

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES NOMINATION, GLACIER NATIONAL PARK

REGION: Rocky Mountain      PARK/AREA NAME: Glacier National Park      PARK NUMBER: 1430

STRUCTURE NAME: Skyland Camp/Bowman Lake Ranger Station      STRUCTURE NUMBER: 349

LOCATION OF STRUCTURE: Southwest shore of Bowman Lake      QUADRANGLE NAME: Quartz Ridge, MT

Zone Easting Northing  
UTM A: 12 705420 5412220

QUADRANGLE SCALE: 7.5-minute

CLASSIFICATION:

OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY:

CATEGORY:

NUMBER OF RESOURCES:

CONTRIBUTING

NONCONTRIBUTING

|  |   |                          |                          |            |
|--|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Private                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building(s) | <u>1</u>                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Buildings  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public-Local              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Sites      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public-State              | <input type="checkbox"/> Site                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Structures |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public-Federal | <input type="checkbox"/> Structure              | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Objects    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed/private & public    | <input type="checkbox"/> Object                 | <u>1</u>                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | TOTAL      |

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION AND EVALUATION:

The Bowman Lake Ranger Station is rectangular in plan and measures 27x50' with a 27x10' porch across the rear and a 7x14' porch at the entrance. Contained inside are a large kitchen with cast-iron cooking stove, a washroom, storage, workshop, and an office-storage bedroom. A large living room with a native stone fireplace comprises the remaining 30x27' section to the rear. Many of the original rustic furnishings are still present inside. Single length, Western Red Cedar logs, 8" to 1'10" in diameter, have been stripped of their bark and have been reverse saddle-notched at the corners. Slight planing of the upper and lower surfaces of each log allowed for a thin slice of oakum chinking and an extremely tight fit. The outside is chinked with concrete. The interior log wall surfaces have been hand-hewn to a glossy, attractively marred texture. Log roof trusses support three full-length log purlins running longitudinally, which in turn support log rafters approximately 2' o.c. running laterally. One-inch decking and asphalt roofing paper form the roof surface. The weight of the structure rests on concrete and stone piers. The log floor joists, notched into the top of the sill logs, are at 2' o.c. and support a floor of 1" subflooring with 1" floor boards above. Most interior partitions are frame with cedar wainscoting, with the exception of a cedar log wall dividing the living room from the other spaces. All windows are eight-light casement units installed singular, in pairs, or, in the living room, as four-jointed units. One exposed truss and four uprights support the 10' roof extension over the rear porch. A smaller, similarly constructed, gabled roof covers the front porch. The Skyland Camp/Bowman Lake Ranger Station was constructed in 1924 by the Culver Military Academy for the purpose of providing the boys with a private mountain retreat. Work was initiated by the boys themselves, under the direction of one master carpenter (Sibley). The building exhibits some of the finest, understated rustic design and construction in Glacier. The tightly fitted 50-ft. axis logs, corner joinery, massive rubblestone masonry fireplace, and ample porch areas give the historic "Rainbow Lodge" a more elegant appearance than other, Park-designed and built ranger stations in Glacier National Park. It is a significant architectural feature in the park.

STRUCTURE NAME: Skyland Camp/Bowman Lake Ranger Station

STRUCTURE NUMBER: 349

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION:

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: 1924

The Skyland Camp was conceived as a summer mountain retreat for boys. The Culver Military Academy, of Culver, Indiana, built the camp and operated the concession through a contract with the National Park Service. The outdoor campus consisted of cabins and other buildings located near this structure, which is located on the shore of Bowman Lake. For a few summer seasons in the early 1920s, the Skyland Camp appeared to be a success as both a summer military camp and a public retreat. It was also hoped that professionals in search of a respite from their daily business responsibilities would use the facility for regular retreats. Although the plan seemed plausible, mismanagement turned the Skyland Camp into a poorly operated tourist accommodation. Eventually, the Park forfeited the contract and the abandoned buildings fell into disrepair. In the spring of 1940, park personnel dismantled or razed all structures of the Skyland Camp except the Rainbow Lodge.<sup>1</sup> The Park Service preserved the impressive log building and rehabilitated it for use as a ranger station in the Bowman Lake area.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

The Bowman Lake ranger station is both an architecturally and historically significant building in Glacier National Park. It exhibits one of the Park's finest combinations of log craftsmanship and rustic design. Its history reflects an attempt, albeit unsuccessful, at private enterprise in a national park and Glacier's successful administrative decision to adapt and re-use an abandoned but restorable building. The Bowman Lake ranger station is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under criteria a and c.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCE:

<sup>1</sup>Michael J. Ober, "Glacier's Skyland Camps," Montana: Magazine of Western History (Summer 1973), pp. 30-39.

