

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: 90001666

Date Listed: 11/15/90

Lake Keomah State Park (Area A)  
Property Name

Mahaska  
County

IA  
State

CCC Properties in Iowa State Parks MPS  
Multiple Name

-----  
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 Boland  
Signature of the Keeper

11/15/90  
Date of Action

=====  
Amended Items in Nomination:

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

Item #7, Description: Page 1, paragraph 1, sentence 4 should state that the two related areas (nominated as two separate properties) include a total of 8 contributing resources. Six of those resources are in the district designated as Area A: bathhouse, 2 latrines, road, lodge, and beach.

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

References to this district are found in Section 7, pp. 1-4; Section 8, pp. 1-3, 6, 7, and 9-11; and Section 10, pp. 1-5.

DISTRIBUTION:

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



**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  
weatherboard  
roof ASPHALT  
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

1935-37  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates

1935  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

CFN-259-1116

Table 1  
Contributing and Noncontributing Properties in Lake Keomah State Park

No.	(1) Common Name	Property Subtype	Contributing/ Noncontributing	Category
Area A: Bathhouse/Lodge Area: 16.11 Acres				
5	lodge	concessions and refectories	contributing	1 building
8	bathhouse	bathhouses	contributing	1 building
2a-2b	latrines	comfort stations privies	contributing	2 buildings
-	beach	other minor park structures	contributing	1 structure
-	chain link fence	post-CCC struc- tures	noncontributing	1 structure
-	road	other minor park structures	contributing	1 structure
-	storage building	post-CCC struc- ture	noncontributing	1 building
Area B: Erosion Control: .42 acres				
10a-b	check dams	other minor park structures	contributing	2 structures
total				10 resources

(1) Resource numbers are preceded by the prefix KEO.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

CPN-259-1116

## 7. Description

### Materials:

Walls: OTHER: Vertical Siding

### Descriptive Statement:

Keomah State Park is located five miles east of Oskaloosa, Mahaska County, Iowa. When acquired by the state of Iowa in 1934, the park contained 254 acres and grew to 365.88 by 1942 (Iowa State Conservation Commission 1935-42 [1936: 118, 1942: 127]). In addition to its 82 acre man-made lake, the park encompasses primarily wooded and open, rolling terrain. The discontinuous district contains six contributing resources in two areas. Area A, the bathing and lodge area, includes the bathhouse, two latrines, road, and the lodge. Representing the soil erosion efforts of the CCC, area B contains two check dams. These properties belong to the property type CCC Properties in Iowa Parks. The resources in area A stand on a broad point of land surrounded on several sides by the lake. The district boundary separates the point of land from modern intrusions. The check dams in area B are surrounded by a somewhat arbitrary boundary which encompasses the gully they protect.

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, functions, property subtypes, and setting. Primarily CCC Company 776 at camp SP20 constructed the resources between 1935 and 1937 (U.S. NPS, Regional Office 1935-1937 [5/35, box 22]; Project Supervisor 1933-47 [3/31/36, box 84]). The property subtypes of which the Lakes Keomah resources are an example are described in section F.

The lodge (KE05) (concessions and refectories, IIB) is located on the top of a knoll in a wooded area at the end of a point of land which overlooks the lake. It is a low, one story, rambling building generally measuring 39 X 115 feet. From east to west, the building contains a kitchen/concession, lodge room, vestibule, powder room, restrooms, checking room, and an open shelter. A flagstone loggia surrounds the shelter. The rough and smooth-faced, ashlar limestone which compose the building stand on a concrete foundation. It surrounds a basement under the kitchen. The pillars supporting the shelter are composed of coursed rubble

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**Section number 7 Page 3

CFN-259-1116

rather than ashlar stone. Providing decorative relief, scattered locations along the wall are finished with vertical wood siding and the gables are closed with end-roughened weatherboard. Asphalt shingle covers the intersecting gables of the roof. Double hung, 1/1 light and 8 light, casement windows irregularly pierce the walls of the lodge. The casement windows are placed in groups of two and in bands as well as singly. One band of casement windows occurs in the central, front facing gable of the lodge while the other opposite gable contains rows of small fixed windows. Lintels are composed of squared timbers. A porch along the rear covered by the main roof of the lodge is elaborated by square timber posts with bracing. At the west end of the building, the rectangular shelter is open on three sides which are supported by stone pillars. Exposed purlins and quoins add to the decorative detailing. The stone walls flare away from the building as they rise toward the eaves. On the interior, the stone walls and pine roof timbers are exposed in the larger rooms while smaller rooms, the restrooms, check room, and powder room, are covered with vertical pine paneling. The massive chimney in the lodge possesses a segmented arch opening with keystone. The original iron light fixtures remain.

Two pit latrines (KE02a-2b) (comfort stations and privies, IH) flank the lodge to the south on the downhill side. The 11.3 by 17.7 foot buildings are composed of uncoursed rubble limestone which rests on poured concrete footings. A gable roof with asphalt shingles covers the building and the small entrance which extends from the side of the building. The irregularly placed hopper windows contain four lights. Purlins and rafters are exposed. The timber roof supports and stone walls are exposed on the interior. The latrines now function as storage buildings.

