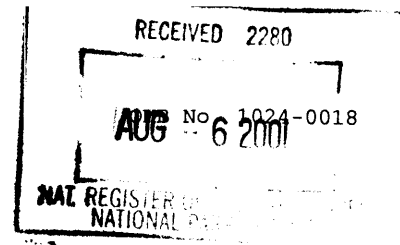


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

1014

1. Name of Property

historic name: Eagle Guard Station

other name/site number: 24BW74

2. Location

street & number: Townsend Ranger District, Helena National Forest, USDA Forest Service

city/town: Townsend

vicinity: X

state: Montana

code: MT

county: Broadwater

code: ~~063~~ 007

zip code: 59644

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Signature of certifying official: Mark F. Baumber

Date: 7/11/2001

Montana State Historic Preservation Office

State or Federal agency or bureau

(See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

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

Signature of commenting or other official: William D. Beckey

Date: 7/26/01

USDA Forest Service Northern Region

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. 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 see continuation sheet
- removed from the National Register see continuation sheet
- other (explain)

Signature of the Keeper

Entered in the National Register

Date of Action

9/20/01

5. Classification

Ownership of Property:	Public-Federal	Number of Resources within Property	
Category of Property:	Building	Contributing	Noncontributing
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register:	n/a	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u> building(s)
		<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> sites
		<u>0</u>	<u>2</u> structures
		<u>0</u>	<u>0</u> objects
Name of related multiple property listing:	n/a	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u> TOTAL

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions: DOMESTIC/single dwelling **Current Functions:** GOVERNMENT/natural resource management
 GOVERNMENT/Forest Service guard station

7. Description

Architectural Classification: OTHER/Vernacular

Materials:

foundation: STONE; WOOD/Log

walls: WOOD/Log

roof: WOOD/Shingle

other:

Narrative Description

Eagle Guard Station is a historic administrative facility owned by the U.S.D.A. Forest Service, Northern Region, Helena National Forest. It is located in the Elkhorn Mountains of west-central Montana, approximately 11 miles due west of the community of Townsend, Montana. It sits in a grassy basin above Eagle Creek, a seasonal tributary of Crow Creek, at the transition between low elevation grasslands dotted with juniper and sage and higher elevation Douglas-fir forest. Forest Service roads access Eagle Guard Station from the south via Crow Creek (FS Road #424) and west via Indian Creek (FS Road #4031). Both roads are part of the scenic automobile route through the south Elkhorn Mountains.

This historic administrative site dates back to 1895. It is composed of a single story three-room log cabin, corral, tack shed, woodshed, and outhouse. It is enclosed by a rustic jackleg pole fence, which is gated at the entry. Pole horse corrals and a loading chute are situated near the gate, directly west and across from the cabin. A small tack shed made of wood planks sits just south of and adjacent to the corrals. The outhouse was constructed with materials salvaged from the original site during the Eagle Guard Station restoration project in 1989. It lies between the tack shed and the cabin, to the east. A small plank-sided woodshed, which was built by the Forest Service in 1989, is located east of the cabin and is always stocked with a supply of firewood for use in either the cabin's wood-burning stove (not original) or in the outdoor fire pit located between the wood shed and the tack shed.

The Elkhorn Mountains are composed of a thick sequence of metasedimentary and volcanic rocks that have been folded, faulted and cut by rhyolitic rocks. Mountain ridges and intervening valleys trend north to south. The mountain range varies in elevation from 3,800 to 9,400 feet above sea level. Six main drainages, including Crow Creek just south of Eagle Guard Station, flow from Elkhorns and eventually reach the Missouri River. A local "rain shadow effect" in the Elkhorns causes ample precipitation to fall on the west flanks of the mountain range but creates more arid conditions in the intermountain valleys to the east, particularly in the Crow Creek drainage below Eagle Guard Station. The historic Park-

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Indian Creek mining district lies on the east flanks of the Elkhorn Mountains in the Indian Creek drainage. Although the mining district is not considered National Register eligible due to lack of integrity, its once prolific placer and dredge operations produced abundant ore valued chiefly for its gold content.

Integrity

The physical landscape surrounding Eagle Guard Station looks much the same as when Dick Owen and Jack Wilson constructed their cabin 1895. The vegetation communities are nearly identical and the panoramic view from the doorway, windows, and yard has largely been unmodified since Owen's and Wilson's time. Even the access road from across Eagle Creek Drainage remains rustic and hidden from the cabin site, despite the general improvement of roads across the Elkhorns and Helena National Forest. Vehicles can be heard coming and going but they are hidden from view. The trailhead located just north of the cabin accesses historic cabins in the Tizer Basin, and once connected to Eagle Guard Station through a grounded telephone line in the early part of the century (1911-1950s). The historic trailhead and trail system remain intact.

Throughout its history, Eagle Guard Station has been variously modified to meet the changing economic and social patterns and land-use needs. The tack shed, re-built on-site by a local rancher under the authority of a Special Use Permit in the 1920s, and the corrals (which were later improved by the Forest Service) compliment the historic cabin in both rustic design and materials. In 1989, the cabin was completely restored to its original, 1930-1950's Forest Service guard station appearance. The outhouse and woodshed were built "in-kind" with materials salvaged during the 1989 cabin restoration project. Overall, despite its long history of use, Eagle Guard Station retains a very high degree of physical, visual and aesthetic integrity.

Description of Resources

Cabin

Eagle Creek cabin is a one-story log building measuring 46' by 14' 6" in plan dimension. It is composed of three rooms resting on sill logs and a foundation of hand-stacked fieldstone and dirt backfill. Hard rock miners Dick Owen and Jack Wilson built the cabin in 1895. They worked at the Hassel Mine, five miles away, and used a crosscut saw and team of oxen or horses to haul the enormous Douglas fir and ponderosa pine logs from nearby Eureka Creek. Each log is in one continuous un-peeled piece, averaging 46 feet in length and 14 inches in diameter. The notching was performed with a broadax in a "V" or "Cathedral" style, and the original felling scars from cutting the trees were not trimmed from the ends of the logs.

One of the most unique features of the cabin is its double-roof design. The sod roof is constructed on four log gables, two purlins and one ridgepole, all made of unpeeled Douglas fir. Roof decking consists of a double coursing of rough-cut Douglas fir planking, with dirt and sod applied to the top for weatherproofing. In 1911, shortly after the government took possession of the cabin, a new roof was constructed directly over the original. The sod roof is still intact. The cabin's high degree of historic integrity is partly attributable to the double-roof design. A dormer was constructed over the middle room/kitchen to provide interior light over the cook stove. A galvanized storm cap was also added.

