

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 00000514

Date Listed: 12/29/2000

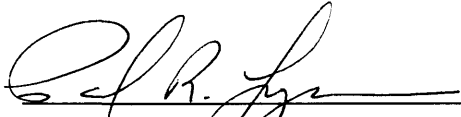
Whaleback Snow-Survey Cabin  
Property Name

Jackson  
County

OR  
State

U. S. Forest Service Historic Structures  
on the Rogue River National Forest, MPS  
Multiple Name

-----  
This property is listed in the National Register of Historic  
Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation  
subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments,  
notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included  
in the nomination documentation.

  
Signature of the Keeper

12/29/2000  
Date of Action

-----  
Amended Items in Nomination:

**Significance:**  
*Architecture* is added as an area of significance under Criterion C.

These revisions were confirmed with the Forest Service.

**DISTRIBUTION:**  
National Register property file  
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

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 Whaleback Snow-Survey Cabin

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Location

street & number Approximately ten miles north of Prospect, OR  not for publication

city or town Prospect (Rogue River National Forest)  vicinity

state Oregon code OR county Jackson code 029 zip code 97536

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

State of Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

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

James Hamrick March 10, 2000  
Signature of certifying official/Title/Deputy SHPO Date

Oregon State Historic Preservation Office  
State or Federal agency and bureau

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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 of the Keeper Carl R. Fujita Date of Action 12/29/00

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 3 Page 1

U. S. Forest Service  
Historic Structures on the  
Rogue River National Forest  
MPS

SECTION 3: FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that the nominations listed below meet the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meet the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the properties meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that these properties be considered significant locally.



Signature of certifying official/FPO

11/2/2000  
Date

Federal Agency and bureau: *U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Region*

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**Administrative**

Star Ranger Station Building/"Tack Room" (1911)  
Willow Prairie Cabin (1924)  
Big Elk Guard Station (1929)

**Fire Lookouts**

Hershberger Mountain Lookout (1924)  
Dutchman Peak Lookout (1927)  
Mt. Stella Lookout (1933)  
Squaw Peak Lookout (1943)

**Snow Survey Cabins**

Whaleback Snow-Survey Cabin (1937)  
Honeymoon Creek Snow Cabin (1943)

**CCC/FERA Recreation Facilities**

McKee Bridge Campground (1935-1936)  
Wrangle Shelter (1935-36)  
Dead Indian Soda Springs Shelter (1936)  
Fish Lake Shelter (1936)  
Parker Meadows Shelter (1936)

Name of Property

County and State

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.)

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing. Rows for buildings, sites, structures, objects, Total.

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

U.S. Forest Service Historic Structures on the Rogue River National Forest

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT: Snow-Survey Cabin

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT: Seasonal Use

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY

AMERICAN MOVEMENTS

Log Cabin

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE

walls WOOD: Log

roof METAL

other

Narrative Description

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

Please see continuation sheets

Name of Property

County and State

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.)

- Criteria A, B, C, D with checkboxes and descriptions.

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- Criteria A, B, C, D, E, F, G with checkboxes and descriptions.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

CONSERVATION
POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

Period of Significance

1937-1943

Significant Dates

1937

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

R.A. Work and others

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):

- Criteria for previous documentation on file (NPS).

Primary location of additional data:

- Criteria for primary location of additional data.

Name of repository:

Rogue River National Forest

Whaleback Snow-Survey Cabin

Jackson Oregon  
County and State

Name of Property

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .75 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 10 53431010 4751081410  
Zone Easting Northing  
2

3 Zone Easting Northing  
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 Katherine C. Atwood  
organization (for) USDA Forest Service date November 6, 1999  
street & number 365 Holly Street telephone 541-482-8714  
city or town Ashland state Oregon zip code 9750

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 USDA Forest Service Rogue River National Forest  
street & number P.O. Box 520 telephone 541-858-2200  
city or town Medford state Oregon zip code 97501

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 Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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Whaleback Snow-Survey Cabin

Section number 7 Page 1

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**Description**

Setting:

The Whaleback Snow-Survey Cabin is located in the SE¼ of Section 33, Township 30 South, Range 2 East, W.M. at an elevation of 5,025 feet above sea level on the east slope of Whaleback Mountain, one of the prominent peaks of the Rogue-Umpqua Divide. The cabin is situated near the headwaters of McCall Creek, a tributary of Abbott Creek that drains into Woodruff Creek, which drains into the Rogue River. The structure stands in a clearing surrounded by a dense stand of Shasta red fir on the Prospect Ranger District of the Rogue River National Forest in northern Jackson County. The Jackson/Douglas county line lies approximately one mile to the west of the site. There are no outbuildings or permanent exterior features associated with the cabin.

The geology on the slope of Whaleback Mountain is characterized by deeply weathered Tertiary andesites. The cabin site itself is located adjacent to an area of meadow marsh with deep soil. Vegetation consists of Shasta red fir, white fir, and mountain hemlock. The understory is composed of manzanita and grasses.

Structural Description:

Whaleback Snow-Survey Cabin is a small, single-room, one-story log cabin. No foundation materials or footings are evident above ground. The sill logs apparently rest on low rock footings placed at intervals around the building and that are now covered with soil. The structure measures approximately 12' x 14' in plan. The logs used in the cabin's construction are probably Shasta red fir and measure approximately one foot in diameter. Joined by V-notching at the corners, the wall logs contain chinking made of concrete that is secured by nails placed at regular intervals. The sidewalls are eight logs (approximately eight feet high) from the ground to the roof eaves. The front and rear walls extend twelve logs (approximately 12') high from the ground to the gable peak. The peak of the medium-pitch gable roof is oriented in a north/south direction; the roof is supported by log purlins that are shielded by wooden bargeboards. The roof is covered by corrugated sheet metal apparently affixed about twenty years after the original sugar pine-shake roof was constructed.

The cabin's single, vertical plank door is located in the south facade. Wood brackets support the eave that is cut out just above the door. The structure's fenestration is simple

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Whaleback Snow-Survey Cabin

Section number 7 Page 2

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and minimal with a small window located high and slightly off-centered in the west gable end. The window has a hinged, interior shutters. A winter use "snow door" is located in the east wall gable end, just below the peak of the roof. This entry is situated in order that visitors can reach the door easily if the main door is blocked by snow. A six-rung ladder, built of dimensional lumber and attached directly to the exterior wall, provides access to the snow door from the ground. A similar, attached ladder is located inside the cabin. A snow tower, or "Santa Claus" chimney, with a gabled roof leads to the interior of the cabin on the interior northeast corner. The tower, approximately twelve feet in height is roughly square, of frame construction, and measures approximately 4' x 4' in size. The tower is sheathed with 6" channel siding. It provided access during especially deep winter snowpacks.