Located south of the lodge and on the south side of the beach, the bathhouse is a low, rambling irregularly shaped building. The octagonal checking room is flanked on each side by rectangular dressing rooms. The boathouse, now a food concession, extends from below the end of one dressing room. Overall, the building is 79 by 58 feet. The bathhouse stands on a concrete footing. Like the lodge, the bathhouse is composed of rough and smooth-faced ashlar limestone with sections of roughly-sawn, vertical siding placed at intervals along the building and at the gable end of the boathouse. While there is no roof over the dressing rooms, a gable roof covers the boathouse and an eight-sided roof shelters the checking room. No windows occur in the building except at the end of the boathouse which represents a replacement of the former double doors.



**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**Section number 7 Page 4

CFN-259-1116

Segmental arches form the lintels over the doors leading into the checking room. Purlins and rafters are exposed. The stone walls and timber roof framing are visible from the interior except for the boathouse in which the ceiling is covered with ceiling panel. Company 776 completed the beach along the lake. Its construction included considerable grading to form a flat area shallow enough for its function and then the addition of gravel and sand. A chain link fence placed around the bathhouse and a small storage building standing near the water's edge also occur in area A.

Two check dams (KE010a-10b) (other minor park structures, IM) control the flow of soil along a watershed south of the main park road. They occur in area B at a timbered location south of the bathing and lodge area. The check dams stand 100 feet apart. Composed of rubble limestone, the dams measure about 3 feet in width and 31 feet in length at the top. Along their 5 foot height, the dams narrow and step down twelve tiers along the slope of the gully to the 8.9 foot long base. An indentation in the center of the head of the dam allows the flow of water down the dams while slowing the movement of silt.

Mainly limited deterioration in part perhaps caused by original construction techniques and modifications demanded for modern use of the park have caused alterations or added intrusions into the district. In area A, asphalt has replaced wood shingle on all buildings. In the lodge (KE05), windows in the bay of the lodge have been replaced. Alterations at the bathhouse (KE08) reflect the boathouse section's change of function to a concession. The original double doors are replaced by windows and doors suitable for a concession and the ceiling is lowered. The check dams (KE010a-10b) have experienced limited erosion along its edges. Intrusions into the district include a chain link fence and a small, 12 by 12 foot wooden storage shed near the shoreline at the beach. Although the road is now paved, it retains its original path.

While a limited degree of deterioration has occurred in 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 local experienced men. And, the buildings were erected to serve a public with needs differing from current park patrons. The alteration of the function of the boathouse portion of the bathhouse is a good example. Modifications derive from these two sources. Because of the emphasis upon landscaping

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 4

CFN-259-1116

Segmental arches form the lintels over the doors leading into the checking room. Purlins and rafters are exposed. The stone walls and timber roof framing are visible from the interior except for the boathouse in which the ceiling is covered with ceiling panel. Company 776 completed the beach along the lake. Its construction included considerable grading to form a flat area shallow enough for its function and then the addition of gravel and sand. A chain link fence placed around the bathhouse and a small storage building standing near the water's edge also occur in area A.

Two check dams (KE010a-10b) (other minor park structures, IM) control the flow of soil along a watershed south of the main park road. They occur in area B at a timbered location south of the bathing and lodge area. The check dams stand 100 feet apart. Composed of rubble limestone, the dams measure about 3 feet in width and 31 feet in length at the top. Along their 5 foot height, the dams narrow and step down twelve tiers along the slope of the gully to the 8.9 foot long base. An indentation in the center of the head of the dam allows the flow of water down the dams while slowing the movement of silt.

Mainly limited deterioration in part perhaps caused by original construction techniques and modifications demanded for modern use of the park have caused alterations or added intrusions into the district. In area A, asphalt has replaced wood shingle on all buildings. In the lodge (KE05), windows in the bay of the lodge have been replaced. Alterations at the bathhouse (KE08) reflect the boathouse section's change of function to a concession. The original double doors are replaced by windows and doors suitable for a concession and the ceiling is lowered. The check dams (KE010a-10b) have experienced limited erosion along its edges. Intrusions into the district include a chain link fence and a small, 12 by 12 foot wooden storage shed near the shoreline at the beach. Although the road is now paved, it retains its original path.

While a limited degree of deterioration has occurred in 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 local experienced men. And, the buildings were erected to serve a public with needs differing from current park patrons. The alteration of the function of the boathouse portion of the bathhouse is a good example. Modifications derive from these two sources. Because of the emphasis upon landscaping

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

## **National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 5

CFN-259-1116

---

by rustic architecture, considerable importance is placed upon integrity of setting, location, feeling, and association of properties. Boundaries are sensitive to the emphasis upon associated landscape and exclude post-CCC intrusions. Because of the fragility of the resources, maintenance of the overall design, reasonable integrity of materials, and tolerance for changes effected by deterioration and modern use remain a requirement. Finally, integrity of workmanship shown in the district retains the important association with the CCC participants.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 1

