

1464

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

DEC - 3

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determination for individual properties and districts. See instruction in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Silesca Ranger Station

other names/site number 5MN.7406

2. Location

street & number Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, & Gunnison NF (GMUG) [N/A] not for publication

city or town Grand Mesa [X] vicinity

state Colorado code CO county Montrose code 085 zip code 81416

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. ([ ] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)
Signature of certifying official/Title: Georgina Cortezgla, State Historic Preservation Officer
Date: November 16, 2004
Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Colorado Historical Society
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [X] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. ([ ] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)
Signature of certifying official/Title: Jenni L. Duxman
Date: 11/22/04
Preservation Officer, USDA Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Region
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- [X] entered in the National Register
[ ] See continuation sheet.
[ ] determined eligible for the National Register
[ ] See continuation sheet.
[ ] determined not eligible for the National Register.
[ ] removed from the National Register
[ ] other, explain
[ ] See continuation sheet.

Signature of the Keeper: Edson M. Beall
Date of Action: 1.12.05

Silesca Ranger Station  
Name of Property

Montrose County/ Colorado  
County/State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not count previously listed resources.)

Contributing

Noncontributing

<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing.**

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Function**

(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT/ office

GOVERNMENT/ storage

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/ single dwelling

DOMESTIC/ secondary structure

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Rustic

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls WOOD/ log

\_\_\_\_\_

roof WOOD

other STONE

\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**National Register of Historic Places  
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Montrose County/ ColoradoSection number 7 Page 1**DESCRIPTION**

The Silesca Ranger Station is situated on a gently sloping meadow on the Uncompahgre Plateau, approximately 20 miles southwest of Montrose, Colorado in the Grand Mesa/ Uncompahgre/ Gunnison National Forest (GMUGNF). In a small open clearing, the buildings are surrounded by pine and deciduous trees scattered randomly. A dirt road meanders through the complex to the west of the buildings. Highway 90 (the Old Divide Highway) is north of the complex with Silesca Pond north of the highway. Less than an eighth of a mile south is the Ouray/Montrose county line.

Historically, the Ranger Station functioned as an administrative center for the local GMUG Forest Ranger. Currently Silesca Ranger Station serves as seasonal housing for Forest Service employees. Over time the existing Silesca Ranger Station has served several functions. From its construction in 1936 up to 1956, the "Combination Building" served as the primary workspace for Uncompahgre National Forest as an office with an attached garage. In 1956 the Combination Building was converted into housing for Forest Service employees. Alterations to the ranger station due to the conversion of the interior space have been moderate (Niles et al. 1985:5).

*Combination Building*

The Pactola Plan (Job 72) Rustic style Combination Building is a 30' x 40', 1,200 square foot, single story building. The cross-gabled roof consists of wood trusses covered with wood shingles. With an asymmetric "T-shape" plan, the building sits upon a poured concrete foundation. Exterior cladding consists of pine half round logs with saddle-notched corners and roughly pointed oakum sealed crowns. Log purlins are evenly spaced along each gable roof line. An interior stone and brick slope chimney emerges from the junction of the cross gables to the south. A basement is located under the former office-portion of the building.

The former garage entrance consists of two solid wood panel, west-facing doors. Each door has three four-light fixed windows. South of the garage doors and under a cross gable is a stone veneered stoop with sidewalls leading to the main entry. Immediately to the north (left) of the wood entry door is a triple window; the center is a fixed 8 light panel with flanking 8-light casements. A narrow vent is located high in the gable face.

The south elevation has two sets of paired windows symmetrically placed on the wall. Each window is an 8-light casement. Also on this side are three divided-light awning basement windows.

The east elevation contains a set of paired 8-light casement windows in the cross-gabled section along with a divided light basement awning window. A narrow vent high in the gable face is identical to the ones on the west façade and north wall. On the main wall is a triple window made up of a central fixed 8-light panel with flanking 8-light casements.

The north elevation has two symmetrically placed 8-light casement windows with decorative shutters. A narrow vent is located at the top of the gable face. From this view, a divided-light basement awning window can be seen on the north side of the east wall (the cross gable projection).

The building is intact with no changes to its location, design or setting. Structural modifications made to the original construction plan of the Combination Building include those made during the construction and a few made after its completion. During the construction, the foundation was not lined with a stone veneer and a basement was constructed. Each modification was executed by CCC labor

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and approved by the Regional Forester. Post-construction modifications to the Combination Building are limited to the conversion from an office to seasonal living quarters in 1957, water system improvements in 1981, and minimum general repairs/preservation work necessary to maintain the integrity in 1985 (work done according to Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation). Since then, there have been no additional changes to the building.