The chinking on the cabin provides some detail about the cabin's careful construction. The simple mud daubing used by Owen and Wilson can still be seen on the cabin's west wall. Since that time, lime masonry has been applied, but the texture is noticeably different at various locations along the interior and exterior logs, reflecting different consistencies (and different eras) in the use of Portland/lime daubing mixture. The western-most room retains the earliest generation of Owen's mud daub chinking. The original mud daub chinking can also be seen on the exterior. This remnant of original chinking, and the fact that the wall logs fit so tightly together, suggests that little time or expense was required to repair chinking throughout the cabin's history.

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The middle room/kitchen (14' 4" by 14' 6") had a built-in root cellar, which apparently took advantage of snowdrifts that built up along the north wall of cabin. This room also has one 4' by 2' south window, an exterior door, and one interior door adjoining the kitchen with the east room. The east room (14' by 14' 6") has a 1' by 2' east window and one south exterior door. The south wall of this room also has an 18" by 20" pass-through telephone box, installed after the Forest Service administrative withdrawal of the property. A patchwork of rough-tooled Portland cement or coarse-grained lime-masonry mixture can be seen in various areas on the building exterior.

Another unique architectural feature of the cabin is its axe-hewn wall logs flattened only on the interior side. Also, "relief cuts" or incisions made on the hewn surface of the west interior walls helped reduce bowing of the logs. The entire interior of the cabin has split log sections inserted between the wall logs--an original wall treatment by Dick Owens. Each room still has (presumably the original) stovepipes but only the middle room/kitchen currently has a wood-burning stove. All three rooms have original wood floor planking. This building is in excellent condition, retains superb historic integrity, and is a contributing resource to the Eagle Guard Station site.

Tack Shed

The tack shed is located in the southwest corner of the fenced compound. It measures 15'x18' and is constructed of rough-sawn 8" board planking. This building was originally located approximately fifteen miles away, near the tiny community of Radersburg. It was dismantled, hauled and rebuilt at the site of Eagle Guard Station in the 1920s by an area rancher under Special Use Permit authorization¹. The original stairway supports can still be seen on the building interior. Although the original appearance of this small out-building is unknown, it is over 50 years old and has not been appreciably modified since it was rebuilt for use at Eagle cabin. For this reason, the tack shed is considered to be a contributing resource.

Pole Fence and Corrals

The jackleg fence encloses approximately five acres of the Eagle Guard Station complex. It is gated with a drive-through double gate just west of the cabin. The total perimeter of this fence is 810 feet, with jackleg supports every sixteen feet. Two sets of corrals share the west edge of this fence. Although the fence adds to the rustic character of the site, it is recent addition to the site and is considered to be a non-contributing resource.

The first set of corrals measure approximately 20' x 20', and is accessible from outside of the fenced complex near the drive-through gate. These were constructed during the Eagle Guard Station restoration project as a convenience for people using the nearby trailheads and hitching posts located about 500 meters southwest of the complex. Because of their recent age, the public corrals considered to be a non-contributing resource.

The second set of corrals (which may be part of the original corrals) and pole loading chute are located just inside and south of the drive-through gate. These corrals have been constantly improved in order to meet safety requirements and provide an adequate area for both Forest Service and public stock. In view of these various modifications, they are considered to be a non-contributing resource.

¹ Al Adams, interview with Janis Bouma, U.S. Forest Service District Archaeologist, Townsend, Montana, July, 1999.

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Outhouse

The outhouse is located near the eastern perimeter of the complex and measures 4' x 6'. It is constructed of rough-sawn planking salvaged during the 1989 cabin restoration project. It is unknown whether this present outhouse is in the location of the original privy. This rustic but recently built outhouse is a non-contributing resource.

Woodshed

The woodshed is located approximately fifteen feet north of the outhouse, between the cabin and outhouse, and measures 12' x 8'. It was constructed of rough-sawn lumber during the 1989 Eagle Guard Station Restoration Project, and is therefore a non-contributing resource.

Group Area: Fire pit and Benches

This structure/feature is located approximately 60 feet east of the Forest Service corrals and loading chute. It consists of a modern fire pit encircled by several 10' log and plank benches. It encompasses an approximate 30' by 20' area. The fire pit and benches were constructed during the 1989 Eagle Guard Station Restoration Project. This outdoor campfire area is popular congregating spot for people renting or using Eagle cabin for recreational (rental, interpretive programs) and administrative purposes. However, because of its recent age, it is a non-contributing resource.

Modifications

Eagle Guard Station Restoration Project: 1989

In 1989, the original cabin foundation made of fieldstone was replaced with concrete curbing and columns to stabilize the settling cabin and prevent infestation by vermin. The floors were replaced by carefully numbering and reusing the original planking and as many of the original floor joists as possible. Wall logs on the north side exhibiting advanced decay from contact with the original root cellar (no longer extant) were replaced using local logs in the same style as the original logs. Windows and doors were repaired after careful removal and re-glazing. The outer roof sheathing was replaced, leaving the original sod roof and structural elements intact. Clear (Number 1) cedar shingles were used because of their quarter-sawn characteristics. The original galvanized storm cap was replaced, and copper flashing was used. Outside chinking was patched using the same materials as the original lime masonry where necessary, and a new jackleg pole fence was constructed around the property. The outhouse was restored with salvaged original materials, and a new corral was constructed adjacent to the original (but modified) corrals.²

² Bernie Weisgerber and Dale Swee, Report: Historical Presevation Project, Eagle Guard Station, Townsend Ranger District, Helena National Forest. U.S.D.A. Forest Service, Helena National Forest. 1992.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria: A and C

Areas of Significance: INDUSTRY; AGRICULTURE;
GOVERNMENT; ARCHITECTURE

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): n/a

Periods of Significance: 1895-1950

Significant Persons: n/a

Significant Dates: 1895, 1913

Cultural Affiliation: n/a

Architect/Builder: Dick Owen, Jack Wilson

Narrative Statement of Significance

Eagle Guard Station stands as testament to the rich and colorful historic past of the Elkhorn Mountains and their surrounding valleys. The property meets Criterion (A) because of its association with the broad patterns of local history in west-central Montana and the Elkhorn Mountains, including: 1) the early years of placer and lode mining; 2) homesteading and ranching; and 3) the early years of the Forest Service when forest fire protection and range management were the fledgling agency's primary responsibility and activity. Eagle cabin is also significant under Criterion (C) as a representation of early rustic (vernacular) log architecture in this area of Montana. The cabin is atypical of most early miner's cabins, which were built quickly and crudely. Instead, the Eagle cabin exhibits a high level of artistic craftsmanship, especially in roof and wall treatment.

