources keyed to National Register nomination.*

Base map developed by Richard Bird, 2001.  
<http://eb.rbjenet.com/bearnstow/>

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## PHOTOGRAPHS

Photograph 1 of 7  
Christi A. Mitchell  
Maine Historic Preservation Commission  
7 September 2006  
Lodge. Western facade; facing southeast.

Photograph 5 of 7  
Christi A. Mitchell  
Maine Historic Preservation Commission  
7 September 2006  
Cabin #4. West and south elevations; facing northeast.

Photograph 2 of 7  
Christi A. Mitchell  
Maine Historic Preservation Commission  
7 September 2006  
Dining Hall. South elevation; facing north.

Photograph 6 of 7  
Christi A. Mitchell  
Maine Historic Preservation Commission  
7 September 2006  
Cabins 6 and 7. Facing south.

Photograph 3 of 7  
Christi A. Mitchell  
Maine Historic Preservation Commission  
7 September 2006  
Lodge interior; facing northeast.

Photograph 7 of 7  
Christi A. Mitchell  
Maine Historic Preservation Commission  
7 September 2006  
Cabin 8. West elevation; facing east.

Photograph 4 of 7  
Christi A. Mitchell  
Maine Historic Preservation Commission  
7 September 2006  
Cabin # 3. West and south elevations; facing northeast.