

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

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

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 90001686

Date Listed: 11/15/90

Pilot Knob St. Park, Obser. Tower (2)  
Property Name

Hancock  
County

IA  
State

CCC Properties in Iowa State Parks MPS  
Multiple Name

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

*Beth Beland*  
Signature of the Keeper

11/15/90  
Date of Action

=====  
Amended Items in Nomination:

NOTE: This property is not part of a discontinuous district.

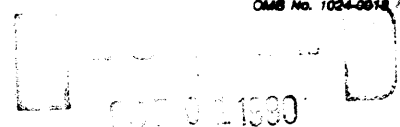
Item #8, Significance: Architecture is an area of significance.

References to this property are found in Section 7, pp. 1-3; Section 8, pp. 2, 6, and 10; and Section 10, pp. 1-3.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

16-86



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

historic name Pilot Knob State Park: Observation Tower (Area 2)  
other names/site number Forest City State Park; Pilot Mound State Park

2. Location

street & number STH 9 and Route 1  not for publication N/A  
city, town Forest City  vicinity  
state Iowa code IA county Hancock code 081 zip code 50436

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: CCC Properties in Iowa State Parks; 1933-42  
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.  
[Signature] 9/17/90  
Signature of certifying official Date  
State Historical Society of Iowa  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:  
 entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet. Beth Poland 11/15/90  
 determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet. \_\_\_\_\_  
 determined not eligible for the National Register. \_\_\_\_\_  
 removed from the National Register. \_\_\_\_\_  
 other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

LANDSCAPE/park

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

LANDSCAPE/park

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Rustic Architecture

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls limestone

granite

roof shingles

other log

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

**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)

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE  
POLITICS/GOVERNMENT  
SOCIAL HISTORY  
CONSERVATION  
RECREATION  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance

1934  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates

1934  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder

Central Design Office, Ames  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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 # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Department of Natural Resources  
State Historical Society of Iowa

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of property .92 acres (less than one acre)

UTM References

A 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

 Zone Easting Northing

B 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

 Zone Easting Northing

C 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

D 

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Joyce McKay, Cultural Resources Consultant  
organization private consultant date June 1, 1990  
street & number P.O. Box 258 telephone 608-424-6315  
city or town Belleville state Wisconsin zip code 53508

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Table 1  
Contributing and Noncontributing Properties in Pilot Knob State Park

No.	(1) Common Name	Property Subtype	contributing/ noncontributing	category
2	observation tower	Trailside seats, shelters, & overlooks	contributing	1 building
3	picnic shelter	picnic shelters	contributing	1 building
4	amphitheater	campfires & amphitheaters	contributing	1 structure
5a-5b	portals	entranceways & checking stations	contributing	2 structures
6a-6c	culverts	culverts & crossing	contributing	3 structures
-	road	other minor park structures	contributing	1 structure
total				9 resources

(1) The prefix PIL precedes all resource numbers.

Acreage of each area:

PIL2: 0.92 acres  
 PIL3: 0.12  
 PIL4: 1.2  
 PIL5a: 0.46  
 PIL5b: 0.17  
 PIL6a-6c: 0.69  
 total 3.56

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## 7. Descriptive Statement:

Pilot Knob State Park is located 4 miles southeast of Forest City, Hancock County, Iowa. Acquired by the state in 1921, the park contained 375.13 acres in 1936 and 368.81 acres in 1942 (Iowa State Conservation Commission 1935-42 [1936: 118-19, 1942: 127-28]). The morainic mound at the east end of the park, Pilot Mound, is the center feature of the park. The second highest point in Iowa, it sits 300 feet above the Winnebago River which flows along its base and 1450 feet above mean sea level. This point offers a view for 25 to 30 miles. The Wisconsin glaciation dumped materials to create the mound and series of ridges to the southwest. This ring of ridges contains the 8 acre Deadman's Lake which supports a floating bog. The remainder of the park is characterized by rolling hills covered with a dense growth of timber (Iowa Department of Natural Resources 1917-89 [IOWA CONSERVATION, 8/30/1980]; Iowa State Conservation Commission 1937, 1941 [1941: 7]). Park development by the CCC strove to highlight the park's natural features. The discontinuous district contains six areas: two sets of entrance portals (PIL5a-5b), a picnic shelter (PIL3), three footbridges along a strip of original trail (PIL6a-6c), the observation tower (PIL2), and the amphitheater (PIL4). These resources belong to the property type CCC Properties in Iowa Parks. The boundaries of these areas surround the resource and immediately adjacent landscaping and exclude intrusions, primarily an altered trail system and recent developments in the park. Thus, boundaries tend to be somewhat arbitrary.

The resources follow the guidelines of the mature rustic landscape architecture style as it developed during the CCC period. They parallel this style in general shaping, floor plan, materials, decorative elements, function, property subtypes, and setting. CCC Company 1757 at Camp SP6 of Forest City developed these resources between April 7 and October 8, 1934 (Alleger and Alleger ca. 1935: 106; U.S. NPS, District Office 1933-1936 [10/16/34, box 4]; (Iowa Department of Natural Resources 1917-89 [IOWA CONSERVATION, 8/30/1980])). The property subtypes of which the Pilot Knob properties are an example are described in section F.

