

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

SEP 15 1989

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Lake Bronson State Park WPA/Rustic Style Historic Resources  
other names/site number Lake Bronson State Park

2. Location

street & number off County Highway 28  not for publication N/A  
city, town Percy Township Lake Bronson  vicinity  
state Minnesota code MN county Kittson code 069 zip code 56734

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>5</u>	<u>        </u> buildings
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>        </u>	<u>        </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>4</u>	<u>        </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>3</u>	<u>        </u> objects
		<u>12</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:  
Minnesota State Park CCC/WPA/Rustic Style Historic Resources  
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Nina M. Archabal 9/5/89  
Signature of certifying official Nina M. Archabal Date  
State Historic Preservation Officer  
State or Federal agency and bureau Minnesota Historical Society

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet. Bob Boland 10/25/89

determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**6. Function of Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Recreation/Outdoor Recreation

Landscape/State Park

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Recreation/Outdoor Recreation

Landscape/State Park

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Other: NPS Rustic Architecture

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone

walls Stone/Wood

roof Asphalt

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

See Continuation Sheets

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Continuation Sheet**

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DESCRIPTION

Lake Bronson State Park WPA/Rustic Style Historic Resources consist of an historic district including Lake Bronson, the Lake Bronson Dam, the concentrated use area of the park, the service yard, and the group camp facility. Five buildings and seven structures are included. Architects for the park buildings were from the National Park Service and the Design Office within the Minnesota Division of State Parks. Construction as completed by a WPA Transient Camp located on the northwest shore of Lake Bronson.

Department of Natural Resources building identification numbers are located after the name of the building.

1. Structure: Lake Bronson Builder: WPA  
Architect: Division of Drainage & Waters Date: 1936-37

Lake Bronson is a 327 acre lake which was created by impounding a portion of the south branch of Two Rivers. The lake is irregular in shape and was formerly occupied by several farmsteads. The reservoir was constructed to provide water, alleviate spring flooding, and offer recreational opportunities.

2. Structure: Lake Bronson Dam Builder: WPA  
Architect: Division of Drainage & Waters Date: 1936-37

The Lake Bronson Dam is a massive structure which required between 3,300 and 3,400 cubic yards of concrete. The dam consists of three spillways separated by two dividing piers and flanking north and south abutment walls. A roadway crosses the dam. The construction of the dam required considerable expertise because quicksand over 100' deep was discovered at the site. According to the Park Management Plan a system was devised by which weight of the dam forced water up and out

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quicksand through 6-inch pipes, thus solidifying the soil base enough to support the weight of the structure. These pipes can be seen today in the spillway wall, and to date have kept the dam from sinking. This structure was given widespread publicity in professional journals as an engineering landmark."

3. Structure: Water Tower 1-272 Builder: WPA  
Architect: Harold Petersen Date: 1939

This Water Tower is the only structure of its kind in the state park system which includes an observation platform. The hexagonal shaped structure is approximately 28' in diameter and is constructed with split face field stone masonry laid random ashlar. The masonry rises 30' to the floor of the observation tower. The stonework is battered up to that point and then is corbelled out to support the observation area which rises 14' to the peak of the hip roof. The partially enclosed platform rests on 12" x 12" projecting beam joists and wall sections are composed of 2" x 10" vertical planks and 2" x 12" horizontal shiplap siding.

The structure actually consists of both inner and outer walls. The inner wall is constructed with brick and rises the full height of the building and encloses the 5,234 gallon water tank and pump. The outer wall is reinforced concrete faced with split field stone. A stairway winds between the outer and inner walls and leads to the observation platform.

An entrance porch paved with stone flagging is covered by a gable roof supported by three 12" x 12" posts placed on each side of the structure. Lookouts project from the gable which also features a 12" x 12" horizontal beam. 7' x 1'4" openings pierce the masonry wall in the tower's mid-section and are covered with wooden grills.

4. Structure: Stone Curbing Builder: WPA  
Architect: State of Minnesota Date: 1939

Two parking areas in the park reflect their original configuration and are defined by stone curbing. One area is adjacent to the Water Tower and the other is near the Picnic Shelter. According to the original plans, the stone curbing must have "at least an 8" minimum exposure." The parking areas are separated from the adjacent roadway by a stone-edged oval median.

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5. Object: Drinking Fountains Builder: WPA  
Architect: State of Minnesota Date: 1940

Drinking Fountains constructed with split stone are located next to the Water Tower, Picnic Shelter, and Bath House. The fountains rest on platforms constructed with stone flagging and rise to a height of 3'. They are 2' square at the base and taper to 1'8" at the top. A faucet is placed at the side and a stone step is located on an adjacent side to allow children to reach the bubbler.