The interior of the cabin contains a large tool-cache box in the northwest corner: a wooden, two-bunk bed in the southwest corner, a small woodstove, propane stove and table. Various cupboards and shelves are attached to the interior walls. Aside from the door and window frames the entire structure has remained unpainted.

With the exception of the corrugated roof covering, some rot in the sill logs, and localized spots of decay in the first tier of logs above the sills, the cabin is structurally sound and retains its original configuration.



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## Significance

Whaleback Snow-Survey Cabin, built in 1937 and used for several decades by snow survey personnel, is significant for its association with the snow-survey program development in southwestern Oregon. This program was created and maintained by the Bureau of Agricultural Engineering/Soil Conservation Service with the assistance of the Rogue River National Forest. Submitted as part of a multiple property submission, "U.S. Forest Service Historic Structures on the Rogue River National Forest, Oregon," Whaleback Snow-Survey Shelter Cabin represents its associated historic context, "BAE/SCS Snow Survey on the Rogue River National Forest 1937-1943." The cabin meets the registration requirements outlined for snow-survey shelter cabins in the registration document. Constructed in 1937, it was established near the beginning of the historic period. The Whaleback Snow-Survey Cabin has retained its integrity of setting, location, design, and materials, and it evokes direct historic associations with its historic context. It embodies the distinctive characteristics of its type through its location, setting, design, and materials. The cabin is eligible to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A as an important representative of the BAE/SCS pioneer snow survey program in southwestern Oregon and of federal involvement in this area of natural resource management. Whaleback Snow-Survey Cabin is one of two log snow-survey cabins remaining on the Rogue River National Forest and one of very few remaining within Oregon.

Additionally, Whaleback Snow-Survey Cabin has been declared eligible under National Register Criterion C as an excellent representative of its type. It illustrates the pattern of BAE/SCS snow-survey cabins in retaining a typical location and appearance. The cabin retains its structural appearance, condition, preservation of the remote backcountry setting, and its standing as one of the earliest snow survey cabins to be constructed in the American West. The Whaleback Snow-Survey Cabin remains unchanged in shape and volume and materials. The same logs comprise the walls and roof supports as when first built. The current roofing material is corrugated metal and sheaths the original roof. Modifications have been very few and slight. Whaleback Snow-Survey Cabin retains a close resemblance to the original South Lake snow survey cabin, including its snow tower or "Santa Claus chimney."

## History:

The Whaleback snow course was established on November 20, 1936 by R.A. ("Arch") Work and R.W. Childreth, from the Medford office of the U.S. Bureau of Agricultural

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Whaleback Snow-Survey Cabin

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Engineering. Work, who served as director of the BAE/SCS western snow-survey program from the 1930s to the 1950s, led efforts in the field. The first measurement for the course was made March 29, 1937. A soil moisture station was also located at the station on same date. Each winter, two-man teams, equipped with tools and supplies measured snow depth and, using snow tubes, determined the moisture content of snow at intervals across an established "snow course."

The Whaleback Snow-Survey Cabin was built in October 1937 by R.A. Work, and others. A pack-string carried in tools and other supplies for the project. The idea for the distinctive tower or "Santa Claus" chimney on the Whaleback cabin had evolved the year before during a winter expedition into South Lake. In January 1936, R.A. Work and a companion skied into South Lake to complete a snow survey. They reached the South Lake cabin site a little before dark but were unable to locate it. Work described their dilemma:

... We couldn't find the log cabin. We knew where the cabin was supposed to be and we feared that maybe some hunters had burned it down... We got our snow-tubes out, went to the place where we believed the cabin to be and started "sounding." Sure enough, we hit wood. We kept sounding until we came over the ridgepole of the cabin roof... Then we started digging, with our skis and with our hand-axe... We dug a hole down eleven feet to get into that cabin... The next year we put a "chimney" entrance on the cabin, and then could climb down through the wooden "chimney" into the cabin, underneath the snowdrifts (Work: 4).

Snow-surveyors, carrying measuring equipment, emergency rations, tools, and other supplies made annual ski trips into Whaleback snow course each year. The last measurements on Whaleback soil moisture station were made in the fall of 1945 and the Whaleback Snow-Survey Cabin continued in use by snow surveyors through the early 1960s. During the 1950s the Soil Conservation Service began developing electronic snow survey methods that eliminated the need for wintertime visits. After a "sno-tel" site at Sevenmile Marsh replaced the two snow courses in Seven Lakes Basin in the late 1960s, the Soil Conservation Service abandoned the shelter cabin and formally turned ownership of it over to the Forest Service. In 1968 the Rogue River Forest district ranger recommended that the cabin be retained for emergency use of their personnel making the snow surveys.

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

Whaleback Snow-Survey Cabin

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Whaleback Snow-Survey Shelter Cabin retains direct associations with the development of the nation's snow-survey program, particularly in the irrigation-dependent portions of the western United States. The cabin is significant for its association with the development of snow-survey in southwestern Oregon, a program created and maintained by the Bureau of Agricultural Engineering/Soil Conservation Service with the assistance of the Rogue River National Forest.

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National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
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Whaleback Snow-Survey Cabin

Section number   9   Page   1  

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**Bibliography**

LaLande, Jeff

1993. Heritage Resource Evaluation and Project Description for  
Honeymoon Creek Cabin (CR Job RR-1013) Rogue River National Forest.

LaLande, Jeff

1999 Field Visit to Whaleback Snow Survey Cabin, August 4, 1999.

U.S.D.A. Soil Conservation Service

n.d. Snow Course Biography

Work, R.A.

1990 Oral History Interview, in Recollections: People and the Forest, Vol. III,  
Rogue River National Forest, Medford, Oregon.

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Continuation Sheet**

Whaleback Snow Survey Cabin

Section number 10 Page 1

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A USGS map of the Abbott Butte Quadrangle is included with this nomination. A photocopied section of this map with the site location marked by an arrow, is also contained within the nomination document.

**Boundary Description**

Whaleback Snow-Survey Cabin is situated on National Forest land in the SE¼ of Section 33 in Township 30 South, Range 2 East, W.M. in northern Jackson County, Oregon. The property is identified on USGS map, Abbott Butte Quadrangle, 7.5. Minute series, included with this nomination.

