

1840

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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 American School of Wild Life Protection Historic District
other names/site number McGregor Heights

2. Location

street & number McGregor Heights Road, north of McGregor not for publication
city, town McGregor vicinity
state Iowa code IA county Clayton code 043 zip code 52157

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u>17</u>	<u>9</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>19</u>	<u>11</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
The Conservation Movement in Iowa, 1857-1942

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] 10/31/91
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.

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

[Signature] 12/23/91
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Entered in the National Register

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/field school

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/summer residential
resort

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

MIXED

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation post-and-pier

walls wood

roof asphalt shingle

other _____

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)

Conservation
Education

Period of Significance

1919-1941

Significant Dates

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

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

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:

Iowa Bureau of Historic Preservation

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property approximately 17 acres

UTM References

A

1	5	6	4	8	5	2	0	4	7	6	5	4	4	5
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

1	5	6	4	8	6	6	0	4	7	6	5	5	3	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

1	5	6	4	8	6	6	0	4	7	6	5	2	0	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

Geographical limits of area associated specifically with the Wild Life School, 1919-1941.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Rebecca Conard date _____
organization PHR Associates street & number 275 Crescent Park Drive telephone 712/657-3347
city or town Lake View state Iowa zip code 51450

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Section 7: Physical Description

McGregor Heights is a summer resort area located north the town of McGregor on a high bluff overlooking the Mississippi River, 500 feet below. For 23 years, from 1919 through 1941, the cottages and cabins located here became the venue for a summer field school known as the American School of Wild Life Protection. The area specifically associated with the school covers approximately seventeen acres surrounded by woodland on three sides and a steep slope to the Mississippi River on the east side. Twenty-six cabins and cottages are arranged in an irregular pattern along a roadway that winds through the site. These 26 summer cottages, cabins, and houses were built at different times, so there are a variety of building types ranging from late nineteenth century Folk Victorian through post-World War II modern styles. The majority of the buildings, however, were built between 1898 and the early 1920s. Two of the cabins, MH-03 and MH-08, and possibly a third, MH-19, date from the time the area was first developed as a chautauqua site and summer resort. Local newspaper accounts state that in 1918 a fire destroyed ten of sixteen cottages existing on the site at the time and that many of the property owners who lost their cabins rebuilt within a short while. Historic photographs of the area indicate that most of the buildings located at McGregor Heights when the American School of Wild Life Protection was in operation are extant. Many of them have been altered to some degree, and a few have been considerably modernized. The area also contains the foundations of the Wild Life School pavilion, the foundations of an observation tower, and the foundations of one nonextant cabin.

There are 17 contributing buildings, one contributing structure, the road, and one contributing site in the district, described below. Site numbers are keyed to a map of the area included in the attachments.

MH-01: Fourteen concrete piers on a gentle slope mark the location of a pavilion constructed ca. 1926. The 1927 Wild Life School announcement contains a photograph of this structure, showing it to have been a simple rectangular shelter measuring approximately 39'x52' and consisting of a low-pitched gable roof supported with wooden posts set on the concrete piers (see attachments). The pavilion was open on three sides, with woven wire fencing posted along the perimeter. The fourth wall, downslope on the river side (east), was enclosed to protect a speakers' platform. There were no permanent seats or benches. Instead, the audience sat on chairs arranged in tiers down the slope. The pavilion was not a very substantial structure, certainly not

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built for permanence. It sat unused for many years after the last Wild Life School session was held there in 1941. Lacking funds to maintain and repair it, the association razed the structure in 1958.

MH-03: Riverview Cottage (aka Quigley Cottage) is a Folk Victorian dwelling located on the edge of the bluff directly overlooking the river. This is the oldest cottage in the district and a key structure in defining its historic character. The official plat map identifies it as the "Quigley Cottage" which, according to news accounts was built in June 1898 by Robert Quigley, one of several McGregor residents involved in the original site development plan. In design, it is a two-story, side-gable I-house sited on a north-south axis with an off-center cross gable. A mirrored pair of gabled dormers located on the far north end of the dwelling give the roofline a highly idiosyncratic appearance. An open front porch runs the length of the building on the east (river) side. Exterior walls are clad with drop siding, and 1/1 wood-sash windows are the predominant fenestration. A turn-of-the-century postcard view of the house reveals that the only alteration has been the addition of a small, shed-roofed open porch at the west entrance.

