

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property Bull River Guard Station
historic name Bull River Ranger Station
other names/site number 24SA69
Forest Service Region 1 Property #(01)(14)(07)(301)

2. Location
street & number Kootenai NF, Cabinet RD [NA]not for publication
city, town Noxon [xx]vicinity
state Montana code MT 030 county Sanders code 089 zip code 59853

3. Classification		Number of Resources within Property	
Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Contributing	Noncontributing
[] private	[x] building(s)	1	1 buildings
[] public-local	[] district	1	1 sites
[] public-State	[] site		structures
[x] public-Federal	[] structure		objects
	[] object	2	1 Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this [x]nomination []request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property [x]meets []does not meet the National Register criteria.
[] See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official Maudie Shuff Date 4-26-90
MT SHPO

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [x]meets []does not meet the National Register criteria. [] See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official Tom D. Robinson Date 5-8-90
USDA Forest Service

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:
[X]entered in the National Register.

[] See continuation sheet. Autumnethi Ghee 6/27/90

[]determined eligible for the National Register. [] See continuation sheet.

[]determined not eligible for the National Register.

[] removed from the National Register.

[] other, (explain:)

for Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)
Government (Office/Dwelling)

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
Vacant/Not in Use

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)
Other: rustic

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation: Concrete
walls: Log
roof: Shingle
other: Wood

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Bull River Guard Station sits on the broad flood plain of the Bull River near the confluence of Bull River and East Fork Bull River, approximately nine air-miles north of Noxon, Montana, and the Cabinet Gorge Reservoir. Currently, the guard station consists of an office/dwelling built in 1908, a newer outhouse, a clothes line, yard fence and sign post. Formerly, the property contained two additional barns, however these are no longer present. The location of one of the barns is marked by a concrete wall foundation. (Please refer to attached map.)

The Bull River office/dwelling (Building #2021), built in 1908, is a one and one-half story, log bearing building with a rectangular floor plan with porches. It sits on a concrete wall foundation with extended corner piers with indented faces. The foundation has settled in many places. The corners of the building are joined with square notches and the horizontal spaces between the wall logs are daubed with mortar held in place by split poles. The surfaces of the wall logs on the interior of the building are hewn, and interior chinking consists of split poles. Gable ends are covered with shingles. An internal brick chimney protrudes from the steep gable roof, which is covered with wood shingles.

Original, open, shed roof entry porches with finished columns, protect both the front (northeast elevation), and rear (southwest elevation), entryways. Wood stoops sit below both the front, wood flush door, and the rear, four paneled door. Windows in the main floor and the front gable end are two-over-two-lite double-hung. The window in the rear gable end is gutted. The half story, northwest elevation, contains a two-by-two-lite sliding window which does not appear original to the building. Several of the windows are missing glass and others are partially boarded over. This building represents a contributing element.

(When the office was recorded by Kootenai National Forest archaeologist Rebecca Timmons in 1982, the interior walls were covered with sheetrock. However, the sheetrock has since been removed and the walls of squared logs with split pole chinking are now exposed.)

A clothesline, built with log posts and cross pieces with beveled ends, is located to the rear of the office/dwelling. A post and pole fence with a large gate surrounds the office/dwelling and clothesline, separating these elements from the remainder of the property. Although the fence posts remain, most of the horizontal poles have fallen away from the posts and deteriorated. The clothesline dates to the historical period and contributes to the historical character of the property.

A rectangular concrete wall foundation (Site 1) is located to the rear of the office/dwelling. This foundation marks the location of one of the barns, which have been removed from the property. This site represents a contributing element.

A second building (HRA 1) is located at the property, and consists of a wood frame outhouse with a shed style roof. The exterior walls of this building are finished with vertical boards and battens. This building represents a fairly new addition to the property and a non-contributing element.

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Part of an old sign post is located between the office/dwelling and Forest Service Road 2278. It consists of a vertical post with a hole drilled in it close to the top of the post. This hole is designed to accommodate a horizontally placed pole, from which identification signs were usually hung. The horizontal pole is missing, and a cultural resources sign is now mounted to the post. No documents indicating the age of the sign were found, however this style of sign is present in early Forest Service use books. These books provided instructions to Forest Service employees for constructing a variety of buildings and structures. This sign post should be considered part of the historical fabric of this property.