"Skyland Camps," illustrated brochure, 1923, University of Montana Mansfield Library and Archives, Missoula, Montana.

List of Classified Structures (Oliveri, 1975), National Park Service, Rocky Mountain Region, Denver, CO.

FORM PREPARED BY:

DATE: June 1984

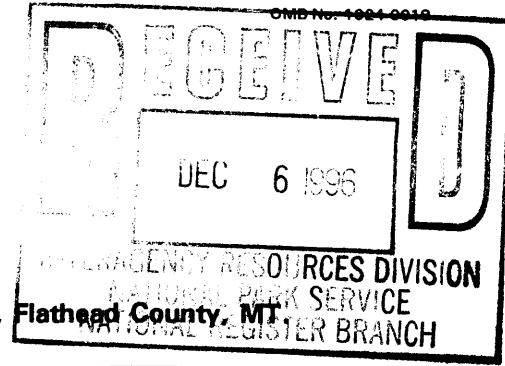
NAME/TITLE:

ORGANIZATION: Historical Research Associates, P.O. Box 7086, Missoula, MT 59807-7086

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

### National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Skyland Camp-Bowman Lake Ranger Station Historic District (addendum), Flathead County, MT



#### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant \_\_\_ nationally \_\_\_ statewide X locally. ( \_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

*[Signature]*  
Signature of certifying official/Title

12.5.95  
Date

National Park Service  
State or Federal agency or bureau

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

*[Signature]*  
Signature of commenting or other official

SEP 29 1995  
Date

Montana State Historic Preservation Office  
State or Federal agency and bureau

#### 4. National Park Service Certification

| I, hereby certify that this property is:   | for Signature of the Keeper | Date of Action |
|--|-----------------------------|----------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register<br>see continuation sheet                  | _____                       | _____          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register<br>see continuation sheet     | _____                       | _____          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register<br>see continuation sheet | _____                       | _____          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register<br>see continuation sheet                | _____                       | _____          |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (explain) <i>additional documentation</i>                  | <i>Guym. Lapley</i>         | <u>1/19/96</u> |

Additional Documentation Accepted

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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### Building Interiors

The following buildings are listed in the National Register of Historic Places as contributors to the Skyland Camp-Bowman Lake Ranger Station Historic District. Additional documentation is provided below for the purpose of describing and evaluating building interiors for integrity and significance.

#### 7. Narrative Description

##### **Skyland Camp Messhall/Bowman Lake Ranger Station (#349), 1920**

The Bowman Lake Ranger Station was constructed in 1920 by the Culver Military Academy for use as a messhall. The NPS converted the building to a ranger station in 1940 and it is now inhabited seasonally by volunteers, who monitor the adjacent campground and provide visitor services in exchange for the opportunity to spend the summer in the park.

The one-story log building contains a kitchen/information center, opening to a storage room (west) and to the large main room (north). The closet and office/bedroom are accessed through the main room. Originally, the main room served as the messhall dining room and the closet/bedroom area was a wait station and pantry. Log walls, open ceilings, wood floors, and pole furniture are the pervasive, dominant design elements. The building features neither running water (with the exception of a pump system feeding the kitchen sink) or electricity; modern kerosene lights illuminate all rooms. Individual rooms are described below.

The kitchen, forming the southwest corner of the building, also serves as a dining area and point-of-contact with area visitors: a large hinged plywood sheet at the southwest corner covers what was originally a window, and swings open to create an information booth. An adjacent four-light/two-panel door, paired with a four-light exterior screen, leads from the front porch to the kitchen. Exterior kitchen walls are hewn log. Interior walls are sided with one-inch tongue-and-groove, painted white. Plywood panels and battens, painted white, create a dropped ceiling. Vintage rolled linoleum covers both the floor and the few counter surfaces. Butt-joint, rather than mitered, 3" window surrounds are modern replacements (ca. 1992), yet conform generally to those found elsewhere in the building. The wall-mounted porcelain sink with built-in backsplash is historic (although not known to be original); the single (vintage) faucet testifies to limits to the homes pumped water supply. Built-in shelving units are open. Plywood panels have been placed behind the modern gas range. The antique "copper clad" stove sits on a heat proof pad. The original phone box, once associated with the Polebridge to Numa Ridge phoneline (listed in the NRHP), is located along the north wall, near the entry to the living room.