MH-05: Villa Marie Antoinette Cottage is a rather large, two-story cottage built in the Craftsman style. The design is chiefly distinguished by a low-pitched, asymmetrical side-gable roof, with the long rake covering an integral porch facing the river on the east. On the east front a long pop-up dormer reveals the second story. An exterior brick chimney is located off-center on the south side, and a small shed-roofed service porch extends from the rear southwest corner. Exterior walls are covered with clapboard, and original windows, where they remain, are wood-sash in a variety of sizes. The front porch has been enclosed with a continuous ribbon of modern aluminum-frame windows. The current owner, Susan Marie Saunders, is in the process of restoring the house to its original appearance. She is the fifth woman in her family to own the cottage, which was built ca. 1910 by her great great aunt Katherine Heck. The cottage name reflects family pride in its French ancestry and the history of French explorers along the Mississippi River. Ms. Heck was a skilled craftswoman who taught manual arts in Rhode Island. It was she who designed and built the house. An interesting feature of the house is the lower foundation along the front facade, which was designed so that a portion of the foundation wall, made of wood, can be dropped, using hinges and suspension chains, to form an outward-facing counter. She and her

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sister Pauline used the space as a gift shop each summer. Items for sale included figurines, toys, and other artifacts which Ms. Heck crafted. Villa Maria Antoinette also was one of the cottages where distinguished visitors to the Wild Life School stayed. Upper-story rooms were rented for this purpose.

MH-06: Che Wink Cottage is a one-story, front-gable building with a partially enclosed porch running the entire length of the east (river) side. The cabin is basically Craftsman in design, with a low-pitched roof, overhanging eaves, exposed rafters, and angle braces. Exterior walls are clad with vertical boards. Asymmetrically spaced 1/1 wood-sash windows are outlined with overscaled plain board surrounds that taper slightly from the bottom up and are cut to a slightly triangular shape across the top. The same motif is carried out across the front porch, which is supported by 4"x4" posts set on 4' centers. An exterior stone chimney is located about half way along the south side. A photograph taken ca. 1921 shows Louis Pammel, H.C. Oberholser, Rev. L.T. Weeks, George F. Kay, Bohumil Shimek, and Rev. George Bennett seated in front of the porch, to which a sign lettered "Faculty House" has been attached. Interestingly, the porch is shown located on the south side, with the stone chimney clearly visible in the background. It appears from the photograph that the porch was moved at some time from the south side to the east front. The only other alteration appears to be the front entrance, which consists of French doors. These seem slightly more modern than other cottage details, although they are quite compatible with the historic fabric. The high degree of architectural integrity makes this cottage a key contributing member.

MH-08: Trail's End is the other late nineteenth century cottage in the district; it also is a key contributing structure. It is similar in design to Riverview Cottage, being a two-story, side-gable I-house, and appears to have been built at approximately the same time. It is, however, more symmetrical in plan, with a central cross gable and no roof dormers. Exterior walls are clad with tongue-and-groove siding, and 1/1 wood sash windows are spaced rather symmetrically on each facade. The window on the lower level, south side, has been replaced with a small wood-sash hopper window. The front porch, which runs almost the entire length of the east (river) facade, has been partially enclosed and screened, and its flat roof doubles as a second-story deck. It is quite possible that the porch roof was constructed this way, since a wood-panel pass door located in the center cross gable opens onto the roof deck. A shed-roofed addition is located along the west rear.

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MH-10: Hilltop Cabin is a one-story front-gable-and-wing cottage. It has a low-pitched roof with slightly overhanging eaves and exposed rafters. Exterior walls are clad with drop siding, and fenestration consists of wood-sash windows in various sizes. A shed-roofed front porch runs across the south front, partially enclosed and screened. The exterior porch walls have been recovered with vertical boards, though drop siding is visible underneath in places, indicating that the porch is probably part of the historic fabric and not a recent addition.

MH-11: Knotakare Cabin is a small, one-story cottage with an asymmetrical side-gable roof which extends farther on the south front facade to cover an integral porch. The roof is low-pitched with a moderate overhang and exposed rafters. The front porch is partially enclosed and screened, with the entrance located on the east side. Exterior walls are clad with drop siding and fenestration consists chiefly of small, symmetrically spaced 1/1 wood-sash windows. A shed-roofed addition extends from the north rear, and a wood lattice skirt screens the post-and-pier foundation.

MH-14: Unnamed Cabin. As one enters the area from the west, there are five older cabins located in a row along the right (south) side of the upper drive. As a group they appear to have been constructed between 1910 and 1920. Together they form a key contributing element to the district. Historic photographs show these cabins to be little altered in appearance; thus, they provide a good index for judging the degree to which the overall historic character remains. This particular building is a one-story front-gable cottage with a partially enclosed porch extending across the entire north front. A low-pitched roof has moderately overhanging eaves. Exterior walls are clad with clapboard, and original fenestration consists of 2/2 wood sash windows, sometimes paired. The front entrance is centrally located along the north facade. Wooden steps provide access to a rear entrance located at the far end of the west side. Like most other cottages in the area, it rests on a post-and-pier foundation.