One additional man-made element is located in the immediate vicinity of the guard station--near the outhouse. This consists of a grass covered mound of earth. A metal barrel, which once served as a container for solution to treat poles lies adjacent to a small cavity excavated within the mound. It has been suggested that this mound of earth represents a root cellar constructed by the original occupant of the property, however, there are no indications of a building or structure beneath the earth mound. It does appear that the mound could have been used as a ramp to back trucks to the pole treatment barrel. This pole treatment facility is not associated with the historical development of the guard station.

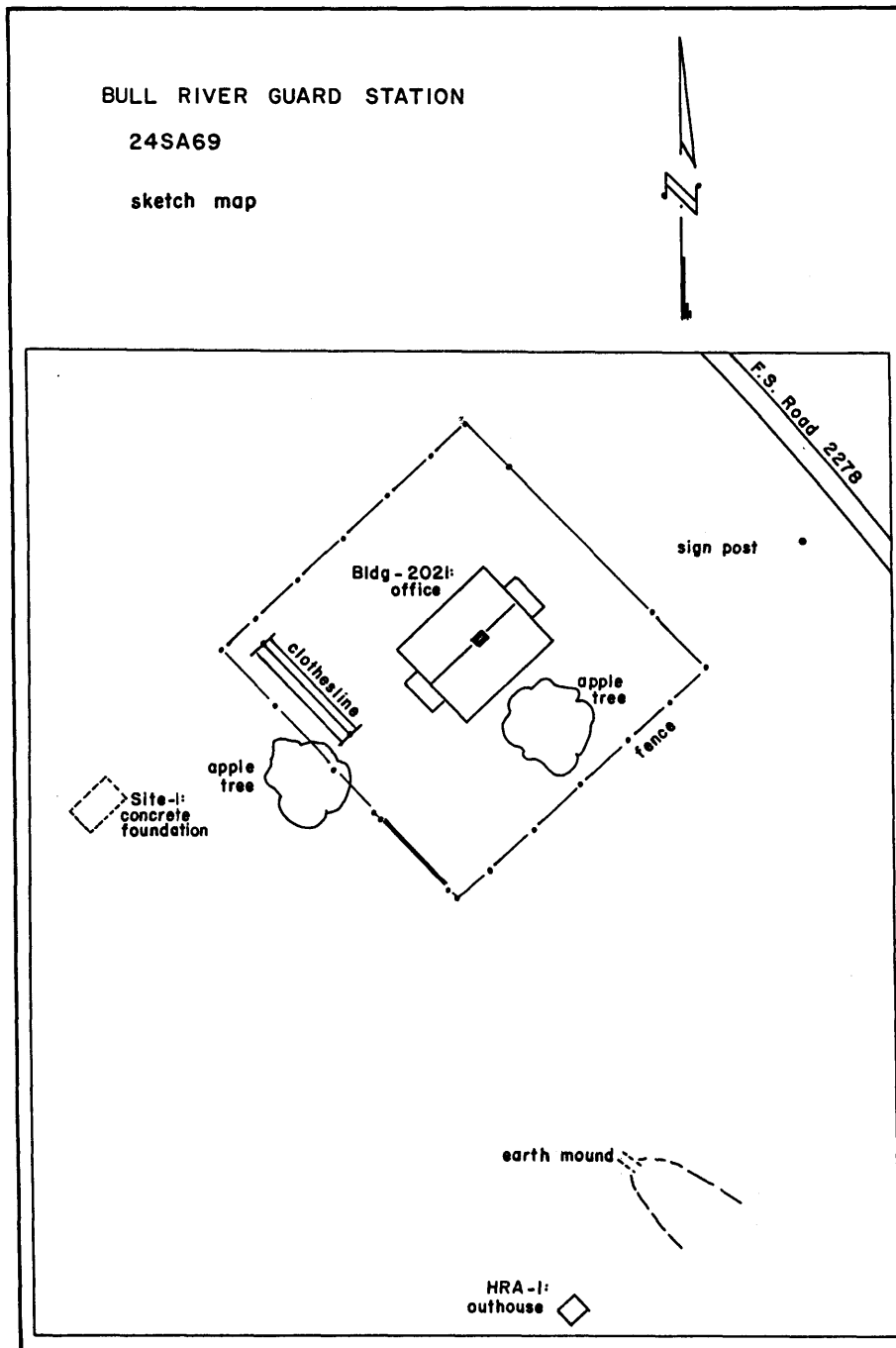
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8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Conservation
Architecture