The two sets of portals (entranceways and checking stations, IA) flank the two access roads into the park on its north side. Both are composed of two random rubble limestone pillars of somewhat different shapes. Those at the northwest or main entrance (PIL5a) include a rectangular pillar 4.5 by 8 feet by 10 feet high and a second with two lower, flanking wings measuring 6 by 9.5 by 16 feet

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high. This second pillar carries a wood sign suspended from a rounded timber bracing. Two rounded timber gates close the entrance. The gate at the northeast entrance (PIL5b) includes one 5.5 by 12 feet by 18 feet high pillar with two lower side wings. This pillar has a slightly castellated top. The second pillar has one side wing and overall measures 4 by 6 feet by 11 feet high. This portal also supports a set of rounded timber gates.

The picnic shelter (PIL3) (picnic shelters, IIA) is located in the southwest corner of the park southwest of Deadman's Lake. It sits at the edge of the timber in a grassy area. The 25.75 by 42.5 foot building is placed on a poured concrete footing. A random rubble, limestone rear and adjacent, partial side walls and four rounded timber posts along its front support the roof. A gable roof with wood shingles covers the shelter. The floor is poured concrete. Bracing along the post and the exposed roof supports add to the rustic appearance of the shelter. Two openings flank the chimney centered along the rear wall. Large stones outline the top of the fireplace opening.

Three random rubble limestone culverts (PIL6a-6c) (culverts and crossings, IK) cross gullies along a segment of original trail in a heavily wooded area. Their tapering side walls are pierced by galvanized metal piping and extend up beyond the level of the path to form side rails. They measure between 8 to 15.5 feet in length and 3 feet in width.

✓ The observation tower (PIL2) (trailside seats, shelters, and overlooks, IIC) rests on the top of pilot mound, the second highest point in Iowa. The top of the mound is covered with a grassy area and is surrounded by dense timber. The tower is composed of two portions, a 24 by 26.3 foot timber shelter and a circular, 19 foot by 33.6 foot high tower at its rear. The slightly tapering walls of the random rubble granite tower are pierced with elongated openings which coincide with the height of the metal stairs within. Iron grillwork covers the openings. These stairs spiral up the interior of the tower and open onto a flat, concrete floor above. The walls of the tower form a waist-height rail around its top. The shelter stands over the entrance of the tower. In addition to the tower's wall, it is supported by two rounded timber posts with bracing along its front. Exposed rounded timbers support the gable roof which is covered with wood shingling. Poured concrete composes its floor. A sign within the shelter identifies the building with the ECW and dates it to 1934.



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The outdoor amphitheater (PIL4) (campfires and amphitheaters, II-I) is secluded in a small valley ringed with timber. It includes four columns of seats along the hill side and a turf stage at the base. A random rubble retaining wall circles the south half of the opening behind the seats. Rubble stone stairs set in concrete lead away from the amphitheater at the rear. Funneling in toward the center, the seats are composed of roughly planed planks placed on short stone piers. The half circle turf stage is ringed by a random rubble retaining wall. Two set of random rubble steps flank the stage held in place along the front by a retaining wall. Timber forms a natural backdrop. The amphitheater measures 128 feet east-west and 130 feet north-south.

Moderate deterioration in part perhaps caused by original construction techniques or exposure and modification demanded for modern use of the park have caused alterations or added intrusions into the discontinuous district. The entrance portals (PIL5a-5b) retain their original configuration except that the timber gates of PIL5b were repaired in 1987. A concrete floor was poured on the shelter (PIL3) floor in 1955. In the observation tower (PIL2), the wood steps of the tower and the flagstone floor of the shelter were replaced by metal and concrete respectively in 1960. And, the wood seats of the amphitheater were replaced with similar rough planks in 1981 (Cole 1989). Although the road has been paved, it maintains the same path.

While moderate deterioration has occurred in the buildings and structures, CCC resources must be viewed as semi-permanent park resources built by essentially unskilled labor under the supervision of trained architects, landscape architects, and craftsmen, primarily locally experienced men. Boundaries are sensitive to the emphasis upon associated landscapes and exclude post-CCC intrusions. Because of the focus upon landscaping by rustic architecture, considerable importance is placed upon integrity of setting, location, feeling, and association of properties. Because of the fragility of the resources, maintenance of overall design, reasonable integrity of materials, and tolerance for changes effected by deterioration remain a requirement. Finally, integrity of workmanship shown in the district retains the important association with the CCC enrolles.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

