

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



1126

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

historic name Big Creek Ranger Station Historic District

other names/site number 24FH0434, Big Creek Work Center

2. Location

street & number North Fork Road

X

not for publication

city or town Polebridge

vicinity

state Montana county Flathead

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 at the following level(s) of significance:
 national X statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria: X A B C D

Carl M. Davis Region 2 Archaeologist/Delegated FPO 11-17-2014
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

U.S. Forest Service, Northern Region
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

Mark F. Faumler 10/10/2014
Signature of commenting official Date

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER MONTANA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register determined eligible for the National Register
 determined not eligible for the National Register removed from the National Register
 other (explain):

Jon Edson H. Beall 1.7.15
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Category of Property
(Check only one box.)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
10	1	buildings
		sites
	2	structures
	1	objects
10	4	Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

GOVERNMENT: government office, fire station

DOMESTIC: institutional housing, secondary structure

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION: education-related

DOMESTIC: institutional housing

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY

AMERICAN MOVEMENTS: Craftsmen

OTHER: Rustic

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Principle Exterior Materials of the Property:

Wood, Metal

Narrative Description

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(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a summary paragraph that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Big Creek Ranger Station Historic District is an administrative headquarters for national forest management and fire control, established in 1908 on a bend in the North Fork of the Flathead River, at its confluence with Big Creek. The historic property occupies a terrace along the south side of Big Creek and consists of a compound of buildings that were built in two phases: eight contributing buildings comprising the 1927-40s ranger station, and two more contributing buildings to the southwest related to transition of the compound in 1965 to an inter-agency firefighting center. In addition to the 10 contributing buildings, the district also includes two noncontributing structures, one noncontributing building, and one noncontributing object. The setting is a cleared area within a riparian landscape set amidst the thick lodgepole forest of the remote and rugged North Fork drainage.

Narrative Description

Located in the Flathead Valley at an elevation of 3333 feet, the Big Creek Ranger Station is situated west of the North Fork of the Flathead River on a creek terrace running along the south side of Big Creek near to the confluence of these two waterways. A driveway leads west from Forest Service Road #210 into the heart of the compound where a trapper's cabin built before 1908 once stood, succeeded by a 1½-story log residence, the first Forest Service building constructed here. These were replaced beginning in 1927, following a site plan issued by the Forest Supervisor's office for a fully-fledged district administrative site at this location. Today, there is a grouping of seven buildings constructed 1927-1942, with three additional 1960s buildings at the rear. The buildings are built of wood-frame construction and share Craftsman design qualities including exposed purlins and rafters, board and batten in gable ends and coursed wood shingle siding, all painted a uniform dark brown. The buildings are capped with gently-pitched gable roofs with the exception of the cookhouse, which has a gambrel roof design also used on different ranger stations in Region One during this period. The pre-1960s buildings also feature multi-light windows and extensive warm, knotty pine paneling on the interiors.

The historic Ranger Station Office, Ranger House, Cookhouse and two Bunkhouses form the core of the administrative compound; they are grouped in close proximity and surrounded by lawns and a gravel driveway. All buildings sit south of the main driveway, with the exception of the Office which stands to the north, between the driveway and Big Creek. In addition, there are several secondary buildings: a Garage, Storehouse and Pump House along with smaller scale features including two forest service signs, antenna/flagpole, and a solar panel and associated shed.

A 1931 site map and forest records indicate there was formerly a barn and large corral located in the meadow north of Big Creek, accessed by two small foot bridges. Prior to construction of the first large bunkhouse in 1939, a small bunkhouse, cookhouse and meat storage building stood on the site west of the cookhouse. In addition, there were several smaller structures on site that no longer remain, including a root cellar, an ice house and 1940s-era gas house behind the complex to the south. The proposed Big Creek Ranger Station Historic District

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encompasses the station's core administrative buildings as well as 1960s buildings relating to regional fire-fighting work center activities.

Contributing Resources

Ranger's House (Building 1003: 1927, one contributing building): The Ranger's House is the oldest building on this site, and originally also functioned as the station's office; for several years it was the first building encountered when entering the compound. It is a 1½ story frame dwelling, rectangular in plan with a gable roof. Exterior walls are clad with coursed wood shingles, and have plain soffits and projecting eaves with exposed rafter tails. The wooden sheathed and shingled roof is now covered with corrugated metal roofing. A cinder block chimney projects from the west slope of the roof, while a vent pipe and aluminum chimney pipe project above the roof's east slope.

The building faces north and this primary elevation is spanned by a full-width, single-story screen-enclosed porch with shingled square columns, a shed roof and screen door centered on the front. Two large double-hung 1-over-1 windows and the central entry to the living room are set within the porch; the door has been replaced with a hollow core door. Paired 1-over-1 windows are centered in the upper gable above the porch; the lower window is an awning unit that opens out. The west and east elevations contain two double-hung windows apiece.

The interior includes a living room, kitchen, bedroom and office. Interior finishes include pine flooring in the house and the porch, and original fiberboard wall covering in the bedroom and office. Historic wood trim includes original beaded wainscoting in the kitchen, and simply corniced historic door and window trim in the living room. Non-historic horizontal pine boards and vertical wood paneling finish the living room walls and simple pine trim frames the openings. The living room retains historic fir tongue-in-groove fir flooring. A contemporary metal wood heating stove stands in the living room and the front door is now a hollow-core pine unit. A center stairway originally opening from the living room was relocated to the bedroom. Upstairs there is one open room built into the rooflines. The walls are finished with fiberboard and painted.

The building's raised concrete foundation provides room for windows and a day lit basement; the front porch is supported with concrete piers. Shallow concrete window wells with 3-pane windows illuminate the basement. A small mudroom projects from the south elevation; it is offset to the west with a gable roof and a doorway in its east side. The rear door is a historic three-panel door with an upper square pane of glass.

Cookhouse (Building 2202: 1930, one contributing building): The Cookhouse, built next door three years after the Ranger's House was completed, was labeled a warehouse on the 1931 site plan. This building is spacious enough to provide meals and recreational space for large crews. The cookhouse is 1½ stories tall and features a high gambrel roof and screened-in single-story entrance porch across the north elevation. The building stands on a concrete foundation, is clad with coursed wooden shingles and the roof is covered with green corrugated metal roofing. A brick chimney and concrete block chimney project above the upper slope of the west roofline, about 1/3 of the way back from the front of the building.

Like the Ranger's House, the cookhouse faces north. Original fenestration includes double-hung 1-over-1 and 6-pane casement wood window units, in the kitchen, classroom, bath, rear wall (south elevation) and upper story above the porch. West elevation windows include a pair

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of large single-pane casement windows. A three-panel wood door with large upper window opens from the great room onto a large outside deck addition.

On the interior, exposed square posts and center beams provide structural support and allow for an open plan between kitchen, dining areas and common rooms. The kitchen is outfitted with a commercial-scale cook stove and steel sinks, rolled linoleum flooring and gypsum board walls and ceiling. From the kitchen, one passes through a center corridor and stairwell to a great room and classroom area. Wooden trim and pine wainscoting in this area appear original. The great room includes built-in wooden bookcases, display cabinetry and oak flooring which were added in 2007.

A central stairway accesses the attic which has a semi-finished interior in which rough sawn joists and hand-peeled wooden rafters are revealed. Finishing includes dark fir tongue-in-groove flooring, a brick chimney, and knotty pine storage closets built into the gambrel rooflines.

Garage/Woodshed (Building 2117: 1927-1931, one contributing building): A log frame Garage/Woodshed sits south behind the ranger's house and opens to the north. The building features a hipped roof with metal roofing, coursed wood shingle cladding and a poured concrete slab. On the primary (north) elevation, sliding wooden crossed-braced garage doors open into an east bay. Log framing and wooden siding are visible on the unfinished interior; wooden flooring has been laid in the west portion of the building that formerly served as a woodshed. The building includes fixed 6-pane window units. The garage is painted brown to match others in the district; however, it appears to have been painted a light color in a historic photograph from the 1930s.