6. Building: Office and Garage 1-271 Builder: WPA  
Architect: National Park Service Date: 1939

This 42'6" x 26'6" Garage and Office building is constructed entirely with split field stone with the exception of the office wing which features rough board siding above the sill line and the west gable which is infilled with horizontal siding as well. The garage is covered with a gable roof while the office is capped with a hip roof. The building contains a two stall garage defined by corbelled stone piers and garage doors built with 2-ply rough boards. The office wing contains office space and a tool room. 4" x 8" lookouts project from the west gable. Window openings on the principal facade and end walls are 6 over 6 light double hung sash while windows on the rear facade are 6 light casements.

The building follows a standard design developed by the Minnesota Central Design Office of the National Park Service. Similar buildings were constructed in four additional parks.

7. Building: Picnic Shelter 1-267 Builder: WPA  
Architect: Edward W. Barber Date: 1940

The Picnic Shelter is a 52' x 24' building containing a shelter area and a kitchen arranged in a rectilinear design. The entire building is constructed with native split stone collected in the general area of the park. The shelter may be entered through openings on both principal facades which are divided into three bays by pairs of 12" x 12" rough hewn posts. The central 10'4" opening is flanked by two openings, each 8'6" wide. The end walls of the shelter contain massive stone fireplaces with the fireplace on the west elevation flanked by built-in benches. Narrow openings with wooden grills are located on either side of the fireplace.

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The kitchen area may be entered from the picnic shelter or an 8' wide opening in the east facade. The opening is flanked by narrow windows covered with wooden grills. The kitchen still contains 7 cast iron cook stoves built into the back of one of the fireplaces. Two window openings, each 7' long and 2'8" wide, pierce the north and south walls of the kitchen. The building is identical to a Shelter Pavilion constructed at Sibley State Park in 1936.

Timber trusses support the gable roof which was once covered with wooden shingles. Roll-up type garage doors have been installed in the central entrances to the shelter and the flanking openings have been infilled with horizontal siding and fixed sash.

8. Building: Latrine 1-268 Builder: WPA  
Architect: Harold Petersen Date: 1938

The Latrine is a standard 32' x 18' rectangular gable roofed building with 5'6" x 9'6" stone entrance screens. Walls constructed with split stone rise to the sill level and rough clapboards are placed above. Board and batten siding is used in the gable areas. Three over three light casements are still in place on all four facades.

The building's original cedar shingles have been replaced with asphalt. In 1963 skylights were added and in 1981 new doors were installed and handicap access provided.

9. Building: Bath House 1-273 Builder: WPA  
Architect: National Park Service Date: 1938

The Bath House employs a standard design utilized throughout the state park system. The split stone building contains a central section covered by a gable roof which originally contained a concession, rest rooms, and storage areas. Loggias which allowed passage through the entire width of the building flanked this portion of the structure and also allowed access to adjacent changing wings. The partially enclosed wings consisted of low stone walls with 7' high wooden screen walls.

The changing wings have been removed, although the stone walls remain intact, and a 23'3" x 14' addition for a concession has been made to the beach facade. The non-contributing addition is frame construction with board and batten siding and a shed roof.

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10. Building: Mess Hall 1-266  
Architect: Harold Petersen

Builder: WPA  
Date: 1940

The Mess Hall and Kitchen building is located at a group camp facility on the south shore of Lake Bronson on the opposite side of the lake from the concentrated use area. The building is a T-shaped gable roofed structure with the dining area located in the top of the T and the kitchen area in the adjoining leg. A massive split stone fireplace separate the dining area from the kitchen.

The building is sheathed with clapboard siding to the sill level with board and batten siding placed above. Nine light casement windows are spaced along the facades. The kitchen contains original shelving and 2 wood stoves used for cooking and heating.

**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)

Architecture  
Landscape Architecture  
Recreation  
Government

Period of Significance

1936-40

Significant Dates

1936

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

National Park Service

Works Progress Administration

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

See Continuation Sheets

See continuation sheet



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### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Lake Bronson State Park WPA/Rustic Style Historic Resources are historically significant for their association with the social, political, and economic impact of the Great Depression and the subsequent development of the various Federal Relief Programs which were responsible for their construction. Lake Bronson State Park is also historically significant as a strategic recreation area located in an section of the state which lacks a natural recreational facility. The park received exceedingly heavy use by the local public as well as many Canadians.

The Lake Bronson State Park WPA/Rustic Style Historic Resources are architecturally significant as outstanding examples of rustic style split stone construction. Of particular significance are the Water Tower, which is the only structure of its type which incorporates an observation deck, and the Lake Bronson Dam, one of the most notable engineering achievements in the state park system. The landscape design of Lake Bronson State Park is significant as an exceptional example of National Park Service master planning which defined and organized the various intensive use areas along both principal shorelines of newly created Lake Bronson. (Refer to the Statement of Exceptional Significance on page F34 of the Multiple Property Documentation Form.)