Period of Significance
1907-1920

Significant Dates
1907

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder
Granville Gordon

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The mining, homestead and lumber frontiers preceded the Forest Service to the banks of the Clark Fork River and its tributaries in extreme northwestern Montana. Signs of all three of these economic spheres were clear on the face of the land by 1907--the year in which the Cabinet National Forest established the Bull River Ranger Station. The station, which served as headquarters for administration of the Noxon Ranger District, was built on previously developed property, adjacent to an established trade route, and within eight miles of two major railroads. Numerous homestead, timber and mining claims crisscrossed the entire Forest Service district, and it was the job of the Forest Service employee stationed at Bull River to evaluate all such claims and ensure that Federal regulations were enforced. Former Regional Forester, Neal M. Rahm described this early period of Forest Service history as "Crusading-Custodial ..., a desperate and difficult period [when] forest rangers were cowboys and lumberjacks who often literally had to fight to wrest control of the lands from local interests and pioneer settlers." Bull River Ranger Station's history, from 1908 until 1920, is an ideal illustration of the early period of development of the Forest Service as a Federal conservation agency.

Forest Service documents indicate that homesteader O.C. Green built the first improvements at the property which has come to be known as Bull River Guard Station. Green's improvements included a one and one-half story house (reported to have burned in 1905 or 1906), a 14 x 18 root cellar built of log with a shake roof and dirt floor, a 36 x 30 log barn with shake roof, and the frame of a new barn, 26 x 30.² A "worthless log shack," built sometime after the 1880 fire that burned the entire Bull River area, may have predated Green's tenure. (Oral histories collected by local historian Mona Vanek, indicate that others may have preceded Green in occupying this piece of property. However, the parcel that contains the Bull River Station has never been patented.)

In the fall of 1906, Green sold the improvements to Patrick Moran. After Moran's unexplained disappearance in November of the same year, his neighbor and partner, Marion Cotton, maintained the property. The dilapidated cabin was left unoccupied. In 1907, 6.6 acres of the property originally claimed by Green, was included in the proposed administrative withdrawal for the first Ranger Station on the nascent Cabinet National Forest.³

[x] see continuation sheet

¹ Paraphrased in A Living Legend: The National Forests of the Northern Region. First Rough Working Draft, copy furnished by Region 1 office, March 1, 1990, p.590.

² "Report on Agricultural Settlement," United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Sept. 17, 1907. On file at Cabinet District Headquarters, Trout Creek, Montana.

³ Report on Agricultural Settlement, USDA Forest Service, Sept. 17, 1907. On file at Cabinet District headquarters, Trout Creek.

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The major problems for the new forest were timber management, fire control, land acquisitions, and boundary adjustments.⁴ All challenged traditional western attitudes towards land usage, the public domain, and the un-hobbled rights of the individual:

Give us our public domain and let the country become settled up under the operations of the land laws of the United States. Do not compel red corpuscled white folks to wait upon the pleasures of bureaucratic officialdom which knows nothing and cares less of western conditions.... Cut out the paternalism business; it is lrrksome....⁵

More than 70 years later, local historian Mona Leeson Vanek would write of the arrival of the USFS: "slowly but inexorably government grew. Private enterprise, at best risky and fluctuating, was squeezed to near extinction."⁶

The acquisition of the Bull River site exemplifies this battle. The Forest Service determined that Cotton's pasture, uninhabited and claimed solely by squatter's right, was the only suitable land in the Bull River area without a prior and valid homestead claim. Cotton, in a direct plea to Gifford Pinchot, claimed to have cut hay from the pasture, enough to "feed my cows there even last winter. I have oats and barley sown on the land now.... Would it not be a matter of justice for the forestry to improve their own land than to take improvements that virtually belongs [sic] to me ...?"⁷