There are only a few surviving cabins on the Helena National Forest, and in the Elkhorn Mountains in particular, that so poignantly reflect these eras of hard work and remote, outdoor living. Eagle cabin witnessed the passing of the mining heydays of the late nineteenth century. During the early days of Montana ranching, riders for the Crow Creek and Indian Creek Livestock Associations used the cabin and corrals as a line camp, especially during roundups. The rustic log cabin saw several generations of Forest Service rangers, forest fire patrols, and trail crews walk in and out of its doors on their way to the three other guard stations in the area. These other stations were oriented on a southeast-northwest line from Toston, Montana, through the community of Radersburg, and into the Tizer Basin in the high Elkhorns. Forest Rangers stayed at the site on a regular basis while tackling the tough job of enforcing homesteading and mining laws and livestock grazing policy among far-flung and independent-minded Montanans. Eagle Guard Station has always served as a recreational stop for locals heading for the high country in the Elkhorns to hike, camp, fish or hunt big game. The Eagle Guard Station restoration was the inaugural project of what has become known as the Region 1 Historic Preservation Team, a group that has since won recognition nation-wide for their work with historic log buildings. In essence, one small cabin in the backwoods of the Elkhorn Mountains has been silent witness to a significant amount of local Montana history.

Placer operations in the Park-Indian Creek Mining District began in 1866 and yielded gold and other precious metals for nearly twenty years. The mining town of St. Louis, later renamed Hassel, boomed following the discovery of gold in the Elkhorn Mountains. Though never more than a several hundred people inhabited this town, it remained an active gold camp during the early placer period, as were the nearby camps of Hog'em, Cheat'em, and Rob'em³. Miners Dick Owen and Jack Wilson were attracted to the gold fields, and worked the mines in the town of St. Louis (Hassel). The two miners constructed the cabin that later became Eagle Guard Station in 1895. It was located within close proximity of the mines, yet far enough away to afford privacy for Owen's wife. It also enabled the partners to stake more mining claims in the Eagle and Crow Creek drainages.

Livestock grazing has been a traditional economic activity in the Elkhorns Mountains since the 1860's. Area ranchers supplied the hungry mining camps and local communities with beef, mutton and lamb. The abundant grasslands surrounding Eagle Guard Station provided ample summer pasture, and, following its abandonment by Owen in 1903, the cabin served as a line camp for cowboys tending cattle herds in the Elkhorns. In 1913, the 90 acres encompassing the

³ Mary Horstman, "Park-Indian Creek Mining District"

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cabin, corrals and outbuildings was formally withdrawn from private ownership and became part of the Helena National Forest. The property was officially designated Eagle Guard Station and became one of four key administrative facilities in the Elkhorn Mountains. Until the advent of aerial surveillance in the 1950's, Eagle Guard Station played a crucial role in fire forest detection and protection. It also served as a field station for the administration of grazing and mining permits, and the maintenance of administrative-recreation trails. Remote outposts such as Eagle Guard Station declined in importance and use in the 1950's with the "modernization" of the Forest Service (i.e., better roads, vehicles, communication systems, fire detection technology) and changing management priorities that seemingly emphasized commodity production over resource protection.

In recent years, the advent of more holistic "ecosystem management" in the Forest Service has revitalized the agency's original mission of resource stewardship. Recreation and historic preservation are now considered important aspects of the agency's public mission. In 1989, Eagle Guard Station was restored to its original condition and has since become an important Forest Service administrative site again. The Guard Station offers trail crews, range conservationists, archaeologists and other employees welcome respite after a long day's work. The facility is also part of the agency's popular cabin rental program during the winter months and affords opportunities for winter hiking, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing in a remote mountain setting. Nearby hiking and equestrian trails access Poe Park, Longfellow Park, and Tizer Basin during the summer months. During the summer, Forest Service volunteers and employees provide guided interpretive tours and campfire talks about a variety of natural and cultural resource topics. Eagle cabin is popular choice for artists participating in the Forest's Artist-In-Residence program. Year-round, the cabin provides spectacular views of the Elkhorn Mountains and the Missouri River valley and a feeling of remoteness, peace and tranquility for all who stay there.

Historical Era of the Property:

Eagle Guard Station shares its history with the American Indian peoples who once inhabited the Elkhorn Mountains. Some of the oldest prehistoric occupation sites, quarries, and campsites in Montana are located in the Elkhorn Mountains and in the immediate vicinity of Eagle station.⁴ Euroamerican explorers and pioneers traveled the Elkhorn Mountain Range and the Missouri Valley, including Lewis and Clark in 1805, and General Thomas James in 1810 while conducting a fur trapping expedition. Records from these expeditions describe the mountains and valleys surrounding today's location of Eagle Guard Station as: "Realizing all my conceptions of the Garden of Eden..." and the mountains as "dark with buffalo, elk, moose, deer, wild goats and sheep; some grazing; some lying down under the trees and all enjoying a perfect millennium of peace and quiet."⁵ With this historical (and aesthetic) backdrop in mind, three overlapping time periods of significance are directly relevant to Eagle Guard Station's place in Montana history:

⁴ George C. Knight, Overview: Ecological and Cultural Prehistory of the Helena and Deerlodge National Forests, Helena National Forest Supervisor's Office, Helena, Montana, 1989.

⁵ Elsie Ralls and M.W. Fairchild, "Broadwater County," unpublished paper on file at the Broadwater County Historical Society, Townsend, Montana and the Montana Historical Society Archives Vertical Files. 1930.

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Homestead/Ranching Era

The cattle industry in Montana began with travel across the Oregon Trail and its many side-routes beginning in the 1840s. Father Jean Pierre DeSmet introduced farming into what became Montana Territory in the Bitterroot Valley in 1842. In the 1860s and 1870s the livestock producers of Montana Territory supplied prospectors and mining camps, military posts, and freighting companies with meat and teams, in addition to assisting travelers. The first homestead in Montana Territory was patented in 1875 in the Prickly Pear Valley near Clancy, now located within the boundaries of the Elkhorn Mountains and Elkhorn Management Unit of the U.S. Forest Service.⁶

Records show grazing use as far back as the 1860s in Eagle Creek, Crow Creek, and Indian Creek. Benjamin Townsley is listed as running cattle and horses on Crow Creek (near Eagle Creek) in 1868. J.A. Gravely used Eagle Creek for grazing livestock in the late 1800s, and a Beckwith and Brown are listed as utilizing the Crow Creek area sometime between 1884 and 1904.⁷ During this Homestead/Ranching Era the property surrounding the cabin served area cattlemen while riding the range and during livestock roundups.⁸

The original 90 acres of the property included in the Forest Service withdrawal of 1913 was classified as pastureland. Several local ranchers made use of the Eagle cabin under the legal authority of a Special Use Permit. Riders from the Crow Creek and Indian Creek Livestock Associations used the cabin and corrals from its early years until the 1970s.⁹ Old cowboys still living in the area remember using the cabin and outbuildings during roundup, and the westernmost room (the only one with no connection to the other rooms) was used to store salt and gear. The riders also developed a spring near the corrals that no longer exists.¹⁰

Mining Era:

Gold was discovered in nearby Montana City in 1862, and in Helena in 1864. Prospectors began to "comb the hills" in search of their fortunes. Placer mining began in the 1860s along Crow Creek and Indian Creek, near Eagle Guard Station. Lode claims were also discovered during this period. Seven distinct mining districts operated in the Elkhorn Mountains from the 1860s to the early 1900s, including Winston (Beaver Creek), Park (the Hassel Mine, where Owen and Wilson worked), Radersburg, Tizer-Wilson Creek (named after Jack Wilson), Elkhorn, Clancy, and Wickes.¹¹ It was during this era that Dick Owen and Jack Wilson constructed the cabin that later became Eagle Guard Station.