Bunkhouse/Boys Dorm (Building 1300: 1939, one contributing building): The Boys Dorm is a one-story cross-gable building built for the Flathead Forest in 1939. The dorm exhibits an L-shaped plan with the primary elevation facing north, and gable-on-hip rooflines at the rear over the ell. The building is sided with coursed wood shingles, and board-and-batten in the gable ends. A corrugated metal roof rests atop exposed rafters and a plain soffit; a brick chimney rises from the ridge and is offset to the east.

On the exterior, the front porch entrance is covered by a projecting gable roof, supported on square posts and open at the sides. The porch has a poured concrete stoop with a single full width concrete step for access. The east bedroom features a projecting, gabled, bay window and tall 6-over-6 sash units in groups of three on the primary (north) wall and east bay. Elsewhere, 6-pane hopper windows are set in the upper exterior walls.

The interior contains four large rooms, finished with high-grade vertical knotty pine paneling and matching pine woodwork on baseboards and openings throughout. The original maple flooring remains in this building except for the shower room which has a concrete floor. Fiberboard panels cover the ceilings. The shower room includes lavatory stalls, a three-station sink and two showers.

Bunkhouse/Girls Dorm (Building 1302: 1939, moved to site ca. 1964, one contributing building): The Girls Dorm is a one-story cross gable building originally built at the Coram Ranger Station near Hungry Horse in 1939 and used there prior to being moved to Big Creek to house fire crews ca. 1964. Contemporaneous with the 1939 Bunkhouse/Boys Dorm, this

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bunkhouse shares a similar L-shaped, gable-on-hip design, although the primary entrance is centered on the front elevation. It is clad with horizontal, coursed wood shingles, and finished in the gables with board-and-batten siding. It faces northeast, and like other buildings in the compound, it is painted brown and has a newer gray, corrugated metal roof and a concrete chimney that rises above the center ridge. It stands on a concrete foundation protected with metal sheeting, painted brown, and has an outside cellar door at grade level in the rear.

The front entrance is covered by a projecting gable roof and open porch supported on square wooden posts. The porch has a poured concrete stoop with a single full width concrete step for access. The east end of the building houses a bedroom with a projecting, gabled, bay window supported on square braces. Like the boys dorm, 6-pane windows occur throughout. Tall 6-over-6 sash units in groups of three illuminate this room from the primary (northeast) wall and southeast bay. Elsewhere, 6-pane hopper windows are set into the upper exterior walls.

The interior contains four large rooms. The porch opens into a hallway corridor running along the front wall with doorways into the southeast bedroom, a center shower, and a northwest bedroom which opens into a third bedroom beyond. The walls are finished with high-grade knotty pine paneling, and built-in cupboards and closets to match. Six-panel pine doors separate the rooms. Original wood floors are covered with tile linoleum in hallways and bedrooms and sheet linoleum flooring in the entry hall and shower room. The shower room includes lavatory stalls, a three-station sink and two showers. Fiberboard panels cover the ceilings. The front hallway includes brass pendant ceiling lights with opaque, schoolhouse-style glass globes. Ceiling lights in the bedrooms have been replaced with more modern chrome fixtures with white globes.

Fire Cache/Recreation Building (Building 2203: 1940, one contributing building): This one-story fire cache and recreation building is rectangular in plan with a gable roof that retains its original wood shingles. The building is sided with coursed wood shingles trimmed with corner boards and includes symmetrically-placed 6-pane fixed wood sash windows on all elevations. It contains three entrances – five-panel wood doors on the north and south, and a sliding door with board-and-batten finish that opens onto a wooden loading deck at ground level. The building is of wood frame construction and sits on concrete piers.

Office (Building 2001: 1942, one contributing building): The Big Creek Ranger Station Office is a one-story building constructed at the end of the Civilian Conservation Corps era. It is rectangular in plan with a gently-pitched gable roof supported by square purlins with mitered ends projecting beyond the roofline. The building faces southeast and has open projecting gabled porches on the front and rear. It stands on a concrete foundation and has a newer gray, corrugated metal roof.

On the primary elevation (southeast) the gable roof of the porch entrance is supported on four square columns, two free-standing and two engaged, with curved angle braces. The porch displays a concrete stoop accessed by two steps. Fenestration features pairs of 9-pane hopper windows with simple wood surrounds. A rear entrance opens on the northwest; it features a concrete stoop and step, and the gable roof is supported by engaged square columns, curved brackets and exposed purlins. A third, unadorned doorway is located in the northeast wall. The rear door appears to be the original three-panel pine door with upper glazing; doors on the front and northwest end are later, solid units. Wood-framed screen doors cover the front and rear doors.

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The primary entrance opens into a reception area, and an adjacent office opens from this room to the east. The reception space is partitioned off by a counter and built-in cupboards. Behind the reception area, there is a central hallway that runs the length of the building, opening into three bedrooms, a work and storage area and a bathroom. Walls and built-in units are all finished with vertical knotty pine throughout the building, floor to ceiling; the floor is covered with green linoleum tile. The work and storage area, and original center front bedroom, retain knotty pine wall finishes while the other bedrooms now have 1970s-80s wood paneling and the front bedroom on the east end is divided with modern partition walls to create a fourth bedroom.

Generator Shed (Building 1850: ca. 1965, one contributing building): The generator shed is a small, square building with a gable roof. The sliding wooden doorway faces to the west. Multi-pane windows are 6- and 9-fixed panes. The building has horizontal board siding and a corrugated metal roof.

Fire Compound Garage (Building 2110: ca. 1964, one contributing building): The big garage that stands at the rear of the compound was constructed ca. 1964 when the station became an intra-regional headquarters for fire-fighting. The long rectangular building stands 1½-stories tall on a poured concrete slab, and has a broad gable roof covered with metal. The building is supported with square posts and a 2" x 12" beam structure, with diagonally braced 2" x 6" lumber framing the walls. Fenestration includes paired sliding 6-pane windows; one pair on the north wall, and a band of three pairs on the east wall along with a metal man-door. The garage houses six vehicle bays, each with a roll-up garage door. Across the back, an upper storage loft is accessed from both ends by wooden cross-braced doors in the upper gable. The building also contains a classroom in the east end.

Saw Shop (Building 2409: ca. 1964, one contributing building): The saw shop is a 1½ -story rectangular building sectioned into four workrooms. The building is framed with 2" x 4" lumber and peeled log rafters. The original wide tongue-and-groove sheathing remains in much of the interior; elsewhere it has been replaced with plywood sheathing. Original fenestration features 6-pane hopper windows; one window retains its glazing, the others are missing. All are shuttered with hinged plywood. Original wooden doors hang on large hinges and are located on the west and south; the south end contains two doorways – at ground level and on the upper level accessed by a large exterior wooden stairway. Two doorways also open on the north elevation; a 5-panel wood door remains in one doorway, while the other has been boarded up.

Non Contributing Resources:

Solar Collector (2012, one noncontributing structure): A large free-standing solar panel was installed on the rear portion of the compound. It is supported with a cylindrical metal post and has 9 upward-facing collector panels, oriented to the southern sky.

Solar Shed (2012, one noncontributing building): A small, wood frame shed stands on the back edge of the compound, to house the collector batteries of the solar collector. It stands on a concrete foundation that originally supported a frame gas house of similar dimension and profile. A forest fire in 2004 threatened the Big Creek compound and this was the only building that burned down. The solar shed is brown, with horizontal board siding, and topped by a gable

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roof with metal roofing. A doorway in the north wall with a plain, white wooden door accessed by three wooden steps leads into the shed. The shed is supported on concrete piers and is removable.

Bracketed Steel Antenna Tower (ca. 1995 one noncontributing structure): This structure, which stands approximately 40' tall, is located immediately north of the Cookhouse. The tower serves the dual purpose of flagpole and antenna; a satellite dish is attached to the lower frame of the structure.

Entrance Sign (base/support ca. 1930/replacement wood sign ca. 2000, one noncontributing object): A Forest Service sign stands near the northeast entrance to the station and bears the current name of the property, *Big Creek Outdoor Education Center*, and the Glacier Institute logo in painted lettering. The large trapezoidal wooden sign is supported by two round pipes anchored in a low stone base capped with concrete.