Acting Chief J.D. McMean assured Cotton that "the Forest Service does not want settlers treated harshly or unjustly, and if any other location in that neighborhood can be used for an administrative site the land along the river will be listed upon your application, under the Act of June 11, 1906."⁸ The final determination, however, was that

Cotton has no valid right [to the claim] as the ground included in the claim was held thru the residence of Moran and not by Cotton prior to the withdrawal and creation of the National Forest.... The location is essentially needed as a building site and is without exception the best that we can hope to secure in this Forest.⁹

Not only did the site possess adequate pasture, water, two barns and a root cellar "that could be put to good advantage,"¹⁰ it was located along the Bull River road, within miles of both the Northern Pacific and the Great Northern Rail Roads, at a central point for the evaluation of abundant homestead and mining claims as well as the administration of timber sales and back country sites. However, to "avoid any feeling that the land had been confiscated," the Forest Service paid Cotton \$100.00 to cover the cost of the improvements.¹¹

⁴ "Yellow sheet" - unsigned descriptive document of each forest found in individual history files at the Region 1 archives. Though undated, these documents appear to have been written between 1910 and 1920.

⁵ "The Western News", May 16, 1907; "The People Want a Square Deal."

⁶ Vanek, Mona, Behind these Mountains, Vol I, promotional blurb.

⁷ Letter from Marion Cotton to Gifford Pinchot, July 8, 1907. On file at the Kootenai N.F. Supervisor's Office, Libby, Montana.

⁸ Letter from M.D. McMean, Acting Chief, to Merion Cotton; August 28, 1907.

⁹ Unsigned letter, originating in Thompson Falls, to The Forester; Oct. 5, 1907.

¹⁰ Unsigned letter, originating in Thompson Falls, to The Forester; Oct. 5, 1907.

¹¹ Unsigned letter, originating in Thompson Falls, to The Forester; Oct. 5, 1907.

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Soon after the administrative withdrawal, Granville "Granny" Gordon, a Wyoming cowboy and "one of Teddy Roosevelt's 'instant rangers,'" began construction of a 20' X 24', one and one-half story, combination office/dwelling for use in the summer administration of the Noxon District. Gordon placed the building to the northeast of the existing barns. Detailed specifications were sent to the Washington office for approval: the building was to have cedar log bearing walls, the logs to measure between 10 and 12 inches at the butt. The corners of the building would be connected with square notches with the space between the logs not to exceed two inches. Chinking was to be done with pieces of wood and lime mortar and the gable ends were to be double boarded with red rosin building paper between. Sills and floor joists for both first and second story were of log, and covered with 4-inch dressed and matched floor; porches were 4' x 8' with shake roofs, etc. Though not included in the building specifications, the foundation was constructed of local stone rather than concrete, thus saving the Forest Service material and shipping costs. Materials not found in the immediate vicinity were hauled from Smead Spur shipping point, located nine miles down the Bull River. Total cost came to \$477.58.¹²

Of native material, log construction, and unobtrusive design, the building conformed to the Forest Service's desire both to blend with the natural environment and the local culture. The nearly-free hand given Gordon on design and construction reflects the decentralized tenor of the Forest Service during Pinchot's reign; designed to encourage participation by local men and to reflect western tradition, decentralization was one component of the crusade for popular public opinion that was often reflected in building design. The combination office/dwelling and the attention given to adequate stock feed and shelter were also typical of pre-1930s administrative sites.

