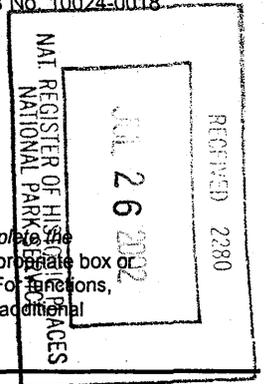


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

937



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 nominations, 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, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Orr Roadside Parking Area

other names/site number _____

2. Location

Street & number Minnesota Highway 53 at First Avenue not for publication N/A

city or town Orr vicinity N/A

state Minnesota code MN county St. Louis code 137 zip code 55771

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 Ian R. Stewart
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

Date 7/23/02

State or Federal agency and bureau Minnesota Historical Society

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 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

Date of Action

Edson H. Beall 9/6/02

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	
0	1	buildings
0	0	sites
5	4	structures
0	0	objects
5	5	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

Federal Relief Construction in Minnesota, 1933-1941

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Landscape/Park

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Landscape/Park

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: NPS Rustic Style

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Granite

walls Granite

Log

roof Asphalt

other Concrete

Narrative Description

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

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.)

- X 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.
X 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.)

Property is: N/A

- 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 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 on 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 #

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Politics and Government

Landscape Architecture

Period of Significance

1935-1938

Significant Dates

1935

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Nichols, Arthur R., Landscape Architect

Olson, Harold E., Engineer

Civilian Conservation Corps, Builder

Minnesota Department of Highways, Builder

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
X Other State agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other

Name of repository:

Site Development Unit within Office of Technical Support, Minnesota Department of Transportation

Orr Roadside Parking Area
Name of Property

St. Louis County, Minnesota
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approx. 10 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 15 512750 5323840
Zone Easting Northing
2 15 512640 5323400

3 15 512550 5323400
Zone Easting Northing
4 15 512500 5323850
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 Susan Granger, Scott Kelly, and Kay Grossman
organization Gemini Research date Nov. 23, 2001
street & number 15 E. 9th St. telephone 320-589-3846
city or town Morris state MN zip code 56267

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 Projects (1024-0018), Washington DC 20503.

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Orr Roadside Parking Area
Orr, St. Louis County, Minnesota

7. DESCRIPTION

The Orr Roadside Parking Area (RPA) is a highway wayside rest located on Minnesota Highway 53 at First Avenue in the city of Orr. The wayside rest is located on the eastern shore of Pelican Lake. (See accompanying sketch map entitled "Sketch Map, Orr Roadside Parking Area, Orr, St. Louis County, Minnesota".) Orr is a town of about 260 people in northeastern Minnesota. The site is about 1,500' in length (north to south) and includes land on both the eastern and western sides of Highway 53.

The setting of the wayside rest has not changed significantly since it was originally built in 1935-1938 by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) working in cooperation with the Minnesota Department of Highways (MHD). The site is located just a few blocks north of Orr's small central business district. The park is surrounded by Pelican Lake on the west; Highway 53 and a Minnesota Department of Conservation Forestry Station (now Minnesota Department of National Resources (MnDNR) Forestry Division Area Headquarters) on the north; the central town site of Orr on the south; and the Duluth, Winnipeg, and Pacific railroad tracks (which predate the site) on the east. Beyond the railroad tracks is a rocky, forested hillside that is developed with residential properties, most of which are screened by trees. Parts of the lakeshore that can be seen from the wayside rest are mostly forested and dotted with lake cottages that are screened by trees.

The property's substantive resources are included in the resource count that appears in "Number of Resources Within Property" in Section 5 above. These resources are also listed in "Summary of Resources" at the end of Section 7 below.

Spatial Organization

The approximately 10-acre Orr RPA was originally designed to include a scenic overlook wall and fishing dock, two picnic areas (one of which allowed camping), a bathing beach, and a looped foot trail. Each of the park's use areas has either direct access to, or a view of, Pelican Lake. The areas are linked to one another by the foot trail and are generally screened from one another by the site's topography and trees. The spatial organization of the park has been altered by the closing of the eastern picnic and camping area in the 1970s. (This area is now under-used and overgrown.) Despite this alteration, the integrity of the wayside rest's spatial organization is good.

Topography and Water Features

The park was built on the rocky, hilly shoreline of Pelican Lake. The elevation of the site rises from west to east, so that even the park land on the eastern side of Highway 53 provides excellent views of the water. The topography also helps isolate specific areas of the park from others. For example, the Shoreline Picnic Area is located several feet below the elevation of

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Orr Roadside Parking Area
Orr, St. Louis County, Minnesota

adjacent Highway 53. This difference in elevation creates a sense of seclusion that belies the picnic area's close proximity to the highway.