MH-15: Sumac Cabin (#3) is a small, one-story, side-gable cottage, the second in a row of five early twentieth century structures. Its low-pitched roof breaks across the front to cover an integral, enclosed front porch. Five pairs of six-pane casement windows are spaced across the north front, three pairs on the left and two pairs on the right of an off-center entrance. Paired casement windows continue along the east and west sides,

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providing an abundance of natural light for the interior. The exterior walls are clad with drop siding, and the cottage rests on a post-and-pier foundation.

MH-16: Kozy Kabin is the third cottage in the row of five. It is a one-story front-gable cottage with a low-pitched roof and exposed rafters. The cottage has no porch, but three pairs of 6-pane casement windows stretch across the north front facade. Paired casement windows are also spaced symmetrically along the other facades. Exterior walls are clad with drop siding. The entrance is located on the east side toward the front; it has no roof cover, only a stoop landing. Historic photographs show that the cottage originally had a second entrance along the east side toward the rear. This entrance appears to have been removed at a fairly early date, and the back porch has been enclosed. The only other change appears to be the addition of skirting around the post-and-pier foundation.

MH-17: Suitsus Cabin is the fourth of the five cabins, and its original design has either been considerably modified or it is a different structure than the original. In any case, the cabin is an older structure, and it contributes to the historic character of the district. Historic photographs reveal that the original cabin in this location was identical to Kozy Cabin (MH-16). While Suitsus is still similar to Kozy Cabin, in that both of them are simple front-gable buildings with side entrances and without porches, Suitsus is slightly wider, the roof is slightly higher, the fenestration is chiefly wood-sash sliding windows, and the exterior walls are covered with narrow clapboard instead of drop siding.

MH-18: Great Escape is the last of five early twentieth century cabins in this row. It is a one-story, front-gable cottage with a prominent hipped-roof, enclosed porch on the north front. The exterior walls of the cabin proper are clad with drop siding, but the walls of the porch are covered with clapboard. Fenestration is predominantly 2/2 wood-sash windows, placed in banks around the front porch, used sparingly elsewhere. Historic photographs show that the front porch has been extended on the left side of the north front, and the entrance has been moved from the east side to the north front. Other changes include a replacement window in the front gable peak: the original was a small 2/2 window; the replacement is a larger, single-pane hopper window. The post-and-pier foundation has also been enclosed with wood lattice skirting.

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MH-19: Owl's Nest is a rather large two-story side-gable building. According to the present owners, Warren and Helen Washburn, the cabin was built by 1906, making it one of the original group to escape the fire of 1918. A low-pitched roof has slightly overhanging eaves. The cabin has an east-facing orientation to take advantage of the river view. Exterior walls have been reclad with rolled asphalt siding of mock-brick pattern which covers the original tongue-and-groove siding. The cabin was constructed with an integral porch running the length of the east front facade, recessed under the second story overhang. Because the front porch was enclosed, there appear to be relatively few windows given the size of the structure. According to the owners, all windows are wood sash and hinged at the top; they were boarded over at the time fieldwork was conducted. An unsheltered front entrance is centrally located on the east, and a lean-to on the rear was removed at some undetermined date. All of these changes were made prior to 1936, when Warren Washburn purchased the cabin from the Quigley family.

MH-20: Unnamed Cabin. Situated south of Owl's Nest is a small one-story, front-gable cabin with a hipped-roof enclosed porch along the east front facade. A porch entrance is located on the right front. The exterior walls of the cabin proper are clad with drop siding; the walls of the porch with vertical boards. Fenestration consists chiefly of 2/2 wood-sash windows. The post-and-pier foundation remains exposed. According to the current owner, Margrieta Delle, this cabin is believed to have been built in the 1920s on the site of an earlier cabin destroyed in the 1918 fire.

MH-21: Wildwood Cabin (Congregational Church) is a simple rectangular building with a hipped roof. Three-pane wooden casement windows are spaced symmetrically around the facades, and some of them are paired. A front stoop entry is located slightly right of center along the east front. Exterior walls are clad with drop siding, and the roof is covered with rolled asphalt roofing. A wooden cross mounted on the north wall identifies this cabin with the McGregor Congregational Church.

MH-24: Cabin 717 is a small gable-front cottage with a shed-roofed extension on the south side. Its low-pitched roof has a moderate overhang and boxed eaves. Exterior walls have been reclad with asbestos shingles. The main front entrance is set on the far left of the west-facing front facade, with a triplet of large 6-pane wooden casement windows on the right and another pair of casement windows around the corner on the

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north side. A second entrance is located on the far right, west side, flanked by narrow 2/2 wood-sash windows.