CFN-259-1116

## 8. Statement of Significance

The CCC resources within the two areas of the Lake Keomah 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 Lake Keomah State Park District acquire significance under criterion C in the area of ARCHITECTURE as an example of rustic architecture. The buildings and structures reflect the effort of this landscape movement to blend park amenities into the natural landscape in their material, design, workmanship, and immediate setting and represent common types developed by the National Park Service for park construction. Thus, the conservation and naturalistic perspective of the CCC relates well to the architecture which the program erected in parks such as Lake Keomah. Because the park amenities within this district were constructed for the enjoyment of local communities and with the exception of the lodge (KE05) are not single examples of exceptionally well preserved, scarce, cultural resources or outstanding examples of Iowa state park rustic architecture, the resources of the district gain significance at the local level. The period of significance extends from the commencement of CCC work in the park by CCC Company 776 at SP20 in 1935 to its close in 1937 (Iowa Department of Agriculture 1935-37 [1935: 21]; U.S. NPS, Project Supervisor 1933-47 [3/31/36, box 84]; Regional Office 1935-36 [5/3/37, box 13]; District Office 1933-35 [3/27/34, box 2; 4/34-10/36 boxes 3, 22, and 23]; CCC 776 REPORTER 1936 [7/31]).

## Background

The State of Iowa acquired Lake Keomah State Park in 1934. The lands including the park were fully developed agricultural properties. Prior to 1936, the county of Mahaska presented the state with several hundreds acres of land to develop a park and lake, and the City of Oskaloosa donated \$25,000 toward the cause. A citizen of Oskaloosa, I.W. Cook, requested the assistance of Company 776 in park development. Additionally, the Lake Keomah

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 2

CFN-259-1116

Development Company, a private local group, assisted the CCC with park development (U.S. NPS, Project Supervisor 1933-47 [11/30/35, box 84]; Regional Office 1935-37 [6/36, 9/36, box 3]; District Office 1933-36 [9/4/34, box 4]); State Inspector 1934-39 [8/28/34]; Iowa Department of Agriculture 1935-36 [1935: 21]).

CCC Company 776 arrived at Oskaloosa June 3, 1933 and began work at Lake Keomah State Park as Soil Erosion Service, National Forest Service camp PE62 on August 8, 1933. During 1933 to 1934, they focused on the development of the 82 acre Lake Keomah, the first man-made lake project in the state, and soil erosion control within and outside the park. After completing the dam and spillway by October, 1934, the camp turned primarily to soil erosion control. The spillway was replaced in 1965 thus removing that area from inclusion in a district. The affiliation of Camp 776 was altered to the National Park Service on May 2, 1935. As SP20, the company erected a majority of the properties. It departed at the end of period 9 on September 30, 1937. In addition to the buildings noted, Company 776 also completed the service building by April, 1937. This building has been substantially changed by the addition of wings on both ends. The Civil Works Administration and Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) constructed most of the adjacent custodian's residence (KE07) during 1934. SP20 altered the roof and completed the interior finish work late in 1935. With the help of Company 776 as PE62, the FERA also began the walls of the lodge but did not accomplish the majority of the work. Finally, the National Youth Administration completed the group camp lodge (reference on plaque on lodge; Alleger and Alleger ca. 1935: 35-37; U.S. NPS, Project Supervisor 1933-47 [10/13/34, 5/31/35, 3/31/36, box 84; Regional Office 1935-37 [3/37, 5/35, 5/37, boxes 12, 13, and 22]; State Inspector 1934-39 [8/28/34, box 1]; District Office 1933-36 [7/35, 10/35, boxes 22 and 25]; Grieshop 1989a: 23; Sandhold 1989 [3/31]). Company 776 as Camp SP20 completed landscaping and soil erosion control within the park. It established a tree nursery in the park, planted trees and shrubs in the open agricultural fields, built foot trails and roads, and erected erosion and silt dams. As Camp PE62, it constructed numerous erosion dams in farmlands adjacent to the park. Most of the erosion devices such as KE010 that lie in the park were probably constructed after 1935 to 1937 when erosion control in the park received a high priority (U.S. NPS, Project Supervisor 1933-47 [7/14/34, 11/30/35, 3/31/36, box 84; Regional Office 1935-37 [6/36, 9/36, 5/37, boxes 3 and 13]).

FERA and Camp PE62 began the foundation of the lodge prior to May,

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 3

CFN-259-1116

1935. Omar Franklin drew plans for the lodge August 4, 1935. Camp SP20 began work on the building completing the foundation in November, 1935 and finished construction May 31, 1936. The CCC 776 REPORTER referred to the building as a sportsman's lodge perhaps referring to the multiplicity of functions it fulfilled: the concession, meeting room, picnic shelter, and the outside meeting area or loggia (CCC 776 REPORTER 1936 [7/30]; see also Oskaloosa HERALD 1936 [6/15]; U.S. NPS, Project Supervisor 1933-47 [11/30/35, 1/31/36, 3/36, 5/31/36, box 84]; District Office 1933-36 [7/35, 11/35, box 22]; Iowa State Conservation Commission 1933-42a [plans for lodge, 8/4/35]). The two latrines flanking the lodge were completed between November, 1935 and March, 1936 (U.S. Project Supervisor 1933-47 [11/35, 3/36, box 84]).