⁶ Barb Springer Beck, Historical Overview of the Helena and Deerlodge National Forests. Helena National Forest Supervisor's Office, Helena, Montana, 1985.

⁷ Montana Writers Project, Reels 1, 2, 4, 9. Reel 15: "Livestock History of Broadwater County," "Biography of Jacob Titman," "Biography of Benjamin Townsley." Located at the Montana Historical Society Archives, MF250, various dates.

⁸ Charlotte Ragen, family are longtime area residents, Charlotte is niece of one of the original Crow Creek Riders. Interview with Janis Bouma, U.S. Forest Service District Archaeologist, Townsend, Montana, July, 1999.

⁹ J.D. Wamu, Deputy Forest Supervisor, Improvement Memorandum to John Frey, Assistant Forest Ranger. File no. 7300-Withdrawals, Helena National Forest Supervisor's Office, Helena, Montana, June 12, 1911; Charles Lawson, Ranger, Report on Proposed Administrative Site, File no. 7300-Withdrawals, Helena National Forest Supervisor's Office, Helena, Montana, March 8, 1913; John Antonich, District Ranger, Maintenance Memorandum to Forest Supervisor, File no. 7300-Withdrawals, Helena National Forest Supervisor's Office, Helena, Montana, January 19, 1966; Wayne Phillips, History and Cultural Resources in the Elkhorn Planning Unit, Helena National Forest Supervisor's Office, Helena, Montana.

¹⁰ Charlotte Ragen, family are longtime area residents, Charlotte is niece of one of the original Crow Creek Riders. Interview with Janis Bouma, U.S. Forest Service District Archaeologist, Townsend, Montana, July, 1999.

¹¹ J.T. Pardee and F.C. Schrader, "Metalliferous Deposits of the Greater Helena Mining Region Montana." U.S.G.S. Bulletin 862, 1933; Barb Springer Beck, Historical Overview of the Helena and Deerlodge National Forests. Helena National Forest Supervisor's Office, Helena, Montana, 1985.

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Dick Owen was a Welshman born in Ridgeway, Wisconsin on April 6, 1853. He married Sarah Reese on December 14, 1881 in Ridgeway. Shortly after their daughter, Sadie, was born in 1891 he left his family and came west to work in the mines in the Radersburg area. He and his partner, Jack Wilson, began construction of the cabin during this time period. In 1895, during the cabin construction, Jack Wilson disappeared and was never seen again. Years later Forest Ranger Earl Welton found Wilson's rifle partially grown into a tree in a nearby drainage, known since as Wilson Creek.¹² An interesting note is the fact that the bottom two-thirds of the cabin shows a distinct difference in workmanship, possibly due to Wilson's sudden disappearance and absence from the construction project.

Owen was a local character, known to area residents as "Dirty Dick Owen". He earned his nickname because during the hot summers he would smear his hands and face with wagon axle grease to repel insects. Many locals remember him as "the dirtiest man they ever knew". His family came west in search of him shortly after or during the construction of the cabin. However, for whatever reasons, his wife and daughter would never live with him once they came west. Instead, his family chose to settle in the nearby gold boomtown of Radersburg, where Sarah Owen ran a boarding house. Sarah Owen died in 1932, and her daughter Sadie married a local rancher and remained in the Radersburg area. Her father lived in a small shack on her property until his death in 1934. Sadie (Owen) McMulan passed away in 1960. The family's headstones can still be seen in the Radersburg cemetery.¹³

The Forest Service Era

The first federal forest reserves were created in 1891 and active land management and protection began under the General Land Office in 1897. However, public domain lands comprising the present day Helena National Forest were not organized until 1900. The Elkhorn Forest Reserve was established by Secretary's Order as a temporary withdrawal on October 18, 1905. On March 4, 1907 the Elkhorn Forest Reserve became the Elkhorn National Forest, which was later transferred to the Helena National Forest by Executive Order on July 1, 1908. By the time the National Forest System was established, mining activity in the area had declined considerably in all the mining districts, although prospecting for mineral resources continues today. Early Forest Rangers spent most of their time administering livestock grazing and firefighting.

In 1913, the Eagle Guard Station was withdrawn from private ownership. The original withdrawal comprises 90 acres of land located E ½, NE ¼, of Section 32 and NW ¼, NW ¼, and NW ¼, of Section 33, T7N R1W M.P.M. At time of withdrawal, the property was used and improvements made by a local rancher named McMahan under Special Permit for pasture. The withdrawal plainly states the importance of the property to the Forest Service because of its accessibility to all parts of the District. It also questions Dick Owen's title to the house and stables due to his abandonment of the property in 1903.¹⁴

¹² Unknown newspaper clipping, Montana Historical Society Vertical Files, n.d.

¹³ Al Adams, interview with Earl Webb, longtime Radersburg resident and adopted son of Sadie Owen McMulan, Helena National Forest Supervisor's Office, 1989; "Rites for Richard Owen, Held Monday in Radersburg," Townsend Star, June 19, 1934, Montana Historical Society Archives, Vertical Files; Unknown newspaper clipping, Montana Historical Society Vertical Files, n.d.; Earl Webb, telephone interview with Ann Hubber, microfilm, Historical Research Associates, Inc., Missoula, Montana, 1990.