The CCC resources within the six areas of the Pilot Knob State Park District gain historical significance under criterion A in association with the context Civilian Conservation Corps Properties in Iowa State Parks: 1933-1942 and the property type: CCC Properties in Iowa Parks. The district represents the theme through the areas of CONSERVATION, RECREATION, SOCIAL HISTORY, and POLITICS/GOVERNMENT. The CCC was a national level government program carried out through the state within its parks. It sought to provide recreational opportunities for local communities and conserve the parks' landscapes by utilizing unemployed youths in make-work projects, a move toward social welfare at the national level. Additionally, the resources in the Pilot Knob State Park District acquire significance under criterion C in the area of ARCHITECTURE as an example of rustic architecture. The buildings, structures, and objects reflect the effort of this landscape movement to blend park amenities into the natural landscape in their material, design, workmanship, and immediate setting and reflect common types developed by the National Park Service for park construction. Thus, the conservation and naturalistic slant of the CCC relates well to the architecture which it erected in parks such as Pilot Knob. Because the park amenities within this district contain single examples of exceptionally well preserved, scarce cultural resources and outstanding examples of Iowa state park rustic architecture, the resources of the district gain significance at the state level. The period of significance in 1934 incorporates the period of CCC work in the park (U.S. NPS, District Office 1933-36 [10/16/34, box 4]; Alleger and Alleger ca. 1935: 106; Iowa Department of Natural Resources 1917-89 [IOWA CONSERVATIONIST 8/30/1980]).

## Background

In August, 1920, a group of citizens met in Forest City to recommend the creation of a state park at Pilot Knob so that its natural setting might be enjoyed by later generations. One hundred and fifty-eight citizens contributed \$7,000 toward the purchase of the park. Matching their donation, the state purchased the land in 1921 and dedicated the park in 1924. By that time, it totalled 237.5 acres. John Fitzimmons prepared a landscape plan for the Board of Conservation in 1925. It strove to preserve and make accessible to the public the natural setting. He planned two entrance portals, parking areas near scenic locations, an

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administrative building, custodian's house and office, shelters, trails, landscaping, and roads. By 1931, the state had added picnic areas, trails, roads, a picnic shelter, and a custodian's residence. A pre-1900 cabin contained a small museum (Iowa DNR 1917-89 [IOWA CONSERVATIONIST, 8/30/ and 2/1980]; U.S. NPS, Project Supervisor 1933-47 [5/34, box 80]; Iowa State Board of Conservation 1931: 23; 1925c; Iowa State Conservation Commission 1917-73 [park plans by Fitzimmons, 1925]; BRITT NEWS TRIBUNE 1924 [9/17: 1]).

CCC Company 1757 arrived at Forest City from Dolliver State Park on April 7, 1934 where they established their temporary camp of tents. They moved to Council Bluffs upon the completion of their work in the park on October 8, 1934 (U.S. NPS, Project Supervisor 1933-47 [5/34, box 80]; District Office 1933-36 [10/16/34, box 4]; Alleger and Alleger ca. 1935: 106).

The company participated in landscaping in the park, for example clearing undergrowth, building roads and foot trails, removing diseased trees, planting trees in construction areas, and setting guard rails (U.S. NPS, Project Supervisor 1933-47 [5/34-9/34, box 80]). The three masonry footbridges (PIL6a-6c) now along one of these trails reached completion by August, 1934 (U.S. NPS, Project Supervisor 1933-47 [5/34-8/34, box 80]).

Company 1757 concentrated primarily on the construction of several major buildings and structures. Materials including the peeled logs were gathered for the two sets of portals by May, 1934. The stone pillars were almost completed by August, and the gates were added in September, 1934 (U.S. NPS, Project Supervisor 1933-47 [5-9/34, box 80]). Although partially completed in late April, the "the cracked boulder and timber" picnic shelter was rushed to completion except for the flagstone floor in September, 1934 (U.S. NPS, District Office 1933-36 [4/16/34, 10/16/34, box 4]).

The observation tower and amphitheater were viewed as the major accomplishments of the company. Construction of the tower consumed the entire period during which the CCC was present at Forest City. The district inspector commented that it was the only one of its kind in the Midwest (U.S. NPS, Project Supervisor 1933-47 [5/34-9/34, box 80]; District Office 1933-36 [4/34-10/16/34, boxes 3-4]). Clearing the extensive area for the amphitheater began in May. Progress on the structure ended in April with the preparation of new plans. Most of the 226 stone piers for the seats and rough grading were done by September. The fine grading, plantings, and seeding were completed just before departure. Good illustrates

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this amphitheater describing it as a simple rendering which blends into the natural setting (Good 1938: (2) 205; U.S. NPS, Project Supervisor 1933-47 [5/34-9/34, box 80]; District Office 1933-36 [4/6/34-10/16/34, boxes 3-4]). The CCC also erected a stone maintenance building denoted as a barn during this period. However, it burned in August, 1989 (Iowa State Conservation Commission 1933-42 [plans, n.d.]; U.S. NPS, Project Supervisor 1933-47 [8/34-9/34, box 80]).