Work began on the beach by May, 1935. Because the slope down to the lake was too steep to provide an area of shallow water, SP20 completed considerable grading before adding the gravel and sand. Plans for the bathhouse were rendered by August 14, 1935. Its construction including the checking room, dressing rooms, and boathouse, began in November, 1935. It neared completion by June, 1936. The state added boat docks and did some unidentified work on the building between 1940 and 1942 (Iowa State Conservation Commission 1935-42 [1942]; U.S. NPS, Project Supervisor [5/31/1935, 11/35, 1/31/36, 3/31/36, box 84]; Regional Office 1935-37 [6/36, box 3]; Iowa State Conservation Commission 1933-42a [plans, 8/14/35]).

While working on the park as early as May, 1935, the project supervisor noted that even with few facilities visitors already began using the park. They had picnics without facilities and used the section of the beach which had been completed. Attendance grew from approximately 25,000 in 1934-1935 to 129,981 in 1942 (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 Lake Keomah State Park served as a recreation reserve (Iowa State Conservation Commission 1935-42 [1942: 127-28]). CCC development strove to restore the denuded farmlands to a recreational area providing fishing, boating, bathing, and picnicking (U.S. NPS, Project Supervisor 1933-47 [3/31/36, box 84]). The park thus served as a recreational area also providing camping, refreshment, and meeting areas. Introduced in 1936, concessions included boating, bathing, refreshment, and miscellaneous sales. The first meals were served in the lodge on

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4

CFN-259-1116

June 26, 1936 (Iowa State Conservation Commission 1935-42 [1936; 1938: 135; 1940: 190-91; 1942: 104]; 1937, 1941 [1941: 20]; CCC 776 REPORTER 1936 [7/31]). Thus, Lake Keomah 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 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

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 5

CFN-259-1116

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. 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 1989).

## 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,



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 6

CFN-259-1116

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 local community of Oskaloosa and the County of Mahaska provided land and funding for Lake Keomah State Park, and the Lake Keomah Development Company worked with the CCC to promote the park. I.W. Cook of Oskaloosa had originally requested the park's development by the CCC.

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, at Lake Keomah, the CCC planted many trees and shrubs across the park including the lodge area and constructed numerous erosion control devices to prevent silting of the lake and gully erosion (KE010). Additionally, a conservation ethic guided the design and placement of park buildings,

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 7

CFN-259-1116

structures, and objects at Lake Keomah 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 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), a rise which was also reflected at Lake Keomah. 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

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 8

CFN-259-1116

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 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 simple 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

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 9

CFN-259-1116

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 the 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 and the upper portions were heavy and durable like the lower portions of the building or structure (Good 1938: (1); Ahlgren 1987: 5, 56; 1988; Tweed 1977: 30, 35, 54, 71, 93-94).

Such make-work programs as the CCC, the Works Progress Administration, CWA, 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, Albert Good's PARK STRUCTURES AND FACILITIES (1938), which in effect summarized rather than forecasted work in the style. This style is evident in a majority of Iowa parks in which the CCC, WPA, CWA or NYA worked. At Lake Keomah, building and structure designs generally came through the Central Design Office in Ames. Omar Franklin drew plans for the lodge in August, 1935. Other plans remain unidentified (Iowa Conservation Commission 1933-42a [plans, 8/4/35, 8/14/35]).

The Lake Keomah State Park District resources represent the rustic style. The master plan (Iowa State Conservation Commission 1933-42b [plan, n.d.]) places buildings and structures in groupings such as the lodge area and the bathing area. Additional groups excluded from the nomination because of later alterations or non-CCC construction include the custodial group, the picnic area, wildlife area, and fish ponds below the dam. CCC Company 776 derived the limestone from a quarry located nine miles from the camp and logs from the area both of which they refined themselves (U.S. NPS, Project Supervisor 1933-47 [11/30/35, box 84]). The variety of stone, the random rubble and coursed, rough and smooth faced ashlar, visible in the buildings may reflect the variety of agencies and span of time during which they were begun and finished. Buildings also display large, peeled, rounded and squared roof timbers. They were intended to blend with the natural surroundings. Buildings display exposed purlins and rafters and

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 10

CFN-259-1116

log bracing. The intricate timber roof framing is often open to view on the interior. The low, horizontal extent of these buildings, particularly the low, rambling bathhouse and lodge, coupled with their use of native materials assists their blending with the natural landscape. Company 776 also performed landscaping, beach development, trail construction, and erosion control which are preserved in the two areas (areas A-B). The two latrines are also composed of native materials. The CCC alluded to the general pioneer theme through the use of native materials, wrought iron lanterns, and dominating fireplaces. Finally, the ornamentation, the low, horizontal lines, the exposed timbers, bracing, extension of the corners at the eaves, a common motif in Iowa, the segmental arch with keystone which forms the upper portion of the lodge fireplace, and the roughly finished siding of the bathhouse and lodge retain the simplicity prescribed by rustic architecture. The lodge was "...in harmony with the ever present surroundings..." and suggestive of the pioneer past (CCC 776 REPORTER 1936 [3/30]).