The presence of Granville's family was less typical of a Forest Service-era best remembered for its social and geographic isolation. This was a home as well as an administrative center and the current site reflects that homestead character: The apple orchard was planted during the Granville years, a substantial garden was maintained, and the clothesline (structure 1) built.¹³

By 1915, the Forest Service had removed the old cabin, developed five acres for cultivation, strung 275 rods of fence and was using 77.89 acres for grazing land. The unused 37.11 acres included in the 1907 withdrawal application were deemed unnecessary for Forest Service purposes and reopened to homestead claims. "Several [homestead] applications" for the bulk of the site were again denied.¹⁴

From 1908 until 1920, the Bull River Station served as administrative and livestock center for surrounding intermediate stations and fire lookouts. For the first five years Forest Service personnel occupied the premises only during the summer months. However between 1913 and 1920, it was occupied year-round. Primary responsibilities of the men stationed there included timber cruising, border adjustments, administration of pole harvests (the first growth after the 1880s fire), administration of salvage sales from the 1910 fire, evaluation of the 194 "June 11" (homestead) applications filed within the boundaries of the Cabinet National Forest by 1910, blazing of fire trails, fire detection and suppression, and lookout construction.

By the 1920s, the Forest Service's adoption of motorized transport resulted in the consolidation of administrative centers. In 1920 district headquarters were moved to Noxon, a site closer to the public and urban amenities. Also, given new modes of transportation, the town of Noxon was no longer deemed too far from timber sales and fire trails. Though Bull River continued to be maintained for summer trail maintenance crews and timber management, it was spared the administrative expansion that began in the 1920s and 1930s and continued in earnest through the '50s and '60s.

¹² Eunice Connor, "History of the Cabinet National Forest", p.17. Unpublished document on file, Kootenai N.F. Supervisor's Office, Libby, Montana.

¹³ Jim McDonald Architects P.C., "Bull River Guard Station Recommendations for Preservation," July 1989. 1914 photo.

¹⁴Ranger Station Report, Reference Circular 1-27-13. On file at the Cabinet Ranger District Headquarters, Trout Creek, Montana.

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In 1954 the Cabinet National Forest ceased to function as an administrative entity¹⁵. The part of the old forest that contained the Bull River Station, officially became part of the Kaniksu National Forest, but was administered by the Kootenai National Forest with its headquarters in Libby, Montana. About this time, a new pole fence was constructed around the cabin and garden in basically the same location as the fence that is shown in a 1915 photograph. This improvement suggests that the Kootenai National Forest intended to continue using the site. The stone foundation in the combination office/dwelling may have been replaced with its current concrete foundation at this time. One of the two barns had been burned by vandals in the 1940s¹⁶, and the second barn is not mentioned in the historical documents after 1920. It is not clear when the second barn finally collapsed or was torn down.

In 1966 Bull River, one of the first Ranger Stations on the Cabinet National Forest and the last of the early stations still standing, was permanently closed. Cabinet District Ranger Jim Mershon explained that the closure was part of a Forest-wide attempt to centralize all work crews. "It was probably cheaper to run them out of Trout Creek.... They didn't have to pay per diem ... and there just wasn't as much trail work anymore."¹⁷

Under Criterion A, the Bull River Guard Station District is eligible for inclusion in the National Register for its association with the Forest Service—an agency that contributed significantly to the management of natural resources on federal lands and thus to the cultural and economic development of the local area, the state and the region. Establishment of the Station challenged Euro-American settler's traditional sense of the West and its resources. The attempted stabilization of the timber industry was an equally crucial component of the area's economic history. The site's ability to "evoke a historical sense"¹⁸ of the early period of Forest Service history is strengthened by the pristine surroundings and marred only by the absence of stock facilities.

The office/dwelling is also eligible for inclusion under Criteria C for its significance as an example of indigenous design embodying the distinct characteristics of the frontier period and "based upon the needs, technologies, aesthetic preferences, attitudes, and assumptions of a people or culture."¹⁹ To a significant degree, the history of the Forest Service can be traced in the development of its administrative sites and the types of buildings constructed; the use of local materials and vernacular design reflects the relative isolation of early Forest Service sites as well as the desire to blend with the local environment and culture. Only the concrete replacement of the original stone foundation irreparably impairs the physical integrity of the office/dwelling.

¹⁵ "Northern Region News" Feb 12, 1954, No.7. On file at the USDA Forest Service Northern Region archives, Missoula, Montana, Cabinet National Forest general history file.

¹⁶ Phone interview with Mona Vanek, March 27, 1990.