MH-25: Unnamed Cabin. This is a side-gabled cabin with a south-facing orientation. It has a low-pitched roof has a moderate overhang. Exterior walls are clad with drop siding, and there is a small shed-roofed extension along the west rear. A rather large exterior chimney of stone is centrally placed along the south facade, flanked by 1/1 wood-sash windows. The entrance is located on the right side of the south front. The original approach has been replaced with a flight of five wooden steps which land on a wooden deck that extends across the right half of the south front and wraps around to extend the full width of the east side facing the river.

MH-29: Hagesteun Cottage is a one-story side-gable building with a tiny, shed-roofed extension on the southwest corner. Its low-pitched roof has a moderate overhang and exposed rafters. Exterior walls are clad with drop siding. An exterior brick chimney located left of center on the west facade is flanked by 6-pane wooden casement windows. There are two entrances: one located on the right side of the west facade, the other on the far right of the north side. Fenestration throughout consists of multipane wood-sash and casement windows. The post-and-pier foundation is exposed.

MH-30: McGregor Heights Road was constructed in 1899 by the City of McGregor, the same year that the City also provided water and electric service to the subdivision. E.C. Schroeder, who owned a rock quarry in Marquette, reportedly furnished crushed rock to improve the road at about the same time he built the 115-foot observation tower at McGregor Heights (1932). Sometime during the early 1950s the road was surfaced with asphalt.

Eleven buildings and sites are noncontributing, also keyed to the attached map. The noncontributing elements are as follows:

MH-02: Former Heights Inn, built 1922 by a group of investors known as the Heights Hotel Association. This is a two-story building which has been completely modernized for use as a summer home. The only architectural elements which identify this as the old inn building, as evidenced by historic photographs, are the roofline, the stone foundation and a stone chimney. The rest of the structure has been radically altered.

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The Washburns purchased the hotel in 1942, according to Warren Washburn; and as late as 1963, his mother, Mrs. Ethel Washburn was still operating the hotel, which had eight rooms and a 50-foot dining room at that time.

MH-04: Concrete slab foundation of former observation tower. In 1932, E.C. (Ernie) Schroeder built a 115-foot observation tower on this site. Schroeder owned a rock quarry in Marquette. The tower reportedly had nine flights with a total of 165 steps. A historic photograph of the tower shows that tapered upward from a square base, with an observation deck located half-way up. A concession stand was located at ground level. The deck was a popular spot for watching river traffic and wildlife. Windstorms, however, caused repeated damage. According to Warren Washburn, whose family acquired the property during the 1940s, the tower was torn down in about 1945, and the lumber was reused to build John McSweeney's cottage (MH-09).

MH-07: Unnamed post-World War II summer home; one-story ranch style.
Noncontributing by virtue of age.

MH-09: McSweeney Cottage. This cottage was built in about 1945 from salvage lumber when the observation tower was razed. It was built in the Minimal Traditionalist style, and appears to have good integrity of design, but at this point in time it is considered noncontributing by virtue of age.

MH-12: Unnamed cabin. This is an older one-story cabin, but the front porch has been completely enclosed with plywood. The newer materials are incompatible with the board-and-batten exterior cabin walls of the older portion, and the enclosure obscures the original cabin design.

MH-13: O-So-Cozy Cottage. This is a post-World War II one-story house of vaguely ranch style. It is noncontributing by virtue of age. The exterior wall covering, which is stucco, also sets this building apart from the rest. In design and materials, it intrudes on the historic character of the area more than any other building.

MH-22: Nifty Cabin. This is an older one-story cabin, but it has so many tacked-on additions and modifications that the original design is obscured.

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MH-23: Unidentified building foundations.

MH-26: Unnamed cabin. This is a relatively modern one-story cabin, probably of post-1960s construction, with a wide, open deck facing the river. It is noncontributing by virtue of age.

MH-27: Unnamed cottage . The pyramidal roof and drop siding of the original section of this building mark it as a late nineteenth century Victorian cottage, to which a modern, flat-roofed room addition and a wooden deck have been added on the river-facing side. These alterations are completely incompatible in design and materials with the historic fabric of the original cottage.

MH-28: Unnamed cottage. A small one-story gable-front cottage which appears to be of 1910s vintage has been extended to almost twice its original length, and a lower story of concrete block construction has been built into the hillside underneath. The result is an extremely hybridized structure which still resembles its cottage origins on west end but presents a modern, two-story, glassed-in facade overlooking the river on the east end.