## Comparative Statement

Because of the general level of resource integrity and the typical property subtypes displayed as well as the local tie of Oskaloosa to the park, the resources within the Lake Keomah State Park District gain overall significance at the local 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, all but the bathhouse (KE08) retain a high integrity of design. The lake end of the boathouse was altered when its functions changed to a concession. As park buildings must meet current needs to survive, a limited degree of alteration is acceptable. Additionally, most unattached boathouses have suffered alteration in the area of the large, side-hinged doors which deteriorated rapidly. The buildings and structures objects within the district are relatively common to Iowa state parks which underwent development by the CCC, for example the lodge or refectory (KE05), latrines (KE02a-2b), and bathhouse and beach (KE08), and erosion control structures (KE010). Although apparently insignificant structures, the erosion control devices represent a major activity of the CCC. Thus, the district achieves significance at the local level.

The district recognizes the contributions made by the CCC in the

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 11

CFN-259-1116

state park and therefore gains significance during the period of construction, 1935 to 1937. The FERA constructed only a small portion of the lodge prior to 1935. The significant date denotes the arrival of company 776.

Then, the Lake Keomah State Park District is a discontinuous district including two separate areas constructed by the same CCC company between 1935 and 1937. These boundaries not only eliminate landscapes and buildings which fail to contribute to the significance of the district but also parallel the concept of the park as nodes of activity by bounding the general area associated with the lodge and bathing and beach complex. 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, 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 that CCC resources their gain significance. Under the area of ARCHITECTURE, they also represent the main principles of mature rustic architecture of the 1930s. Despite the district's strong relationship to national and state movements, it possesses local significance. The bureaucratic government allowed movements of national origin to affect local areas. The local community of Indianola became engaged in the movement. And, from the perspective of landscape architecture, the resources while following principles espoused at the national level, generally embody common resource subtypes becoming significant illustrations of CCC state park development in Iowa.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

CFN-259-1116

9. Bibliography

Ahlgren, Carol Ann

1987 A HUMAN AND LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURAL LEGACY: THE INFLUENCE OF THE CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS ON WISCONSIN STATE PARK DEVELOPMENT. Master's Thesis, University of Wisconsin, Madison.

1988 The Civilian Conservation Corps and Wisconsin State Park Development. WISCONSIN MAGAZINE OF HISTORY, 71 (3): 184-204.

Alleger, C.N. and C.A. Alleger

ca. CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS: IOWA DISTRICT HISTORY.  
1935 Johnson and Bordews, Inc., Rapid City.

Berthoff, Rowland

1971 AN UNSETTLED PEOPLE: SOCIAL ORDER AND DISORDER IN AMERICAN HISTORY. Harper & Row, New York.

CCC 776 REPORTER

1936 Newspaper printed by CCC Company 776, Oskaloosa. Mss., see U.S. NPS, Project Supervisor 1933-47 [7/30/36, box 84]).

Crane, Jacob L. and George Wheeler Olcott

1933 REPORT ON THE IOWA TWENTY-FIVE YEAR CONSERVATION PLAN. Iowa Board of Conservation and Iowa Fish and Game Commission, Des Moines.

Gottfried, Herbert and Jan Jennings

1985 AMERICAN VERNACULAR DESIGN, 1870-1944: AN ILLUSTRATIVE GUIDE. Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, New York.

Good, Albert

1938 PARK AND RECREATION STRUCTURES (3 vols.). U.S. National Park Service, Washington, D.C.

Grieshop, Anne

1989 The CCC Museum at Backbone State Park: Research Report. Report submitted to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Des Moines.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 2

CFN-259-1116

Hays, Samuel

- 1957 THE RESPONSE TO INDUSTRIALISM, 1885-1914. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

HERALD

- 1936 Newspaper published in Oskaloosa, Iowa (6/15).

Holland, Kenneth and F.E.Hill

- 1974 YOUTH IN THE CCC. American Council on Education, no place given.

Howard, Donald S.

- 1973 THE WPA AND THE FEDERAL RELIEF POLICY. De Capo Press,  
[1943] New York.

IOWA CONSERVATIONIST

- 1941- Publication of the Iowa State Conservation Commission.  
1943 Copies at the State Historical Society of Iowa Library,  
Iowa City.

Iowa Department of Agriculture

- 1935- IOWA YEARBOOK OF AGRICULTURE. State Printing office, Des  
1937 Moines.

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

- 1917- Records of each Iowa state park. Mss. curated by each  
1989 state park, Department of Natural Resources.

Iowa Secretary of State

- 1939- IOWA OFFICIAL REGISTER. State Printing Office, Des  
1940 Moines.

Iowa State Conservation Commission

- 1933- Maps and building plans drawn for the work programs of  
1942a the Iowa CCC for state park work by the Department of  
Landscape Architecture, Iowa State University, Ames in  
cooperation with the Regional Office, Branch of Land  
Planning, Design, and State Cooperation, National Park  
Service. Mss., Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Des  
Moines.