¹⁴ J.D. Wamu, Deputy Forest Supervisor, Improvement Memorandum to John Frey, Assistant Forest Ranger. File no. 7300-Withdrawals, Helena National Forest Supervisor's Office, Helena, Montana, June 12, 1911; Charles Lawson, Ranger, Report on Proposed Administrative Site, File no. 7300-Withdrawals, Helena National Forest Supervisor's Office, Helena, Montana, March 8, 1913; John Antonich, District Ranger, Maintenance Memorandum to Forest Supervisor, File no. 7300-Withdrawals, Helena National Forest Supervisor's Office, Helena, Montana, January 19, 1966; Wayne Phillips, History and Cultural Resources in the Elkhorn Planning Unit, Helena National Forest Supervisor's Office, Helena, Montana

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Eagle Guard Station is the oldest administrative site on the Helena National Forest. The cabin is shown as U.S. Forestry Quarters on a GLO plat map dated 1914 (survey date 1911-1912). The cabin became the property of the Federal Government at the creation of the Elkhorn Forest Reserve in 1905.¹⁵ This reserve later became the Elkhorn National Forest in 1907, and part of the Helena National Forest in 1908. In 1911, the Forest Service added the new roof.¹⁶ The cabin is listed as a "proposed administrative site" consisting of one three-room house, two stables, 100 rods of woven wire fence (built by the Forest Service), several corals, and 80 rods of pole fence (built by local rancher McMahan under Special Use Permit) in 1913. The document describing the change of ownership/administrative site proposal also mentions the abandonment of the property by Dick Owen in 1903, and attributes the stable (which is no longer exists) to Owen.¹⁷ Sometime later, a 22' by 17' 7" by 5' loading chute was added to the south corral, a 15' 3" by 18' 4" plank tack shed (planks 3" by 10") with an exterior door was moved from the Williams Ranch in Radersburg.¹⁸

Forest Service Rangers used Eagle Guard Station on a regular basis while inspecting numerous homesteads and mining claims in the area, and enforcing Forest Service grazing policy. Centrally located among a string of four cabins in the Tizer Basin of the Elkhorn Mountain Range, Eagle was an important part of wildfire detection and safety until the 1950s. A grounded-type telephone line connected Eagle Guard Station to the Radersburg Central Office and to the Tizer Basin. When not in use during the forest fire season, this telephone could be accessed and used free of charge from the inside or outside of the cabin through the cupboard housing it in the easternmost room.¹⁹ This cupboard is still intact on the south wall of the cabin.

World War II and the post-war boom brought about significant changes in the Forest Service. Airplanes, helicopters, four-wheel drive pickups, radios, field gear, and a host of other World War II technological innovations reduced or eliminated the roles that backwoods guard stations once played in fire detection and suppression, range and mining permit administration, and recreation management. Administration of remote parts the forest by horseback was still commonplace for range management but, overall, both the traditional Forest Ranger functions of the past, and supporting "infrastructure" of trails, cabins and corrals went by the wayside throughout the 1950's and 1960's. Eagle Guard Station met this fate and fell into gradual disuse by Forest Service employees beginning in the early 1950's. Cowboys, hunters, and hikers, however, continued to recognize the value of the place for their activities, which undoubtedly extended the use-life of the cabin into the 1980's, when it was essentially rescued by local Forest volunteers.

¹⁵ Wayne Phillips, History and Cultural Resources in the Elkhorn Planning Unit, Helena National Forest Supervisor's Office, Helena, Montana.

¹⁶ J.D. Wamu, Deputy Forest Supervisor, Improvement Memorandum to John Frey, Assistant Forest Ranger. File no. 7300-Withdrawals, Helena National Forest Supervisor's Office, Helena, Montana, June 12, 1911.

¹⁷ Charles Lawson, Ranger, Report on Proposed Administrative Site, File no. 7300-Withdrawals, Helena National Forest Supervisor's Office, Helena, Montana, March 8, 1913.

¹⁸ Al Adams, interview with Janis Bouma, U.S. Forest Service District Archaeologist, Townsend, Montana, July, 1999.

¹⁹ Al Adams, interview with Earl Webb, longtime Radersburg resident and adopted son of Sadie Owen McMulan, Helena National Forest Supervisor's Office, 1989; Barb Springer Beck, Historical Overview of the Helena and Deerlodge National Forests. Helena National Forest Supervisor's Office, Helena, Montana, 1985.

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Eagle Guard Station Restoration, 1989

In more recent Region 1-Forest Service history, the guard station gave rise to the Region 1 Historic Preservation Team. From the 1960s until 1989 the cabin was vacant and had fallen into disrepair—except for the elk hunters who made use of the cabin and corrals during the fall. In fact, it was at risk of being destroyed (as had been the fate of many such cabins over the past several decades) until 1989 when two Forest Service volunteers, Ben Mayger and Al Adams, suggested restoration to the Regional Historic Preservation Task Force and Glacier National Park restoration experts Frank Vitali and Cary King. The four then enlisted the leadership of Historic Preservation Engineer Bernie Weisgerber of the National Park Service, a graduate of the NPS Williamsport Preservation Training Center.²⁰ The Townsend Ranger District agreed that the project was worthy and provided funding, volunteers, and logistical support for the project. Records indicate that the Forest Service also pursued consultations with the Montana State Historic Preservation Office and other interested parties.

The Region 1 Historic Preservation Team was created and underwent training in Williamsport in anticipation of the Eagle Guard Station restoration project. The restoration crew, which included Forest Service employees and local volunteers, were trained in restoration with the philosophy of maintenance- “don’t overdo or overstate... leave as much of the original fabric as possible”. Upon completion, the Forest Service presented Mayger and Adams with Outstanding Service awards for their service and commitment to the Eagle Guard Station restoration efforts. Today, the cabin is embraced as vital part of the Townsend Ranger District and the restoration efforts there have provided model for similar historic cabin renovations on the Helena National Forest.

Architectural Significance

Eagle cabin is also significant under Criterion (C) as a representation of early rustic (vernacular) log architecture in this area of Montana. The cabin is atypical of most early miner’s cabins, which were built quickly and crudely—with an intended short use-life. Instead, the Eagle cabin exhibits a high level of artistic craftsmanship, especially in roof and wall treatment. The integrity of the building was clearly respected by the cowboys and forest rangers that occupied the cabin during the course of their outdoors work. The usual nails and spikes, carved initials, smoke damage and other signs of an under-appreciated building are notably absent at Eagle cabin. The cabin’s superior craftsmanship may have helped sway Forest Service managers from destroying it during the 1960’s and 1970’s. Integrity and craftsmanship undoubtedly played a role in the final Forest Service decision to restore the cabin in 1989. According to Historic Preservation Team member and restoration project leader, Bernie Weisgerber, the following construction details are readily visible evidence of the cabin’s high quality of craftsmanship:

1. The logs used in construction, including the sill, wall, ridgepole, and purlins are enormous Douglas fir, 46 feet long and up to 18 inches in diameter. The hewn logs on the interior side only (as opposed to both interior and exterior sides) is unique for this time period. Further, these huge Douglas fir log walls fit so tightly together given their enormous size and the fact that the bark was never peeled. In fact, the cabin may have been constructed with green logs.