Pilot Knob State Park had been partially developed during the 1920s. The high number of visitors in 1934, 106,480 persons, may reflect an attraction of interest through the building of unique resources. The district inspector noted that the observation tower and amphitheater attract "great crowds". By 1936, visitation reached 30,000 and remained at that level through the CCC period (U.S. NPS, District Office 1933-36 [10/16/34, box 4]; Iowa State Conservation Commission 1935-42 [1936 118, 1942: 127]). The Iowa master plan for park development (Crane 1933) suggested the creation of specific types of parks to serve particular purposes. The Iowa State Conservation Commission reclassified these parks several times so that by 1942 Pilot Knob State Park was to serve as a state park with general recreation activities (Iowa State Conservation Commission 1935-42 [1942: 127-28]). Recreational activities included camping, picnicking, winter sports, hiking, nature study, a museum in the pioneer cabin, and theatrical performances, concerts and meetings in the amphitheater. Organizations in Forest City were planning pageants for the amphitheater by October, 1934. The WPA constructed a toboggan slide in 1938. However, it was removed ca. 1940 (Iowa State Conservation Commission 1935-42 [1938: 110, 1940: 157, 1942: 112]; 1937, 1941 [1937: 35, 1941: 7]; Iowa DNR 1917-89 [note dated 1/26/39]; U.S. NPS, District Office 1933-36 [10/16/34, box 4]; BRITT NEWS TRIBUNE 1925 [10/26]). Thus, Pilot Knob State Park received heavy public use even during the CCC period.

## Historical Significance

Iowa state parks preserve in a very tangible way evidence of the CCC program. The four areas of significance which relate to the district through criterion A, GOVERNMENT/POLITICS, SOCIAL HISTORY, CONSERVATION, and RECREATION, are tightly intertwined. Thus, the legislation of the New Deal at the national level directed the improvement of state parks to provide welfare and work for the unemployed building among other things park facilities. They

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offered local recreational opportunities for the idle to ensure a smoother recovery from depression.

## GOVERNMENT/POLITICS

The national government reached a sufficient level of maturity to create and operate a public works program by the depression era. Although conceived during the Progressive Era, the bureaucratic government came of age to oversee such programs through professionally led government agencies only by the 1930s. Through a bureaucratic government, the nation influenced such areas as social welfare, conservation, and recreation, in, for example, CCC programs. And, through such programs it heavily influenced the orientation of state and local government in these areas. Where before welfare, conservation, and recreation had been the concern of the individual family or at most the community, they were now strongly influenced by the federal government (Berthoff 1971: 330-38, 342, 357, 359-61; Hays 1957: 48, 140-41, 150; Weibe 1967: 111, 131).

To participate in the CCC program, each state was required to submit a park development plan. Iowa was among a small number of states which had developed such a plan. It was carried out by a state-level organization, what became the Iowa State Conservation Commission by 1935, and by 1934 it created a State Planning Board. This planning allowed State Forester G.R. McDonald to present a proposal for sixteen Iowa camps soon after the creation of the CCC. Like the national level organization, the operation of the Iowa CCC relied upon the cooperation of a multitude of state, local, and private agencies (Iowa Department of Agriculture 1935-37 [1935: 6-7, 191; Wirth 1980: 150; Merrill 1981: 128). The State Conservation Commission directed the effort, the Central Design Office created many of the plans, and many other state agencies provided services in areas of their expertise (U.S. NPS, District Office 1933-36 [12/16/34, box 6]; Iowa State Planning Board 1936-38 [1936: 1 (1): 4).

The Iowa CCC was underway by April, 1933 (Alleger and Alleger ca. 1935: 14). State park work led by the National Park Service began with two companies and expanded to thirteen by October, 1933, the peak number except in the fifth period (4-9/1935) when it reached fourteen. The number declined to five by the tenth period (10/1937-3/1938), three by the seventeenth period (4/1941-9/1941), and ended with two by the eighteenth period (10/1941-3/1942) (U.S.

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CCC, Office of the Director 1933-41 [1935: appendix D, 1937: appendix C, 1938: appendix D, 1939: appendix H, 1940: appendix D, 1941: appendix D). However, the National Forest Service camps also significantly contributed to the state park cause and are not included in this count. This work advanced park development greatly in Iowa. The State Conservation Commission was able to complete 75% of its 25 year master plan between 1933 and 1937 (Grieshop 1989a).