- 1933- Maps and building plans drawn for the work programs of  
1942b the Iowa CCC 1942b for state park work by the Department  
of Landscape Architecture, Iowa State University, Ames in  
cooperation with the Regional Office, Branch of Land



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 3

CFN-259-1116

Planning, Design, and State Cooperation, National Park Service. Mss., Department of Landscape Architecture, School of Design, Iowa State University, Ames.

- 1935- BIENNIAL REPORT OF THE STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION.  
1942 State of Iowa, Des Moines.

Iowa State Planning Board

- 1936- IOWA PLANNING NEWS (vols. 1-3). Copy, Iowa State  
1938 Historical Society Library, Iowa City.

Johnson, Jack

- 1941 The Iowa Department of Social Welfare. IOWA JOURNAL OF  
HISTORY AND POLITICS (April): 146-79.

Merrill, Perry H.

- 1981 ROOSEVELT'S FOREST ARMY: A HISTORY OF THE CIVILIAN  
CONSERVATION CORPS. Perry H. Merrill, Montpelier.

Owen, A.L. Riesch

- 1983 CONSERVATION UNDER FDR. Praeger, New York.

Paige, John C.

- 1985 THE CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS AND THE NATIONAL PARK  
SERVICE, 1933-1942: AN ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY. U.S.  
Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.

Sandhold, James

- 1989 Oral information concerning the development of Lake  
Keomah State Park by James Sandhold, Park Ranger, Lake  
Keomah State Park, Oskaloosa, Iowa (3/13).

Schlesinger, Arthur

- 1940 THE NEW DEAL IN ACTION, 1933-1939. MacMillan, New York.

Tweed, William C.

- 1977 National Park Service Rustic Architecture, 1916-1945.  
Ms. submitted by the National Park Service, Western  
Office, Cultural Resource Management. Ms. available from  
Midwestern Regional Office, National Park Service, Omaha.

U.S. Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works

- 1934 FINAL REPORT OF THE NATIONAL PLANNING BOARD. U.S.  
Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 4

CFN-259-1116

U.S. Federal Security Agency

1941 THE CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS AND PUBLIC RECREATION.  
U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C.

U.S. National Park Service (NPS)

1941 A STUDY OF THE PARK AND RECREATION PROBLEM OF THE UNITED STATES. U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C.

U.S. National Park Service (NPS), District Office

1933- Reports of district offices and inspectors concerning  
1937 State Park Emergency Conservation work for the Branch of Land Planning, Design, and State Cooperation. Arranged by district (Iowa) and then chronologically. Entry 39, RG79, U.S. National Archives, Washington, D.C.

U.S. National Park Service (NPS), Project Supervisor

1933- State park file: records relating to the CCC work  
1947 projects supervised by the Branch of Land Planning, Design, and State Cooperation. Records derived from regional offices of the National Park Service and the states. Arranged by state and camp. Boxes 71-88, Entry 37, RG79, U.S. National Archives, Washington, D.C.

U.S. National Park Service (NPS), Regional Office

1935- Reports of the regional office and inspectors concerning  
1937 state park ECW work submitted to the Branch of Land Planning, Design, and State Cooperation. Arranged by region (no. 6) and then chronologically. Entry 40, RG79, U.S. National Archives, Washington, D.C.

U.S. National Park Service (NPS), State Inspectors

1934- Inspection reports. Reports of investigation of state  
1939 and local park sites proposed for development under the CCC. Also reports on work progress and changes. Arranged alphabetically by state. Entry 64, RG79, U.S. National Archives, Washington, D.C.

Weibe, Robert H.

1967 THE SEARCH FOR ORDER, 1877-1920. Hilland Wang, New York.

Wirth, Conrad

1980 PARKS, POLITICS, AND PEOPLE. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 1

CFN-259-1116

## 10. Geographic Description

### Boundary Description:

Area A: Bathing and Lodge Area: The boundary begins at the extreme southeast corner of the parking lot associated with the bathhouse. It travels from that exterior corner due east to the lake and then north and west along the point of land to a location due west and slightly north of the bathhouse on its opposite side. One segment of the park road ends at this location. From this point, the boundary travels due east, skirts the outside edge of a parking lot and continues east along the north edge of a multi-use trail to a north-south multi-use trail. The boundary follows its north edge to a point just east of the northeast corner of the parking lot. The boundary then follows the east edge of the parking lot to the point of beginning.

Area B: Erosion Control: The boundary surrounding the two check dams lies 50 feet northeast and southwest of the outside edge of both dams and 30 feet northwest and southeast of the outside edge of these dams.

### Boundary Justification:

The boundary for area A is drawn to exclude as many recent intrusions as possible such as picnic shelters, roads, and parking lots and encompass the surrounding setting including the point of land associated with the resources in area A. It thus includes the beach and wooded areas surrounding the bathhouse and lodge. The boundaries for area B include part of the associated drainage adjacent to the two check dams.