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Section 8: Statement of Significance

Summary Statement

McGregor Heights is significant under National Register Criterion A as the location of the American School of Wild Life Protection, a summer field school established in 1919 for the purpose of promoting resource conservation values among the lay public. The Wild Life School is discussed in Subsection 2 of Section E, "Wildlife Conservation."* In addition to being an important educational institution -- some claimed it was the first of its kind in the nation -- the Wild Life School was an important vehicle for promoting a national park in the Upper Mississippi River Valley and, later, the Upper Mississippi River Wildlife and Fish Refuge. The school remained a vital element in the Iowa Conservation Movement until World War II. Additional research may reveal that the property also is significant at the national level.

Criterion A

The American School of Wild Life Protection grew out of the 1918 meeting of the Iowa Conservation Association (ICA). The association had just reorganized for the second time, membership was growing rapidly, and ICA had just scored a major victory with passage of the Holdoegel state park bill. ICA leaders thus felt the need to supplement the annual March meeting with a special summer session, which was organized by Rev. George Bennett, the ICA's field representative. Bennett selected McGregor Heights as the location. The Heights was a particularly appropriate site, having been originally established as a chautauqua site in 1898 by the McGregor Improvement Company (later known as the Northeastern Iowa Outing Association) and the Decorah District of the Methodist Episcopal Church. In subsequent years the church dropped its affiliation, but chautauquas continued for some time. The site also became a popular resort area, and several property owners built summer homes there. By 1918 McGregor Heights had been the scene of large outdoor meetings for two decades; and the ICA meeting was well-attended, attracting a large crowd of northeastern Iowans who had been promoting a national park in the McGregor area.

The response was enthusiastic enough that Bennett organized a full-fledged field school in July 1919. Governor W.L. Harding presided over this one-week session, attended by about 1000 delegates. The faculty for this first year of operation included Dr. Louis Pammel of Iowa State College, botany; Dr. George F. Kay, University of Iowa, geology; Dr. Bohumil Shimek,

* Within the Conservation Movement in Iowa MPS

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University of Iowa, dendrology; Dr. T.C. Stephens, Morningside College, ornithology; and Prof. Charles R. Keyes, Cornell College, Indian lore. Pammel also organized a special conference to address the subject of conservation in the Upper Mississippi River Valley and the need for a national park. Governors of the states of Minnesota, Illinois, and Wisconsin sent delegates to discuss a legislative strategy for obtaining the much-sought-after national park. By the end of the week, two notable steps had been taken. Declaring the experiment in outdoor education a success, Bennett moved to establish a board of directors and make the Wild Life School an annual event. The first board consisted of the original five faculty members and five members of the McGregor Heights Outing Association. On the legislative front, Governor Harding appointed the State Board of Conservation to act as a special committee. In this capacity, the Board of Conservation was to help coordinate a multistate effort to secure legislation for a national park.

The 1919 session set the tone for the American Wild Life School, combining, as it did, education with activism. During the first few years, the summer session lasted only one week and the format resembled chautauqua meetings with lantern-slide lectures, inspirational talks, legislative planning discussions, and religious services. Beginning in 1921, the session was extended to two weeks in length, and the agenda broadened to include field trips and special activities, such as Boy Scout Day, Farmer's Day, and Kodak Day. Bohumil Shimek registered some concern about loading the program with special days, arguing that the educational purpose of the school should not be diluted or diverted with fun-filled activities. In a letter of September 4, 1923 to Fred Bell, Shimek noted that it was the "regular work" (meaning faculty lectures and field trips) which "makes the Wild Life School unique, and it is this which will develop the most lasting interest, making not only good conservationists of the participants, but making each one a bearer of light to his own community."

Rev. George Bennett and Florence L. Clark were, in many ways, responsible for the success of the American School of Wild Life Protection. Bennett, a native of Cornwall, England, emigrated to the United States shortly after he was ordained as an Episcopal clergyman. He never seems to have ministered to any large congregation, however. Rather, he chose or was forced to accept a succession of country pulpits, and he supplemented his income writing nature columns for newspapers. In about 1912, he came to Iowa and shortly thereafter became involved with the Iowa Conservation Association as its field representative, traveling around the state drumming up new members, and editing its magazine, *Iowa Conservation*. In his position as field representative, Bennett organized the ICA summer meeting at McGregor in