***Barn***

The barn is an 18' x 24', 423 square foot building composed of a wood frame with manufactured half-log siding and concrete foundation. It is divided into two rooms; the smaller room measures 10' x 18', the larger room measures 17' x 18', and contains a loft accessible by a ladder built into the north wall. Other aspects of the barn's interior include an unfinished wood plank floor and a workbench incorporated into the east part of the larger room. Double doors on the north of the barn open to the driveway, while a single door on the eastern elevation leads to the adjacent corrals. Windows encased in chicken wire are located on the east, west, and south elevations of the barn. Two corrals constructed of cedar posts and spruce poles are associated with the barn. One cedar post and spruce pole corral was constructed with the barn in 1937 on the southwest elevation of the barn. The second corral was added after 1967 to the existing corral on the southeast elevation.

***Pump House***

The pump house was probably constructed in 1981 during a water system improvement project, although the exact date of construction is not currently available. Resting on a concrete slab, the one-story structure has milled vertical wood cladding and a shed roof with wide overhanging eaves and asphalt shingles. It is a non-contributing element to the property.

Additional features include the remains of a historic foundation filled with gravel and measuring approximately 30' x 30'. It is located south of the Combination Building and represents the remains of a Ranger Dwelling constructed between 1916 and 1936. When habitable, it had a living room, kitchen, hall, and two bedrooms. The Ranger Dwelling burned down in 1977. Only the west, north, and south portions of the foundation are visible, as well as a series of associated sandstone slab sidewalks which run from the Combination Building and the barn. Also associated with this foundation are two depressions, probably privy and/or midden locales. A prehistoric occupation site located on the property is a sparse scatter of lithic artifacts including lithic flakes, a biface, and a metate. Artifacts found and recorded are directly adjacent to the current Combination Building and the remains of the Silesca Ranger Station Dwelling.

Silesca Ranger Station  
Name of Property

Montrose County/ Colorado  
County/State

## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

### Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

CONSERVATION  
ARCHITECTURE

### Periods of Significance

1937-1954

### Significant Dates

1937

### Significant Person(s)

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS (CCC)

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

### Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

### 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

Name of repository:

Colorado Historical Society  
Supervisor's Office- GMUG National Forest

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Montrose County/ ColoradoSection number 8 Page 3**SIGNIFICANCE**

The Silesca Combination Building and barn are eligible to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, in the areas of Politics/Government and Conservation. The buildings at Silesca represent the Civilian Conservation Corps-era (CCC-era) Forest Service ethics of conservation, efficiency, and working for the public good that typified Roosevelt's New Deal Programs, and the local implementation of these programs in west-central Colorado. In addition, it is associated with the early management of Colorado National Forests; the site of the current Ranger Station at Silesca is the first dwelling/ administrative complex of the Uncompahgre National Forest.

The Silesca property is also eligible to the National Register under Criterion C for Architecture. The Ranger Station Combination Building and barn serve as examples that typify administrative buildings of the Rocky Mountain Region of the USDA Forest Service during the CCC era. Moreover, the Silesca Combination Building is one of only two examples of Phase III Rustic Style architecture in the Grand Mesa/Uncompahgre/Gunnison National Forest. The Silesca buildings represent 1930s CCC-era construction in southwest Colorado; the Combination Building is a rare example of a Rustic-Style building with an attached garage (Hartley and Schneck 1996:60). Skilled local men from CCC camp F-27-C, using predominantly locally available materials, constructed both the Combination Building and the barn. The office/garage configuration typical of CCC era Combination Buildings, the continuation of barn construction despite widespread use of automobiles, and the use of locally available materials are all hallmarks of the Phase III Rustic Style Period (Hartley and Schneck 1995). The Rustic Style of the CCC era embodied the pragmatic Forest Service values of utility, respect for the land, and harmony the Agency was trying to express. Furthermore, the buildings reflect a local manifestation of a regional style mandated by the Forest Service for rural areas during the Depression years (Otis et al. 1986: 209).

**Historic Context**

The federal government has a long history of exercising control over the nation's natural resources. Federal control over the nation's forested resources was established in 1873 with the development of Forest Reserves throughout the United States. The primary role of the Reserves was management of forest resources, including timber, mining, grazing, and water. Rapidly increasing populations and resource extraction in the nation's forests required active management of these resources to avoid the negative impacts of increasing resource use. Creation of the Forest Reserves put in place a nationwide administrative structure and management protocol that would influence the nation as a whole, especially the western states, where management of the vast government property was previously at a minimum. While federal control over the nation's forested natural resources was in place in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was not until the establishment of Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal programs that the federal presence in the National Forests was homogenized through architectural construction styles of administrative buildings.