A three-panel/one-light swinging door, varnished, leads from the kitchen to the large main room, where huge hewn logs with "kindling" chinking form the exterior walls and 3" softwood planks, painted grey, cover the floor. (The grey paint dates to 1961, before which time the floors were varnished.) The ceiling is open to the roof, exposing the elaborate log truss system. A fireplace constructed of large lake stones and topped with a 5" x 15" mantel dominates the west wall. This fireplace was "remodeled" in 1961; the firebox is now sealed

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with a metal shield and a "Frontier" wood-burning stove, vented through the original chimney, sits immediately in front of the fireplace on a metal hearth.

Ribbons of multi-light casement windows along the north wall, looking to the porch, and along the east wall, looking to the lake, form a dominant design element. These windows are fitted with wood-frame screens, framed with 3" stained rough-cut lumber, and are paired with shelving units supported by cottonwood pole braces. Current residents report that the cottonwood-pole chairs scattered throughout the room were constructed by senior boy scouts at an unknown date (post 1940). An eight-light/3 vertical panel door leads from the main room to the front porch.

The swinging door leading from the main room to the historic pantry/wait station (used by rangers ca. 1950 as a washroom/office and now a bedroom/closet) is constructed of stained 1" angle-cut tongue-and-groove, laid vertically and secured with cross bracing. The black porcelain knobs-with-lock-box (as per those found at the East Glacier Ranger Station) are presumed to be original. The ceiling and all but the north wall are also covered with angle-cut tongue-and-groove, laid horizontally and stained. The wall dividing the station from the main room, however, is constructed of 12" hewn logs. A small bottom hinged service door in this wall, constructed of 1" tongue-and-groove, was apparently used to pass food directly from the pantry to the dining room. Similarly, a six-light casement window swings open between the wait station/closet and the pantry/bedroom.

The large storage area adjacent to the kitchen is accessed through a painted door, constructed of 1" vertical tongue-and-groove. Painted 2" softwood planks cover the floors. The two exterior walls are constructed of hewn log. The interior walls are 1" horizontal tongue-and-groove, as per that found in the pantry/wait station. The ceiling is open to the roof, exposing a gable truss system substantially less elaborate than that visible in the main room.

### **Boathouse (#548), 1935**

This simple utilitarian building is an excellent example of design following function. The pole framing system is exposed, leaving interior walls formed by the board and batten exterior siding and by the exposed 1 1/2' of lake-stone foundation. The ceiling is open to the roof, exposing the pole and wood-frame truss system. Thirty-feet of the 85' feet of wood and steel boat track run down the center of the dirt floor.

### **Boathouse (#549), 1930**

Unlike boathouse #549, this is an interior-frame building, constructed of heavy 6" x 6" rough-milled posts connected to floor and ceiling level horizontal members (creating a series of "boxes" running the length of the building). The 8" exterior shiplap siding is visible behind this framing system. Heavy planks, laid across the beams, form a partial storage loft. The remainder of the ceiling is open to the roof, exposing the wood-frame truss system. The floor is graveled and does not feature a track: instead the boats are winched into the space along large free-rolling logs running perpendicular to the entrance.

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### 8. Statement of Significance

The interior floorplan, finishes, and furnishings of the Bowman Lake Ranger Station — substantially different from those found at NPS-constructed stations and representative of the building's historic use as a messhall — maintain physical integrity and contribute to the building's significance (particularly its association with rustic architecture).

The unfinished boathouse interiors are unmodified, provide a clear view of the structural systems, and reflect the buildings' historic function. They contribute to the buildings' significance, as do the track/mechanical winch system in building #548 and the log/winch system in building #549.

### Photographs

- 1) Photographer:                      Nancy Niedernhofer
- 2) Date of Photographs:            September 1992
- 3) Location of Negatives:        National Park Service, RMR-RC, Denver, CO.

| PHOTO NUMBER | STRUCTURE NAME AND NUMBER | LOCATION/DIRECTION OF VIEW     |
|--------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1            | Ranger Station (#349)     | Interior - Bedroom             |
| 2            | Ranger Station (#349)     | Interior - Great Room          |
| 3            | Ranger Station (#349)     | Interior - Great Room          |
| 4            | Ranger Station (#349)     | Interior - Phone detail        |
| 5            | Ranger Station (#349)     | Interior - Kitchen sink detail |
| 6            | Boathouse (#548)          | Interior                       |
| 7            | Boathouse (#548)          | Interior                       |
| 8            | Boathouse (#549)          | Interior                       |
| 9            | Boathouse (#549)          | Interior                       |