The granite that underlies the Orr region is visible in a large outcropping on the eastern shoulder of Highway 53 immediately southeast of the Overlook Wall. The granite is also visible in a series of natural boulders and small outcroppings that lines the foot trail in the Shoreline Picnic Area, and in the rocky shoreline itself.

There is one small stream within the wayside rest and another just outside its northern boundary. The stream within the park flows from east to west under Highway 53 through a concrete culvert, through the Bathing Beach Area, and into Pelican Lake. In the Bathing Beach Area the stream has rock riprapping that appears to date from the 1930s. (See also Stream Riprapping under Structures and Furnishings below.) Just outside the northern boundary of the park is a small stream that serves to separate the park from the adjacent forestry station. The stream flows from east to west down the forested hillside, under Highway 53, and into Pelican Lake. The stream is audible from the roadside park's Eastern Picnic and Campground Area.

The wayside rest's topography and water features are basically intact.

Vegetation

The wayside rest was created in an area that is naturally forested. Trees on the site today include numerous basswood, maple, birch, poplar, spruce, fir, pine, ash, and aspen -- all trees that are naturally present in the surrounding forests.

Unfortunately, no original planting plans or historic photos showing early plantings have been identified. A July 1937 "Tentative Sketch" for the site shows extensive existing trees that were likely preserved during construction. Additional trees and shrubs were likely transplanted from the surrounding forests to frame scenic views, screen the park's use areas from the highway, and repair site and highway construction scars. In keeping with the design of MHD wayside rests of the period and typical CCC practices in northern Minnesota, it is likely that native trees and shrubs were transplanted into the park from the surrounding area and that these were installed in naturalistic patterns.

The park's vegetation generally appears to retain good integrity except in the Eastern Picnic and Campground Area on the eastern side of Highway 53. This area was abandoned in the 1970s and is now covered with hundreds of young spruce, fir, basswood, aspen, and other native deciduous trees that are naturally reclaiming the site. This area also has an understory of dozens of species of native woodland plants. North of the Eastern Picnic and Campground Area, along the creek that runs between the roadside parking area and the forestry station, is a dense stand of trees that does not appear to have been disturbed during the 1930s development of the park and the forestry station. This small area contains coniferous and deciduous trees that appear to be older

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Orr Roadside Parking Area
Orr, St. Louis County, Minnesota

than the trees found elsewhere in the park. These older trees rise above a rich forest carpet of moss and needles.

Circulation

The wayside rest is bisected by Highway 53, which was improved and paved by the MHD in 1936-1937 during the construction of the park. (The highway was a gravel road in 1921 when it became part of the state's newly-established trunk highway system.) (See also Minnesota Highway 53 under Structures and Furnishings below.)

The Orr RPA originally had three vehicle parking lots. They were located at the Scenic Overlook, the Bathing Beach, and the Eastern Picnic and Campground Area. The parking areas at the Overlook Wall and Bathing Beach are extant, while the parking area at the Eastern Picnic and Campground Area was removed in the 1970s. (All three parking areas are also discussed under Structures and Furnishings below.)

The park was designed with a foot trail that formed a loop that traveled through all areas of the park, crossing the highway at both the park's northern and southern ends. (A 1937 plan for the park proposed a pedestrian underpass beneath Highway 53 near the northern end of the Overlook Wall that was never built.) The western portion of the trail, through the Shoreline Picnic Area, is basically intact. Part of the trail on the eastern side of Highway 53 is intact, but a larger portion has lost integrity. The trail system also originally extended northward out of the park and encircled the adjacent state forestry station. A portion of the trail that leads to the forestry station is intact. (See also Foot Trail listed under Structures and Furnishings below.)

In general, the wayside rest's circulation systems retain fair to good integrity.

Structures and Furnishings

All Structures and Furnishings were designed by A. R. Nichols and the Minnesota Department of Highways (MHD) and built by the CCC and the MHD unless otherwise indicated.

Overlook Wall

Built: 1935-1938

One Contributing Structure

The Overlook Wall, which doubles as a parking concourse, is the largest structure in the park and the only structure built of mortared stone. It is basically intact. The wall stands about 45' east of the water and provides an excellent view of Pelican Lake. It was built of pink, red, and gray granite boulders laid in a random pattern on a stone footing. The exact source of the stone has not been identified. A longtime local stone mason, Carl Brown, believes that the granite used to build the wall was acquired from a gravel pit about one mile north of the wall in the SW 1/4 of

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Orr Roadside Parking Area
Orr, St. Louis County, Minnesota

Section 32 of T65N R19W. He indicates that gravel pits such as this are common sources of local stone near Orr (Brown 2000).