Integrity

The historic core of the Big Creek Ranger Station remains relatively unchanged since the main period of construction for this administrative complex, 1927-1942, displaying integrity of setting, location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The buildings display a very high level of integrity, and alterations overall are minor, located on the interiors, and generally reversible including wall and floor finishes and lighting fixtures. The generator shed, fire compound garage, and saw shop, while constructed in the mid-1960s, all reflect the station's evolving mission and contribute to the district. These three buildings also display all seven aspects of integrity.

Significant changes relate to loss or replacement of some early buildings over time – the 1908 log ranger cabin and some outbuildings were replaced 1927-1939 as more substantial buildings were constructed. In addition, the barn and corral across the creek were lost (likely during the 1964 flood), along with the gas house to the 2004 fire, and the pump house to causes unknown. The girls dormitory building represents a major building relocated to the Big Creek compound as firefighting capacity was being expanded, to meet the need to provide housing for seasonal crews in this remote location. Although the girls dormitory is a building moved to this property from Hungry Horse, it was relocated 50 years ago in 1964 when the fire center was established here, and thus falls within the historic period of significance. Elsewhere, addition of a 1990s exterior deck on the cookhouse is easily reversible and limited in scale within the district.

The utilitarian firefighting buildings in the rear all display a high level of integrity, although the 2012 solar collector and nearby solar shed could have been more sensitively located; they are a modern intrusion within the complex. However, their location toward the rear of the district, visually blocked from the original ranger station buildings, minimizes their impact on the integrity of this very historic ranger and firefighting station. Likewise, a seasonal tipi and the steel antenna tower are of minor consequence do not significantly detract from the district.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

CONSERVATION

Period of Significance

1927-1965

Significant Dates

1927; 1964

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Established in 1908, the Big Creek Ranger Station Historic District reflects the history of the Flathead National Forest and the early 20th century development of administrative and firefighting facilities in the remote North Fork of the Flathead River valley, part of the Glacier View District on the forest. The property today encompasses ten historic buildings constructed during the 1927-1942 period of significance, and the district is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A at a state level for its historical associations with the creation and administration of Flathead National Forest programs, and fire management in U.S. Forest Service Region One and the western United States. The property gains added significance under Criterion C at a state level for the qualities of the buildings which reflect Craftsman influences combined with a rustic aesthetic, a typical format for USDA Forest Service buildings in the west and particularly Northern Region One.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

The Big Creek Ranger Station is a remote forest administrative site, located 20 miles north of Columbia Falls, along the western edge of Glacier National Park. The region has long been a rugged and heavily forested environment, accessed by a gravel road and limited to travel a good portion of the year.

The first EuroAmerican settlers in the North Fork drainage were homesteaders, who moved into the region after the Butte Oil Company discovered oil seeps near Kintla Lake and built a primitive 40-mile road running north from Belton, Montana along the east side of the North Fork of the Flathead River. Drawn by abundant wildlife and the promise of free land, the number of homesteads in this community east of the river reached 44 by 1910. The North Fork community subsisted on hunting, fishing and limited agriculture and, during this initial settlement period, centered around Sullivan Meadow and a log mercantile building established by William "Bill" Adair and his wife Jessie.¹

The creation of Glacier National Park in 1910 curtailed further homesteading east of the river, and after construction of a new and improved road in 1912, running north from Columbia Falls along the west side of the North Fork river, settlement shifted to lands outside of the park. The Adairs numbered among those who filed for a homestead on the west side of the river, building a square-notched log cabin in 1912 and larger, false-fronted mercantile in 1914. The Polebridge Post Office opened there in 1920. Named for a nearby river crossing, Polebridge became the new center to a community of over 150 homesteads established on the agricultural bottomlands of the valley by 1922.²

The Forest Reserve Act was signed into law by President Benjamin Harrison in 1891, and later that year, the Yellowstone Forest Reserve was the first reserve to be established under the Act.

¹ *Glacier National Park*, Interpretive Resource Bulletin Series: North Fork Homesteads, <http://www.nps.gov/glac/naturescience/upload/North-Fork-Homesteads-web.pdf>.

² Aarstad, et al. *Montana Place Names from Alzada to Zortman*, Polebridge entry; GNP Interpretive Resource Bulletin Series: North Fork Homesteads. See also Bick, Patricia, *Homesteading on the North Fork in Glacier National Park* for an excellent context on this period in the valley's history. It became park policy to acquire and remove pre-existing North Fork homestead inholdings over time; the last one was acquired in 1954 and today the remains of just 4 homesteads are discernable.

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Harrison's successor, President Grover A. Cleveland, signed the Forest Reserve Act of 1897 (also known as the Organic Act) into law, empowering the U.S. Secretary of Interior to protect forest reserves against fire and timber depredation. As stated in the Act, it would "preserve and protect forests in the reservation... to furnish a continuous supply of timber for the use and necessities of the people of the United States."³

That year, President Cleveland established 13 new forest reserves, the first four of them -- Flathead, Lewis & Clarke, Bitterroot and Priest River Forests -- located within the boundaries of today's USFS Northern Region. In 1898, Gifford Pinchot was appointed Chief of the new federal Division of Forestry, imprinting the fledgling agency, which reorganized as the Forest Service in 1905, to become a program that protected timber and wild land resources while inviting all Americans to hunt, fish and experience the back country on these public lands. In 1907, the reserves were renamed National Forests and they have remained so under the U.S. Department of Agriculture for over a century.

Today's Flathead National Forest generally encompasses the original Flathead and Lewis & Clarke Forests, minus lands that became Glacier National Park and the eastern part of the Blackfeet National Forest; in 1933 these joined to become one Flathead National Forest.⁴

Big Creek Administrative Site

During the early years, the Forest Service established an administrative framework for managing the national forests, with seasonal and year-round administrative sites strategically placed within their public lands. Prospective administrative properties were withdrawn from public domain, setting them aside for development as ranger stations and district offices.

On February 6, 1908, Deputy Supervisor W.H. Dangs reported on a proposed administrative site along the confluence of Big Creek and the North Fork of the Flathead River (within what was then the Lewis & Clark Forest) noting there was no other tract suitable for a ranger station for six miles. Later that month, the Lewis & Clark National Forest requested the Secretary of the Interior to withdraw 160 acres of unsurveyed land at both Big Creek and Sky Line "from settlement, entry and all forms of appropriation under the public land laws... for use by the Forest Service, as Administrative Sites." The request to establish a ranger station at this location was approved on March 11, 1908 although it was not until 1911, that the district ranger visited and the property was surveyed, producing various maps and surveyor notes demarking a smaller 77.09-acre tract, along with a 9' x 10' abandoned trapper cabin and the path of the anticipated North Fork Road within its boundaries. On June 12, 1911, U.S. Department of Agriculture reserved the Big Creek Administrative Site, including a new, 18' x 24', 1½-story log house with a shake roof built by the Forest Service, and land was described as "largely heavily timbered with some forest grazing."⁵

³ McKay, Kathryn. Trails of the Past, p. 51.

⁴ Ibid. p. The original Lewis & Clarke Forest Reserve covered 2,926,000 acres; the Flathead Forest Reserve 1,382,400 acres. The Flathead Forest Reserve included lands in Glacier National Park prior to park creation in 1910. Portions of the Flathead and the Lewis & Clarke Forest Reserves designated in 1897 now make up much of the Flathead National Forest.

⁵ W.M. Hays, Acting Secretary of Agriculture to the Secretary of the Interior, correspondence on behalf of the Lewis and Clark National Forest, Feb 29, 1908; S.V. Proudfit, Assistant Commissioner for Department of Interior General Land Office to Lewis and Clark Forest, March 11, 1908; A.E. Clark, Assistant Forest Ranger, Report on Proposed Administrative Site including April 23, 1911 Survey Map and Notes, Big Creek Ranger Station, Blackfeet Forest, April 28, 1911; Big Creek Administrative Site Approval, June 12, 1911.

