

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Custer State Game Lodge

and/or common Coolidge's Summer White House

2. Location E of Custer on US 16-A

street & number U.S. Highway 16A, Custer State Park

NA not for publication

city, town Custer vicinity vicinity of congressional district Second

state South Dakota code 46 county Custer code 033

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	agriculture
building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> park
site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
object	NA in process	yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
	being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other:recreation

4. Owner of Property

name Department of Game, Fish and Parks, State of South Dakota

street & number Division of Custer State Park % Superintendent Warren Jackson

city, town Hermosa vicinity of state South Dakota 57730

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Custer County Courthouse

street & number 420 Mt. Rushmore Rd.

city, town Custer

state South Dakota

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title NA has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town

state

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The state game lodge is sited on a hillside above a meadow and a terrace. The building is in the Western Stick Style, raised over a high stone basement. Large boulders are set in the rubble wall, adding to the rustic styling. Monroe Nystrom, who also worked on the Lewis Byron House (listed on the National Register) was from Minnesota and the stone mason. The lodge has a central stairhall with parlors to each side. A porch crosses the first floor on the front of the building, which supports a smaller sleeping porch above. On the gable ends, sleeping porches were cantilevered out between the chimneys on the second and third floors. Additions have since filled in under these. A long dormer lights the third floor. The lodge was extended with a dining room wing to the rear which matches the siding of the main section. Two-story motel wings were joined to either side of the lodge in 1963 and an addition was made to the dining room wing in 1969.

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Continuation sheet Custer State Game Lodge

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The additions to the Lodge include the side, motel wings and rear, kitchen wings. The motel wings are built independently of the main Lodge block. (This is visible in photos 3 # 4). The dining room wing is entered through one opening at the rear of the Lodge. Each motel room has direct access to the outside. Photographs 1 # 3 show the dining room/kitchen additions. The * addition is a three-story, rectangular block. The lower story is the kitchen, the second, the dining room and the third, sleeping quarters. Using the same shape window - double-hung sash, three over one window - the addition's windows are grouped in a band on the second floor and tucked under the eave on the third. The siding matches the original siding and paint details are matched throughout.

The later 1969 kitchen addition is a one-story, rectangular frame block. A shed unit contains a door and the gable end, a window. Siding and trim match the original block.

The additions are located on the rear and open onto the service drive. They are out of view of the public areas and therefore, quite unobtrusive.

* original, c. 1940s

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below							
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion				
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science				
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture				
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/				
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian				
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation				
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) recreation				

Specific dates 1922

Builder/Architect Phelps-Wyman, Minneapolis, MN

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Custer State Game Lodge is significant in the areas of architecture, recreation, politics, and government. The building is the major example of 1920s recreation -resort architecture in the state. While the park is one of the early civic efforts toward controlled wilderness recreation, it gained additional significance in 1927 when it became President Coolidge's Summer White House.

Custer State Park was established in 1919, and the first Game Lodge, slightly smaller than the present structure, was built in 1921. Within three months of completion the first lodge burned, and in 1922 the present lodge, designed by Phelps Wyman of Minneapolis, was constructed. Following the rustic motifs used for park structures by Frederick Law Olmstead, > the founder of the national parks, and heavily influenced by the Western Stick Style from California, the Game Lodge, because of its later prominence was influential in reinforcing the image which would characterize the majority of future park buildings, particularly during the building programs of the Depression Years.

Phelps Wyman was a fellow of the American Society of Landscape Architecture and an honorary associate member of the Minnesota Chapter of the AIA. He was born in Manchester, Vermont, on April 13, 1870, and had a degree in agriculture from Cornell. He studied architecture and landscape architecture for two years at the Boston Technological Institute and worked for the firm of Frederick Law Olmstead before coming West. Advertisements for garden and park design and town planning suggest that he may have assisted with the initial planning for Custer State Park as well as designed the Game Lodge itself, although the documentation has not been found to substantiate this assumption.

The State Game Lodge received national attention in 1927 when President Calvin Coolidge chose it for use as a Summer White House. This is reportedly the first occasion when a sitting president had chosen a western location for his headquarters over a lengthy period of time, and was also the first time a president has established a residence in South Dakota. The President, his family and staff, lived in the main lodge, cabins and the "Coolidge Inn" which was constructed during the two weeks between Coolidge's announcement of the selection of the Game Lodge and his arrival. The Coolidge family and about eighty staff, servants and reporters stayed at the Game Lodge from June 15 to September 9, 1927. Coolidge established his offices in the Rapid City High School, 32 miles north. During his stay, he officially dedicated the inaugural work on the carving of Mount Rushmore, hosted ambassadors and distinguished visitors (including Herbert Hoover, John J. Pershing and Charles Lindbergh) and issued his famous pronouncement: "I do not choose to run for President in 1928."

Following the departure of the Coolidge entourage the Game Lodge returned to its original functions as a hotel.

9. Major Bibliographical References

The Black Hills Engineer, Volume 15, No. 4, November, 1927.

"Welcome Coolidge," scrapbook of newspaper clippings, Custer County Library, Custer.

Interview, Mrs. Mildred Lynn, February 5, 1980.

Letters of application, MSAIA, Phelps Wyman, 1915, Northwest Architectural Archives.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 1 1/2 acres

Quadrangle name Iron Mountain

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

Lodge		Northing			
A	1 3	6 3 0	3 4 0	4 8 4 6	6 8 0
Zone	Easting				
C					
E					
G					

B		Northing			
B	1 3	6 3 0	3 4 0	4 8 4 6	6 8 0
Zone	Easting				
D					
F					
H					

Verbal boundary description and justification

The Game Lodge has a boundary on the north, east and south demarcated by the driveway and on the west by the brow of the hill.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state NA code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

Technical Editing: Carolyn Torma, John Burrows

name/title David Shelta Historical Preservation Center

USD, Vermillion, SD 57069

organization State Game Lodge

date 11 Jun 81

street & number NA telephone 605-255-4541

city or town Custer state South Dakota 57730

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

James R. Fisburn

title Director, Office of Cultural Preservation

date 12/10/82

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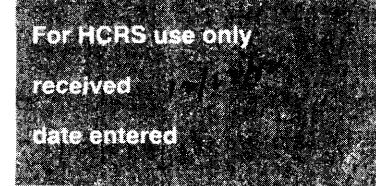
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date 3/30/83

James McClellan
keeper of the National Register

date 3/29/83

Attest: Patrick Andrus
Chief of Registration

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The Lodge briefly hosted a president again in 1953, when President Eisenhower stayed there for two-and-a-half days, during which time he fished in the park, addressed the National Young Republican Convention in Rapid City, and hosted dinners for the Governor of South Dakota, one Senator, two Congressmen and other government officials. The Game Lodge is the focal point of the Custer State Park, a major recreational area for the region.

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The Boundary is delineated on the copy of photo #4. The service roads surround the building. One, immediately to the southwest functions as a parking lot to the rear of the building. The edge of the pavement constitutes the boundary. The service drive along the front with its stone retaining wall forms the northeast boundary. On the southeast, the service drive curves to the south but does not quite join the rear road. Therefore an imaginary line, lying 20 feet from the southeast wall of the building connects the two roads and serves as the boundary line. The northwest boundary is formed by the brow of the hill which is visible on the USGS topographical map and can be discerned in the color aerial shot. No other buildings are incorporated within this boundary.