The 18"-thick Overlook Wall is aligned north and south. It consists of a straight section that is about 200' long and two curved end sections that are each about 55' long. The wall's eastern face varies in height from 29" to 37" and its western face varies in height from about 4' to about 7'9". The wall has 18 piers that are about 26" square and project about 6" above the wall. The straight portion of the wall has six sections of open balustrade that alternate with sections of solid wall. The balustrades consist of pairs of 6"-diameter, 12'-long, peeled log rails. At the wall's midpoint is a 13'-wide opening that leads to a gravel ramp and path that descend westward toward the water. Immediately north of this opening is a gray granite date stone incised with the words "Built by CCC Camp S-52 1938." The straight section of the wall is lined with a 5'-wide flagstone walkway and stone curb. The southern 40' of the walkway has been replaced with a poured concrete walkway.

The Overlook Wall's parking concourse is entered directly from Highway 53 and has a shape governed by the Overlook Wall against which the parking concourse is set. (A narrow traffic island proposed on original plans to separate the parking area from Highway 53 was never built.) The parking area was originally surfaced with gravel and is now paved with bituminous. It is otherwise intact.

Vegetation near the Overlook Wall includes a dense screen of mature deciduous and coniferous trees at the wall's northern end and about one dozen mature ash, basswood, and other deciduous trees at the wall's southern end. Two spruce (now about 15-20 years old) have been planted on the shore west of the wall, south of its midpoint. There is mowed grass between the wall and the water.

Fishing Dock

Built: 1989

One Noncontributing Structure

The Fishing Dock is a 150'-long, T-shaped wooden dock that extends into Pelican Lake immediately west of the Overlook Wall. The dock is linked to the Overlook Wall by a gravel ramp that extends toward the dock from an opening in the Overlook Wall's midpoint. (The original use of this gravel ramp and why it was built instead of stone stairs or another design device has not been determined.) A 1937 plan for the park indicates an "existing dock" at this location. The dock has been replaced several times since then. This most recent dock was built in 1989 for the MnDNR and the City of Orr.

Picnic Fireplace

Built: circa 1935-1938

One Contributing Structure

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Orr, St. Louis County, Minnesota

One intact picnic fireplace remains at the southern end of the park's Shoreline Picnic Area. The fireplace is about 16" tall. It consists of a 1' by 2' metal box mounted on a concrete base. The box is covered by an iron grate for cooking and a hinged plate that can be flipped over the grate to create a warming plate. The box swivels so that it can be adjusted to protect the fire from wind. North of the intact fireplace are the circular concrete bases of four more identical fireplaces whose fire boxes were removed in the 1970s. (At least four similar concrete bases are also located in the Eastern Picnic and Campground Area.)

The park's original picnic tables, which were placed in both the Shoreline Picnic Area and the Eastern Picnic and Campground Area, are presumed to have been standard portable wooden picnic tables that were commonly used by the MHD Roadside Development Division in its parks of the 1930s. These tables were built of peeled logs with timber plank seats and table tops. Many of these tables were built for the MHD for use in its roadside parks by Minnesota teenagers employed by the National Youth Administration (NYA), a New Deal relief agency.

Bathing Beach Area

Built: circa 1936-1937

One Contributing Structure

Near the southwestern corner of the site is a swimming beach with a parking lot. The CCC apparently developed the beach by hauling sand to the site. Two small woodframe bathhouses were built in which bathers could change. The bathhouses have been removed.

The parking area at the Bathing Beach is an 80' by 100' rectangle that is linked to Highway 53 by a short entrance drive. The parking area was originally surfaced with gravel and lined with a Rustic Style timber guardrail that consisted of horizontal timber or log rails supported on low timber or log posts. The parking area retains its original size and shape but is now surfaced with bituminous. It retains a few cement guardrail posts that apparently remain from a circa 1960 replacement of the original timber guardrail.

In addition to being a prime spot for swimming, the Bathing Beach Area has now become the park's major picnic spot with a log picnic shelter (built near the former bathhouses), two picnic tables, three benches, and some playground equipment, all of which appear to date from the 1980s.

Vegetation at the Bathing Beach Area includes scattered mature deciduous and coniferous trees. Near the northwestern corner of the Bathing Beach parking area is a mature cedar. The screen of trees and shrubs that extends along the Shoreline Picnic Area also extends through the Bathing Beach Area. There is another dense screen of mature deciduous and coniferous trees at the southern end of the Bathing Beach Area, separating the wayside rest from adjacent residential properties.

The Bathing Beach Area has fair integrity.

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Stream Riprapping

Built: circa 1936-1937
One Contributing Structure

Within the Bathing Beach Area is a small drainage stream that appears to have been riprapped by the CCC as part of the original park development. The stream flows from east to west under Highway 53 (through a concrete culvert) and into Pelican Lake at the beach. The eastern portion of the stream within the Bathing Beach Area is riprapped with cantaloupe-sized lake boulders. The riprapping appears to date from the 1930s and is basically intact.