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The log house served as a seasonal facility like many early administrative stations within Region One – “a stopover camping ground for Forest officers en route to and from the Upper North Fork region, and as a summer quarters for patrolmen during the fire season.” With the North Fork Road under construction, and a telephone line underway to connect Columbia Falls with the Moran Ranger Station, Big Creek ranger station would soon link with both the Moran Station and District Headquarters in Kalispell. The forest was pleased with this siting, commenting that “It is anticipated that in the course of the progress of timber sales work, this station will be found to be extremely valuable.” In addition, they noted “this station commands the outlet of the Big Creek drainage besides being situated at an advantageous point directly on the main county wagon road leading into the North Fork country.”⁶

In 1914, the large 160-acre parcel withdrawal for Big Creek was revoked, and all but the 77.03 acres reverted to unclaimed status. The following year, Fletcher Stines was granted a long-term occupancy permit to neighboring land across Big Creek to the north, where Stines planned to build a stopping place with a log hotel and stable, as the location was “one day of travel from Columbia Falls, a supply point for the North Fork Valley. It would be to the Advantage of the Forest Service as well as to the settlers to have a stopping place at this point.”⁷

In 1917-18 the site was resurveyed to facilitate enlarging the Big Creek site. Big Creek improvements included a house, tool house and fence built by the Forest Service, and on Stine’s property, a log barn and incomplete log house. The site was evaluated as the “most important secondary protection station site in the Lower North Fork district” and a campground used “by numerous parties during the summer months,” which could potentially serve as a District Headquarters in future. Its boundaries expanded to take in a total of 214.60 acres officially filed on March 24, 1919.⁸

In 1927, construction of a permanent Big Creek Ranger Station with a complement of associated work buildings was begun. The first building erected on the site was a good-sized, 1 ½ story Ranger’s Residence, that initially also served as an administrative office. In 1930, a second major building was constructed which served as a warehouse but as staffing grew was soon used as a cookhouse with plenty of space for gathering, meeting, storage and recreation. In 1931, a site plan was drawn for the complex, and following USFS region-wide patterns, it also included numerous outbuildings for additional crews and living in a remote forest setting. These included a small bunkhouse, a barn and corral, a root cellar and several outbuildings.

After creation of the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1933, forces of seasonal workers were assigned throughout the National Forests tasked with projects ranging from road construction and building construction and repair, to tree planting and forestry projects. On Region One, more than 100,000 were hired in Montana, accomplishing a whole range of projects through the

⁶ A.E. Clark, Assistant Forest Ranger, Report on Proposed Administrative Site including April 23, 1911 Survey Map and Notes, Big Creek Ranger Station, Blackfeet Forest, April 28, 1911.

⁷ Long Term Occupancy Permit Application, Fletcher Stines to Blackfeet National Forest, Report on Applications for Special-Use Permits and Rights of Way. Oct 9, 1915, p. 2.

⁸ The 1911 withdrawal took in the core of the historic compound along with land across the FS Road 210, where the Big Creek Campground is now located. The boundary of 1917 extended this holding to the west. Throughout this era of correspondence, there is name confusion as the Forest name alternated between Lewis & Clarke, Blackfoot and finally Flathead National Forest, and Big Creek was also known as Chilson Creek, until 1920 when the creek was officially named Big Creek.

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early 1940s, including building 93 new fire lookouts and numerous administration buildings.⁹ Those on the Flathead Forest were stationed at various ranger districts on projects ranging from fuel reduction to building projects to cutting shingles at the Columbia Falls shingle mill. A camp at Big Creek housed CCC workers, who built many improvements in 1936, including a barn, shop/garage, dwelling and administration building. They also completed grounds work such as fencing, planting the lawn and laying flagstone walks.¹⁰

While forestry and fire protection were always foremost in the mission of this station, for some years following construction of the Big Creek campground by the CCC, ca. 1940, the primary activity in the North Fork drainage, in addition to firefighting, was recreation.¹¹ Following WWII, the construction industry exploded and demand for timber increased dramatically. As much of the readily available timber had already been harvested from private land, the mid-1940s through the end of the 20th century witnessed the timber industry harvesting much of its annual yield from national forests. Timber of the North Fork was less accessible and desirable than elsewhere in western Montana and thus it was not heavily logged, although the mid-1950s saw logging in the aftermath of a spruce bark beetle infestation that ran for several years.

In 1964, heavy rains on June 7 and 9 caused a 100-year flood in northwestern Montana, raising the Flathead River above its banks and inundating an extensive area. The flooding damaged or destroyed approximately 100 bridges throughout northwest Montana, washed out roads, highways, portions of the Great Northern Railway and Northern Pacific Railroad's lines. The district ranger's logbooks from this month recorded the impact of these events at Big Creek, as the North Fork Road was washed out and power was lost. A 1964 aerial photo taken in the aftermath of the flood reveals that the Big Creek Ranger Station was high enough above floodstage that buildings were not flooded while the campground across the road to the east was underwater (see photograph on p. 27).¹²

Fire Management and the Role of Big Creek Ranger Station

The people have helped the Forest officers immensely in preventing and fighting fire. There are not half enough Rangers to suitably protect the Forests. The only way to keep fire down is for everyone to take a hand at it. -- Gifford Pinchot, 1907¹³

From the earliest days, a primary charge of the Forest Service was suppression of fire, a challenge Gifford Pinchot expounded upon in a 1907 essay, *Why National Forests Were First Made*:

⁹ The Forest Service and the Civilian Conservation Corps: 1933 – 42, Chapter 3- The Northern Region. Accessed May 1, 2014 at http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/ccc/ccc/chap3.htm; See also Janene Caywood, et al. Evaluation Of Region 1 Forest Service-Owned Buildings p. 51-52.

¹⁰ McKay, p.263.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Logbooks for 1964, Big Creek Ranger Station. On file at Hungry Horse Ranger District.

¹³ Pinchot, The Use of the National Forests, 1907. Accessed Oct 5, 2013 http://www.foresthistory.org/ASPNET/Publications/Use_of_Nat_For/sec6.htm. This publication by Pinchot was the first in the "Use Book" series, a manual for forest service employees and publication for general readers. Over the 20th century, it was expanded and reissued numerous times.

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In 1891 Congress authorized the President to establish forest reserves (now called National Forests), and President Harrison created the first one—the Yellowstone—that same year.

Congress took this action because the forests of the great mountain ranges in the West were being destroyed very rapidly by fire and reckless cutting. It was realized that unless something were done to protect them, the timber resources of the country and the many industries dependent upon the forest would be badly crippled. So the law aimed to save the timber for the use of the people, and to hold the mountain forests as great sponges to give out steady flows of water for use in the fertile valleys below.¹⁴

Ranger Frank Liebig, who joined the Flathead National Forest in 1901 as one of the very first staff, later remembered those first years building trails and defending 500,000 acres against fire with a two-man crew, and patrolling against “timber thieves, fraudulent miners, poachers, squatters, and game violators” equipped only with an axe, a one-man crosscut saw, and a box of ammunition.¹⁵

The fires of 1910 swept through Montana and Idaho, challenging the force of some 3,000 firefighters to keep up. They met 90 large fires and more than 3,000 small burns that summer, before the blowup of late August that tore through the Idaho Panhandle and much of western Montana. Locals were evacuated on railroad cars and President Taft dispatched the U.S. Army to serve emergency duty. Before the rains came on August 31, the fire consumed some 3 million acres, destroying a third of the town of Wallace, Idaho and claiming the lives of 80 firefighters and additional local residents. The fires were devastating to the young agency and a shock to the nation. In the aftermath, the agency hardened its stance to do all in its power to combat loss of the forests to fire. Thus began a fire suppression program that saw the training and employment of thousands of firefighters, construction of fire lookouts, development of aerial surveillance and programs of fire science and public education with a goal to suppress all fires and protect timber to the greatest extent possible.

The first fire lookouts were small log cabins or mountain-top platforms supported on a pole structure, and the first known Forest Service lookout was built by 1909 in the Cabinet National Forest in Montana. Early forest supervisors began to promote the concept, and following the 1910 fire, there was urgency to develop preventive fire management, resulting in the construction of numerous lookouts across the west. The year 1914 witnessed the construction of the first permanent lookout in the Flathead Forest atop Spotted Bear Mountain. Lookouts multiplied across the years, peaking by the mid-20th century at 147 on the Flathead Forest and 800 fire lookouts throughout Region One.¹⁶

As the 20th century progressed, fire suppression efforts were organized through inter-agency programs based in the West. During the 1930s and 1940s, Civilian Conservation Corps crews were sometimes pressed into firefighting duty, and in 1939, the first experimental fire suppression crew was formed on the Siskiyou National Forest in Oregon and California. The idea was fostered through the Oregon School of Forestry, and following WWII, in 1947, the first “hot shot” fire crews were organized in California. With a goal to mount a responsive, highly trained fire fighting force, during the early 1960s, Interagency Fire Suppression crews were

¹⁴ Pinchot, The Use of the National Forests, http://www.foresthistory.org/ASPNET/Publications/Use_of_Natl_For/sec2.htm.