For purposes of this nomination, the property may be further identified as circular parcel measuring approximately 200 feet in diameter. The boundary of the circle may be determined by measuring approximately 100 feet from the southwest corner of the cabin, and scribing a circle 200 feet in diameter. The acreage of this circle is .75 acres, more or less.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary encompasses the Whaleback Snow-Survey Cabin and the immediate area directly associated with the cabin and incorporated within a 200' diameter circle. This boundary forms a discrete, visually identifiable area within which activities related to the shelter took place.

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Whaleback Snow-Survey Cabin

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Photographs \_\_\_\_\_ Page 1

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## Photographs

### Photograph No. 1

- 1) Whaleback Snow-Survey Cabin
- 2) SE ¼ Section 33, T 30 South, Range 2 East, W.M. Jackson County, Oregon
- 3) Photographer: Katherine Atwood
- 4) Date of Photograph: August 1999
- 5) Negative holder: Rogue River National Forest  
P.O. Box 580  
Medford, Oregon 97501
- 6) View of south and west elevations
- 7) Photograph number 1 of 2

### Photograph No. 2

- 1) Whaleback Snow-Survey Cabin
- 2) SE ¼ Section 33, T 30 South, Range 2 East, W.M. Jackson County, Oregon
- 3) Photographer: Unknown
- 4) Date of Photograph: c. 1960
- 5) Negative holder: Rogue River National Forest  
P.O. Box 580  
Medford, Oregon 97501
- 6) Historic View
- 7) Photograph number 2 of 2

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

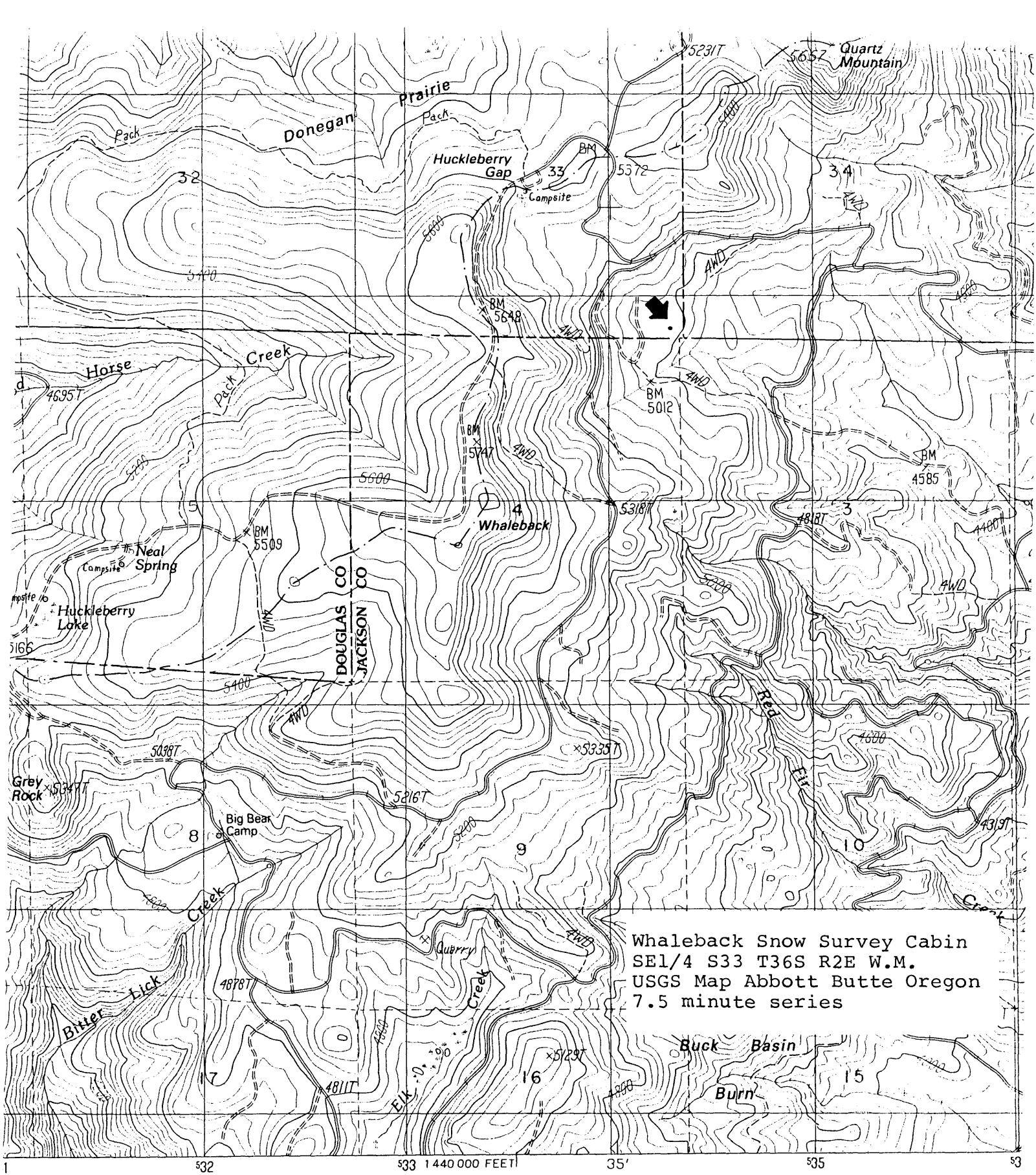
**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Whaleback Snow Survey Cabin  
Section number 11 Page 1

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**Property Owner Notification**

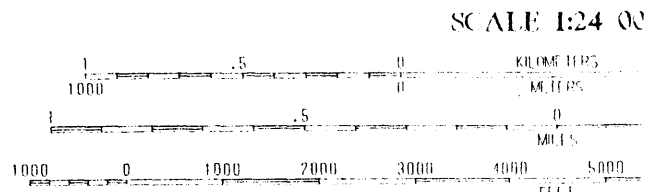
U.S. Forest Service  
Rogue River National Forest  
J. Michael Lunn, Forest Supervisor  
Jeff LaLande, Forest Archaeologist  
P.O. Box 520  
Medford, Oregon 97501



Whaleback Snow Survey Cabin  
 SE1/4 S33 T36S R2E W.M.  
 USGS Map Abbott Butte Oregon  
 7.5 minute series