Picnic Shelter

Built: circa 1980
One Noncontributing Building

An intact 24'-square picnic shelter is located near the Bathing Beach. The shelter was built circa 1980 and funded by the Orr Lions Club. It was built of 8"-diameter peeled logs that have been stained brown. The shelter has an open-raftered ceiling, an asphalt-shingled hipped roof, and a poured concrete floor. The lower 4' of the walls are solid while the upper portion of the walls is open. The shelter is furnished with two massive log picnic tables that date from about 1990.

Footbridge

Built: 1989
One Noncontributing Structure

A small wooden footbridge spans the narrow stream in the Bathing Beach Area. The footbridge is constructed of wooden posts, planks, and peeled logs and measures about 10' by 15'. Built for the City of Orr, the bridge is the latest replacement of a series of footbridges that have been at this location since circa 1936.

Eastern Picnic and Campground Area

Built: 1937-1938
One Noncontributing Structure

On the eastern side of Highway 53, directly east of the Overlook Wall, are the remnants of the Eastern Picnic and Campground Area. CCC records indicate that overnight camping facilities were developed here in 1937 and 1938. In the 1960s the area had about 15 overnight camping sites. At least four circular concrete fireplace bases and a circular boulder fire ring are still located here. Running water was piped from the adjacent forestry station. The capped end of the water pipe is still located just outside of park boundaries on the southern edge of the forestry station's southern drive. A council ring and a small stone overlook were proposed for the Eastern Picnic and Campground Area in early highway department plans but never built.

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Orr Roadside Parking Area
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The Eastern Picnic and Campground Area's parking lot was a shallow rectangle with curved ends that mirrored the curves in the Overlook Wall's parking area immediately to the west. The eastern parking area was originally surfaced with gravel and lined with a Rustic Style timber guardrail identical to the guardrail at the Bathing Beach parking area.

The Eastern Picnic and Campground Area was closed in the 1970s and its parking area was removed. This portion of the park is now overgrown and little used.

Vegetation at the Eastern Picnic and Campground Area is largely overgrown with deciduous trees and shrubs including many mature basswood and some mature coniferous trees. There is an understory of dozens of species of native woodland plants including ferns, wild raspberries and strawberries, and many species of wildflowers. The area is covered with hundreds of young spruce and fir that are naturally reclaiming the site, as well as a thick growth of young basswood, aspen, and other native deciduous trees.

Foot Trail

Built: circa 1935-1938
One Contributing Structure

The Foot Trail is a walking trail that was designed to travel in a loop through all areas of the wayside rest. The trail was designed to cross the highway at the park's northern and southern ends. The trail also extended northward out of the park and encircled the adjacent state forestry station.

Most of the western portion of the trail, which follows the Pelican Lake shoreline, is intact. This part of the trail is about 5'-wide and surfaced with gravel and dirt. At its northern end, the trail is overgrown but walkable as it curves around the northern end of the Overlook Wall.

Vegetation along the western portion of the trail includes a dense screen of coniferous and deciduous trees and shrubs that extends between the trail and Highway 53 for most of the trail's length. This vegetation effectively separates the shoreline area from highway noise and motion. Also along the shoreline trail are grassy open areas and scattered coniferous and deciduous trees (both mature and young) that offer shade and shelter.

The most intact section of the trail on the eastern side of Highway 53 consists of a 5'-wide dirt path that extends through the northern edge of the Eastern Picnic and Campground Area, out of the park boundaries, and into the adjacent forestry station. The rest of the trail on the eastern side of Highway 53 is less intact, with only some portions discernible in the overgrowth. The southern part of the trail on the eastern side of Highway 53 was disturbed circa 1999 during utility work that buried a city water main along the eastern edge of the park.

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Orr Roadside Parking Area
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Vegetation along the eastern portion of the trail includes mature deciduous trees and shrubs and an overgrowth of shrubs. In the vicinity of Eastern Picnic and Campground Area, hundreds of young coniferous and deciduous trees and an understory of native woodland plants line the trail.

The overall integrity of the Foot Trail is fair, with excellent integrity west of Highway 53 and poor integrity east of Highway 53.

Minnesota Highway 53

Built: improved circa 1936-1937, widened 1970s
Designer and Builder: Built by the MHD
One Noncontributing Structure

Highway 53 is aligned north and south and bisects the park. The highway was a gravel road when it became part of the state's new trunk highway system in 1921, the year the system was implemented. The highway was first paved -- to a width of 32' -- in 1936-1937 during construction of the roadside park. The highway was widened slightly during a 1970s repaving. It now has an approximately 44'-wide paved area that consists of two 12' driving lanes and two 10' shoulders. Sections of metal highway guardrail, which date from the 1970s, are located on both sides of the highway in the southern one-third of the park. Guardrail also extends from the northern end of the Overlook Wall northward along the western edge of Highway 53 out of the boundaries of the park. These sections of highway guardrail are considered to be part of the highway structure for the purposes of this nomination. Highway 53 has been categorized as Noncontributing due to the increase in paved width and the erection of the guardrails.