²⁰ Bernie Weisgerber and Dale Swee, Report: Historical Preservation Project, Eagle Guard Station, Townsend Ranger District, Helena National Forest. U.S.D.A. Forest Service, Helena National Forest. 1992.

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2. The "relief cuts" incised into the interior wall logs in the west room is an old European design element, and one rarely seen in western primitive log architecture. These cuts are 6" vertical, axe cut incisions about 2" deep that serve to reduce outward bowing of the logs.
3. The cabin's double roof is still intact some 100 years after its construction. The original sod roof is low pitched and features a sod layer covering (still extant today). The Forest Service built a new roof over the original in 1911. This new roof is more steeply pitched and radically changes the outward appearance and design of the original cabin. The new roof is covered with cedar shingles and exhibits a unique (for this turn-of-the-century time period) design element: a dormer over the middle room/kitchen provided interior lighting over the cook stove. The rough craftsmanship of the original "soddy" and the finely built upper-shingled roof tells the story of a transition from an old homestead to an actively used administrative Guard Station.
4. Design elements typical of early homestead/mining-related cabins, but of superior quality, include: steep/Cathedral ("V") corner-notching; "choppers" or "felling scars" (from axe-falling the logs) on the ends of the wall logs; purlins that extend past the line of the walls, and step flashing along the upper roof and dormer.

The Eagle Guard Station meets the requirements for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion (A), as a property associated with events, activities, and broad patterns of local and regional history: turn-of-the-century mining, ranching, recreation and National Forest administration. It also qualifies under Criterion (C) because of its high degree of craftsmanship, unique architectural design elements, and natural and physical integrity. It is one of a handful of surviving Forest Service administrative cabins on the Helena National Forest. Eagle Guard Station is a local landmark, a testament to the rich historic past of the Elkhorn Mountains and surrounding valleys, and a direct physical link to the early history of west-central Montana.

Eagle Guard Station
Name of Property

Broadwater County, Montana
County and State

9. Major Bibliographic References

See continuation sheet

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 # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other -- Specify Repository:

10. Geographic Data

Acreage of Property: 90

UTM References: Zone: 12

	Easting	Northing
A:	442295	5130160
B:	442920	5130160
C:	442920	5129970
D:	442720	5129970
E:	442720	5129335
F:	442295	5129335

Legal Location (Township, Range & Section(s): Township 1 North, Range 7 East, E ½ NE ¼ of Section 32, NW ¼, NW ¼, NW ¼ of Section 33, Giant Hill Mine 7.5' USGS quadrangle map, see attached map.

Verbal Boundary Description

See attached USGS 7.5' quadrangle, showing location of the property, floor plans and work drawings, plan-view of property.

Boundary Justification

The boundary is drawn based on legally recorded boundary lands during withdrawal and conveyance to the Forest Service.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Janis L. Bouma and Carl M. Davis, Helena National Forest heritage resource specialists
organization: USDA Forest Service
street & number: 2880 Skyway Drive
city or town: Helena state: MT

date: August, 2000
telephone: (406) 449-5201, extension 280
zip code: 59601

Property Owner

name/title: USDA Forest Service, Region 1, Helena National Forest
street & number: 2880 Skyway Drive
city or town: Helena state: MT

telephone: (406) 449-5201
zip code: 59601

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Ragen, Charlotte (family longtime area residents and niece of one of the original Crow Creek Riders)

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1990 Telephone Interview with Ann Hubber, June 14, 1990. On File (microfilm) with Historical Research Associates, Inc. Missoula, Montana.

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PHOTOGRAPHS

The photographs included with this nomination show the pertinent features of the Eagle Guard Station property and cabin, and the historic landscape, and reflect the post-restoration condition of the property as of May 2000.

Photographer: Janis Bouma

Date: May 15, 2000

Negatives: Helena National Forest Supervisor's Office

<u>Photo Number</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	Overview of Eagle Guard Station, looking south
2	Overview of corrals looking southeast
3	Historic landscape surrounding station, to the south
4	Outhouse, woodshed, firepit and tack shed looking south
5	Eagle Guard Station, south elevation
6	Eagle Guard Station, north elevation
7	Eagle Guard Station, east elevation
8	Eagle Guard Station, west elevation
9	Eagle Guard Station, south elevation with telephone door
10	Eagle Guard Station, north elevation with root cellar door
11	Eagle Guard Station, southeast corner
12	Dick Owen, original builder and owner of cabin

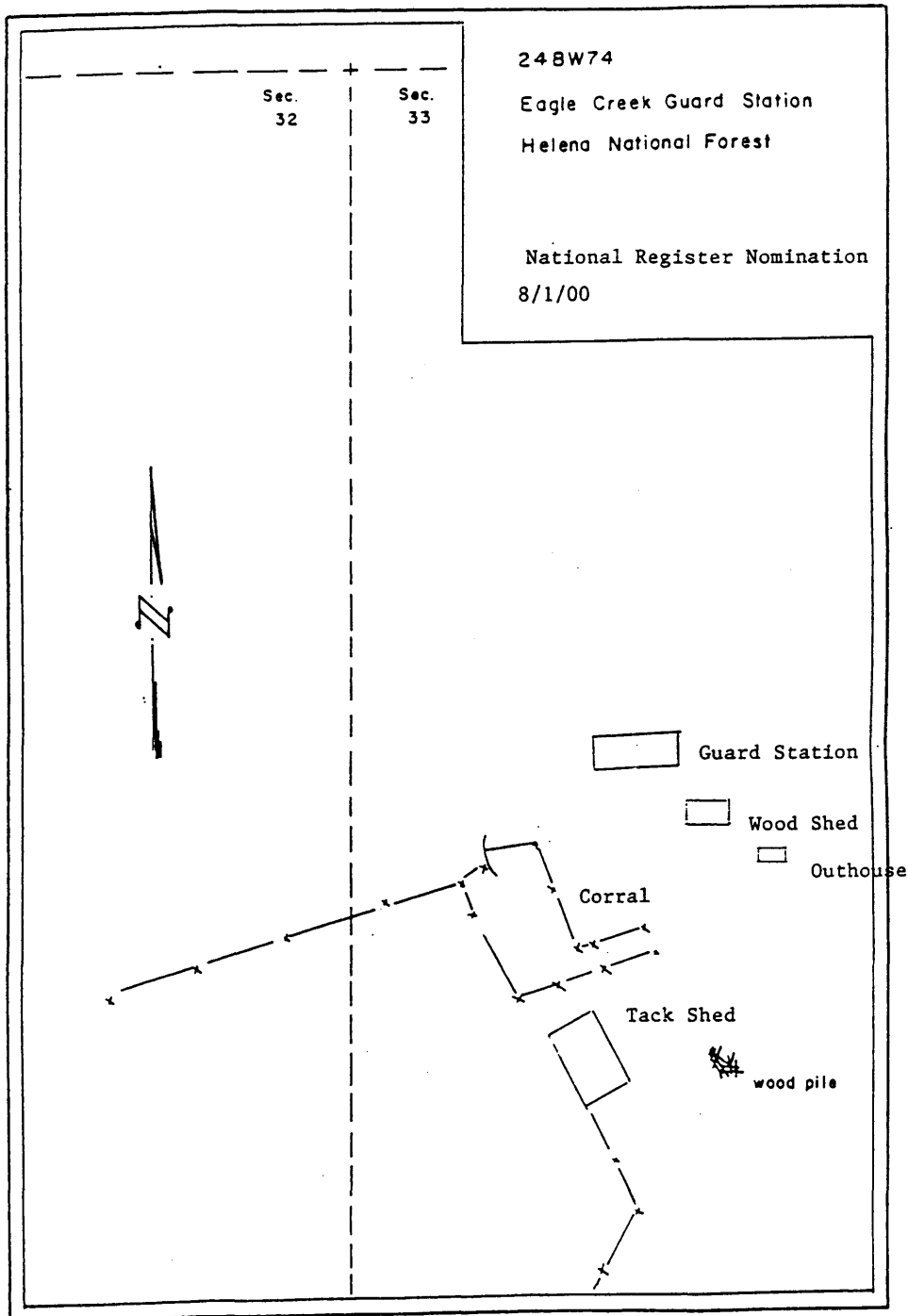
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Site Map