Roosevelt's New Deal programs fostered the greatest mobilization of American labor in the country's history. Soon after the election of 1932 Roosevelt sought authorization to purchase public lands. The first three years of the New Deal saw forest land purchase appropriations rise to a level that was 70 percent greater than all of that appropriated between 1911 and 1932 (Dana 1956:250). By the beginning of U.S. participation in World War II, Rocky Mountain Region 2 had acquired over 182,000 acres (Hinton 1988:V-4-5).

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During discussion in the U.S. Senate regarding unemployment, consideration of reforestation as a source of jobs was brought forth. The result was a congressional resolution introduced by Senator Roy Copeland (New York) calling for a plan to improve the management of forested lands (Steen 1976:200 – 201). The 1933 “Copeland Report” proposed by the Forest Service recommended substantial extension of public ownership of forested land (Hinton 1988:V-3-4).

In signing executive order No. 6101, Roosevelt established the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in April of 1933, intending that 1300 camps be operationalized by July 1 of that year. In the summer of 1933, twenty-nine camps were established in Colorado. By the last year of CCC operations the state maintained forty-two camps, with the largest number of camps under the jurisdiction of the Forest Service.

Within days after Roosevelt authorized the CCC, the Forest Service organized projects, proposed and developed crews, and acquired and moved camp supplies and tools to various work locations. The work opportunities afforded by the CCC transformed the lives of men living idle in the face of vast unemployment. Thomas Ruch, a foreman at camp F-17-W, Chimney Park, Wyoming, wrote in 1935:

The CCC takes a pretty raw product from the streets and pool halls where some would turn out to be barflies, gamblers, and petty criminals, and makes a majority of them, well-trained workmen fitted for the industrial life of a nation. Many of these men go out capable of handling a gang of workmen efficiently on any job requiring manual labor. Some learn the use of carpenter tools; others welding ... almost any kind of skilled work that may come up in general public life (1935:31).

Like the rest of the country, Colorado benefited from the effect of the war on demands for goods and services that were available from the state, facilitating economic recovery from the Depression (Simms 1970:119). Roosevelt’s New Deal programs were instrumental in freeing America from the economic confines of the Great Depression. During these years, greater consolidation and increasing centralization to save costs were the philosophy of the Forest Service administration. These changing values are well reflected in the standing architecture at the Silesca Ranger Station.

**History of Forest Service Design and Construction of Administrative Buildings**

Up until the Depression, the Forest Service operated with limited governmental support and financial resources to oversee its vast domain. With the creation of the CCC, the Forest Service found itself on the verge of unprecedented expansion. National Forests presented a perfect vehicle for implementing New Deal goals. Roosevelt’s administration quickly drafted legislation to put 250,000 men on the Federal payroll, working for the “common good.” What began as an ambitious project mushroomed into one of extraordinary scale; within the first two years the number of men enrolled in the program doubled from the initial figure. Over three million men had signed on by 1942. More than 57,000 men would work in the National Forests of Colorado during the next decade, spending more than \$63 million on conservation efforts (Merrill 1981). All told, the Forest Service administered over half of the total output of the CCC, much of it in building construction (Steen 1976:215).

Previous to this expansion, The Copeland Report advocated a more active role for the Forest Service in resource development, but lack of administrative facilities prevented Rangers from maintaining a regular presence in the Forests. Due to the expansion of Colorado’s National Forests though, Rocky Mountain Region 2 needed to implement long-range plans for construction of administrative facilities.

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Forest Service Chief Robert Y. Stuart, recognizing an opportunity to make vast upgrades with the resources of the New Deal, admonished that nothing be built which would later go unused (Hartley and Schneck 1996). This practical building style was best articulated by W. Ellis Groben's *Acceptable Plans: Forest Service Administrative Buildings* (US Forest Service 1938).

Groben was hired as consulting architect for the US Forest Service in 1936. He was a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania and attended the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris. Just before he came to the Forest Service he specialized in residential design in the city of Philadelphia and briefly served as chief architect (Tatman and Moss 1985:318). He put his skills as both residential and public administrator to work, guiding the Forest Service as it created its own style of architecture. Groben was directly involved in the design of several buildings and sites in Region 2.