Summary of Resources

The Orr Roadside Parking Area includes five Contributing resources (five structures) and five Noncontributing resources (four structures and one building). The resources are listed below:

Overlook Wall	1935-1938	One Contrib Structure
Fishing Dock	1989	One Noncontrib Structure
Picnic Fireplace	circa 1935-1938	One Contrib Structure
Bathing Beach Area	circa 1936-1937	One Contrib Structure
Stream Riprapping	circa 1936-1937	One Contrib Structure
Picnic Shelter	circa 1980	One Noncontrib Building
Footbridge	1989	One Noncontrib Structure
Eastern Picnic and Campground Area	1937-1938	One Noncontrib Structure
Foot Trail	circa 1935-1938	One Contrib Structure
Minn. Highway 53	circa 1936-1937, widened 1970s	One Noncontrib Structure

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Orr Roadside Parking Area
Orr, St. Louis County, Minnesota

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Orr Roadside Parking Area (RPA), built in 1935-1938, is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A, significance to the broad patterns of our history, in the area of Politics and Government, and under Criterion C, design significance, in the area of Landscape Architecture. The property is an excellent example of the wayside rests that were built during the formative years of the Roadside Development Division of the Minnesota Department of Highways (MHD) and an outstanding example of the fruits of the partnership between the division and federal relief agencies. Architecturally, the property is an excellent example of the National Park Service Rustic Style. It displays the work of highly skilled craftsmen and the distinctive use of indigenous materials, both characteristic of the style. Finally, the property is noteworthy within the body of work of its designer, prominent landscape architect A. R. Nichols. The property is significant on a statewide level.

The National Register eligibility of the Orr Roadside Parking Area has been evaluated using the registration requirements in the Multiple Property Documentation Form entitled "Federal Relief Construction in Minnesota, 1933-1941." The property meets two of those requirements:

Requirement 2: Significance to the History of Roadside Development. The Orr Roadside Parking Area is significant to the history of roadside development in Minnesota as an excellent example of the roadside parks that were built during the formative years of the Minnesota Department of Highways' Roadside Development Division, thereby meeting Registration Requirement 2. As a Depression-era MHD federal relief-built roadside development property, Orr is important as a good example of the well-designed public facilities that were built by the MHD in partnership with federal relief agencies to meet the objectives of roadside development while providing essential work and job training to the unemployed. This fruitful partnership was crucial to the MHD's first large-scale effort to construct roadside development facilities and resulted in the first set of roadside development properties to be built and managed by the division.

Requirement 4: Design Significance. The Orr Roadside Parking Area is a good example of the application of the National Park Service Rustic Style to a highway wayside rest, thereby meeting Registration Requirement 4a. In its Overlook Wall, the Orr RPA displays the work of highly skilled craftsmen and the distinctive use of an indigenous material -- local granite -- thereby meeting Registration Requirement 4b. Finally, with its overlook wall, bathing beach, picnic area, foot trail, and other landscape features, the park is an excellent example of A. R. Nichols' more complex highway wayside rests of the 1930s and early 1940s. The Orr RPA is therefore noteworthy within the body of work of a prominent landscape architect, meeting Registration Requirement 4c.

Further contextual information on the property is available in the National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) entitled "Federal Relief Construction in Minnesota,

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Orr Roadside Parking Area
Orr, St. Louis County, Minnesota

1933-1941." This information is found under "Civilian Conservation Corps" in Section E and under "Waysides and Overlooks" in Section F of the MPDF.

History of the Site

The Orr Roadside Parking Area is located on the eastern shore of Pelican Lake, one of the largest lakes in northeastern Minnesota's prime recreational area. The park is on the northern edge of Orr, a small community that was founded circa 1902 around the general store of William Orr, the first homesteader. In addition to being the only town on Pelican Lake, Orr was historically important because it provided the only railroad station close to the nearby Bois Forte Ojibwe Indian Reservation.

The Orr RPA was built as a highway wayside rest, but is the only park in Orr. It is located on Minnesota Highway 53, the highway that travels through Orr along the eastern shore of the lake. It was created at the place where Highway 53 passes closest to the eastern shore of the lake. The site provides an exceptional view of the lake's blue waters and pristine wooded shore. The MHD probably chose to build a wayside rest at this location because of the site's outstanding scenic qualities and because of the Orr region's potential to become a popular recreational area.

The park was apparently constructed in intermittent periods between the spring of 1935 and the summer of 1938. It was built in conjunction with a 1936-1937 improvement of Highway 53. The highway had been a 24'-wide gravel road when it became part of the Minnesota trunk highway system in 1921, the year the system was implemented. First known as Minnesota Highway 11, the highway also became part of U.S. Highway 169 (an interstate route) circa 1932. Highway 11 was renumbered as Highway 53 in 1933 during a statewide highway renumbering effort.