## SOCIAL HISTORY

The bureaucracy of the national government enabled it to become responsible for the welfare of the nation's individual citizens through state and local governments and local representatives of the federal agencies. Again, although such concepts were not wholly new, they had not been activated at the federal level. The context of the depression demanded new solutions to the social welfare problem (Howard 1943: 651-52; Johnson 1941: 48; Scheslinger 1940: 1-4; U.S. Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works 1934: 71-72). The national government created the CCC program to provide temporary relief and secondarily offer training in work skills to destitute young men. It taught them social maturity, new values, and a sense of responsibility, gave them hope for a brighter future, and offered limited education opportunities. And, it purposefully utilized this human resource to conserve the nation's environment (Paige 1985: 126, 132; Holland and Hill 1974 [1944]: 113; Wirth 1980: 100). Between 1933 and 1942, the Iowa program created work for 5% of the male population or 45,846 Iowans. Their accomplishments, the development of state parks, provided recreational opportunities which were utilized soon after construction. It had been one of the goals of park development to create opportunities to engage the idle and boost their sense of optimism and confidence in the future. It also provided economic opportunities for local communities since CCC camps purchased many supplies locally. And, communities reciprocated by gifts of land and materials for the park projects (Iowa Secretary of State 1939-40: 308-09; Merrill 1981: 128; Wirth 1980: 145; Paige 1985: 127). As noted, the construction attract considerable crowds to Pilot Knob. The local citizens of Forest City held a farewell party for the CCC on September 30 and immediately began planning performances for the amphitheater (U.S. NPS, District Office 1933-36 [10/16/34, box 4]).

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CONSERVATION

The conservation projects reaching the scale of those executed by the CCC were economically if not philosophically inconceivable under normal past conditions. These projects not only provided a source of make-work projects but began to refurbish the nation's ailing natural resources and as importantly highlighted their deteriorated condition to the nation. These resources could no longer be taken for granted (U.S. Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works 1934: 67; U.S. Federal Security Agency 1941: 3; Owen 1983: 82, 120). The conservation movement in Iowa had slowly begun as early as 1895 (IOWA CONSERVATIONISTS 1943: 2 (2): 9) and reached a clear expression as Iowans gained concern for the erosion of their natural resources in the REPORT ON THE IOWA TWENTY-FIVE YEAR CONSERVATION PLAN (Crane 1933: 2, 13-17). The plan spelled out both the steps necessary to restore the state's resources and to create a state-wide park system which ensured the preservation of these resources. The CCC projects in parks included conservation of the parks' natural resources. Park amenities were not to intrude upon them either visually or physically. Almost all if not all park development required landscaping through the planting of trees, shrubs, and grasses around new construction and many times throughout the entire park. Erosion control devices were constructed to rejuvenate park lands already suffering from erosion or to prevent its occurrence after park development (Ahlgren 1988). For example, The CCC at Pilot Knob planted many trees and shrubs across the park, cleared undergrowth, and practiced disease control. It highlighted the natural amenities of the park through trails, the observation tower, and the molding of an outdoor theater to the contours of the landscape. Thus, a conservation ethic guided the design and placement of park buildings and structures at Pilot Knob State Park as noted below.

RECREATION

During park development, the CCC erected facilities which did not intrude upon the natural setting and thus ensured a healthful environment for the escape of local communities from the circumstances of depression. Also, in the long run, increasing mechanization created greater leisure time but also increasing stress. To cope, the individual needed to seek relaxation and rejuvenation of mind and spirit in a non-mechanized environment or nature. This increasing mechanization also provided the means to physically reach beyond the built environment through the

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automobile. Parks provided an opportunity to satisfy the immediate requirements for recreation created by the depression and as it lifted by the need to break man's isolation from the inspiration of his natural surroundings (Crane 1933: 144; IOWA CONSERVATIONIST 1941-42 [1941: 1(2): 7]; U.S. NPS 1941: v, 9; Owen 1983: 12). This identified public need became substantiated by the rise of Iowa state park visitation between 1928 and 1941-1942 season from 1,542,557 to 3,686,481 (Iowa State Conservation Commission 1935-42 [1936; 1938; 1942]; Iowa State Board of Conservation 1931: 30). The visitation at Pilot Knob sustained a relatively high level for its size and type of recreation during this period. Thus, the CCC's activity in state parks provided the necessary opportunity for recreation in the form of picnicking, nature study, bathing, and fishing. Conservation and recreation remained intimately tied in the development of Iowa state parks. Park development for such recreation was not to impair the natural surroundings. And, it became the state's responsibility to provide a wholesome environment in which its citizens could spend its leisure time (Crane 1933: 11; Iowa State Planning Board 1936-38 [1937: 2(3): 7-8]). This philosophy espoused early in Iowa was echoed in the federal government's study of recreation needs in 1934 and 1941 (U.S. NPS 1941: v).

## Architectural Significance

The National Park Service developed the basis for park design utilized in state parks during the depression era, the philosophy of rustic architecture, dating as early as 1917. This philosophy reached maturity by the 1930s and became obsolete by the early 1940s. With its emphasis upon landscaping and strong recognition of the need to conserve and remain sensitive to the natural environment, this design movement dovetailed with the goals of the Roosevelt era. And, because of its demand for intensive labor guided by a carefully prepared master plan for park development, "A work program intended to remedy unemployment and introduce new manual skills was suited to the construction of the architectural designs prescribed by rustic architecture" (Ahlgren 1987: 29).