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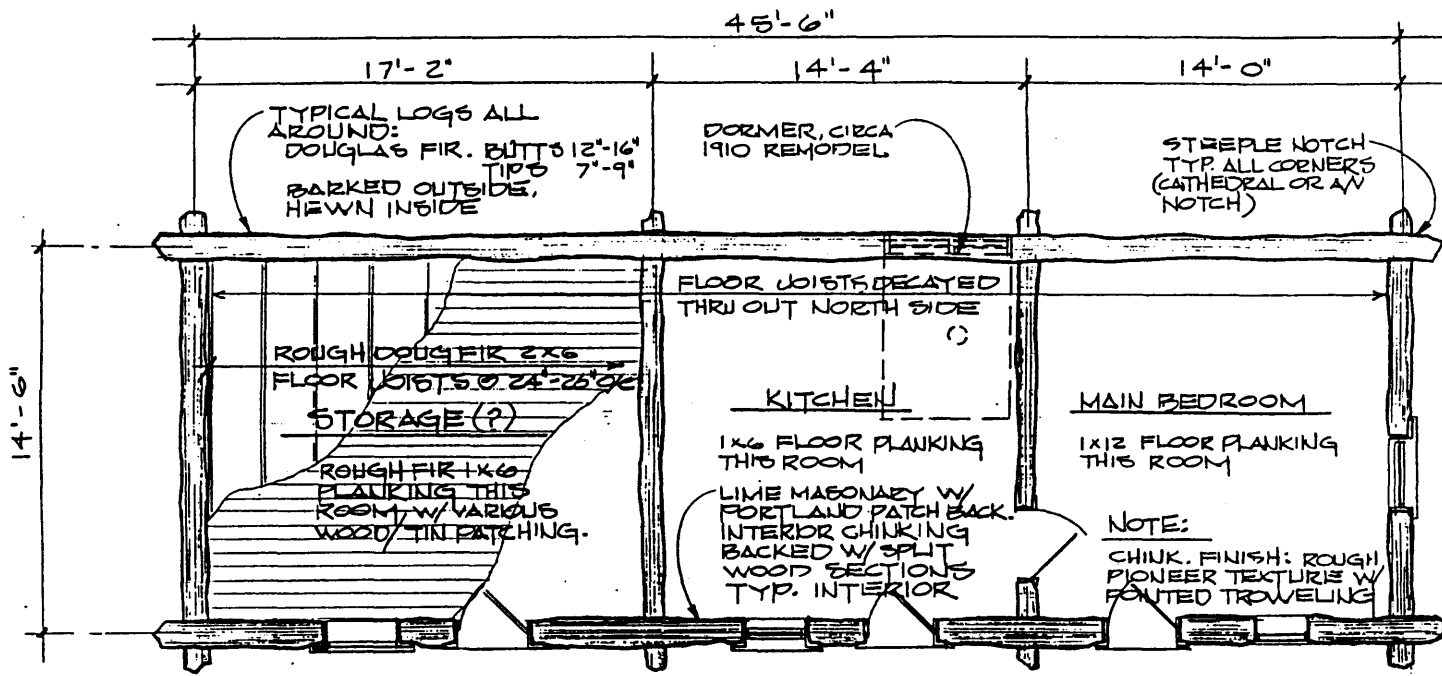
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FLOOR PLAN, AS EXISTS
1/8" = 1'-0" ±

SHEET NO.	WORKING DRAWINGS FOR YELLOWSTONE LOG RESTORATION BOZEMAN, MONTANA	STABILIZATION OF EAGLE STATION TOWNSEND DIST. HELENA NATIONAL FOREST