The wayside rest was constructed by the Roadside Development Division of the Minnesota Department of Highways (MHD) with labor provided by a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) crew that was stationed in Kabetogama State Forest (within which Orr is located). The crew was known as CCC Company 725, and was stationed in a camp in the nearby town of Cusson. The CCC crew was supervised by the Minnesota Department of Conservation's Division of Forestry. The CCC crew apparently worked on the wayside rest as time and funding dictated.

Leading the Minnesota Department of Highways staff was Harold E. Olson, head of the Roadside Development Division. He served as engineer for the project. The park was designed by Arthur R. Nichols, a prominent Minnesota landscape architect who was working as Consulting Landscape Architect for the division.

Unfortunately, few details about the course of the construction are known. For example, little is known about the manipulation of the site's topography and plants. (The Roadside Development Division's 1938 annual report lists "cleanup," grubbing, sodding, and breaking down backslopes among the activities accomplished at Orr in 1938.) The park was probably developed in a

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manner consistent with other MHD Rustic Style roadside parks of the period. This development likely included the preservation of existing trees, judicious clearing of trees and brush to open viewsheds at the overlook wall and at optimal view points along the trail, selective planting of trees and shrubs to blend the overlook wall (the largest man-made structure) with its surroundings, the planting of screens between the use areas and the highway, and "erasing" the scars of highway and park construction through slope contouring and planting. In keeping with the design of Nichols' MHD roadside parks of the period and typical CCC practices in northern Minnesota, it is likely that native trees and shrubs were transplanted into the park from the surrounding area and that these were installed in naturalistic patterns.

The National Youth Administration or NYA is also believed to have contributed to the park. The numerous portable picnic tables with which the park was originally furnished were probably built by NYA youth who were employed by the NYA's several vocational training centers in Minnesota. These centers supplied signs, picnic tables, and other site furnishings to the MHD Roadside Development Division for use in wayside rests. In 1938, for example, NYA shops built 190 wooden picnic table and bench sets, 123 refuse containers, 72 fireplace grates, 6 "stoves," and 6 signs for the division (*Annual Report 1938:1*).

When it was completed, the approximately 10-acre Orr Roadside Parking Area was one of the most well-developed of the highway department's wayside rests of the 1930s and early 1940s and included a scenic overlook wall, a bathing beach, a picnic area, and a foot trail, all extant. The park also originally included a second picnic and camping area that was closed in the 1970s and is now an undeveloped area of the park.

The Orr RPA has been in continuous operation as a highway wayside rest since the mid-1930s. It has also continuously served as Orr's only city park. The City of Orr has apparently been participating in the park's management and maintenance since 1938, which would be consistent with the Roadside Development Division's policy of working cooperatively with local governments when MHD wayside rests were located within city limits. Some of the most recent additions to the southern end of the park, including a log picnic shelter and playground equipment, were furnished by the city. The Minnesota Department of Conservation (now MnDNR) also participated historically in the management of the park's campground and, in cooperation with the city, has successively (and recently) replaced the large fishing dock near the overlook wall.

Construction of the Overlook Wall

Harry Dantes, a native of Orr, was enrolled in Company 725 in 1934-1935. He was one of the young men who helped begin the overlook wall in the spring of 1935 "as soon as the weather warmed up" (Dantes 2001). (The date stone on the overlook wall is inscribed "1938," apparently indicating the year the wall was completed.) Dantes recounts that he worked side-by-side with the master stonemason who supervised construction of the overlook wall. He recalls that the

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master stonemason was an approximately 50-year-old Bohemian immigrant from Eveleth, Minnesota, but does not recall his name. Dantes explained:

Counting the stonemason, there were about ten of us who worked on the wall while I was at the Cusson Camp. . . . The mason would get the face out of the rock, just like that! He'd cut the stone, hit it just right, and lay it in the wall. The rest of us mixed his mortar, hauled the rock to him, and did general laborer work. The CCC 'boys' didn't select which rocks the mason used. He [the stonemason] would cast his eye over all the rock and tell us which rock he would cut next. He'd look at it and know just what to do with it, where to put it, and just how to cut it. It was a real art. He was a wonderful craftsman (Dantes 2001).

Company 725 of the Civilian Conservation Corps

Company 725 of the CCC was stationed within Kabetogama State Forest, one of 13 state forests that were established by the state legislature in 1933 in conjunction with the commencement of CCC work in Minnesota. Company 725's activities included forest fire prevention (for example, clearing acres and acres of downed trees and brush left over from commercial logging in the area), extensive tree planting, the construction of a state forestry station at Orr, and the construction of recreational facilities such as campgrounds and canoe portages.

The crew was stationed at Camp S-52, also known as the Cusson Camp, which had been established in June 1933 as one of Minnesota's first CCC camps. The camp was located at Cusson, a town about three miles north of Orr. (The Cusson CCC Camp's remaining camp buildings were named to the National Register of Historic Places on March 2, 1989.)