Groben felt that current Forest Service design did not "possess Forest Service identity ... or adequately express its purposes" (Otis et al. 1986:209). In identifying appropriate ways to express Forest Service values in architecture, he advocated a regional approach to design based upon local architectural styles and materials.

No matter how well buildings may be designed, with but few exceptions, they seldom enhance the beauty of their natural setting ... therefore, the Forest Service should erect only structures as are absolutely essential ... and then only of designs which harmonize with, or ... are the least objectionable to nature's particular environment (Groben 1938:foreword).

The manual, written in part to assist inexperienced regional architectural staff with development of appropriate designs, defined several regional styles, locations, and building materials, and included examples of Forest Service designs from around the nation, including several from Region 2.

Building on lessons learned from the successes and failures of earlier Phase I and II designs, architects responded to climatic conditions, especially the deep snows found at higher elevations, by raising foundations of Rustic-style buildings several feet from grade. Simple gable roofs, strongly reinforced, were meant to cleanly shed heavy snow, which fell away from the building due to deep overhangs. Many porches featured large areas adjacent to the entry and protective roofs over entries. Barn and garage doors opened in or up and were oriented to the south when possible. Sites used topography and vegetation to provide wind and storm protection.

The administrative reorganizations of the CCC-era became opportunities for Forests to upgrade their buildings. Many existing buildings that did not represent of the US Forest Service image were replaced with standard designs that often included living quarters. These reorganizations were the result of changes in the spatial administration of the Forests throughout Phase III and can be accounted for primarily by changes in the amount and location of use of Forest resources, the introduction of vehicles into the Forests, and environmental changes.

Enrollment in the Colorado CCC was highest in 1936 with 9,535 men. By 1940, enrollment was down to 3,248 (Waldman 1981:81 – 82). In June of 1941, H.D. Cochran, Assistant Regional Forester, wrote to all Forest Supervisors in Region 2:

CCC enrollment has been seriously affected by competing demands for you men. ... For example, in Colorado the April quota was 898



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but only 272 enrolled. ... If enrollment is not kept up, further reductions will be made in the camps available for doing important work this year for the National Forests of our Region (Cochran 1941).

By June of 1942, nearly all of the CCC camps in the Region were closed (Hinton 1988:VI-1). Despite arguments by the Forest Service to continue at least some CCC operations for fire protection, Congress voted to liquidate the Corps in June of 1942 (Salmond 1967:212 – 217). By this time only five camps remained in Colorado, one each in Estes Park, Grand Lake, Montrose, Glenwood Springs, and Mancos (McCarthy 1981:31). Reduction in funding and labor camps concluded the expansive construction of Silesca-like administrative buildings.

**General Discussion of Forest Service Architectural Influences**

The administrative history of the Forest Service in Colorado can be read in its architecture. The two are so closely linked that in 1913, it was said that "All improvements planned for the future have a direct bearing on the protection of the Forests ... it is almost impossible to determine where one leaves off and the other begins" (Hartley and Schneck 1996:33; Phillips 1913:2). As this mission of protection turned to one of resource management, Forest Service architectural designs changed with it (Hartley and Schneck 1996:33). During the 1930s, Forest Service designers strove to balance the industrious appearance of a cluster of buildings with the efficiency of multi-functional buildings.

Although stylistic interpretation by Regional designers evolved throughout Phase III, the basic elements of the Rustic style used in Region 2, including massing, appearance, and basic construction were in place by 1936. By the late 1930s, CCC-Rustic Style Ranger Stations represented the most standardized, functionally efficient administrative facilities used by the U.S. Forest Service. Throop identifies four characteristics of CCC-era site design; these include 1) a balanced arrangement of buildings and grounds, 2) economic development, 3) harmony with the surroundings, and 4) conformity with existing physiographic conditions (1979:29). With the help of landscape architects and obvious influence from Groben's *Principles* (ibid.), Region 2 Ranger Stations exemplified these characteristics. Designers arranged local administrative facilities in configurations that physically reinforced the dual roles of the Rangers as local residents and Forest Service employees. The overall appearance was that of community and informality, attributes that complemented the mountain settings in which the Rustic Style was most appropriately found.