Stated principles of rustic architecture emphasized that man-made resources be inconspicuous and blend with their natural environment. Design simplicity and the use of native materials, often from the park, furthered this goal. Because each region possessed a different environment, the design was specific to each region if not the park. Planning in Iowa was to be sensitive to



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the rolling hills of prairie and woodland often resulting in low, horizontal massing of buildings and buildings and structures of combined log and stone, limestone or sandstone, or frame. Park facilities also often followed a single historical allusion to the areas's past so that resources achieved a unity of design and blended culturally. For this reason, rustic architecture did possess some ties to the romantic movement. In Iowa, the historical theme generally referred to the pioneer past through the use of log and stone or to a general Native American theme. Study of the natural setting prior to development and the extensive use of master plans ensured harmony within the built environment and with their natural surroundings. Each resource contributed to the whole. Development occurred in areas of concentrated use such as the custodial group, the picnic area or the bathing area rather than being scattered across the park to minimized intrusion upon nature (Good 1938: I; Ahlgren 1987: 30, 78-79; 1988; Tweed 1977: 55, 63, 77, 94, 104). This orientation dictated simplicity of stylistic theme with a limited variety of construction materials and unelaborate ornament. Many times, rustic architecture utilized elements from the American Craftsman style (1900-1930). Detailing often included large dormers, exposed rafters and purlins as well as other exposed building members, brackets, broad overhangs, and porches in addition to the low, horizontal massing (Gottfried and Jennings 1985: 140, 186, 222-23; Ahlgren 1988: 202-03; Good 1938: I, 8).

Specific guidelines for park facilities derived from these principles stressed the minimal impact of construction upon surroundings through hand labor and the use of native materials such as stone and timbers. They underwent limited refinement by hand. The use of modern materials such as concrete was to be covered by a veneer of natural materials. Simple frame buildings were utilized for utilitarian functions. Low, horizontal lines in rolling hills of prairies and scattered woodlands assisted blending. Careful landscaping with native vegetation allowed the building or structure's transition into its setting as did the use of rough stone foundations, battered or buttressed walls, irregular building lines, and native materials placed in their natural position. In stone construction, the stone was laid in vaguely horizontal planes with larger stones toward the base but with a mix of size within general limits. Roofs were often of heavy, exposed timber supports covered with wood shingle. Thus, they blended with the surrounding tree line. The upper portions were heavy and durable like the lower portions of the building or structure (Good 1938: I; Ahlgren 1987: 5, 56; 1988; Tweed 1977: 30, 35, 54, 71,

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93-94).

Such make-work programs as the CCC, the Works Progress Administration, and the National Youth Administration utilized this style extensively across the nation. To meet the volume of work demanded by the broad state park development, the National Park Service published a guide in 1935 and 1938, PARK STRUCTURES AND FACILITIES by Albert Good (1938) which summarized rather than forecasted work in the style. This style is evident in a majority of Iowa parks in which the CCC, WPA or NYA worked. Designs and plans for Pilot Knob are associated with the Office of Central Design, Ames. John R. Fitzimmons who became the landscape architect for the Iowa State Conservation Commission during the CCC period first rendered a master plan for the park in 1925. He and Herbert Blackney prepared the plans for the portals both dated May 24, 1934 and the undated preliminary development plans for CCC work (Iowa State Conservation Commission 1933-42a [plans, 5/24/34]; 1917-73 [report, 12/15/25]; 1933-1942b [master plan, n.d.]). Although other unsigned plans appear, it is likely that Fitzimmons assisted heavily in park design.

The Pilot Knob State Park District resources represent the rustic style. The 1934 unsigned master plan places buildings and structures in isolated areas, for example the custodian's group, the shelter area south of Deadman's Lake (PIL3), several other shelter locations, the observation tower (PIL2), and the amphitheater area (PIL4). However, this park did not receive the concentrated development of a state park such as Backbone or Springbrook. For this reason, CCC resources are more scattered. Company 1757 utilized native materials from the area. They gathered granite boulders from adjacent fields and within the park, cracked them, and faced them. Timbers were cut locally and peeled and planed (U.S. NPS, Project Supervisor 1933-47 [5/34, 8/34, box 80]; District Office 1933-36 [10/16/34, box 80]). Thus, buildings maintain a rough appearance with random rubble walls and large roof timbers. They blend with the natural surroundings. Open buildings such as the picnic shelter (PIL3) have intricate timber roof supports. Enclosed buildings display exposed purlins and rafters and log bracing, and the timber roof framing is open to view upon the interior. The minor structures within the park such as the portals (PIL5a-5b) and footbridges (PIL6a-6c) are also of native materials. CCC designs highlighted the natural features of the park, Deadman's Lake, the morainic ridges, and Pilot Knob itself, with the built features such as the shelter, footbridges along trails, the placement of the amphitheater in a natural depression

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and the observation tower on top of Pilot Knob. These features allowed visitors to view the "wild, heavily wooded", rustic scenery of the park (Crane 1933: 131). The use of native materials also permitted the allusion to the general pioneer theme. The limited ornamentation, the exposed timbers and the low, heavy massing retain the simplicity prescribed by rustic architecture. The designers of Pilot Knob achieved the effect sought through the rustic style in the amphitheater. Albert Good chose illustrate the structure for its simple rendering and ability to blend into the natural setting (Good 1938: (2) 205).