In addition to constructing the Orr Roadside Parking Area, the men of Camp S-52 constructed buildings for their camp at Cusson, as well as for "side" camps F-29 and S-94 that were located elsewhere in the state forest. In 1938-1939 the men of Camp S-52 also built the Minnesota Department of Conservation Forestry Station that still stands immediately north of the wayside rest. The forestry station consisted of about ten structures, most of which remain today. The CCC built a 65'-long, waist-high granite retaining wall at the main entrance to the forestry station that is similar to the overlook wall at the wayside rest. The two walls stand on either side of Highway 53 about 600' apart.

Orr native Harry Dantes had joined the Cusson Camp in January 1934. Dantes' father was enrolled in the same camp and his brother was stationed at a nearby camp. Even though he was only 16 years old at the time, Dantes was designated by the CCC as a "Local Experienced Man" or LEM. Dantes recalls, "There were about 20 of us LEMs [at Cusson], all local boys. The rest of the enrollees in the camp were from southern Minnesota -- Mankato, Sleepy Eye, etc." According to Dantes, the CCC crew typically worked Mondays and Tuesdays for eight hours, one-half day on Wednesdays, eight hours on Thursdays and Fridays, and had the weekends off. Dantes remembers earning \$1 a day. Room and board, medical care, clothing, and food were

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provided. Dantes was allowed to keep \$5 a month from his CCC salary, and the rest was sent home to his mother and two younger siblings. Dantes remained at Cusson until August 1935, when he was transferred to Company 713 at Camp Jeanette in Superior National Forest (Dantes 2001).

Arthur R. Nichols

The Orr Roadside Parking Area was designed by Arthur R. Nichols (1880-1970), a prominent Minnesota landscape architect who served as the first Consulting Landscape Architect for the MHD and its Roadside Development Division. Nichols was a leading figure in the roadside development movement nationwide. He strongly influenced the design of early roadside development properties in Minnesota. Nichols also played a major role in establishing the profession of landscape architecture in the state.

Nichols was originally from Massachusetts. He studied engineering, architecture, and landscape design at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and was the first person to graduate from MIT's newly-created landscape architecture program. During his early career he prepared plans for Monument Valley Park in Colorado Springs while working in the office of New York City landscape architect Charles W. Leavitt, Jr. In 1909 he formed a partnership with fellow Leavitt designer Anthony Morell and moved to Minnesota. Morell and Nichols' park designs in Minnesota included extensive work in Duluth, as well as parks in Minneapolis, Thief River Falls, Albert Lea, and elsewhere. In 1926, just before Anthony Morell's death, the firm designed scenic roadways in Glacier National Park, as well as the grounds of Glacier Park's monumental Glacier Park Hotel.

Nichols was one of Minnesota's most prolific landscape architects. He designed numerous college campuses, state parks, urban master plans, and private estates. During decades of consulting for the State of Minnesota, he planned dozens of state facilities including hospitals, prisons, parks, state colleges, and other institutions. Between 1910 and 1952 he consulted for the University of Minnesota on numerous projects on at least five separate campuses. He also designed the State Capitol Approach in St. Paul (1944-1950) and worked on several state parks during the 1950s. He retired in 1960 at the age of 80.

Harold E. Olson

Harold E. Olson served as engineer for the Orr Roadside Parking Area. Olson had been working for the Minnesota Department of Highways for ten years in 1932 when he was charged with organizing the MHD's new Roadside Development Division. He led the division for 31 years. During the Depression Olson collaborated with the staffs of many New Deal federal relief programs to jointly build roadside development facilities in the state. Olson was prominent in the roadside development field nationally and, beginning in 1938, was a leader in the multi-state effort to designate the Great River Road along the Mississippi River. He served as the MHD's primary ambassador to state and national conservation groups; civic, tourism and development

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associations; and various public agencies on the topics of scenic highways and roadside development. Olson retired from the Roadside Development Division in 1963 and continued to work with the MHD until January of 1968.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Orr Roadside Parking Area is an excellent example of the wayside rests that were built during the formative years of the Minnesota Department of Highways' Roadside Development Division. It is significant as an outstanding example of the roadside development work of distinguished landscape architect A. R. Nichols, who served as consultant to the highway department, and as a good example of the National Park Service Rustic Style as applied to a highway wayside rest. The park represents the strong partnership between the highway department and New Deal federal relief agencies such as the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). These partnerships created distinctive and well-constructed public facilities that met the objectives of roadside development while providing essential work and job training to Minnesota's unemployed during the Depression.