¹⁵ Ibid. chapter 5.

¹⁶ McKay, ch 15, p. (Flathead NF Recreation)

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created and posted across the West: 5 in 1961, 9 in 1963 and 15 by 1967. In Region One, 7 units were established from 1961-1965, including the Flathead Interregional force in 1966, as seasonal fire camp based at Big Creek.¹⁷

To accommodate this new assignment, the Big Creek Ranger station was upgraded. A second bunkhouse was relocated from the Coram Ranger Station to house expanded crews and three new buildings were erected to create a fire center with workshop and vehicle storage space.¹⁸ The Big Creek Work Center, as it became known, operated for two decades, until interagency firefighting centers in Boise and elsewhere eclipsed the need for remote stations like Big Creek. During the 1980s, the Big Creek firefighting center and ranger station closed and went unused until the 1989, when the property was leased to the Glacier Institute to house educational programs for young people, a mission that continues to this day. Celebrating its 30th anniversary in August 2013, the Institute's director Joyce Baltz noted 27,000 young people from the Flathead region had engaged in Big Creek outdoor education programs since that time.

Architectural Significance**Buildings in the National Forests**

During the Forest Service's early years, rangers were entrusted to create and operate a management program, which included building or securing buildings to house ranger and administrative functions, often renting office space or operating from their own homes. This began to change as the agency matured and funding was secured for forest improvements. Early Forest Service buildings were typically one and two-room cabins, built with logs harvested from the surrounding forest; the oldest known example is the 1898 Alta Ranger Station, which still remains in Montana's Bitterroot Valley. A 1917 Forest Service circular illustrates the Forest Service's eye toward modesty, as it advocated cost-effective log construction for smaller buildings, and standardized, wood-frame construction for larger buildings.¹⁹ According to Kathryn McKay's overview history of the Flathead Forest, *Trails of the Past*, the typical cabin built in the first decade of the 1900s "averaged 17' x 26', cost \$200-350 for labor and \$50-75 for materials" and were heated with a sheet steel woodstove.

These buildings were often built by the ranger himself, generally a jack-of-all-trades outdoorsman who, according to Pinchot "must be able to take care of himself and his horses under very trying conditions; build trails and cabins; ride all day and all night; pack, shoot, and fight fire without losing his head. He must know a good deal about the timber of the country and how to estimate it; he must be familiar with lumbering and the sawmill business, the handling of livestock, mining, and the land laws."²⁰

In 1912, the Forest Service outlawed operating ranger stations out of homestead cabins, and during the decades that followed, thousands of buildings were constructed by, for and on the

¹⁷ Martin Alexander, *The Interregional Fire Suppression Crew*, pp. 1-2, 7.

¹⁸ Gladys Shay, *Hungry Horse News*, Oct 11, 2007 relates that *The Hungry Horse News* reported in September 1956 that the Bureau of Reclamation sold 10 acres and 13 buildings at Coram, including a large administration building and 24-room dormitory, to the Flathead National Forest, no longer needed once the dam was completed in 1953. This would have presumably freed the 1939 dormitory from the Coram Ranger District to be moved to the Big Creek site.

¹⁹ *A History of Architecture in the USDA Forest Service*, accessed November 20, 2013 at <http://www.foresthistory.org/ASPNET/Publications/architecture/chap1a.htm>.

²⁰ Pinchot, *The Use of the National Forests*.

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national forests as the agency grew and developed. By the late 1930s, "there were 147 lookout buildings and 247 other buildings on the Flathead National Forest."²¹ Early stations included outbuildings essential to the rural self-sufficiency required of rangers, their staff and any family members residing with them. In addition to residences common buildings included offices, cookhouses and bunkhouses, outhouses, meat storage, wood sheds, ice and spring houses for domestic use; in addition, site developments also included corrals and tack buildings, fire caches, and workshops. Big Creek was typical of the emerging well-rounded ranger station, with its solidly-built residence and bunkhouses along with its organized site plan and range of work buildings, root cellar, wood shed, ice house, meat house, horse corral and barn, fire cache, cookhouse and fire caching structures.

In 1933, T.W. Norcross, Chief Engineer for the U.S. Forest Service, hired W. Ellis Groben to serve as the Washington Office architect. Groben launched an effort to create agency-wide consistency and identity for Forest Service buildings, and in 1938, published a book of *Acceptable Plans, Forest Service Administrative Buildings*. In his words, "the purpose of this collection of building plans, developed in the respective Regions for various types of buildings, is to make the best ones available for the Forest Service generally." Rather than "imported styles, foreign in character to a particular Region," Groben strove to develop plans responsive to climate, vegetation and forest cover. He zoned the regions as Desert or Semidesert, Grassland, Woodland or Alpine, and accordingly, recommended "timber type buildings for Woodlands" and "Alpine type" buildings of stone and rough timbers for mountainous settings.²²

Groben's approach included systematic investigation of potential sites, and comprehensive planning for site improvements. Along with discussion of the pros and cons encountered in building designs and site planning, he included a series of prototypical plans that could be built throughout the service, and as John Grosvenor noted in his architectural history of the Forest Service, Groben's writings had the intended effect:

The Regions had the opportunity to use, modify, and create their own building designs. These sometimes conflicted, as in the anomalous Art Deco or Classic Revival designs, but more often resulted in the more successful blending of philosophy, style, and local tradition promoted by the designs illustrated in "Acceptable Plans, Forest Service Administrative Buildings." Mostly devoid of superfluous ornamentation, it was the richness of texture, sense of craftsmanship, and juxtaposition of shapes and materials that made these buildings aesthetically pleasing. These structures reflect both national and local architectural trends and building philosophies of the Forest Service that include utility, respect for nature, and harmony with the environment.²³

Grosvenor's influence can be traced throughout the country through building programs carried out in the various Forest Service regions during the 1930s and 1940s. The numbers of forest buildings increased exponentially with the mobilization of FDR's Civilian Conservation Corps from 1933-1942. With a work force of more than 3 million young men at the government's disposal and much need for infrastructure, agencies including the National Park Service and the Forest Service experienced a tremendous building boom.

²¹ Trails of the Past, accessed Oct 4 at <http://www.foresthistory.org/ASPNET/Publications/region/1/flathead/chap6.htm>.

²² John R. Grosvenor, *History of the Architecture of the USDA Forest Service*, pp. 21-22.

²³ *Ibid.* p.25.

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Tasked with generating plans for the crews within Northern Region 1, Groben enlisted Clyde P. Fickes to aide in building design and construction efforts. Fickes was the son of a carpenter who came up through the Forest Service as a Forest Guard in Idaho. His extensive background in building proved useful as the Forest Service began to standardize its building plans. While in Idaho, Fickes designed a simple, low-cost, pre-cut fire lookout that could be hauled to a site and built by forest crews. This pragmatic plan prompted his transfer to the regional office in Missoula, where his new assignment included “supervising the design and construction of all improvements (trails, telephone lines, buildings, campground layouts, and later radio communications).”²⁴ As Fickes later recalled:

Early in my assignment to the Regional Office, it became apparent to me, from my contact with the rangers in the field, that they needed some sort of manual or handbook to which they could refer for information of all sorts on improvement, construction, and maintenance work. I set to work gathering all kinds of illustrations showing how to frame a building wall, how to cut a rafter, what kind of nails to use, how to mix concrete, how to build a brick chimney, what kind of hardware to use and how to order from the dealer, how to build concrete forms, a chapter on log building construction, and the most practical way to string telephone wire and install telephones. This developed into a letter-sized mimeographed volume about 1-1/2 inches thick, which we called the *Improvement Handbook*. This became the ranger’s construction and maintenance bible.²⁵

In 1935, the Forest Service released a Region One Handbook on Construction and Maintenance of Forest Improvements compiled by Clyde P. Fickes. In the introduction dated Dec 1, 1935, Fickes declared that “This handbook is intended to be a working manual describing the better mechanical ways of doing things and including information of value in determining the kind of material most satisfactory for any particular job...”