Lake Bronson State Park, originally known as Two Rivers State Park, was acquired in 1936 as part of the Red River Valley Water Conservation Program and for its ability to provide recreational facilities. The area around the future park had been plagued by drought during the Depression and the creation of an artificial reservoir to provide water, alleviate spring flooding, and offer recreational opportunities for the area was advocated by Kittson county engineer J.E. Dishington. The local communities of Bronson and Hallock tried unsuccessfully to raise \$225,000 for the local share of the \$900,000 proposed W.P.A. project to build the dam. The local communities appealed to the Minnesota State Executive Council for funds and were again unsuccessful. Finally in March 1936, Hallock mayor Clifford Bouvette appealed to Governor Floyd B. Olson and St. Paul banker and Schmidt's brewery owner Adolph Bremer who was a friend of President Franklin Roosevelt. Roosevelt ultimately issued an executive order for the project. The area was officially designated a state park in 1937.

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Department of Natural Resources. Working Drawings and Specifications for the Buildings and Structures at Lake Bronson State Park. Bureau of Engineering. St. Paul, Minnesota.  
Florance, Robert D. "Building the Bronson Dam." Kittson County WPA Commemorative Celebration 1937-1987. Kittson County Historical Society. 1987.  
State of Minnesota. Minnesota State Park, Parkway and Recreational Area Study. 1938.

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. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property 358 Acres

UTM References

A 

1	4
6	7
3	9
5	0

5	3	9	9	8	7	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Zone Easting Northing

C 

1	4
6	7
6	7
1	0

5	3	9	8	3	8	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

B 

1	4
6	7
6	6
8	0

5	3	9	9	9	2	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Zone Easting Northing

D 

1	4
6	7
3	9
7	0

5	3	9	8	2	6	0
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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries for Lake Bronson State Park WPA/Rustic Style Historic Resources are shown as the heavy line on the accompanying map entitled "Lake Bronson State Park." They are defined by the Lake Bronson Dam to the west, the entrance point of the south branch of Two Rivers to the east, and the shoreline of Lake Bronson to the north and south, including the Group Camp Mess Hall and the concentrated  See continuation sheet use area. The heavy boundary line is crosshatched.