**Comparative Statement**

Because of the general level of resource integrity and the number of outstanding examples of rustic architecture, the resources within the Pilot Knob State Park District gain significance at the state level. As noted in the descriptive statement, buildings and structures generally retain integrity of setting, location, overall design, material, feeling, association, and workmanship. And, except for some general deterioration, they retain a high integrity of design. Several of the resources such as the picnic shelter, stone footbridges, and portals are relatively common to Iowa state parks. But unlike other examples, the portals (PIL5a-5b) retain their timber gates. As noted, until at least October, 1934, no building comparable to the observation tower (PIL2) had been erected in midwestern parks. Good illustrates the amphitheater (PIL4) as an example of this subtype in his work on rustic architecture. As Good notes, the amphitheater as well as the other resources highlight natural surroundings of the park, the major goal of rustic architecture. The amphitheater is also a fragile resource with many elements so that replacement of plank seats does not affect its overall eligibility. Thus, Pilot Knob State Park preserves some rare examples of rustic architecture and for this reason the district achieves significance at the state level. The district recognizes the contributions made by the CCC in the state park and therefore gains significance during the period of construction in 1934. The significant date, 1934, denotes the arrival of CCC Company 1757.

Then, the Pilot Knob State Park District is a discontinuous district including six separate areas constructed by the same CCC company during five months of 1934. As a product of the CCC, the district gains significance for its historical associations with the CCC and its contribution to the areas of GOVERNMENT/POLITICS,

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SOCIAL HISTORY, CONSERVATION, and RECREATION. The park is a direct product of interrelated historical movements in all these areas. It is through the combination of these threads of historical movements that CCC resources gain significance. Under the area of ARCHITECTURE, the resources also represent the main principles of mature rustic architecture of the 1930s. Encompassing several buildings and structures of outstanding architectural merit in comparison to other examples within their subtypes across the state, the district possesses overall significance at the state level.

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10. Geographic Data

Boundary Description:

The discontinuous district contains six separate areas (see park and USGS maps).

PIL5a: The boundary of the entrance portal begins at the intersection of the park road with the main entry road from route 9 and travels south along the 1300 foot contour. Following this line of elevation, the boundary continues along the east side of road for 200 feet and curves back to the north along the west side of the road touching the main entry road. Then, the district boundary follows the main entry road east to the point of beginning.

PIL5b: The boundary of the northeast entrance portals extends 50 feet around both portals except on the north side where the district line follows the south edge of the road.

PIL3: The district boundary radiates 30 feet from the edge of the picnic shelter.

PIL6a-6c: The boundary extends 20 feet on either side of the trail associated with the culverts and 20 feet east and west of culvert 6a and 6c, a distance of 1200 feet along the trail.

PIL2: The boundary of the observation tower follows the edge of the top of the mound along the 1450 foot contour line. PIL4: The district boundary extends 50 feet in a ring beyond the edge of the amphitheater which is marked by the edge of the timber line.

Boundary Justification:

Boundary lines are drawn to include the contributing resources and their immediately associated landscapes but exclude intrusions. Alteration of trail locations, paved roads, and the addition of new facilities prevented inclusion of the entire park. The boundary around the entrance portals (PIL5a-5b), the picnic shelter (PIL3), and the amphitheater (PIL4) is arbitrary and attempts to include the adjacent setting. The boundary around the culverts (PIL6a-6c) encompasses the associated trail which follows its original course at this location. And, the line around the observation tower

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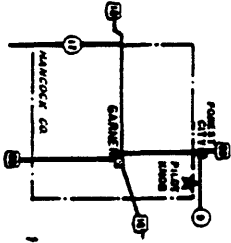
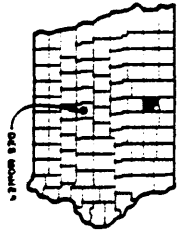
(PIL2) includes the opening in the timber associated with the tower.

The five areas are placed within a single discontinuous district to interrelated the CCC resources constructed in the park thus associating them with the park's historical development. This approach also relates the resources to the single CCC company which constructed the resources within a relatively short time span. It allows an overall impression of the CCC work in the park and yet eliminates park lands inappropriate to the theme of the nomination. The discontinuous district also provides a workable guide for overall park planning by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

UTM References:

- A. 15-4789070-453960 (PIL5a) B. 15-4789120-455700 (PIL5b)  
C. 15-4788890-455830 (PIL4) / D. 15-4788800-455140 (PIL2)  
E. 15-4788340-453980 (PIL3) F. 15-4788350-454765 (PIL6a-6c)

**A Park User Permit is required. Annual permits are available at the park office or at county recorder's offices. Daily permits are available at posted locations in the park.**