With regard to buildings, Fickes noted that “It will be the general practice to prepare a special design and plan for each of the major buildings at each site. These plans will be prepared by the architects working in the Regional Office. The use of standard plans will be confined to such structures as barns and garages at headquarters and to structures at temporary field stations.” Contrary to previous guidance by Pinchot and early FS Use Books, Fickes indicated an aversion to use of log for dwellings and administrative buildings citing difficulty of construction, and additional cost to finish interiors so they are able to be kept clean.²⁶

Notably, the buildings at Big Creek adhere to this philosophy, generally employing frame construction, often with use of log structural support. With regard to exterior siding, Fickes offered this advice, “It has been found that a very satisfactory substitute for log buildings insofar as appearances are concerned is secured when the exterior walls of frame structures are covered with a sawed cedar shingle which has one surface scarified so that it resembles a split or hand-rived shake.”²⁷ Throughout the Big Creek complex, coursed wooden shingles are the finish applied to the buildings.

²⁴ Ibid. p. 33 and pp. 183-184.

²⁵ Grosvenor, p. 183.

²⁶ Fickes, p. R-1 and R-2.

²⁷ Fickes, R-2.

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"It is not desirable or good practice to adhere to a policy of standardization of design for the principal buildings at a ranger station. In each separate situation it is desirable to rearrange floor plans to fit the ground and to modify or change the exterior appearance of the structure to fit the surroundings." He therefore instructed that requests for building plans be made allowing "ample time" for Forest Service architects to draw them up.²⁸

With the CCC program booming, Fickes was also tasked with hiring architects, and draftsmen to staff the construction division. According to the 1991 *Evaluation Of Region 1 Forest Service-Owned Buildings* by Caywood et al, "Typically a ranger or forest supervisor selected a plan from the Region One Improvement Handbook, and the architectural staff made adjustments to the plan to accommodate special requirements of the facility and to fit the topography and surroundings of the site." Fickes was involved, not only in approving projects but in guiding detailed design choices including cabinets, lighting, fireplaces and finishes, and many of the CCC crew members were highly skilled. The resulting buildings retained a standardized look and quality that remains impressive to this day. The buildings of the period also came to embody a regional style, as architects responded to the environment and native materials at hand.²⁹

Craftsman Style Design and the U.S. Forest Service

The Craftsman Style originated in the Western United States as an expression of the blending of the built and the natural environment. Craftsman design evolved with an emphasis on natural materials particularly wood and stone with designs that reflected the surrounding environment. In Montana, the influence of such architects as Robert Reamer and Kirtland Cutter translated well within a region where use of native log and stone was a natural extension of settlement patterning. In addition, during the 1930s, the U.S. Forest Service, along with the National Park Service, issued extensive guidance on site plans and buildings that fit their settings. The buildings at the Big Creek Ranger Station are a product of this era and reflect typical design patterning employed by the Forest Service throughout the 20th century.

Architectural Significance of the Big Creek Ranger Station Buildings

The buildings at the Big Creek Ranger Station retain a high level of integrity and reflect typical design patterning established by Forest Service architects of the 1920s and 1930s that pervaded throughout the 20th century. The simple, pattern-book designs evidenced in the buildings incorporate many aspects of agency design, from the utilitarian emphasis on rural self-sufficiency, to the Craftsman detailing discernable in gently-sloped rooflines, shingle siding, inviting porches, exposed rafters and purlins, multi-paned horizontally-banded windows.

Although plans and blueprints for the Big Creek buildings are yet to be located, the patterning is often clear and similar to other Forest Service buildings of the time. Even minor architectural changes often occurred simultaneously between different ranger stations as illustrated by historic photographs of a building at the Coram Ranger Station, which like the Cookhouse at Big Creek, features a gambrel-roof.

²⁸ C.P. Fickes, *Region One Handbook Construction and Maintenance of Forest Improvements*, p. BP-1. Accessed Nov 4, 2013 at https://fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fsbdev3_042124.pdf.

²⁹ Caywood, p. 53-55.

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The Big Creek Ranger Station today is a very well preserved compound that would today still be recognizable to the architects and planners who shaped our National Forests, and also to the builders and rangers of Region One, who over the years made a career of protecting the Flathead Forest and promoting the ways that reserved forest land was an important resource to the citizens of Montana and this nation.

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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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

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

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned) _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 10.76 acres

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| A. Latitude: 48.600975 | Longitude: -114.1700574972291 |
| B. Latitude: 48.602314 | Longitude: -114.16557361513495 |
| C. Latitude: 48.601269 | Longitude: -114.16481813072156 |
| D. Latitude: 48.60002 | Longitude: -114.16925627196076 |

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UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

The property lies in T33N R20W of Section 27 (SE1/4)

A	<u>11</u>	<u>708627</u>	<u>5386966</u>	C	<u>11</u>	<u>709012</u>	<u>5387013</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
B	<u>11</u>	<u>708952</u>	<u>5387127</u>	D	<u>11</u>	<u>708690</u>	<u>5386862</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries for the Big Creek Ranger Station are indicated on the accompanying topographic map.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries for the Big Creek Ranger Station Historic District follow natural features to encompass the historic buildings and structures in a manner that makes visual and historic sense for this historic administrative site.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Chere Jiusto

organization Montana Preservation Alliance

date Fall 2013

street & number 120 Reeder's Alley

telephone 406-457-2822

city or town Helena

state MT zip code 59601

e-mail chere@preservemontana.org

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

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

Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

Additional items: (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

All Photographs (with the exception of historic views, as noted):

Name of Property: Big Creek Ranger Station

City or Vicinity: Polebridge vicinity

County: Flathead County State: Montana

Photographer: Chere Jiusto

Date Photographed: July 10, 2013

See Continuation Sheets, pages 27-47 for images.

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.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

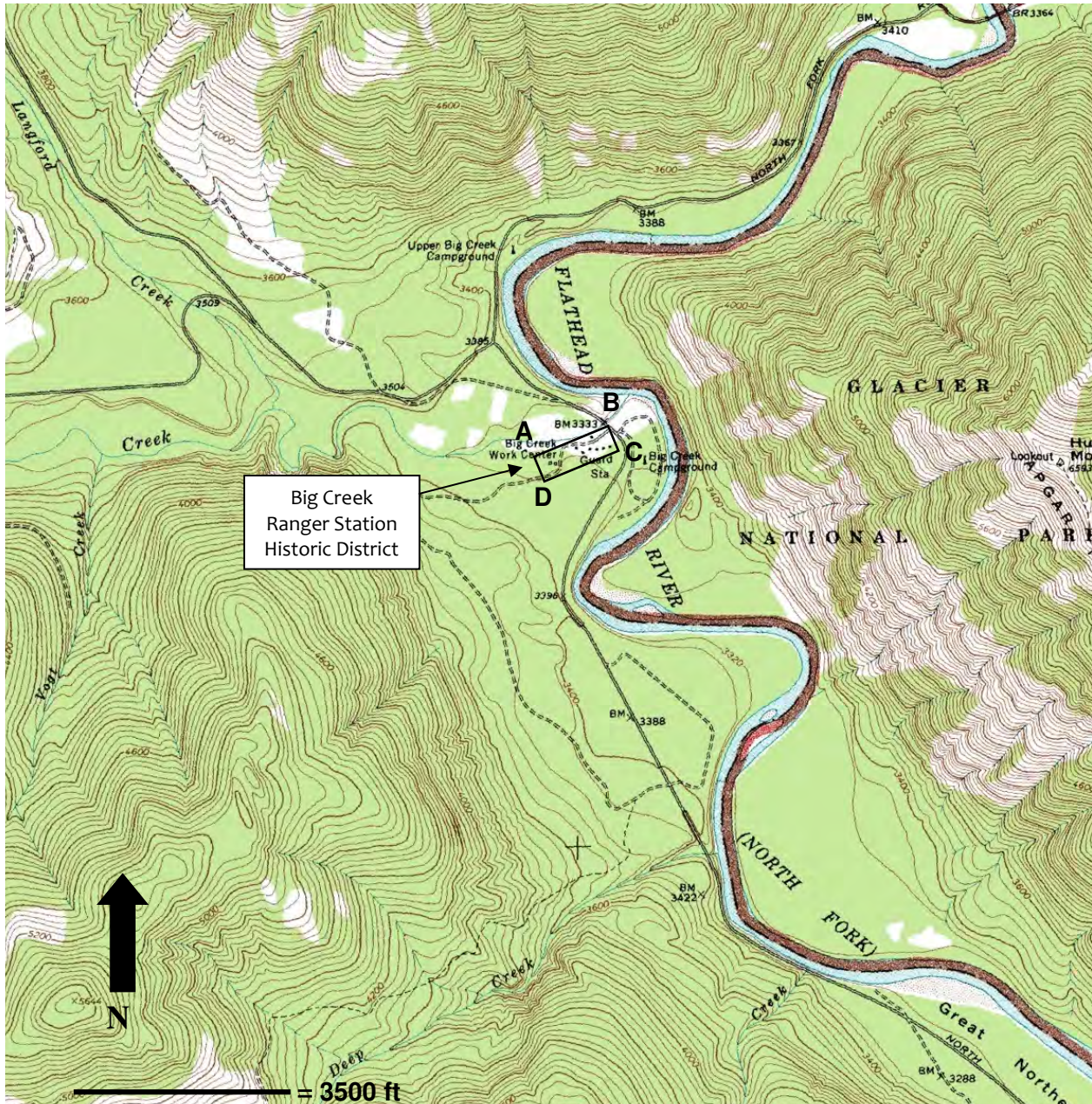
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Big Creek Ranger Station Historic District
USGS 7.5 Minute Quadrangle: Huckleberry Mountain, 1966