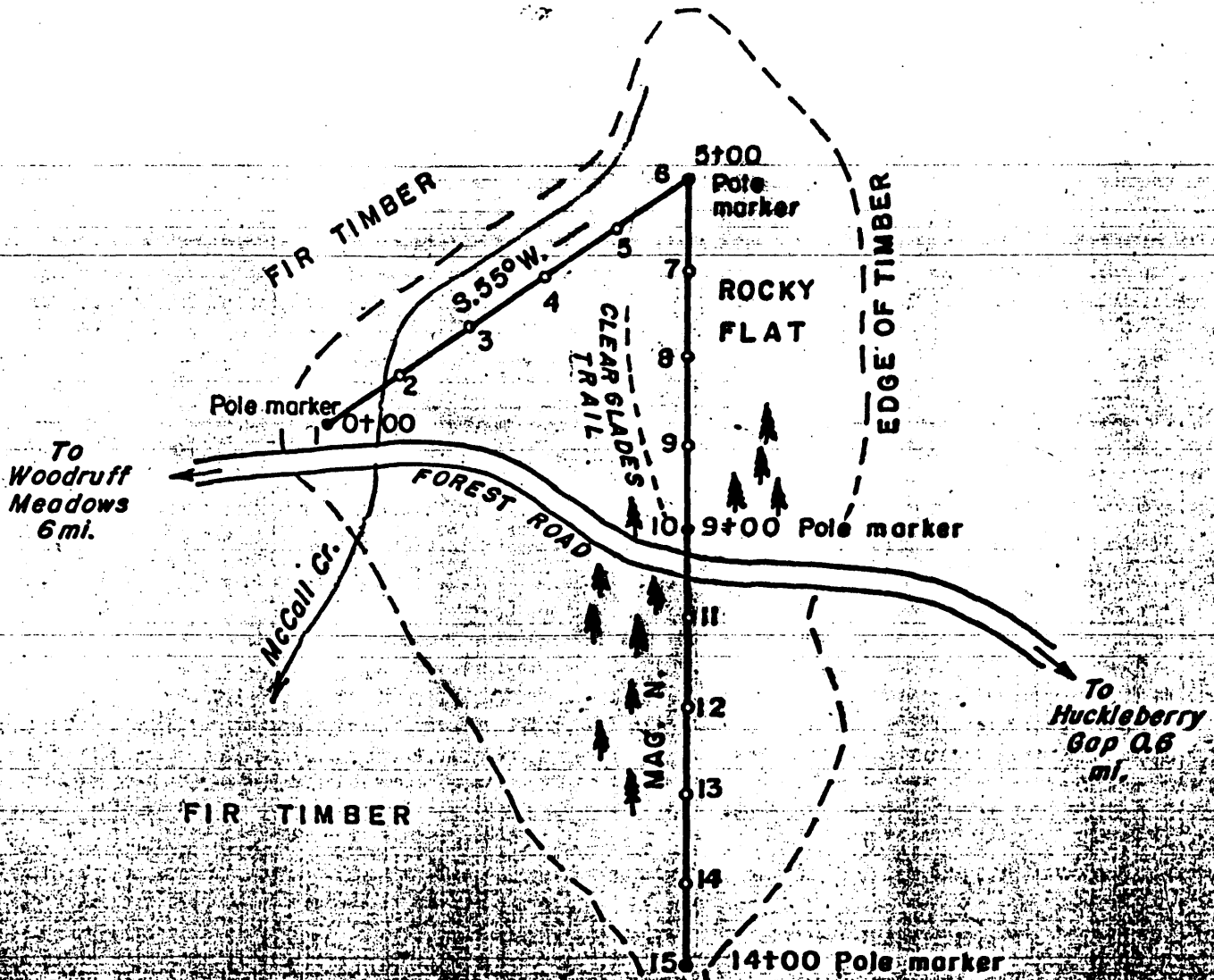
BY THE UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL SURVEY  
 AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN . . . . . 1980  
 1984 . . . . . MAP EDITED . . . . . 1989  
 . . . . . LAMBERT CONFORMAL CONIC  
 UNIVERSAL TRANSVERSE MERCATOR . . . . . ZONE 10  
 STATE GRID TICKS . . . . . OREGON, SOUTH ZONE  
 INATION . . . . . 0'18" EAST  
 NORTH DECLINATION . . . . . 18' EAST  
 . . . . . NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929  
 . . . . . 1927 NORTH AMERICAN DATUM  
 the predicted North American Datum of 1983,

**PROVISIONAL MAP**  
 Produced from original



SCALE 1:24 000  
 CONTOUR INTERVAL . . . . .  
 To convert feet to meters multipl  
 To convert meters to feet multipl