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1918, and then the first real session of the Wild Life School in 1919. From then until his death in 1928, he was the school's driving force. Depending upon one's point of view, Bennett was either a crusader for conservation or a visionary. In either case, he promoted the annual summer sessions enthusiastically; and under his direction, the Wild Life School generally offered an indiscriminate mix of spirituality and science which appealed to a wide audience. McGregor resident Florence L. Clark served as Secretary of the Wild Life School, but she did far more than handle correspondence, set schedules, and keep track of funds. Clark was also a freelance writer, and she took it upon herself to pen any number of articles about the school which were picked up and published by local papers as well as the *People's Home Journal*, *Outdoor America*, and the *Christian Science Monitor*. The publicity she generated for the school undoubtedly helped to bring in many out-of-state visitors. Participants regularly came from the border states of Wisconsin, Illinois, and Minnesota, but gradually the circle of influence grew larger. In a 1930 radio talk given by Louis Pammel, he reported that students that year also had come from Nebraska, Missouri, Kansas, Ohio, Michigan, Connecticut, Oklahoma, Mississippi, New York, and South Dakota.

Despite the trend toward a summer camp atmosphere, Shimek and other leaders in the state conservation movement remained faithful supporters. Pammel, Shimek, Kay, Keyes, and Stephens, along with G.B. MacDonald, head of the forestry program at Iowa State College regularly led field trips and taught classes in geology, botany, ornithology, archaeology, zoology, entomology, astronomy, forestry, American history, photography, conservation, and ecology. Faculty and invited speakers included a veritable "who's who" of notables in conservation, both within and without Iowa. Patrons included William T. Hornaday, Director of the New York Zoological Park and Gilbert Pearson, President of the National Audubon Societies.

During its 23 years of operation, the Wild Life School drew thousands of "students" who indulged their love of nature during a two-week vacation. It also proved to be a convenient meeting ground, literally, for movers and shakers in the conservation movement. In 1923, Pammel organized another special conference on aquatic resources. The purpose was to bring together various individuals and groups lobbying for passage of federal legislation to establish the Upper Mississippi Wildlife and Fish Refuge, the national park idea having run into obstacles by then. Congressman Gilbert Haugen, author of the wildlife refuge bill, was in attendance as was Dr. Harry Oberholser of the U.S. Bureau of Biological Survey. Another special meeting occurred in 1924, when The Bookfellows joined the Wild Life School. Authors

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Willa Cather, Ruth Suckow, and Herbert Quick were in attendance; and an encampment of Winnebago Indians added a note of authenticity to the study of Native Americans. In 1928, Aldo Leopold took time out from his game survey to spend a few days at the Wildlife School.

People who attended the Wild Life School stayed in cottages or tents on the Heights, or in hotels and private homes in town. Meetings were held in a large tent, and meals were served in a smaller tent. In 1922, the Heights Inn opened, thus providing additional accommodations on-site. Beginning in 1920, students over age 18 paid a \$5.00 fee to help defray the cost of operations, an amount that remained constant throughout the life of the school. Faculty members volunteered their services. After the 1924 meeting with The Bookfellows, which drew an unusually large crowd, the Board of Directors decided to build a pavilion. This pavilion, which replaced the large meeting tent, was the only permanent structure ever built by and specifically for the school. It was razed in 1958 after sitting unused for several years..

Pammel pronounced the Wild Life School as the first of its kind in the nation, although this claim bears some scrutiny, since Iowa Lakeside Laboratory was established ten years earlier in 1909. But the two institutions had different missions. Even though both provided important forums for conservation education, the program at Lakeside Laboratory was tailored for college students, school teachers, and independent researchers. The Wild Life School was open to all ages and all comers; it was far more democratic in operation and far more activist in character.

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Section 9: Bibliography

American School of Wild Life Protection. Bulletins, various years, 1919-1941. Bulletins are located in various collections. John Bickel has several in his personal archive; others are located in the Pammel and Shimek collections.

Beckley, Zoe and Florence L Clark. "Going to School With the Birds." *North Iowa Times*, June 1, 1922.

Bickel, John. Telephone conversation with Tracy Cuning, August 31, 1990 and personal conversation with Rebecca Conard, September 30, 1990. Mr. Bickel has a large collection of local historical materials, including the American School of Wild Life Protection, which he made available for research. Both of his parents and his grandfather were involved in conservation work locally and lent their support to the operation of the school. His father, L.P. Bickel, owned five cottages at McGregor Heights, which were made available for faculty housing during the annual session, and some participants always stayed in the Bickel home in McGregor.

Carlander, Harriet Bell. "The American School of Wildlife, McGregor, Iowa, 1919-1941." *Proceedings, Iowa Academy of Science* 68 (1961): 294-300.

Delle, Margrieta. Personal conversation with Rebecca Conard, August 15, 1991.

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_____ . "Heights Now Sixty Years Old." *North Iowa Times*, July 31, 1958.

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Pammel, Louis H. Collected works and papers: McGregor and Iowa Conservation Association files. Iowa State University Special Collections.

