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United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

FEB 03 1989

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 Civilian Conservation Corps Camp S-52 other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Off U.S. Hwy. 53 not for publication N/A city, town Orr (Leiding Twp.) vicinity state Minnesota code MN county St. Louis code 137 zip code 55771

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: private (checked), public-local, public-State, public-Federal. Category of Property: building(s) (checked), district, site, structure, object. Number of Resources within Property: Contributing 4, Noncontributing 0 buildings, sites, structures, objects. Total 4. Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0.

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

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 (checked) does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet. Signature of certifying official: Nina M. Archabal, Minnesota State Historic Preservation Officer, State of Federal agency and bureau: Minnesota Historical Society. Date: 1/25/89.

In my opinion, the property meets (checked) 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 (checked), determined eligible for the National Register, determined not eligible for the National Register, removed from the National Register, other (explain:). Entered in the National Register (checked) 3/2/89. Signature of the Keeper, Date of Action.

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: CCC Buildings

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

No Style

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete

walls Weatherboard

roof Asphalt

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Civilian Conservation Corps Buildings at Cusson were put up in ca.1933 on the south edge of the town of Cusson. Their original functions were to provide shop space for a large CCC logging and forest maintenance operation which occupied these buildings (as well as the rest of the old Cusson townsite) from 1933 to ca.1941. The nomination consists of four contributing buildings.

Three of the four buildings (shops 1, 3, and 4) are located in the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 24, T65N R20W. The fourth building (shop 2) is located in the NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 24, T65N R20W. All four properties are within the municipal plat of Cusson, in Leiding Township, St. Louis County, Minnesota. By road, the buildings are on the west side of U.S. Highway 53 at the intersection of Highway 53 and County Road 180.

The construction of the buildings is similar: poured concrete foundation, stud walls supporting log king trusses, sheathed in shiplap and roofing felt covered by board and batten or board siding.

SHOP 1

Shop 1 is a frame utility building of rectangular plan. The long axis of the building runs north-south. The building sits on a new poured concrete and concrete block foundation that was put in by the Diamond Match Company in ca.1970. The frame of the building is stud walls supporting log king trusses. The exterior is sheathed with a layer of shiplap covered by roofing felt, covered by an outer layer of board and batten siding. The 6/6 double hung windows are original. The gabled roof is covered with asphalt shingles. The building is in excellent condition. The main shop entry door in the south end is an overhead type that replaced the original at an unknown date. Otherwise the building is substantially original.

SHOP 2

This frame utility building is rectangular in plan, with its long (north-south) axis only slightly greater than its short (east-west) axis. The ridgeline of the gabled roof runs north-south along the long axis. The building sits on a poured concrete foundation. Its framing is stud walls supporting log king trusses. It is sheathed in shiplap covered with roofing felt with an outer layer of vertical boards. The windows and doors are original. The roof is covered with rolled asphalt. The building is in excellent condition.

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Continuation Sheet**

Civilian Conservation Corps Camp S-52, St. Louis County, MN

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SHOP 3

This rectangular frame building sits on a poured concrete foundation and is framed with stud walls supporting log king trusses. It is sheathed with shiplap covered with roofing felt with an outer layer of vertical board siding. The roof is covered with rolled asphalt. The windows are original. The principal entry door in the east end has been made higher than the original door to accomodate modern logging equipment. The new doors for this larger opening are compatible. The building is in excellent condition.

SHOP 4

This rectangular frame building measures 32' by 56'. The ridgeline of its gabled roof runs east-west. The building sits on a poured concrete foundation. Its framing is stud wall supporting log king trusses. It is sheathed with shiplap covered with roofing felt with an outer layer of vertical board siding. The roof is covered with rolled asphalt. The doors and windows are original. The building's integrity is high, but it is not weathertight. It is in fair condition, but will deteriorate fast if it is not sealed to the weather.

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)
POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

Period of Significance
1933-1937

Significant Dates
1933

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Significant Person
N/A

Architect/Builder
CCC

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

The four shop buildings are significant as the only known CCC-era structures in Cusson (Camp S-52) built for the Civilian Conservation Corps and as the only identified structures with the CCC program remaining in the International Falls Sub-District, headquartered at Hibbing, Minnesota. The Cusson Camp was one of the original 25 camps set up in Minnesota in the year 1933. It was one of five of the original Minnesota camps still operating in 1935. The area of significance is politics and government, since the CCC activities stemmed from the bill setting up the Emergency Conservation Work (ECW) of 1933 which put young unemployed men to work under the Minnesota Department of Conservation--Division of Forestry. But the historic themes with which these 1933 buildings are associated are conservation activities in Minnesota and northern Minnesota logging. Very few CCC camp buildings have survived in Minnesota because they were simple, utilitarian wood frame structures that were generally considered to be only temporary facilities. Other extant CCC camp buildings include two in Itasca State Park and one in St. Croix State Park, as well as the 1935 Rabideau CCC Camp (NRHP) in Beltrami County. The Cusson CCC buildings are only the second CCC-associated property being nominated to the National Register in Minnesota and the oldest identified.