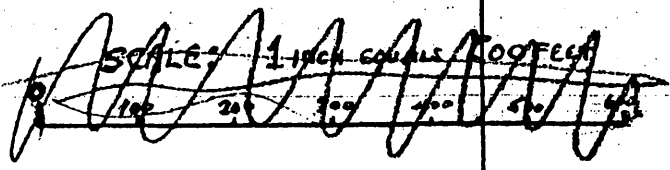
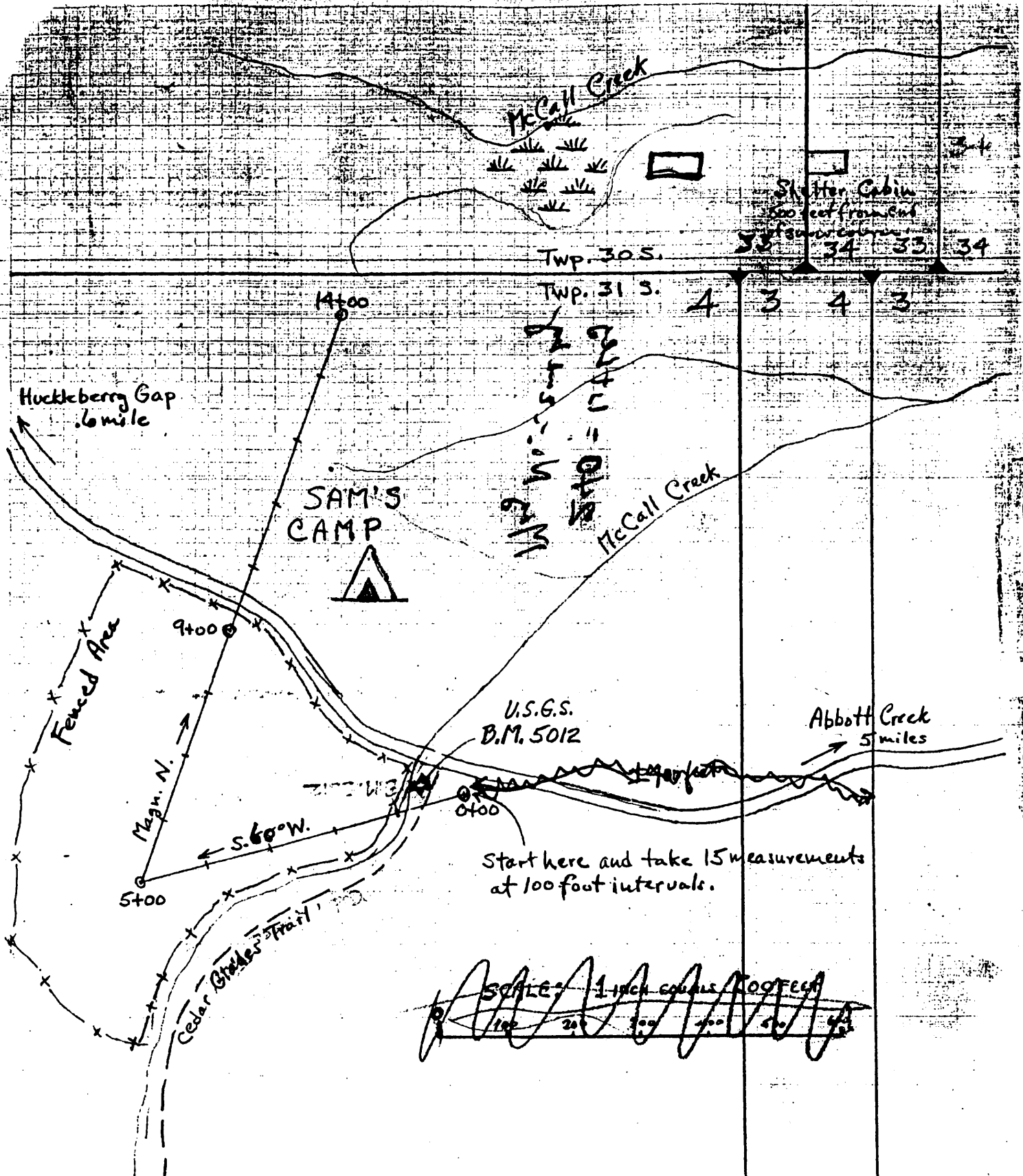


15 measurements to be taken at 100' intervals, beginning at 0+00.

Whaleback Snow Course  
Established  
1936

COOPERATIVE SNOW SURVEYS AND STREAMFLOW FORECASTS  
OREGON  
**WHALEBACK SNOW COURSE**  
Established Nov 20, 1936 by Work BC  
COURSE NO 226 / SET 3 / 1-19 / 1-21  
ELEVATION 5140' / SAMPLES 15 / INTERVAL 100'

S.C.S. cabin



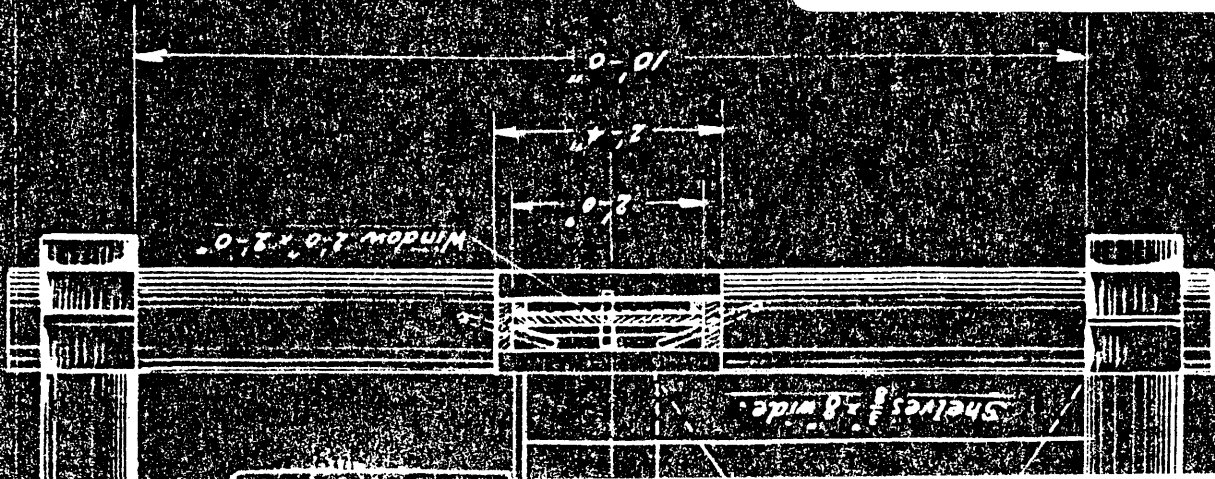
Oregon Cooperative Snow Surveys  
and Streamflow Forecasts  
**WHALEBACK SNOW COURSE**  
Established Nov. 20, 1936 by Work + Childreth  
No. 7217 Elev. 5025  
Location: Sec 4, T31S, R2E.  
Sketch Revised 8-7-50 W.T. Frost

PLAN OF A  
SNOW SURVEY SHELTER CACHE  
CONSTRUCTED IN SEVEN-LAKE BASIN, OREGON.