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA, CONTINUED

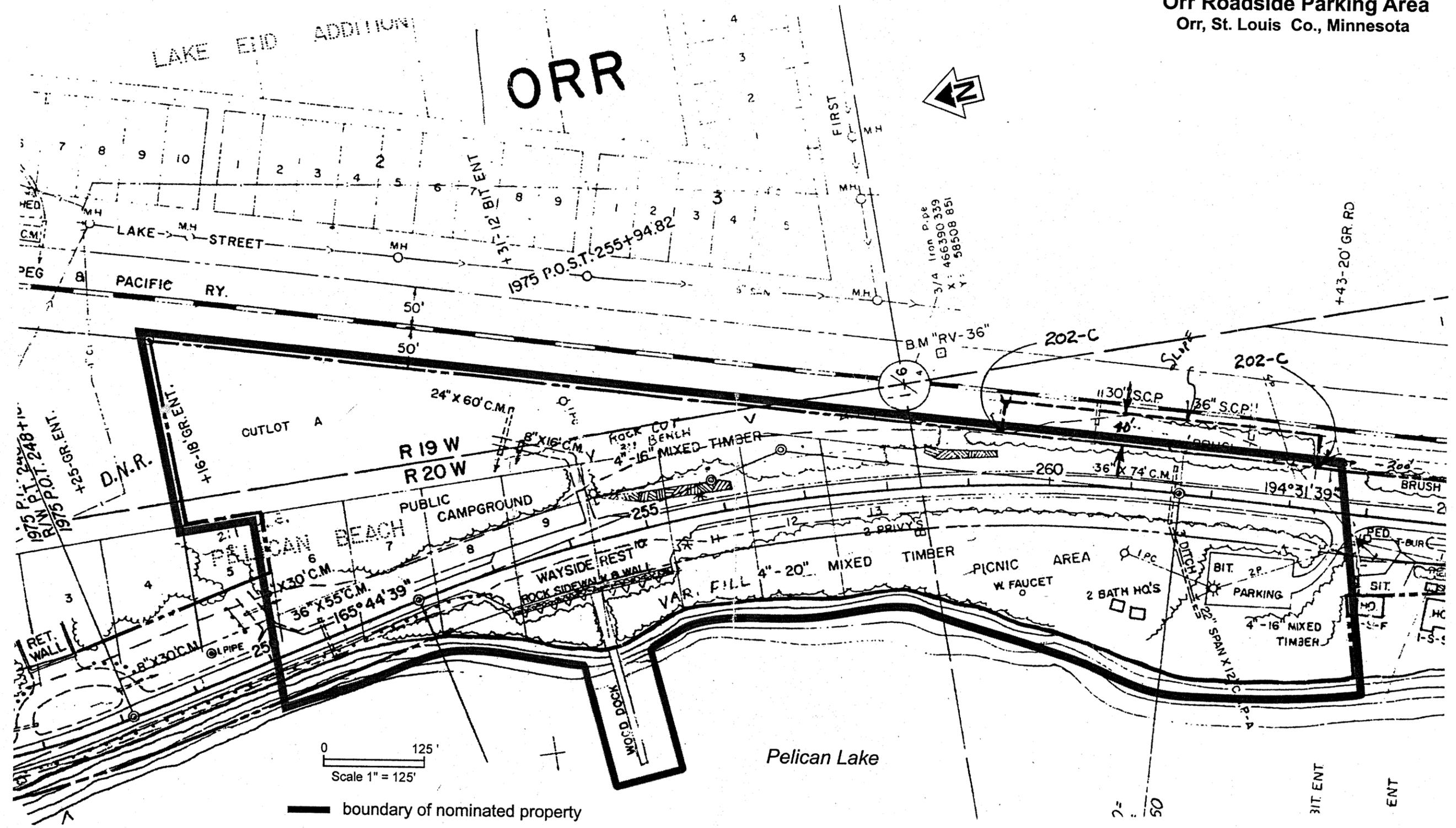
Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated property is shown by the solid line on the accompanying map entitled "Site Boundaries, Orr Roadside Parking Area, Orr, St. Louis County, Minnesota." The base map for this sheet is a Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) Right-of-Way Map. The northern, eastern, and southern boundaries of the nominated property follow Mn/DOT right-of-way lines. The western boundary follows the shoreline of Pelican Lake except where the boundary extends into the lake to encompass the Fishing Dock. The property lies within the NE 1/4 of Section 1, T64N, R20W, and the NW 1/4 of Section 6, T64N, R19W. It is located within the city of Orr.

Boundary Justification

The nominated property is comprised of the parcel of land historically associated with the Orr Roadside Parking Area. This parcel conforms to the boundaries of the park as drawn on early Minnesota Department of Highways plans and right-of-way maps.

Site Boundaries
Orr Roadside Parking Area
 Orr, St. Louis Co., Minnesota



— boundary of nominated property

Base Map: Mn/DOT Right-of-Way Map

prep by Gemini Research 11-01

Sketch Map
Orr Roadside Parking Area
Orr, St. Louis Co., Minnesota