Saunders, Susan Marie. Telephone conversation with Rebecca Conard, August 22, 1991.

Shimek, Bohumil to Fred G. Bell. Letter dated September 4, 1923. Bohumil Shimek Papers, University of Iowa Special Collections.

Washburn, Warren and Hellen. Telephone conversations with Rebecca Conard, December 14, 1990 and July 19, 1991. Mr. Washburn's family has owned property at McGregor Heights since the 1930s.

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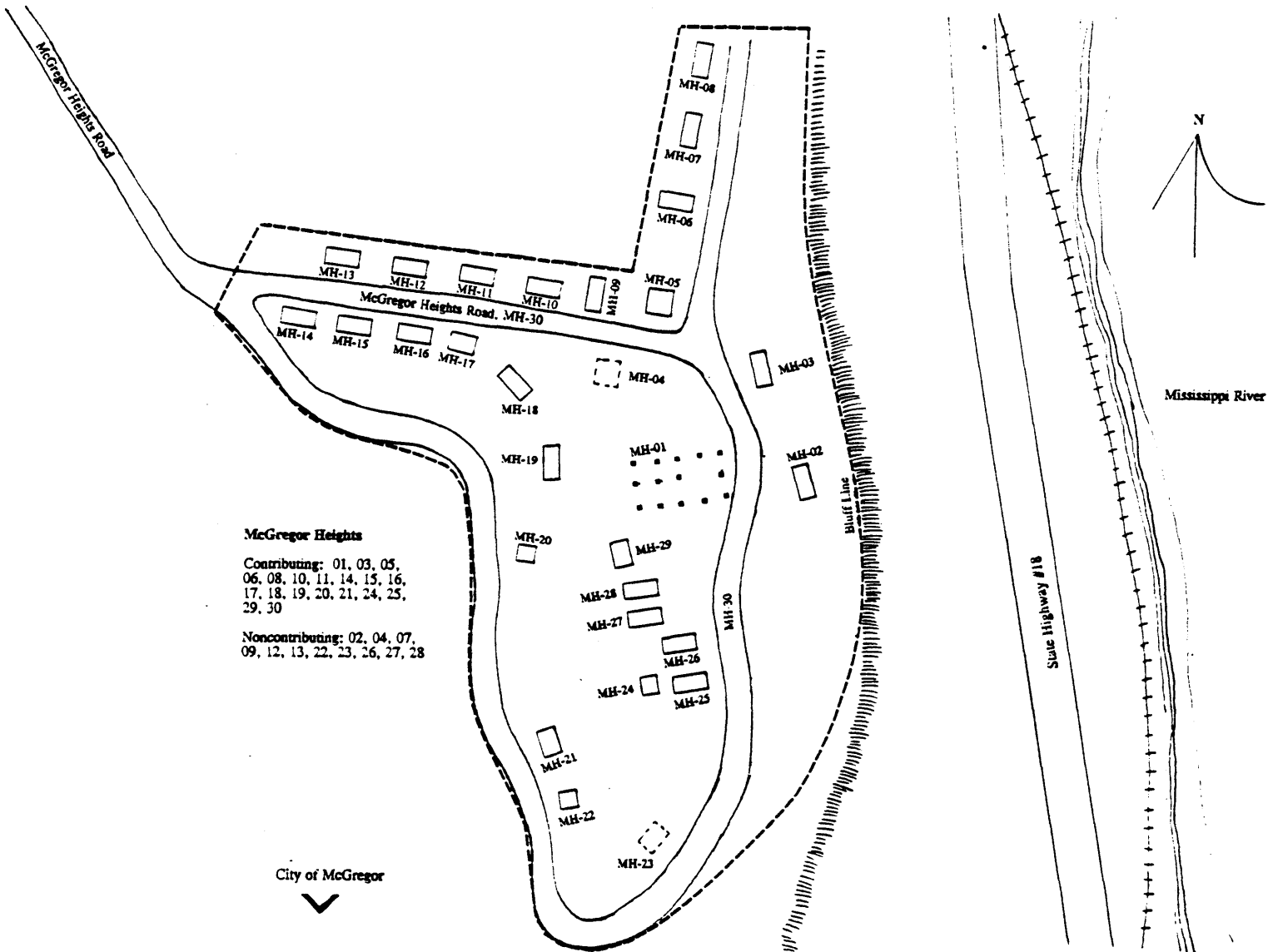
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Section 10: Geographical Data

Boundary Description: That portion of McGregor Heights associated with the American School of Wild Life Protection is an irregular parcel of land bounded on the west and south by a perimeter road, on the east by the ridge line of a bluff overlooking the Mississippi River, and on the north by an L-shaped line formed by the back boundaries of subdivided lots.