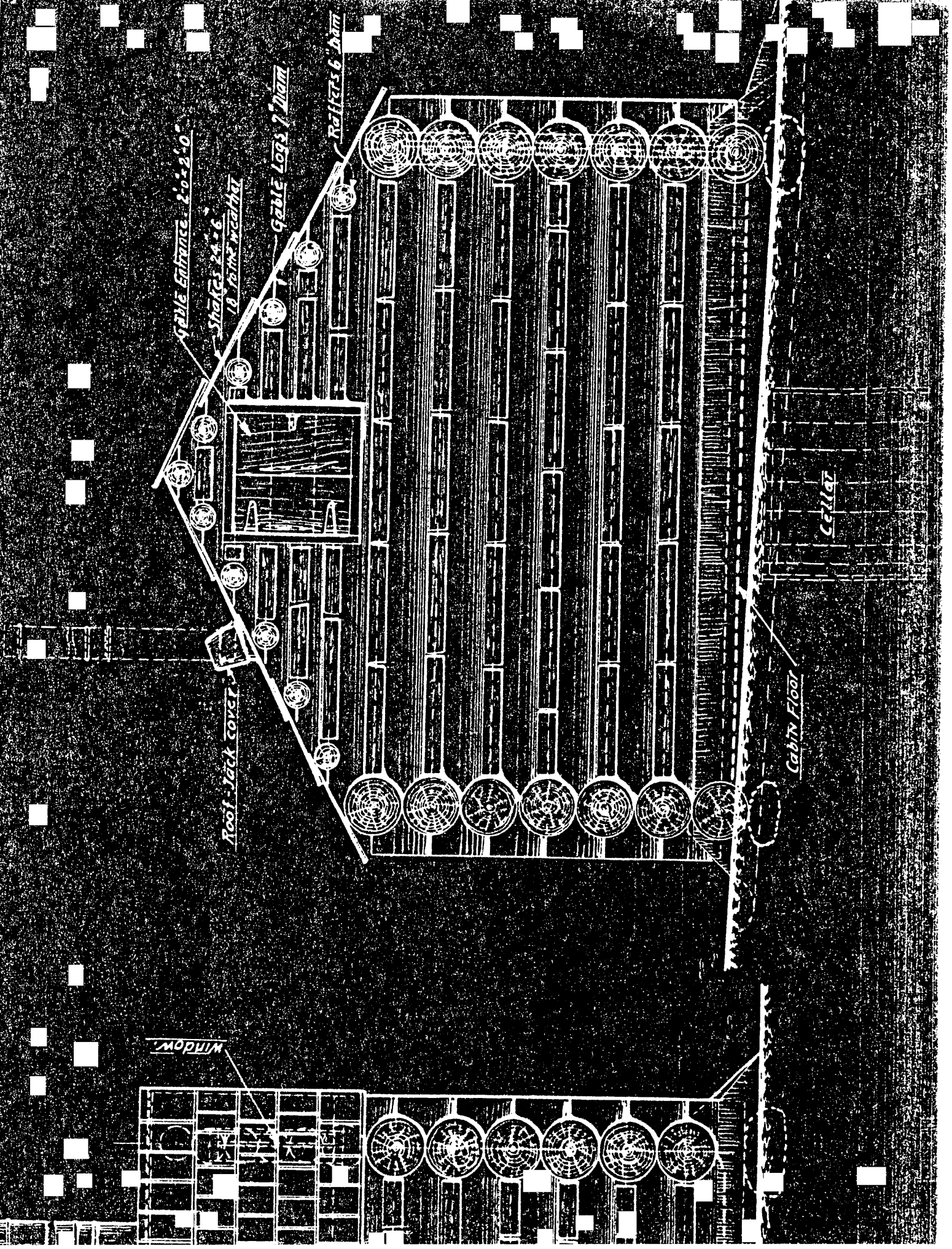
1935.

SCALE: 1" = 1 FT.

"Plan of a Snow Survey Shelter Cache"  
Seven Lakes Basin  
1935







Gable Entrance. 2'-0" x 2'-0"