¹⁷ Phone interview with Jim Mershon, March 26, 1990.

¹⁸ "National Register Bulletin; Criteria for Applying the National Register Criteria for Evaluation (U.S. Department of the Interior, NPS, Interagency Resources Division) 1982, p.36.

¹⁹ "National Register Bulletin; Criteria for Applying the National Register Criteria for Evaluation (U.S. Department of the Interior, NPS, Interagency Resources Division) 1982, p.36.

9. Major Bibliographical References

"National Register Bulletin; Criteria for Applying the National Register Criteria for Evaluation (U.S. Department of the Interior, NPS, Interagency Resources Division) 1982A

Living Legend: The National Forests of the Northern Region. First Rough Working Draft, copy furnished by Region 1 office, March 1, 1990

Vanek, Mona, Behind these Mountains, Vol I, promotional blurb.

"The Western News" Libby, Montana

Jim McDonald Architects P.C., "Bull River Guard Station Recommendations for Preservation," July 1989.

[x]See continuation sheet

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

Specify repository:

USDA Northern Region Office, Missoula, MT
Kootenai NF Supervisor's Office, Libby, MT

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 82.89 acres

UTM References

A 11	591050	5328435	B 11	591300	5329350
Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
C 11	591050	5328500	D 11	590620	5328890

[xx]See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The recommended boundary for this property conforms to the legal description of the area included in the reduced administrative withdrawal, established in 1915. Please refer to attached map for exact boundary.

[x]See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The area included within administrative withdrawal reflects the historical function of the site and thus assures integrity of association. It also preserves the open space, river front, and timber strands crucial to integrity of setting and of feeling.

[]See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ann Huber, Research Historian
organization **Historical Research Associates, Inc.**
street & number P.O. Box 7086
city or town Missoula

date March 27, 1990
telephone (406) 721-1958
state Montana zip code 59807-7086

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Phone interview with Mona Vanek, March 27, 1990

Phone interview with Cabinet District Ranger Jim Mershon March 26, 1990.

Documents on file at the Region 1 archives

"Yellow sheet" - unsigned descriptive document of each forest found in individual history files. Though undated, these documents appear to have been written between 1910 and 1920. Cabinet National Forest, General History file.

"Northern Region News" Feb 12, 1954. No.7, Cabinet National Forest, General History file.

Documents on file at the Supervisor's Office of the Kootenai National Forest, Libby, Montana:

Letter from Merion Cotton to Gifford Pinchot, July 8, 1907.

Report on Agricultural Settlement, USDA Forest Service, Sept. 17, 1907.

Letter from M.D. McMean, Acting Chief, to Merion Cotton; August 28, 1907.

Unsigned letter, originating in Thompson Falls, to The Forester; Oct. 5, 1907.

Eunice Connor, "History of the Cabinet National Forest"

Ranger Station Report, Reference Circular 1-27-13.

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Section number Photographs Page 1 Bull River Guard Station

Photo #	Description
1	Bull River Guard Station 24SA69. Northeast and southeast elevations of Dwelling/office, Forest Service Building #2021.
2	Bull River Guard Station 24SA69. Northwest and southwest elevations of Dwelling/office, Forest Service Building #2021
3	Bull River Guard Station 24SA69. Detail of notching--southwest corner of Dwelling/office, Forest Service Building #2021.
4	Bull River Guard Station 24SA69. Looking south over concrete foundation--Site #1
5	Bull River Guard Station 24SA69. Looking southeast to clothesline--Structure 1
6	Bull River Guard Station 24SA69. Looking northeast to gate in fence--Structure 2.
7	Bull River Guard Station 24SA69. Looking northwest to intact segment of fence--Structure 2.
8	Bull River Guard Station 24SA69. Looking southwest to old sign post--Structure 3.
9	Bull River Guard Station 24SA69. Looking northwest over earth mound--Structure 4.
10	Bull River Guard Station 24SA69. Detail of metal barrel (pole treatment vat) associated with Structure 4.

Photographer; Donna Hartmans

Date of Photographs; July 22, 1989

Location of Photographs; Historical Research Associates, P.O. Box 7086, Missoula, Montana 59807

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