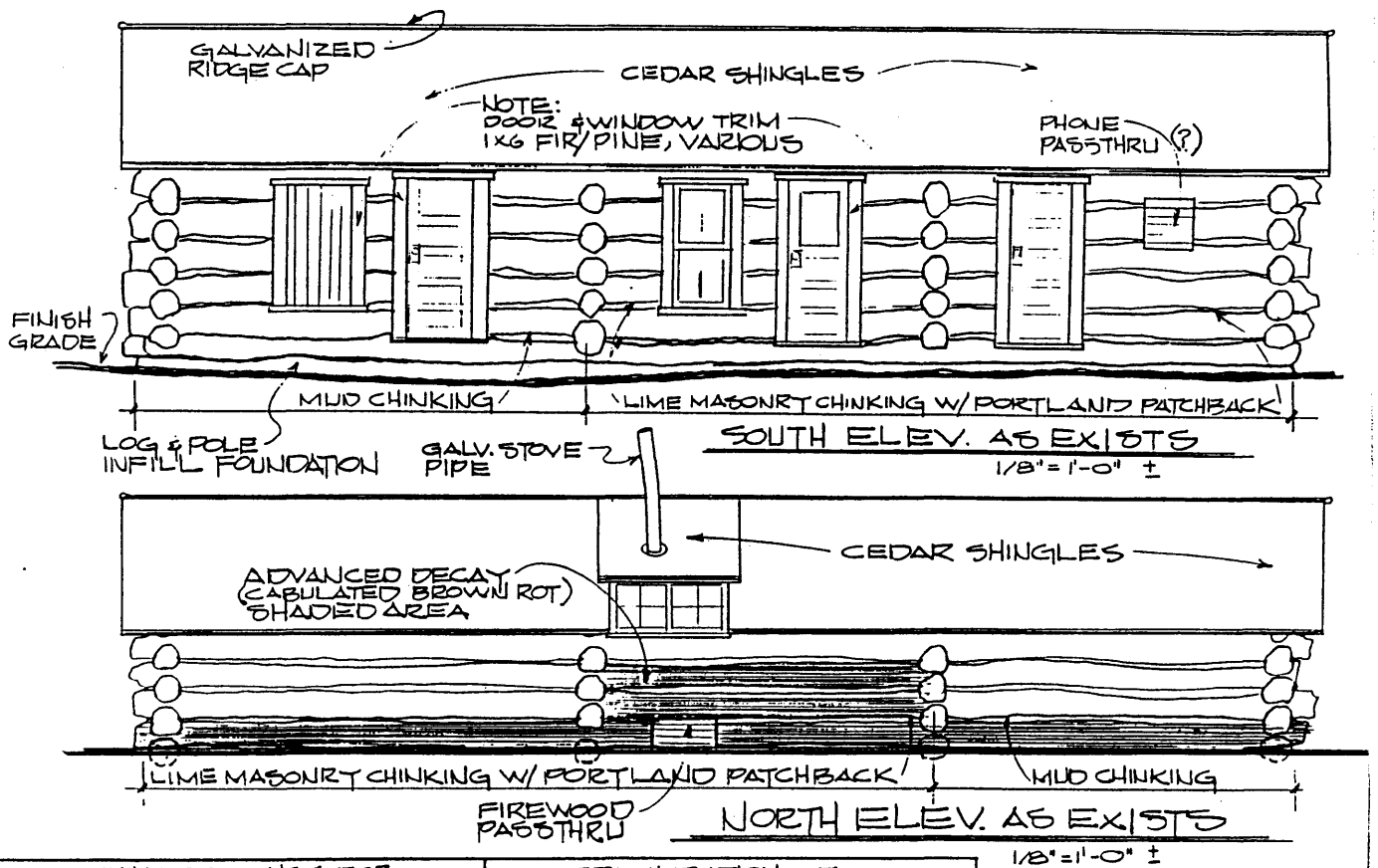
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Building Plans

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SHEET NO. 12	WORKING DRAWINGS FOR	STABILIZATION OF
	YELLOWSTONE LOG RESTORATION	EAGLE STATION
	BOZEMAN, MONTANA	TOWNSEND DIST. HELENA NATIONAL FOREST

(8-86)

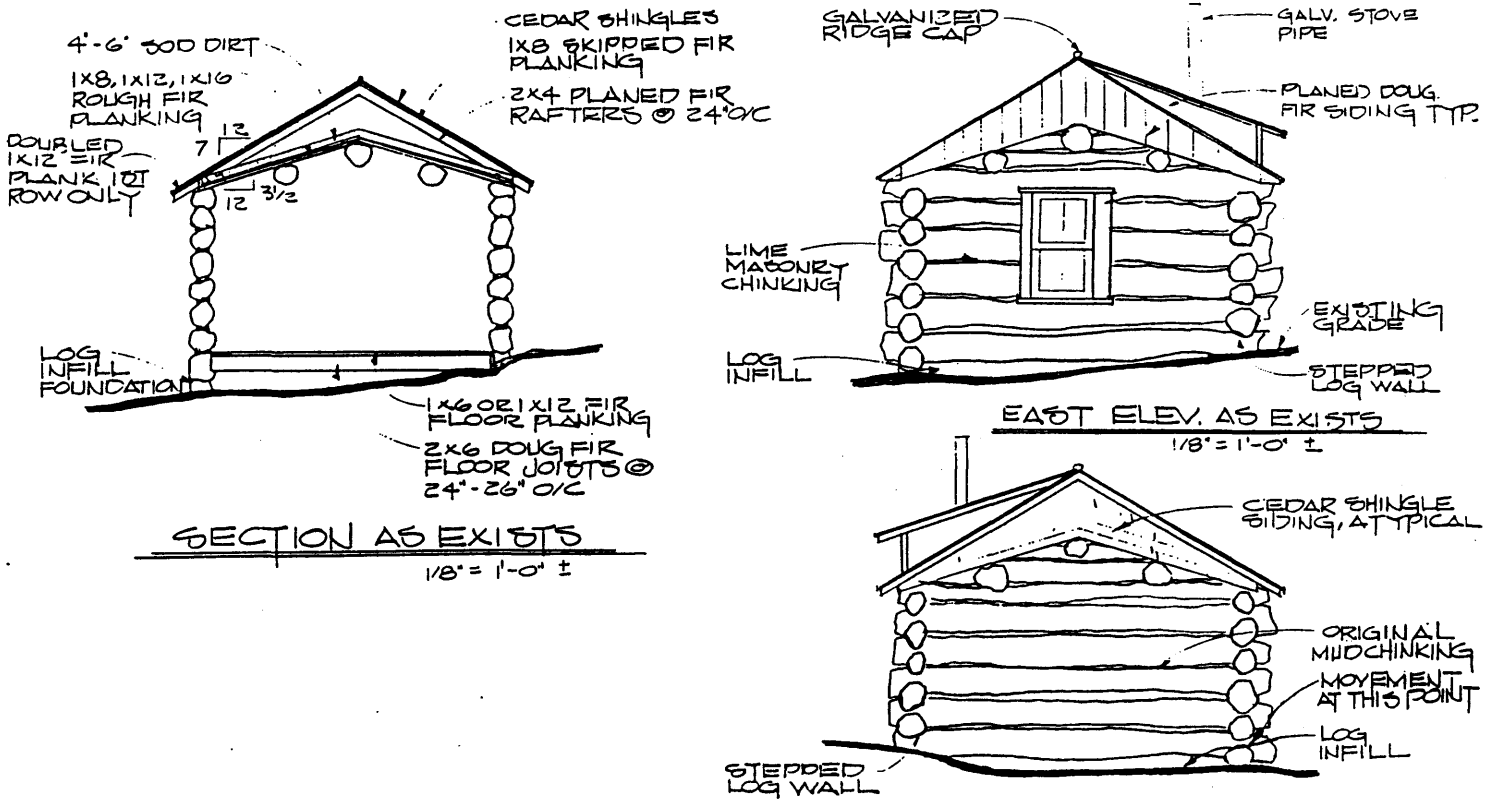
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SHEET 07 W	WORKING DRAWINGS FOR YELLOWSTONE LOG RESTORATION BOZEMAN, MONTANA	STABILIZATION OF EAGLE STATION TOWNSEND DIST. HELENA NATIONAL FOREST
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WEST ELEV. AS EXISTS
1/8" = 1'-0" ±