Boundary Justification: These boundaries mark the geographical extent of the structures and setting annually associated with the American School of Wild Life Protection from 1919 through 1941.



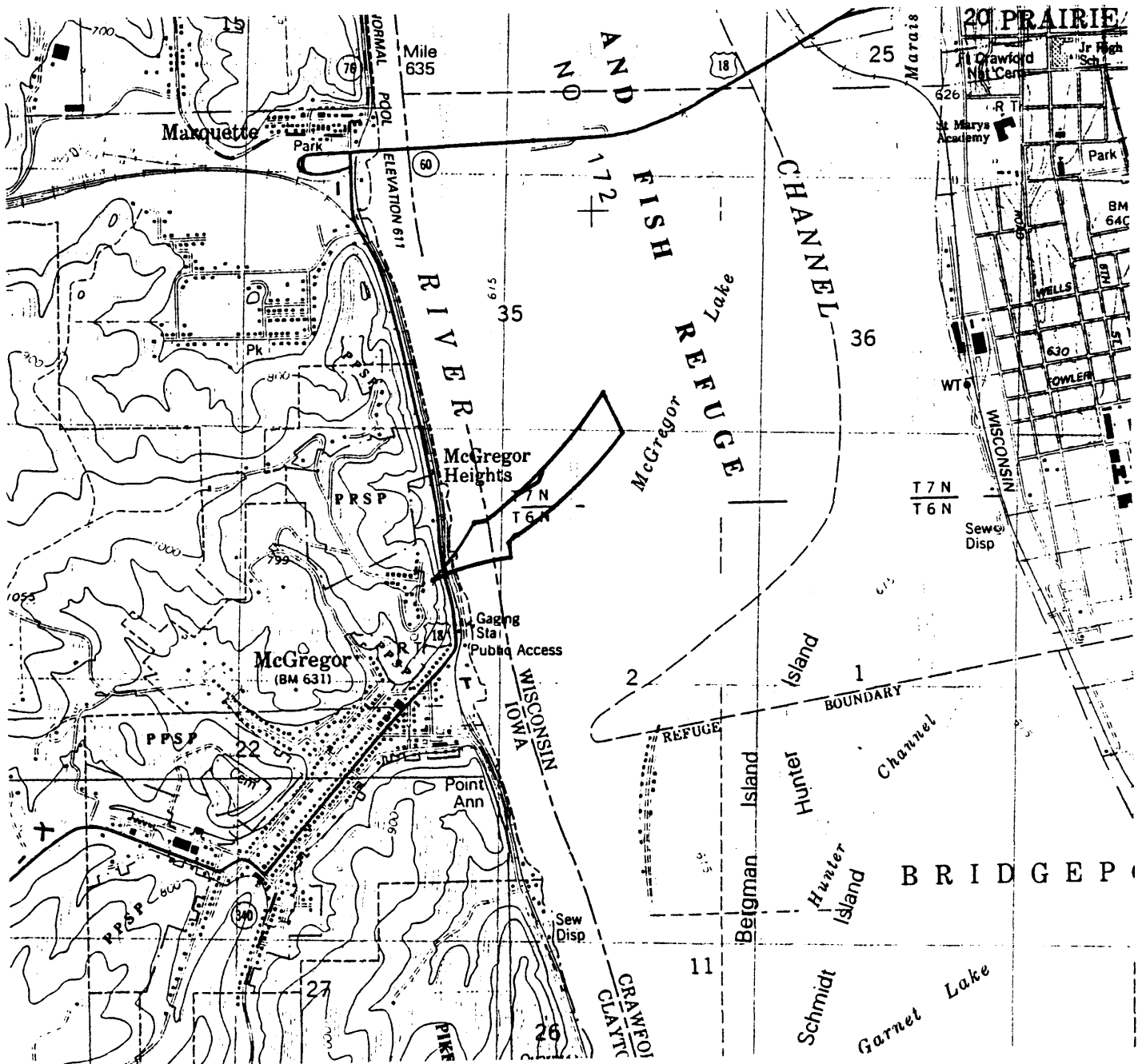
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Attachments: Vicinity Map
Prairie Du Chien (Iowa-Wisconsin) Quadrangle, 1983



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*Attachments: View of the Wild Life School Pavilion
Source: Ninth Annual Session Announcement, 1927*

AMERICAN SCHOOL OF WILD LIFE PROTECTION

NINTH
ANNUAL
SESSION



AUGUST
7th to 18th
1927



"THE WILD
LIFE
SCHOOL"



McGREGOR,
IOWA