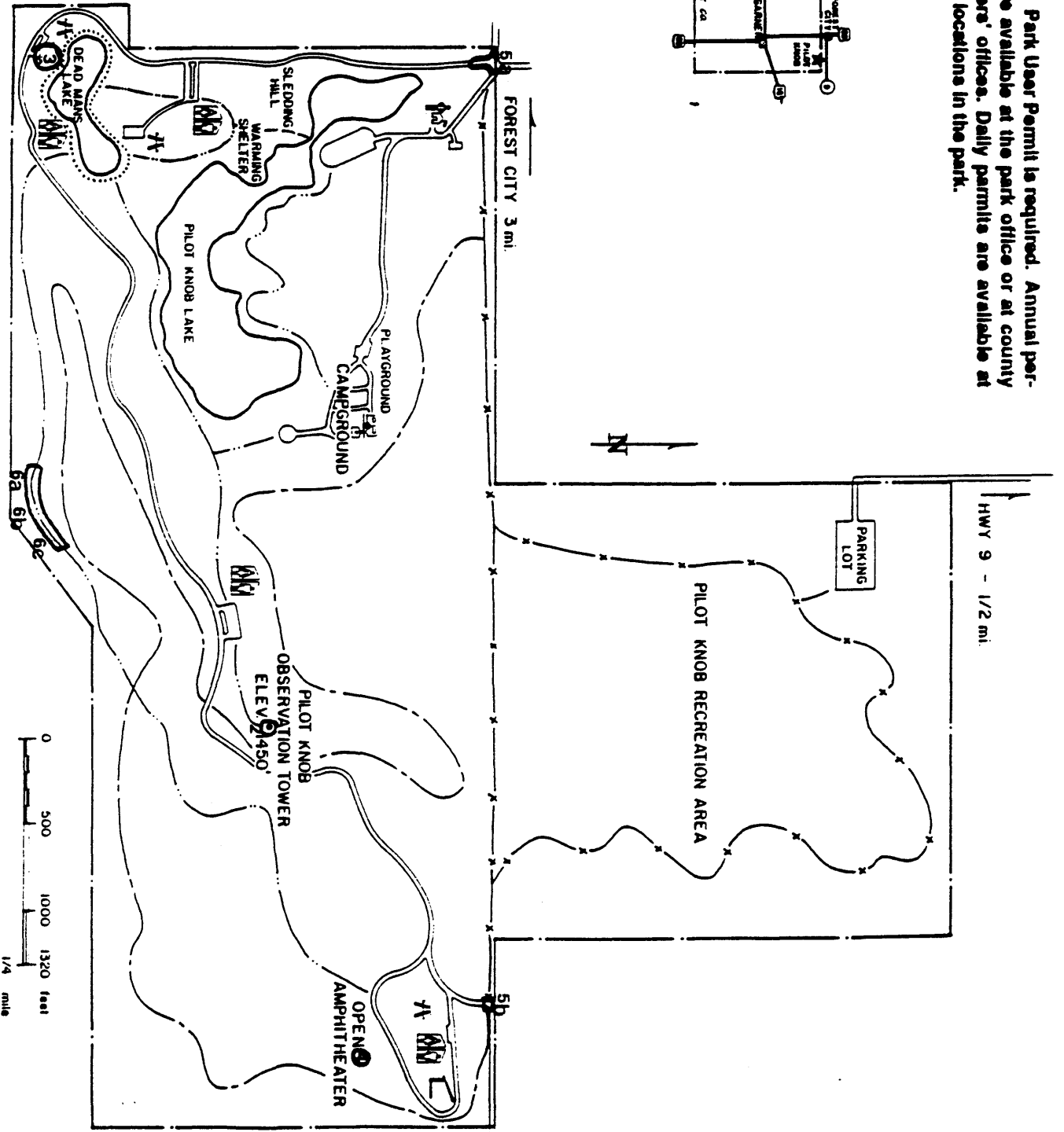


- PARK RANGER
- SHELTER
- PICNIC AREA
- REST ROOM
- TRAILER DUMP STATION
- NATURE TRAIL
- HIKING TRAIL
- HORSE TRAIL
- HIKING - CROSS COUNTRY SKI TRAIL
- MULTI-USE TRAIL
- HIKING
- HORSE
- SNOWMOBILE

**Pilot Knob State Park**

Area 2

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Photographic Identification:

Name: Pilot Knob State Park  
Location: Forest City, Van Buren County, Iowa  
Negative: Bureau of Historic Preservation, State Historical  
Society of Iowa  
Photographers: Kevin Pape and Joyce McKay  
Date: March 9, 1989 and May 27, 1989

Description:

1. View of northwest entrance portals (PIL5a) facing south.
2. View of northeast side of picnic shelter (PIL3) facing southwest.
3. View of one of three culverts (PIL6c) facing east.
- \*4. View of the observation tower (PIL2) facing west.
5. View of the amphitheater (PIL4) facing west.
6. View of one of three culverts (PIL6c) facing south.

\*Only this photograph has been submitted with this nomination.