Shakes 24" x 6"  
18 for the weather

Gable Logs 7' diam

Refrigerator

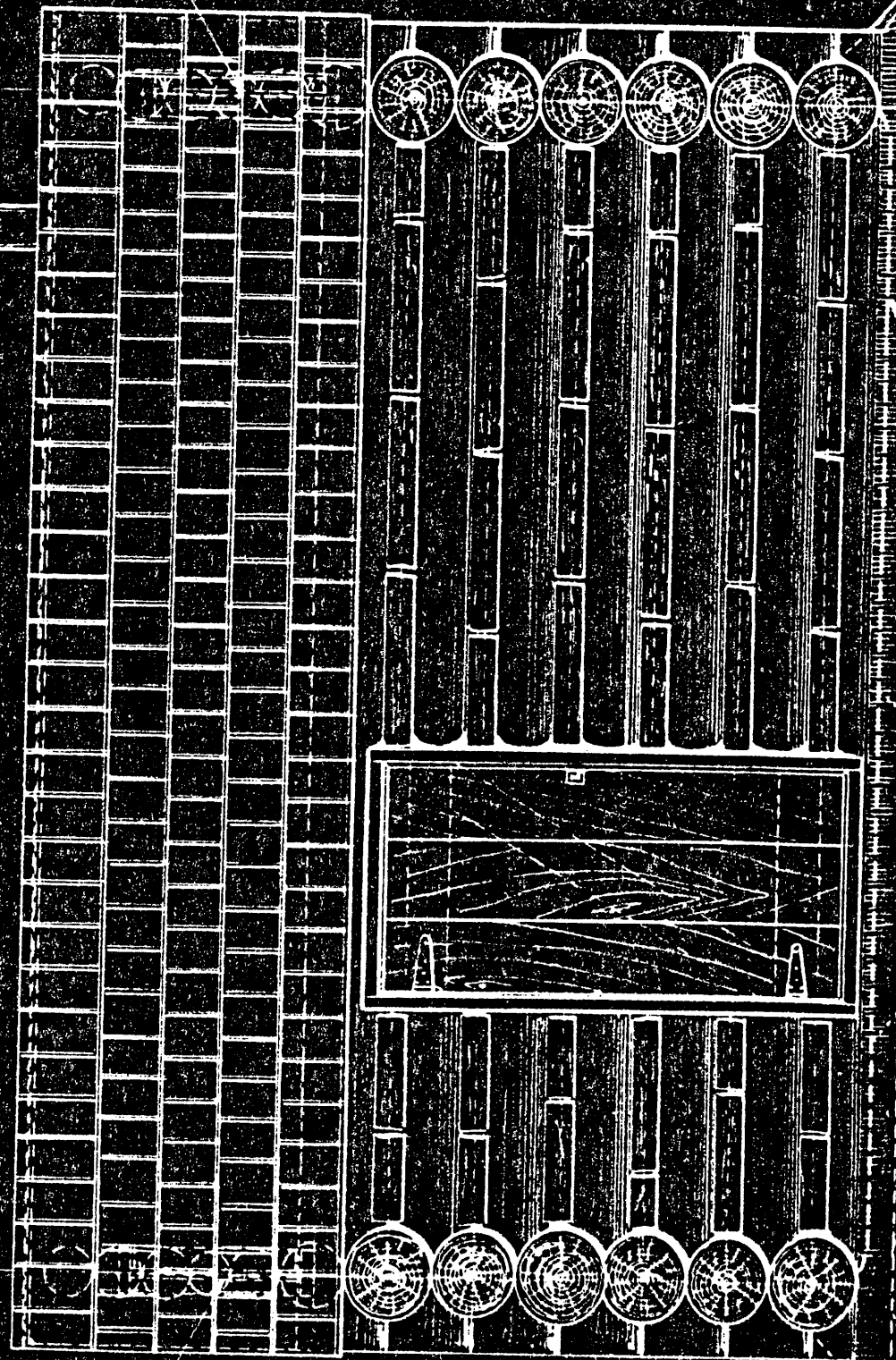
Roof Jack Cover

Cabin Floor

Cellar

Window

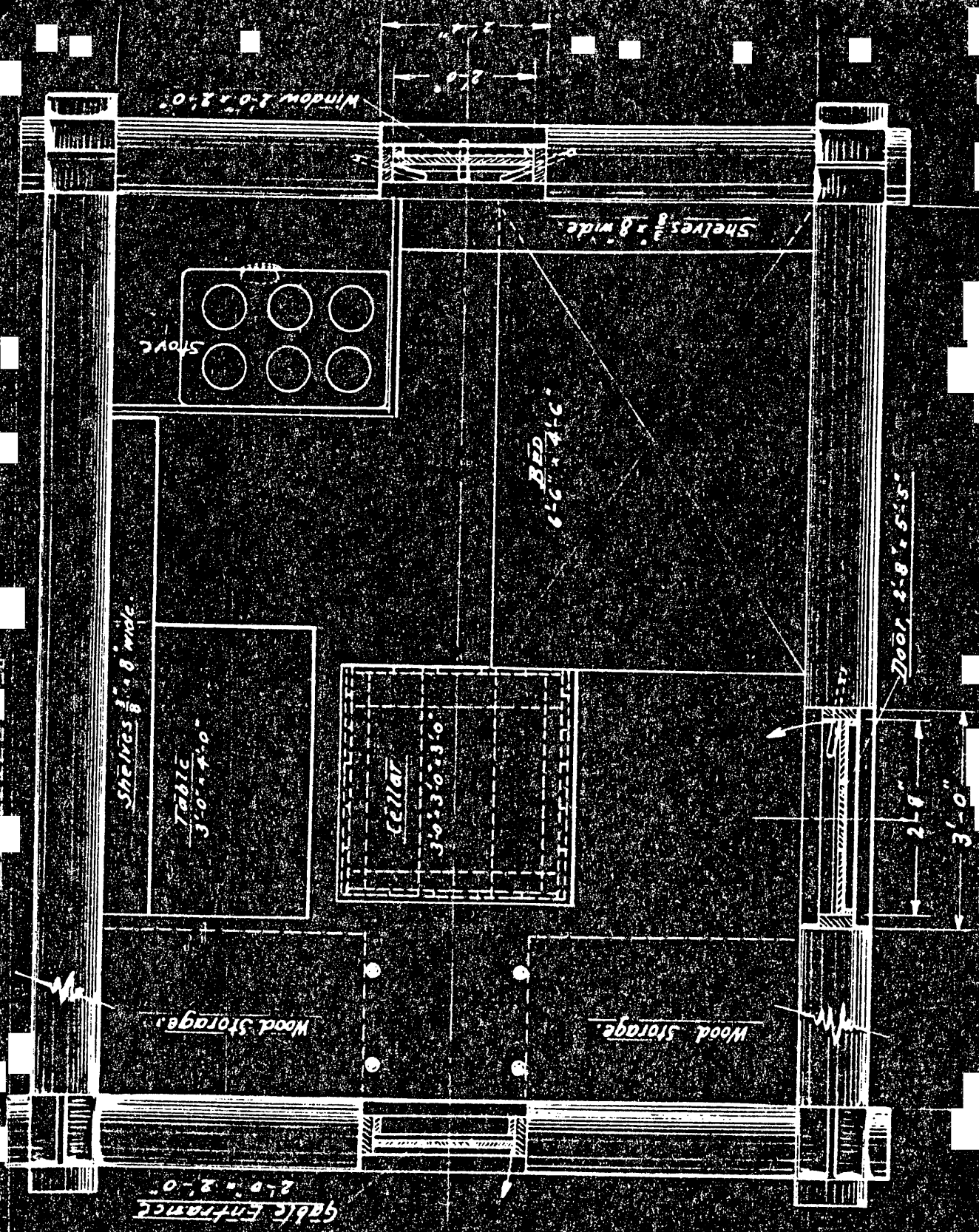
MORPH

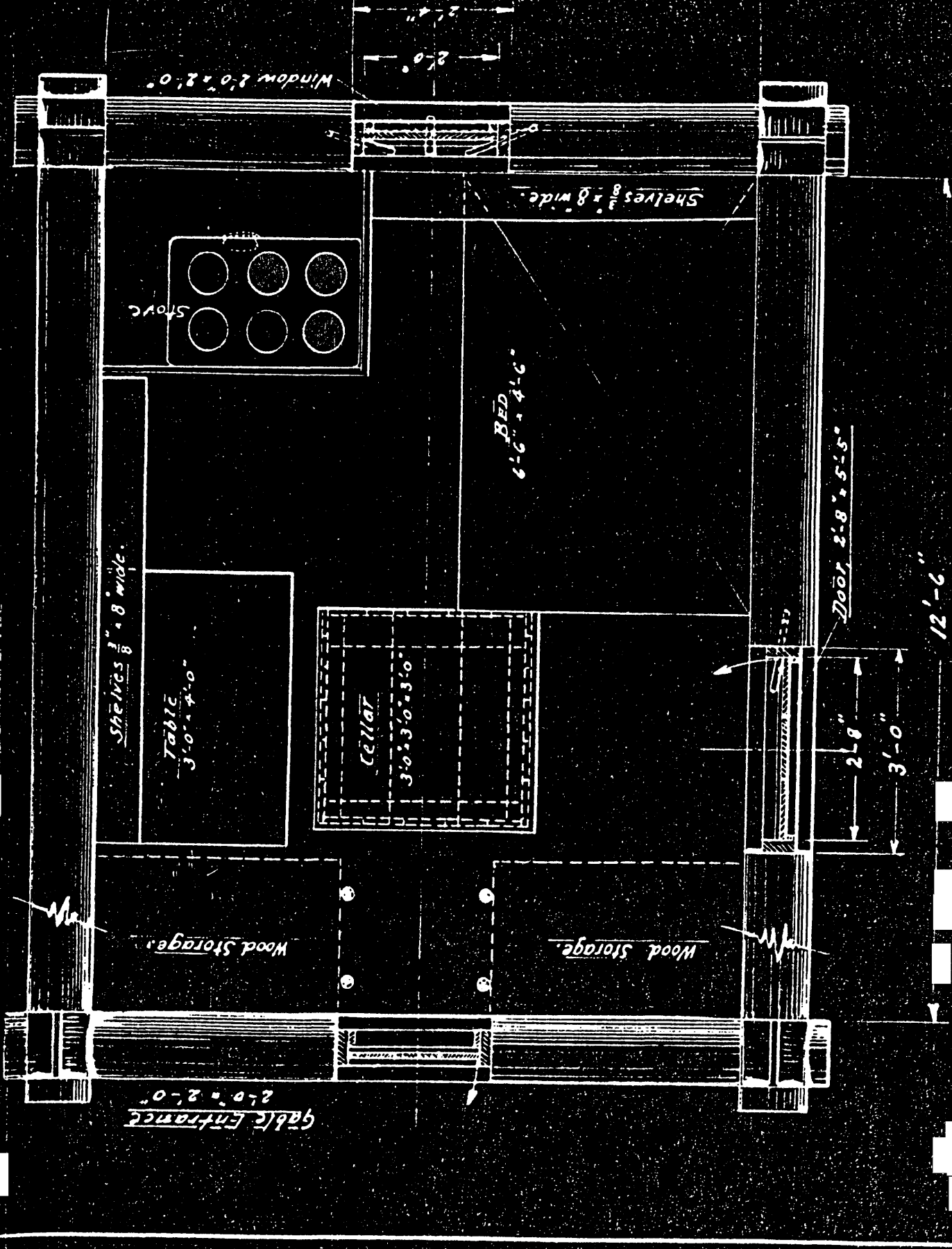


Cabin Floor

C/War

GABLE ENTRANCE





Window 2'-0" x 2'-0"

Shelves 3/8" x 8 wide

STOVE

BED  
6'-6" x 4'-6"

Shelves 1/8" x 8 wide

TABLE  