**Construction Phases and Elements**

Phases I, II, and III were developed by Hartley and Schneck to detail the general design phases of Forest Service Administration buildings. Phase I construction or the "Pre-design phase" incorporates "buildings built from the inception of the Forest Reserves [1891] until the start of formal design within the Forest and Regional engineering divisions in about 1910, Phase I administrative buildings predominately reflect the pioneer traditions of their builders" Phase II, or the "Pre-CCC phase" "runs from approximately 1911 to 1933, the start of the CCC. During this era, Regional and Forest designers established a formal architectural vocabulary, based primarily upon the Bungalow, Arts and Crafts and Rustic styles. Though based upon formal architectural plans, pioneer construction methods are common" (1995:34).

Phase III architectural design encompasses the CCC-era, from 1933–1942. During this era of administrative expansion, the Architectural Division, created in 1936, developed its own interpretation of the Rustic Style, which employed natural settings and materials to harmonize with the physical

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environment. Construction in this era, predominately executed by New Deal labor, is typified by its standardized design, Rustic appearance, and labor-intensive composition. The architecture of Region 2 during the CCC-era thus represents a departure from earlier vernacular style architecture, common in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Instead, the homogenization of architectural styles was a direct result of New Deal economic development policies (Hartley and Schneck 1995:34).

Rustic architectural designs during Phase III have either a frame or log construction. Characteristic features of Phase III Rustic construction include battered split-stone foundations, massive interior and exterior stone chimneys, log walls, small-paned windows, deep overhanging roofs and minimal detailing. These characteristics are generally encompassed in the Centennial Combination Building Ranger Station (Job B-150) in the Medicine Bow National Forest, Wyoming. Walls are constructed from peeled, shaved logs of uniform diameter or wide clapboard siding. Log joints were usually saddle notched with roughly pointed crowns, up to 18" deep, although flat cut log ends are not uncommon. Moderately pitched roofs almost invariably featured exposed log or frame rafters and purlins. Gables of both log and frame buildings often had vertical logs or board siding, with attic vents at the peak. After 1938, some rooflines incorporated the broken gables seen in *Acceptable Plans: Forest Service Administration Buildings* (Forest Service 1938). Casement and hopper wood frame windows are both present in Phase III Rustic architectural designs. Andersen or Curtis casement windows were a Regional standard, thus providing a sense of visual unity for all Phase III designs regardless of architectural style. Hopper windows were exclusively used on basements, casement windows for all other floors. Interior color schemes were often selected by the overseeing ranger, though final approval rested with the Regional Forester until the mid-1940s when Forests began finishing many of the frame buildings in the same "Forest Service Brown" used on the log buildings (Hartley and Schneck 1995:63, 285-289).

### *Materials*

Construction materials included logs, oakum, poured concrete, split stone, brick, and deeply overhung shingle or tin roofs. Exteriors of log buildings were oiled, stained, varnished, or painted a light cream or dark brown; ochre pigment was often used to achieve the desired dark brown appearance. Interior treatment included waxed wood floors, especially in public rooms. Interior materials not stained or waxed were painted. Finishing treatments included the use of products like NuWood, Plywood, Masonite, and Beaver Board. Rustic designs incorporated both native and imported stone and timber. Veneers and shutters were predominately constructed using local stone and wood.

### *Site Placement*

Rangers respected local building codes and practices, which often required design, setting, or material modifications of regionally produced specifications. Layouts were revised and the elevation details quickly changed to whatever style or method of construction seemed most appropriate for the site. Following Groben's recommendations:

... the floor plans themselves are of chief concern, the design of their respective elevations must necessarily take into account the locality in which the buildings are to stand. ... It is just as impossible to designate any one style of architecture as acceptable and satisfactory for Forest Service buildings as for private ones (ibid.).

Site locations were formally evaluated according to practicality and efficiency. Proximity to water was a

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southern exposure. Additionally, sites used topography and vegetation to provide wind and storm protection.

Buildings were located far enough apart to provide a physical and psychological sense of separation, while preserving efficiency of vehicular and pedestrian movement. The centrally located driveway typically serviced all buildings, and site layouts accommodated existing vegetation (McCord 1939). Landscape plans incorporated native species into natural configurations. Low plantings near buildings and foundations softened visual impact by blurring the line where ground and building met. This incorporation of both landscape design and its role in the site placement becomes fully realized in the CCC-era Forest Service construction, and represents a marked departure from earlier architectural periods.

Based on the construction methods, materials, landscaping and placement of the Silesca Combination Building and its related buildings and structures, one can see that the nominated Silesca Ranger Station property is indicative of Phase III CCC-era construction styles.

**History of the Silesca Ranger Station**

Archaeological investigations, documentary and ethnohistoric evidence indicates that the Silesca landscape has been occupied from an unknown prehistoric temporal period through the present time. Prehistoric and historic components were recorded throughout the landscape immediately surrounding the Silesca Ranger Station property, some potentially related to the construction of the Combination Building and associated buildings and structures, others unrelated.