The two areas are placed within a single discontinuous district to interrelate the CCC resources constructed in the park thus associating them with the park's historical development. This approach also related the activities of one or several CCC companies. It allows an overall impression of CCC work in the park 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.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 10 Page 2

CFN-259-1116

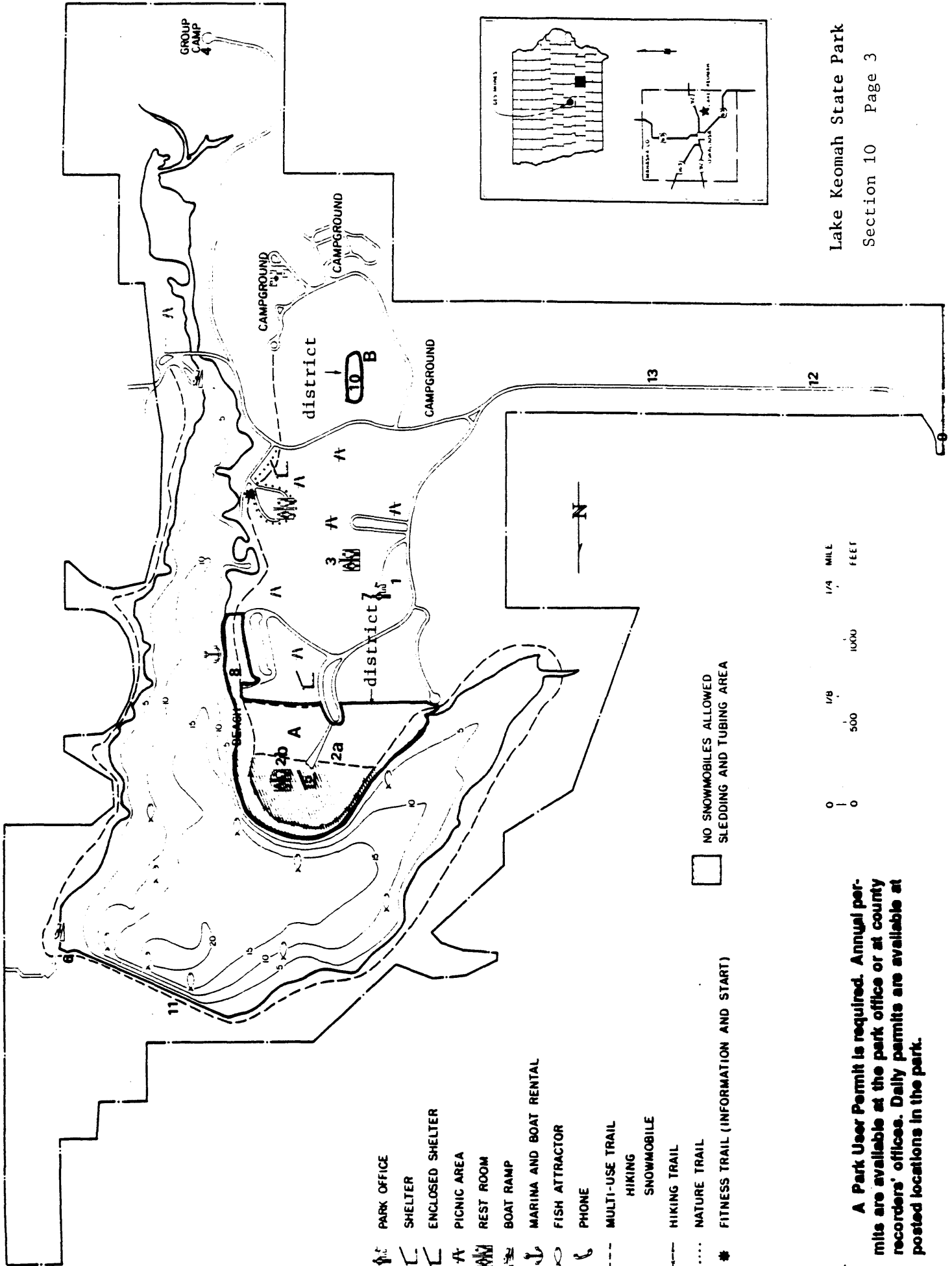
**UTM References:**

**Area A:**

A. 15-4570770-538540	B. 15-4570760-538500	C. 15-4571160-538510
D. 15-4571080-538330	E. 15-4570920-538230	F. 15-4570900-538360
G. 15-4570950-538390	H. 15-4570910-538440	I. 15-4570950-538510

**Area B:**

J. 15-4570300-538340



- PARK OFFICE
- SHELTER
- ENCLOSED SHELTER
- PICNIC AREA
- REST ROOM
- BOAT RAMP
- MARINA AND BOAT RENTAL
- FISH ATTRACTOR
- PHONE
- MULTI-USE TRAIL
- HIKING SNOWMOBILE
- HIKING TRAIL
- NATURE TRAIL
- FITNESS TRAIL (INFORMATION AND START)

NO SNOWMOBILES ALLOWED  
SLEDDING AND TUBING AREA

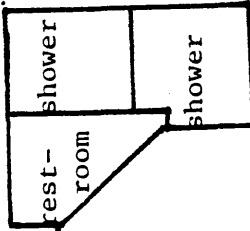
0 0 500 1000 1/4 MILE  
0 0 500 1000 FEET

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

41' - 10.5"