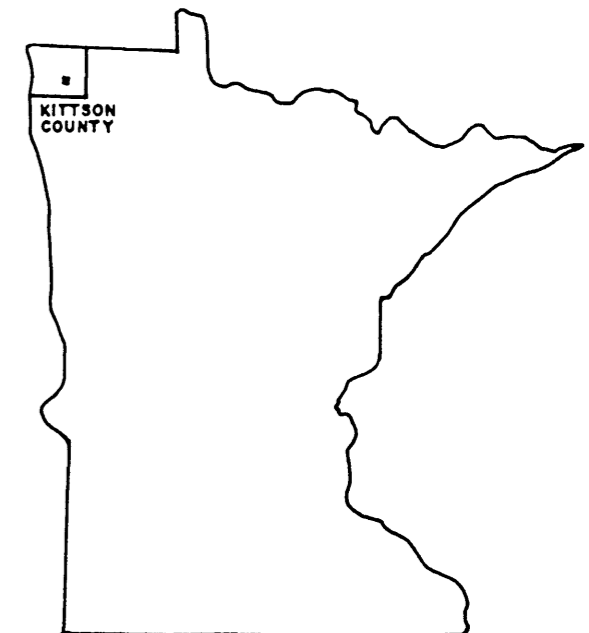
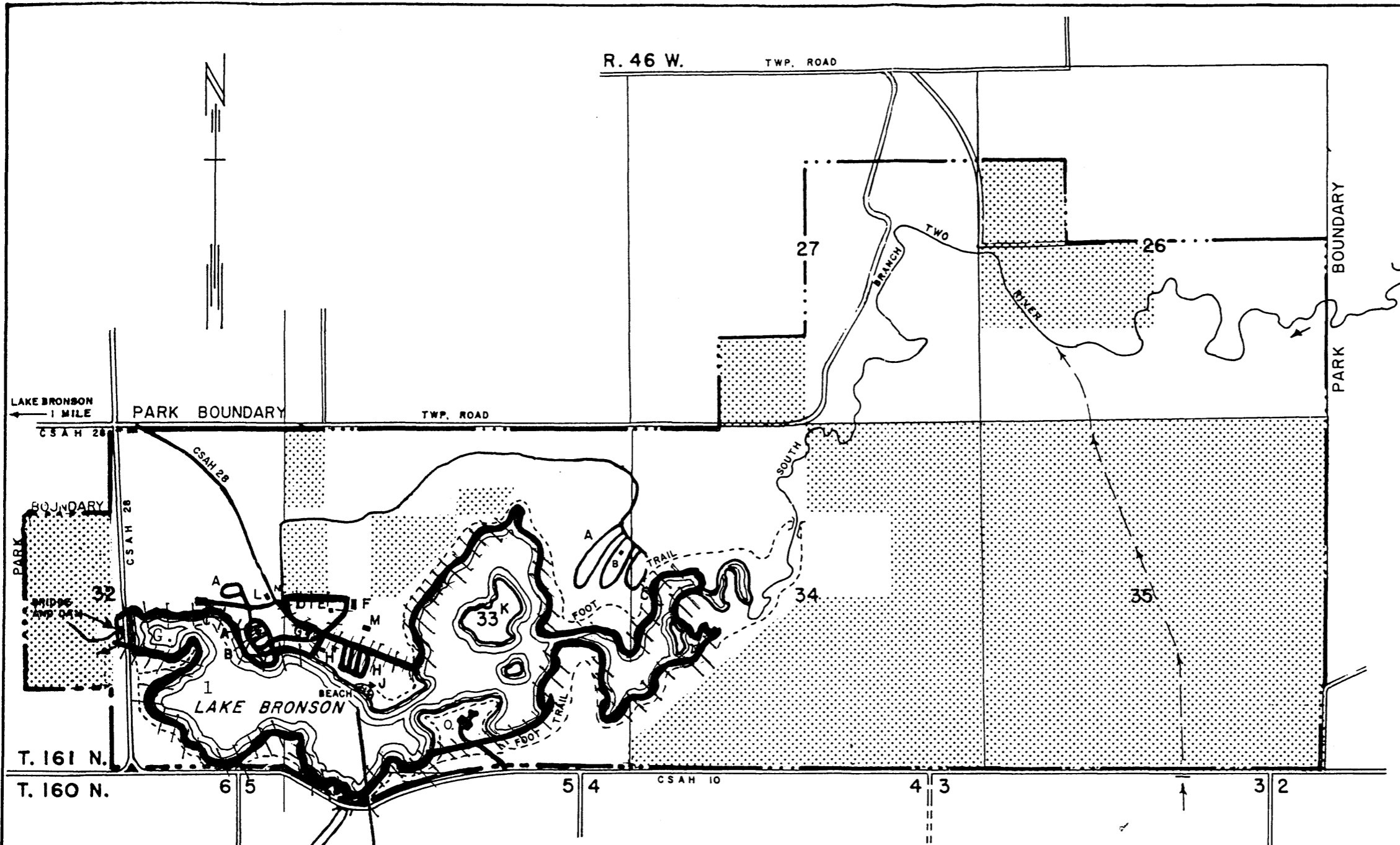
Boundary Justification

The boundaries include the buildings and structures that have been historically associated with the property and that maintain historic integrity. The boundary defines the areas in the park which were developed by the Works Progress Administration.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Rolf T. Anderson date September 6, 1988  
organization N/A telephone 612-824-7807  
street & number 3632 Park Avenue South state Minnesota zip code 55407  
city or town Minneapolis



KEY

- STATE LAND
- PRIVATE LAND
- EXISTING DEVELOPMENT

T. 161 N.  
T. 160 N.

SCALE 3" = 1 MILE  
STATUTORY BOUNDARY 2983 ACRES (APPROX.)

- A. Water Tower - 3\*\*
- B. Office/Garage - 4
- C. Parking Lot - 4
- D. Shelter 7
- E. Latrine - 8
- F. Bath House - 9
- G. Dam - 2
- O. Mess Hall - 10
- \* Drinking Fountain - 5

- A. CAMPGROUND
- B. SANITATION BUILDING
- C. BOAT LANDING
- D. TEMP. CONTROL STATION
- E. WATER TOWER (OBSERVATION TOWER)
- F. SERVICE AREA
- G. RESIDENCE
- H. PICNIC GROUNDS
- J. BATH HOUSE
- K. BIRD SANCTUARY
- L. CONTACT STATION
- M. LOG CABIN
- N. TRAILER DUMP STATION
- O. PRIMITIVE CAMP

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION OF PARKS AND RECREATION		
STATE PARK SITE		
LAKE BRONSON STATE PARK KITTSOON CO. - NEAR LAKE BRONSON		
DRAWN DAD 3-16-65	T. 160, 161 N.   R. 46 W.   5 TH P. M.	SURVEY
CHECKED JAJ 3-25-65	BUREAU OF ENGINEERING	DATUM
REVISED SVF 7-20-78	<i>[Signature]</i> CHIEF ENGINEER	

Lake Bronson

\*\*Keyed to nomination