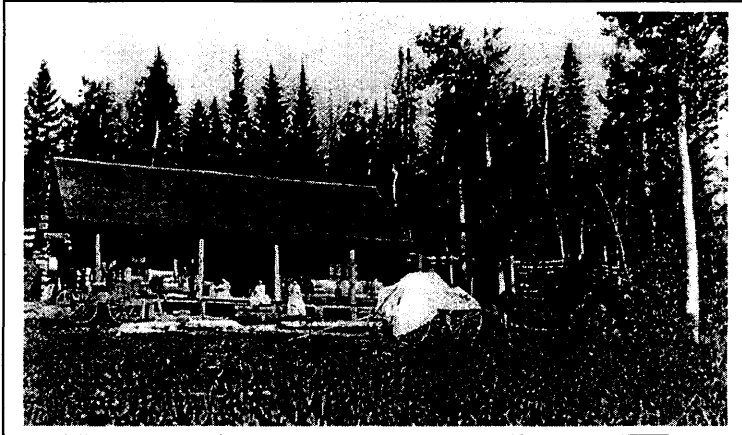
The archaeological, documentary and ethnographic evidence indicates a Euro-American occupation as the second known occupation site of the Silesca landscape in the late 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Such an interpretation is supported by the former presence of depression features, a log roller, cultural materials dating from 1830 – 1930 clustered near the western shores of Silesca pond recorded in 1985, and the ethnohistoric account of Jody Waverly of Nucla, Colorado. Waverly indicated that his grandfather recalled the presence of a lumber station in the Silesca pond vicinity. Further, he remembered a stopover station at Silesca pond “where teamsters could rest and change teams” (Bradley 1992:4). Finally, the song “Farewell to Sileski” is “suggestive of some type of lay-over station located at Silesca prior to 1905 when the Uncompahgre National Forest was established” (Barclay 1992:4, G). Unfortunately, this archaeological evidence has been destroyed by the newer establishment of an off road vehicle road to the southwest of Silesca pond. The destruction of these resources limits further exploration of the historic occupation of the Silesca cultural landscape before the establishment of the Silesca Ranger Station complex.

A cabin and barn possibly associated with the pre-20<sup>th</sup> Euro-American occupation of the area were constructed sometime before 1905 on the site of the nominated property. Although the exact time of the construction is unclear, photographs, site maps, and documentary evidence indicates that after the establishment of the Uncompahgre National Forest in 1905, an abandoned cabin and barn were taken over by Ranger McMullin. It was developed into the first Forest ranger station, then known as the Colony Ranger Station, on the site of the current Silesca Ranger Station property (Barclay 1992:4; No author: n.d). On October 31, 1912, the name was changed to Silesca Ranger Station per the request of the Forest Supervisor (Wilson 1912). By the time of the 1937 construction of the current Silesca Ranger Station, the pre-1905 buildings were destroyed. The lack of archaeological evidence of buildings and structures predating 1905 is likely a result of landscaping for the current Ranger Station in 1938 (Barclay 1992:8).

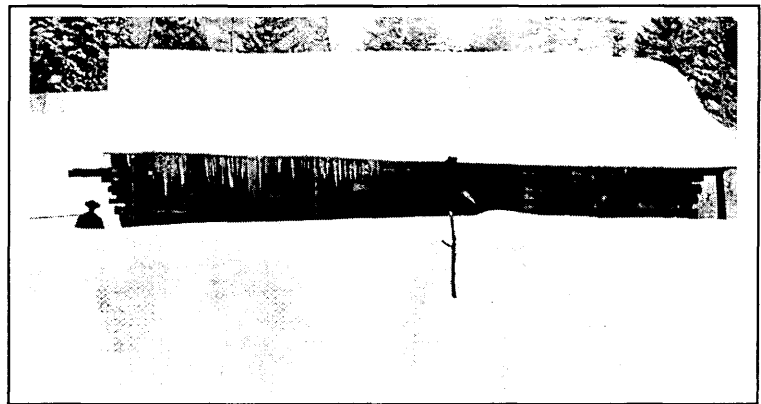
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Colony Ranger Station  
Summer 1910, Photo courtesy  
of USDA Forest Service  
← (no longer extant)



Colony Ranger Station  
Winter 1910, Photo Courtesy of  
USDA Forest Service  
→ (no longer extant)