The boundary is delineated by the polygon whose vertices are marked by the following UTM reference points: Zone 11, A=708627E 5386966N. B=708952E 5387127N. C=709012E 5387013N. D=708690E 5386862N.

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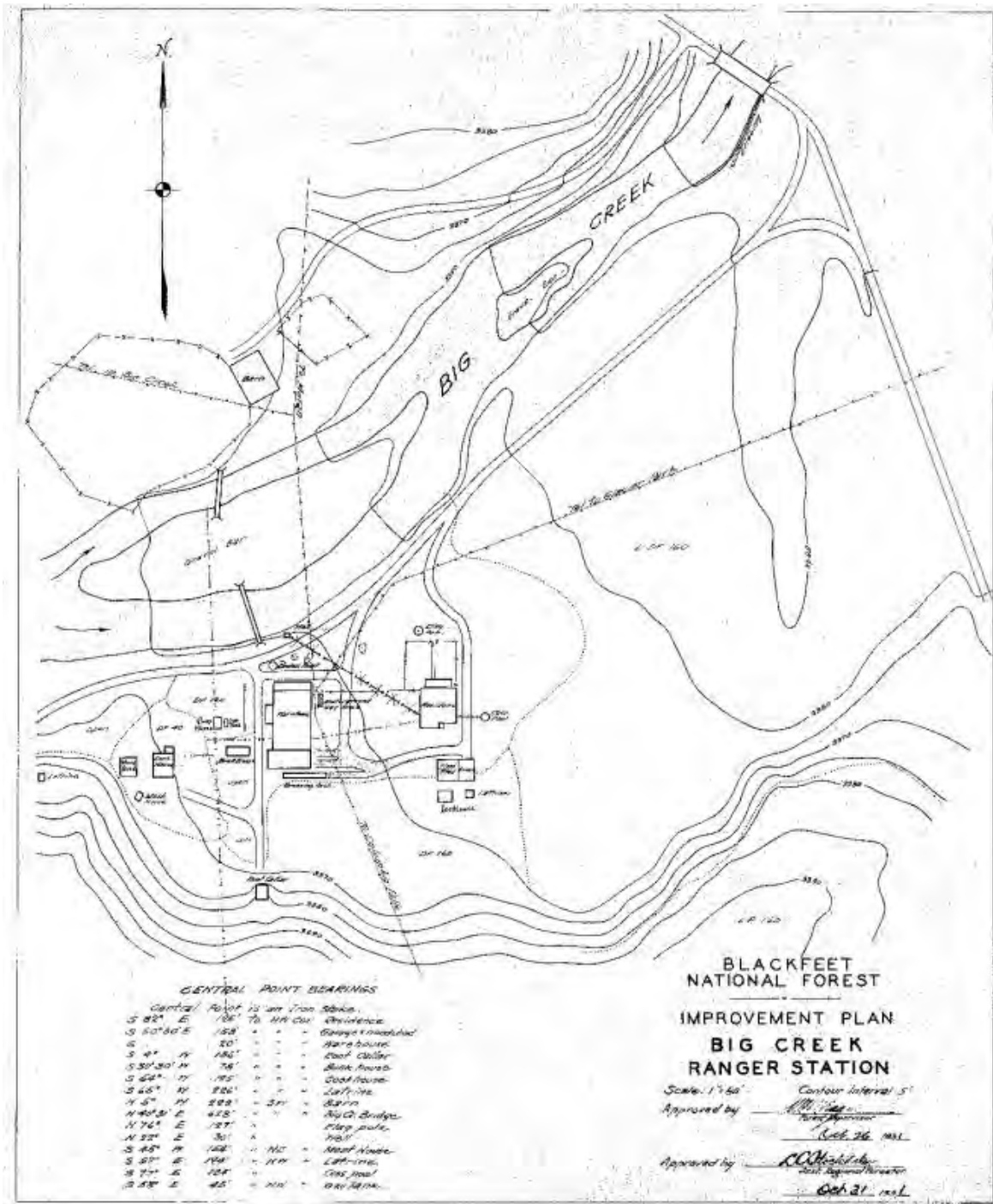
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Blackfeet National Forest Improvement Plan map, Big Creek Ranger Station, 1931

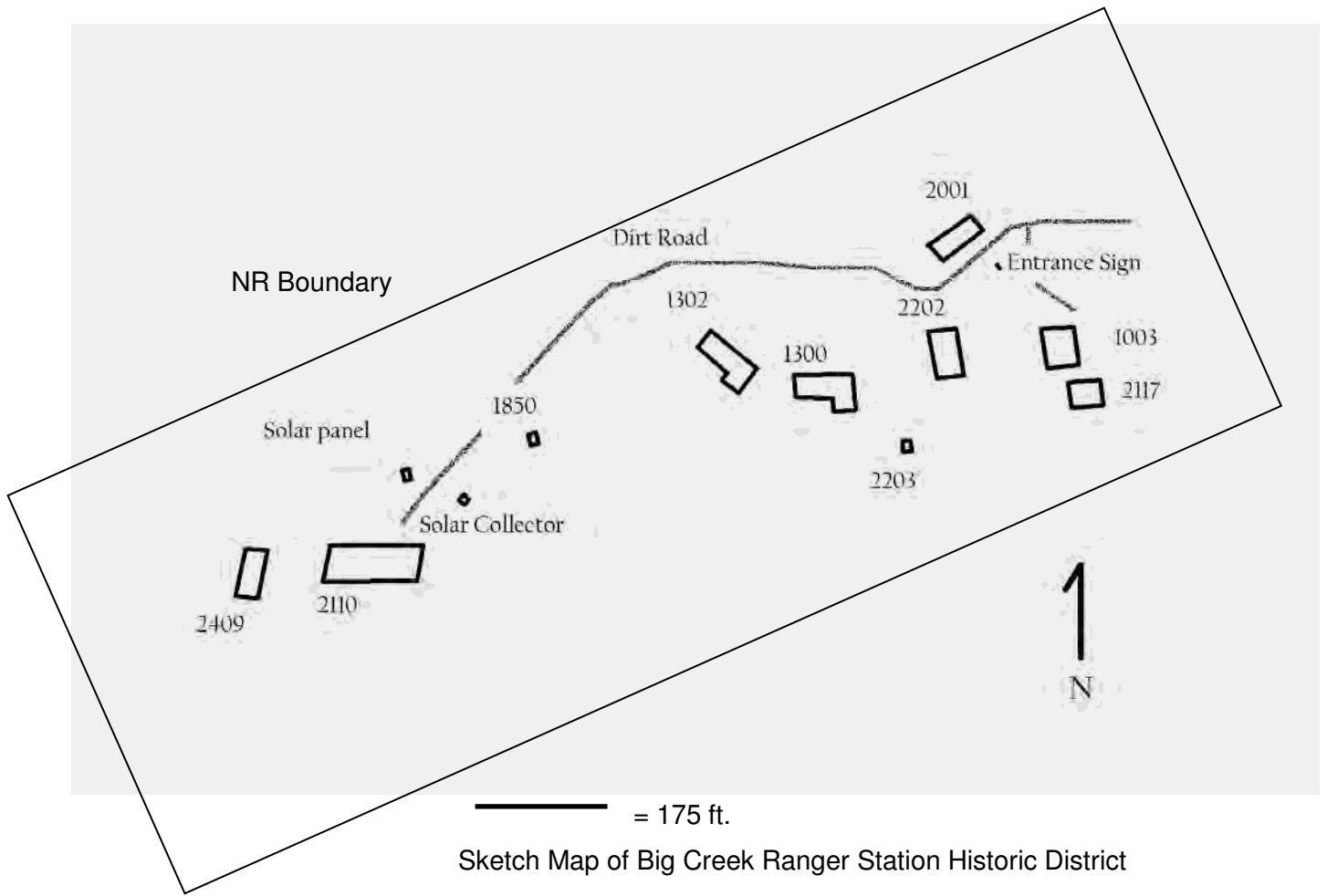
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Sketch Map of Big Creek Ranger Station Historic District