3'-0" x 4'-0"

CELLAR  
3'-0" x 3'-0"

Door 2'-8" x 5'-5"

2'-8"

3'-0"

12'-6"

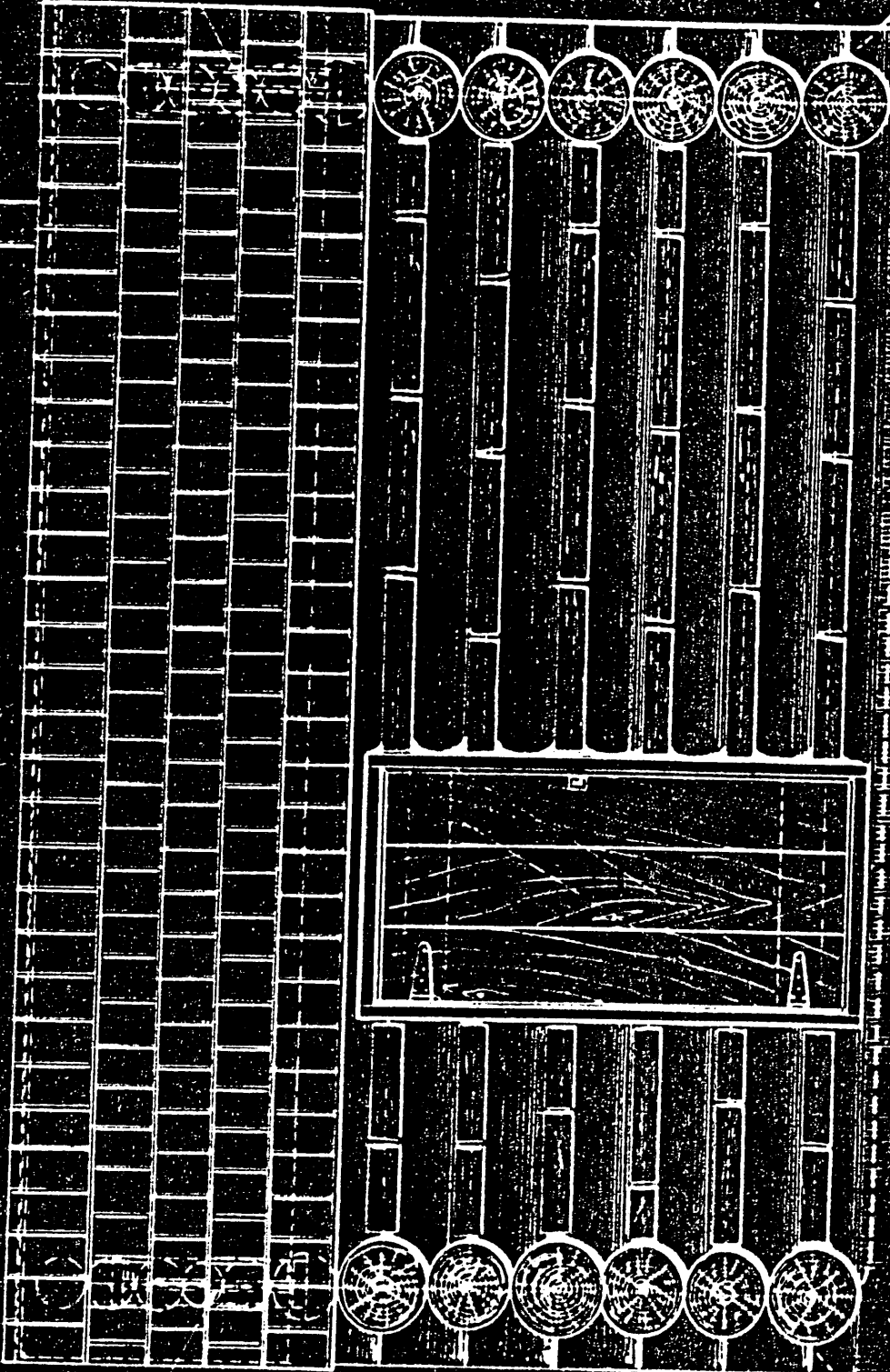
Wood Storage

Wood Storage

Gable Entrance  
2'-0" x 2'-0"



WINDOW



Cabin Floor

Cellar

CABIN ENTRANCE



Window



Gable Entrance 2'-0" x 2'-0"

Shingles 24" x 6"  
18" to the weather

Gable Logs 7" diam.

Reflector Drum

Roof-Jack Cover



Cabin Floor

Cellar