Construction plans for the Silesca Combination Building and barn were based on the principles outlined by Groben and the Architectural Division of the Forest Service, and the Pactola Combination Building plan (Job 72)<sup>1</sup> (Brownlee 1936). Planning for the construction of the Combination Building began in 1936; construction began in 1937 and continued through 1940. During the 1936 planning, discussions took place determining the look of the Combination Building and the barn. In 1936, Forest Supervisor Rist notified the Regional Forester that the Combination Building would be finished throughout with peeled, stained, and varnished logs, which are still present today. Planning information about the barn indicates that in 1936, locally sawn Engleman Spruce slabs were supposed to be used in the construction of the Silesca barn, but internal Forest Service documentation indicates that "it [was] practically impossible to obtain usable slabs locally" (Beals 1937). Therefore, manufactured log siding was purchased from the Warren-Lamb Lumber Company in Rapid City, South Dakota (Hilton 1937). This is why the barn siding is not identical in appearance to the log siding construction of the Combination Building. In addition to using the manufactured siding "because of the fact that good stone is scarce," the builders felt it would "be advisable to use concrete for the foundation of the combination building." The decision to vary from the original plan was approved (Beals 1937; Hilton 1937).

In June 1939, Forest Supervisor James Beals requested the Forest Supervisor allow for a non-

<sup>1</sup> The site plans for the Pactola Combination Building cannot be located at this time.

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In June 1939, Forest Supervisor James Beals requested the Forest Supervisor allow for a non-standardized juniper and spruce post and pole fence to be constructed on site, rather than a standard worm or buck pole fence type associated with Combination Buildings, due to the great expense of one and practicality of construction of the other (Beals 1939; Thompson 1939). Permission was granted and accounts for the type of fence present today. Such negotiations provide clear examples of how Rangers accommodated modifications to original standardized plans to fit the needs of the site.

In 1956, the Combination Building was converted to a bunkhouse for housing seasonal Forest Service employees. Additionally, documentary evidence indicates that a building referred to as the "Main Ranger Dwelling" was still standing, although the date of its construction is unclear. According to Forest Service records, the Ranger Dwelling was built some time after 1916 but before the planning of the 1936 Combination Building and barn. Unfortunately, the Ranger Dwelling burned to the ground in 1977 in an accidental fire. The chimney of the burned dwelling was removed some time between 1985 and 2004, and the foundation covered in gravel. No documentary evidence has been located indicating date of removal of the chimney or covering of the foundation, but vegetation around and in the feature indicates that it has been at least several growing seasons since removal.

In 1967, an additional corral was added to the existing corral, and several log barriers were removed from the premises. A pump house was added to the service site some time before 1981, and water system improvements were made to the Combination Building in 1981. In 1985, stabilization and minimal structural and cosmetic repairs were made.

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Continuation Sheet****United States Department of the Interior  
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Montrose County/ ColoradoSection number 9 Page 11**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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Silesca Ranger Station  
Name of Property

Montrose County/ Colorado  
County/State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than two

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1. 12 751329 4246405  
Zone Easting Northing

2. Zone Easting Northing

3. Zone Easting Northing

4. Zone Easting Northing

[ ] See continuation sheet

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Bridget Roth, Special Projects Archaeologist

organization USDA Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Region date 17 August 2004

street & number 740 Simms Avenue telephone (303) 275-5047

city or town Golden state Colorado zip code 80401

## Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

### Continuation Sheets

#### Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

### Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

### Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

## Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name USDA Forest Service- Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre & Gunnison National Forests