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———— = 175 ft

Big Creek Ranger Station, Aerial View

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Above: Aerial view of Big Creek Ranger Station in aftermath of 1964 flooding.
Below: Detail of above photo. Both views courtesy Flathead National Forest.



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View of Big Creek Ranger Station, depicting Ranger Resident, Garage, Cookhouse, 1930. Photographer unknown. courtesy of Hungry Horse Ranger Station, Flathead National Forest

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ALL CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHS:

Name of Property: Big Creek Ranger Station Historic District
City or Vicinity: Polebridge Vicinity
County: Flathead County State: Montana
Photographer: All photographs by Chere Justo, July 2013

- Photo 0001: Big Creek Ranger Station, view to west.
Photo 0002: Above: Ranger House, view to the south.
Photo 0003: Below: Ranger House, view to the north.
Photo 0004: Above: Ranger House, view to the west.
Photo 0005: Below: Ranger House, Ranger House & Garage, view to the east.
Photo 0006: Above: Big Creek Garage/Woodshed, view to southwest.
Photo 0007: Below: Garage Interior.
Photo 0008: Above Cookhouse, view to northeast.
Photo 0009: Below Cookhouse, view to west.
Photo 0010: Above Cookhouse, view to northeast.
Photo 0011: Below Cookhouse Common Room.
Photo 0012: Above Cookhouse Interior, Kitchen.
Photo 0013: Below Cookhouse Interior, Attic.
Photo 0014: Bunkhouse/Boys Dorm, view to southeast.
Photo 0015: Bunkhouse/Boys Dorm, northeast corner, view to southwest.
Photo 0016: Bunkhouse/Boys Dorm, view to north.
Photo 0017: Bunkhouse/Boys Dorm Central Bedroom.
Photo 0018: Bunkhouse/Boys Dorm, Closets.
Photo 0019: Bunkhouse/Boys Dorm Hopper Window.
Photo 0020: Bunkhouse/Girls Dorm, view to southwest.
Photo 0021: Bunkhouse/Girls Dorm Hallway.
Photo 0022: Bunkhouse/Girls Dorm, view to west.
Photo 0023: Bunkhouse/Girls Dorm East Bedroom.
Photo 0024: Bunkhouse/Girls Dorm Exterior Light.

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Photo 0025: Fire Cache/Recreation Building, view to southeast.

Photo 0026: Fire Cache/Recreation Building, view to northwest.

Photo 0027: BC Generator Shed, view to east.

Photo 0028: Saw Shop, view to northeast.

Photo 0029: Fire Compound Garage, view to southeast.

Photo 0030: Solar Collector.

Photo 0031: Solar Storage Shed.

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Photo 0001: Big Creek Ranger Station, view to west.

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Photo 0002: Above: Ranger House, view to the south.



Photo 0003: Below: Ranger House, view to the north.

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Photo 0004: Above: Ranger House, view to the west.



Photo 0005: Below: Ranger House, Ranger House & Garage, view to the east.

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Photo 0006: Above: Big Creek Garage/Woodshed, view to southwest.



Photo 0007: Below: Garage Interior.

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Photo 0008: Above Cookhouse, view to northeast.



Photo 0009: Below Cookhouse, view to west.

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Photo 0010: Above Cookhouse, view to northeast.



Photo 0011: Below Cookhouse Common Room.

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Photo 0012: Above Cookhouse Interior, Kitchen.



Photo 0013: Below Cookhouse Interior, Attic.

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Photo 0014: Bunkhouse/Boys Dorm, view to southeast.



Photo 0015: Bunkhouse/Boys Dorm, northeast corner, view to southwest.

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Photo 0016: Bunkhouse/Boys Dorm, view to north.



Photo 0017: Bunkhouse/Boys Dorm Central Bedroom.

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Photo 0018: Bunkhouse/Boys Dorm, Closets.

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Photo 0019: Bunkhouse/Boys Dorm Hopper Window.



Photo 0020: Bunkhouse/Girls Dorm, view to southwest.

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Photo 0021: Bunkhouse/Girls Dorm Hallway.

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Photo 0022: Bunkhouse/Girls Dorm, view to west.



Photo 0023: Bunkhouse/Girls Dorm East Bedroom.

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Photo 0024: Bunkhouse/Girls Dorm Exterior Light.

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Photo 0025: Fire Cache/Recreation Building, view to southeast.



Photo 0026: Fire Cache/Recreation Building, view to northwest.

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Photo 0027: BC Generator Shed, view to east.



Photo 0028: Saw Shop, view to northeast.

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Photo 0029: Fire Compound Garage, view to southeast.



Photo 0030: Solar Collector.

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Photo 0031: Solar Storage Shed.





















LIVING IN BEAR COUNTRY

GLACIER

Informational display on the left wall featuring a large bear head image, a map, and several smaller framed documents. The display is titled "LIVING IN BEAR COUNTRY" and includes sub-sections for "WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT", "BEAR SAFETY", and "BEAR TRACKS".















EMERGENCY
FIRE EXIT
OVER LATCH-PULL & EXIT



Pillows

Pillows

Pillows



















W. I. GENERATOR

1850

DANGER
HIGH
VOLTAGE









UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Big Creek Ranger Station Historic District

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MONTANA, Flathead

DATE RECEIVED: 11/21/14 DATE OF PENDING LIST:
DATE OF 16TH DAY: DATE OF 45TH DAY: 1/07/15
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 14001126

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 1.7.15 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in
The National Register
of
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



File Code: 2360

Date: NOV 18 2014



Mr. Roger Reed
National Register of Historic Places
National Park Service
1201 Eye Street NW (2280)
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Mr. Reed,

The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the nomination for the Big Creek Ranger Station to the National Register of Historic Places. The historic ranger station is located on the Flathead National Forest in Flathead County, Montana.

The nomination was prepared by Ms. Chere Jiusto of the Montana Preservation Alliance in collaboration with the Flathead National Forest. Bordering Glacier National Park, the ranger station is an important historic resource on the Flathead National Forest. It is used today by the Glacier Institute under a Special Use Permit with the U.S. Forest Service. The ranger district has been the scene of various historic preservation projects over many years. This nomination is strongly supported by the U.S. Forest Service, Northern Region.

If you have further questions or concerns regarding this nomination, please contact me at (406) 329-3654 or the Flathead National Forest Heritage Program Leader, Tim Light, at (406) 758-5258.

Sincerely,

CARL M. DAVIS
Regional Archaeologist-Delegated
Federal Preservation Officer

cc: Michael Kaczor

Enclosure