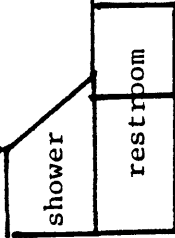
21'

Women's Dressingroom



22' 7.5"

Basket Room



31' 7.5"

34' 7.5"

Men's Dressingroom

23'

Boat Storage  
(food concession)

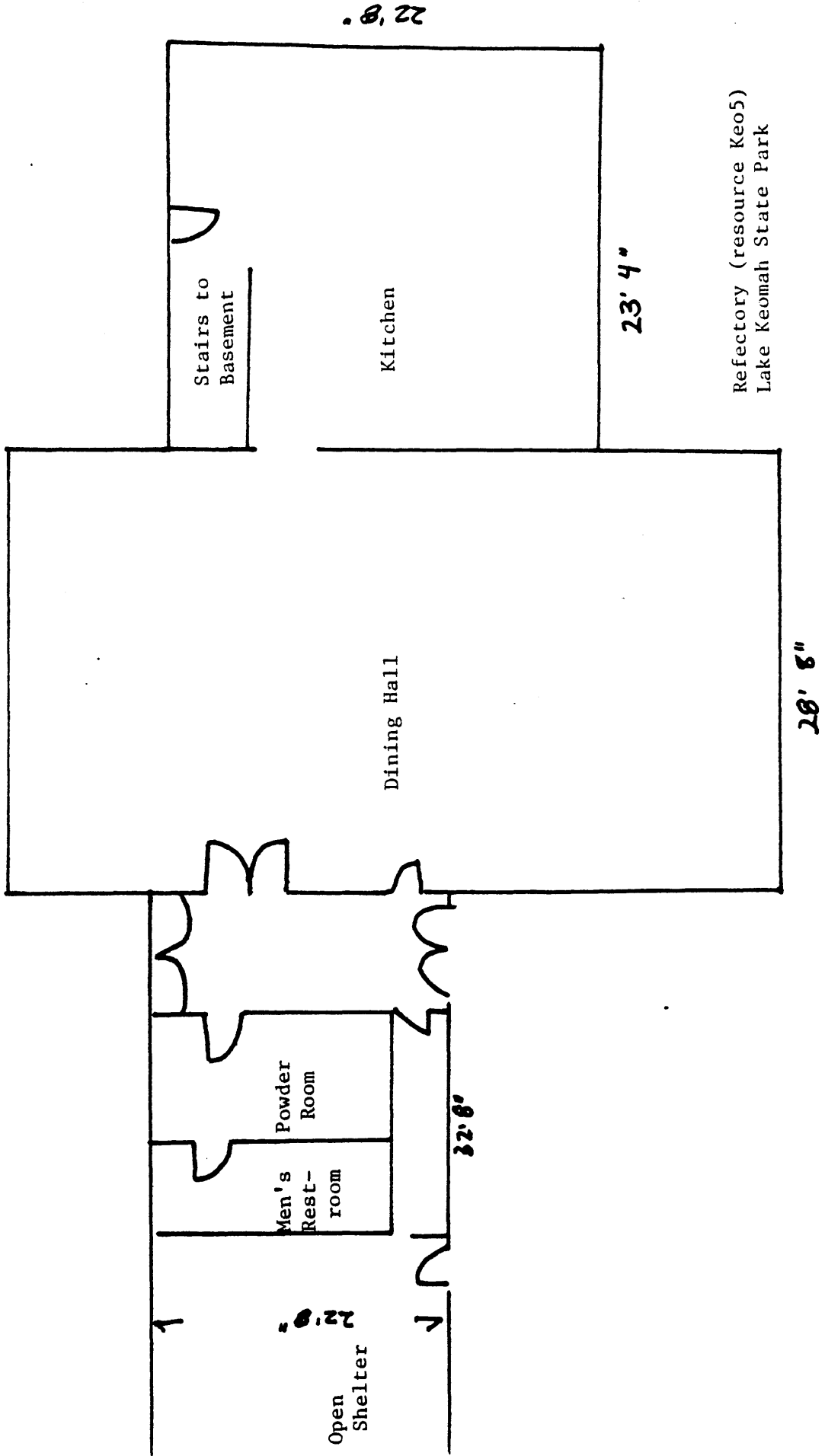
25'

19' 6"

28'



Bathroom (resource Keo8)  
Lake Keomah State Park



Refectory (resource Keo5)  
Lake Keomah State Park

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number photo Page 1

CFN-259-1116

### Photographic Identification

Name: Lake Keomah State Park  
Location: Oskaloosa, Mahaska County, Iowa  
Negative: Bureau of Historic Preservation, State Historical Society  
of Iowa  
Photographer: Ken Hyman  
Date: February 18, 1989

### Description:

- \*1. View of the south facade of the lodge (KE05) facing north.
- \*2. View of the north facade of the lodge (KE05) facing south.
- \*3. View of the bathhouse (KE08) facing east.
- \*4. View of the bathhouse (KE08) facing west.
- \*5. View of one (KE02b) of two latrines associated with the lodge facing northeast.
6. View of one of two check dams (KE010) facing southeast.

\* Only these photographs have been submitted with this nomination.