street & number 2250 Highway 50 telephone (970) 874-6600

city or town Delta state Colorado zip code 81416

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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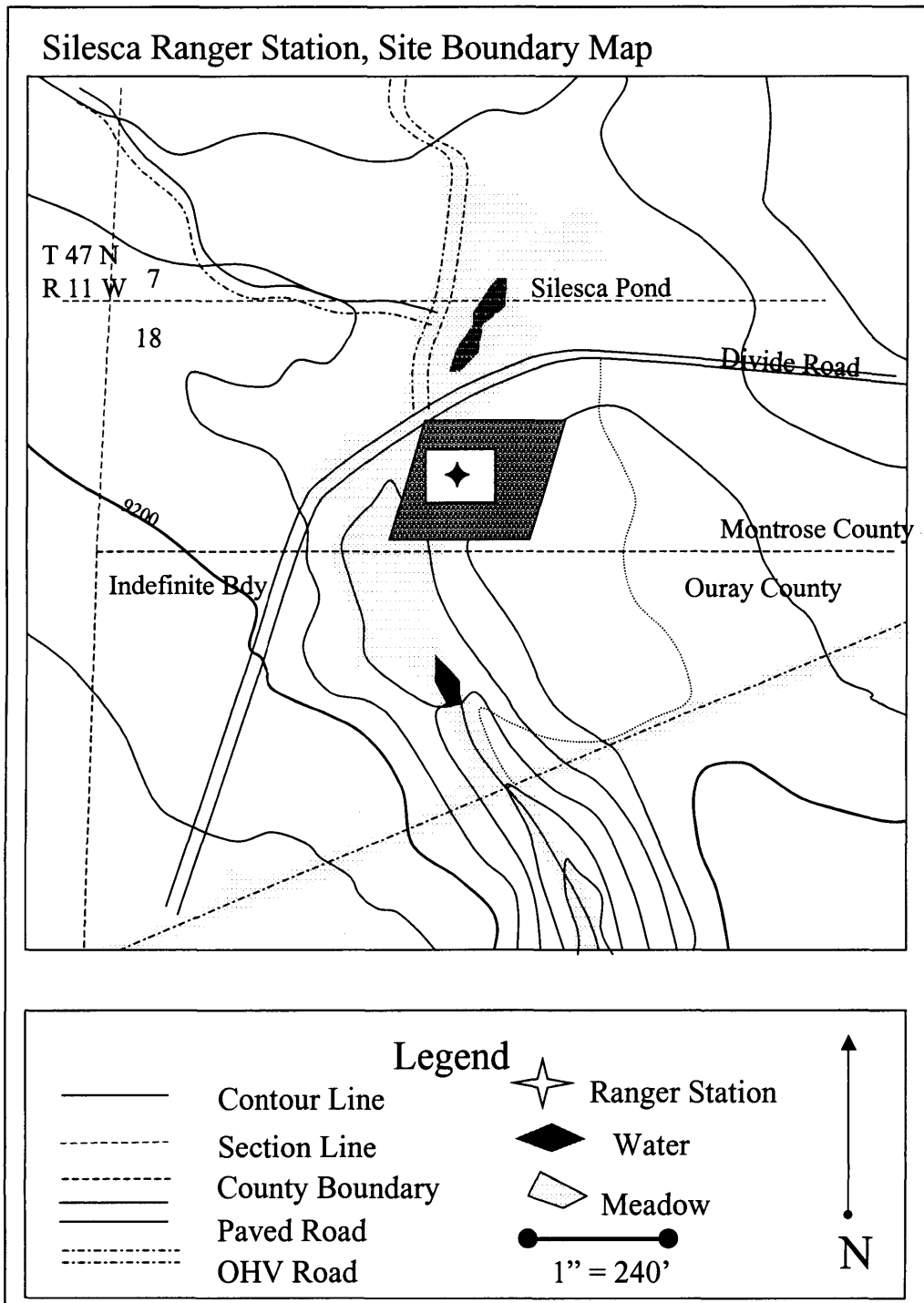
## GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated parcel includes the shaded portion noted in the scale map below.

### BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated boundary includes those buildings associated with the historic use and operations of the Silesca Ranger Station within the Uncompahgre National Forest.



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Montrose County/ ColoradoSection number \_\_\_ Page 15**PHOTOGRAPH LOG**

The following information pertains to photograph numbers 1-9 except as noted:

Name of Property: Silesca Ranger Station  
Location: Montrose County, Colorado  
Photographer: Leigh Ann Hunt  
Date of Photographs: October 14, 2004  
Negatives: USDA Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Region Office

<u>Photo No.</u>	<u>Photographic Information</u>
1	Combination Building- west façade, camera facing east.
2	Combination Building- south elevation, camera facing north.
3	Combination Building- east elevation, camera facing west.
4	Combination Building- north elevation, camera facing south.
5	Combination Building- close-up detail of northwest corner.
6	Barn- east façade and north wall, camera facing southwest.
7	Barn- east façade, camera facing west.
8	Barn- south elevation, camera facing north.
9	Barn- west elevation, camera facing east.

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**USGS TOPOGRAPHIC MAP**  
Pryor Creek Quadrangle, Colorado  
7.5 Minute Series

UTM: Zone 13 / 751329E / 4246405N  
PLSS: NM PM, T47N, R11W, Sec. 18  
SW $\frac{1}{4}$ , SE $\frac{1}{4}$ , NE $\frac{1}{4}$ , NW $\frac{1}{4}$   
Elevation: 9161 feet