The CCC operation in Cusson was unusual, because, unlike the other Minnesota camps, Cusson was the site of a company town, platted in 1909 by the Virginia and Rainy Lake Lumber Company and operated as the headquarters for their logging operations until 1929, when operations ceased. So Cusson already had buildings available to the CCC operations in 1933. The town of Cusson was abandoned in 1929 and all the houses, stores, and warehouses stood empty or some were moved off the townsite to other locations. The lumber company sold the entire townsite in 1930 to Nick Ofstad. When the Emergency Conservation Work Bill went into effect on March 31, 1933 upon the inauguration of President Roosevelt, the Civilian Conservation Corps was launched. At Cusson, it was not necessary for the CCC to build many of the barracks and structures needed to run the full operations of the camp. Consequently, Cusson became the site of one of the first 25 CCC camps in Minnesota sometime in June, 1933. The state Department of Conservation-Division of Forestry in Minnesota simply leased the entire townsite from Nick Ofstad on a yearly basis and built

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some shops, those being currently nominated. The department paid Ofstad \$10.00 for leasing ground for a "tent city" for the initial 1933 summer camp, and by August, 1933, signed a lease for an additional \$10.00 a year lease for the existing buildings at the Cusson townsite. This very low rate covered the land and buildings of the old Virginia and Rainy Lake Lumber Company townsite and saved the program the expense and delays of new construction. The four buildings in this nomination were shop buildings, built in 1933, because they do not appear on a 1929 building plat map of Cusson drawn by the Virginia and Rainy Lake Lumber Company. The year 1933 was the depth of the Depression and by 1937, many of Minnesota's CCC camps were no longer in active operation. This seems to be the case at Cusson. By 1935, only five of the first 25 camps established in Minnesota were still in operation and Cusson was one of the five. It may have not been operating by 1940, because at least one other CCC-era garage building at Cusson was moved to the Flint Creek Farm south of Cook in 1940.

The Cusson CCC camp was the site of Company Number 725. This company was organized on June 2, 1933 at Fort Snelling under the command of an army captain. The company left for Cusson on June 16, 1933 and erected a tent camp while the state Forestry Division was negotiating with Ofstad for a lease of the townsite and its buildings. Company 725 first built the winter camp at Cusson (S-52), and also had charge of building two other CCC camps, F-29 and S-94. The 200 boys and young men assigned to Cusson engaged in forestry conservation activities in the region during their stay at Cusson. The Local Experienced Men (LEM) were probably older local lumbermen who came from the surrounding towns and cities of Orr, Cusson, Cook, and Buyck. The CCC operation at Cusson not only gave employment to young men whose families were destitute during the Great Depression, it also gave work to the LEMs, experienced lumbermen who had been thrown out of work as the lumber industry collapsed in northern St. Louis County.

9. Major Bibliographical References

- Aguar, Charles E. Exploring St. Louis County Historical Sites. Duluth: St. Louis County Historical Society. A Special Services Project of Aguar Jyring Whiteman Moser, Inc., 1971.
- Alleger, C.N., compiler. Civilian Conservation Corps, Minnesota District. Rapid City, S.D.: Johnston 7 Bordewyk, Inc., Printers, 1934?
- Beatty, L.R. "Five Years for Conservation: A Report of the Conservation and Training Accomplishments of the CCC Camps on the Minnesota State Forests, June 1933 to March 1938," July, 1938. On file: Iron Range Historical Society, Gilbert, MN.
- Correspondence on CCC Camp S-52 at Cusson, MN, dated 1933-35. Department of Conservation, Civilian Conservation Corp Camps, Camp S-52, 1933-35 (69F8.4F). Division of Archives and Manuscripts, Minnesota Historical Society.
- Drake, Robert M. "CCC Started 50 Years Ago." Minnesota Forests (Fall 1983): 4-6.
- Letter from Bernis Anderson Bergren to The Reverend Arthur Dale, January 6, 1987 on the history of Cusson.
- Virginia and Rainy Lake Lumber Company plat map of Cusson, 1929. On file: Iron Range Historical Society, Gilbert, MN.

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 approximately 1.75 acres

UTM References

A

1	5	5	1	1	5	4	0	5	3	2	7	4	2	0
Zone	Easting					Northing								

C

1	5	5	1	1	6	6	0	5	3	2	7	3	2	8
Zone	Easting					Northing								

B

1	5	5	1	1	6	6	0	5	3	2	7	4	0	0
Zone	Easting					Northing								

D

1	5	5	1	1	5	3	0	5	3	2	7	3	4	2
Zone	Easting					Northing								

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated property is delineated by the polygon whose vertices are marked by the following UTM reference points: A 15 511540 5327420, B 15 511660 5327400, C 15 51160 5327328, D 15 511530 5327342, Orr, MN Quadrangle, Photorevised 1986.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundaries are drawn to include only the four extant CCC buildings that have historically been associated with Cusson Camp S-52.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Drs. Joe and Norene Roberts

organization Historical Research, Inc. date November 4, 1987

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Civilian Conservation Corps buildings, Cusson, St. Louis County, Minnesota

Map is not to scale

Buildings 1, 3, and 4 are in SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 24, T65N R20W

Building 2 is in NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 24, T65N R20W

- 1 = Shop #1
- 2 = Shop #2
- 3 = Shop #3
- 4 = Shop #4

