

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NATIONAL REGISTER ONLY	
RECEIVED	DEC 5 1984
DATE ENTERED	JAN 19 1985

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Silcox Hut

AND/OR COMMON

**LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

Timberline Road

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Timberline Lodge

VICINITY OF Government Camp

Third

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Oregon

41

Clackamas

005

**CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

**OWNERSHIP**

**STATUS**

**PRESENT USE**

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**

**ACCESSIBLE**

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER: recreation

**AGENCY**

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)

U. S. Forest Service

STREET & NUMBER

2955 N. W. Division

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Gresham

VICINITY OF

Oregon

**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Forest Supervisor's Office

STREET & NUMBER

2955 N. W. Division

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Gresham

Oregon

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Mt. Hood National Forest Cultural Resources Overview, 1978, on file at Forest Supervisor's Office

DATE

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

2955 N. W. Division, Gresham

Oregon

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Silcox Hut is a rustic stone and timber structure nestled into the south face of Mt. Hood at 6,950 feet. Designed and constructed in 1939, Silcox was built to house the upper terminus of the Magic Mile and to serve as a warming hut for chilled skiers, mountain climbers, and visitors who might buy a "Sunset Ride" on the chairlift.

Silcox Hut is an excellent example of a style of architecture which developed during the 19th century and reflected a romanticism about nature and the western frontier. <sup>1/</sup> Silcox Hut was designed to be a non intrusive accessory of nature. As such, it is sunken into the southern slope of Mt. Hood, and its use of natural materials blends in with the surrounding barren, boulder-strewn, alpine environment. Consistent with the concept of harmony with local environment, Silcox Hut's structure and scale fits in with surrounding rock outcroppings which are dwarfed by the mountain itself. The shape and bulk of the mountain were translated into the squat and sturdy design of Silcox Hut. The use of heavy timbers and battered irregular boulders help integrate the building into its surrounding environment.

Silcox is 60 feet long and 27 feet wide at its widest point. A single detached building, Silcox is shaped in an 'L'. The main rectangular portion of the building is built on an east-west axis with a rectangular wing projecting south. This non-intrusive east-west axis placement and the 'L' shape fit naturally into the mountain slope. Yet, the heavy construction ensures that the building is not diminished into insignificance within its mountain setting. The body of the 'L' is one story; the foot of the 'L', which housed the ski lift terminus, is two stories including the loft with a window. The walls of the hut are made of rough cut local stone and grout. The base of the rock walls are approximately four feet thick and narrow to approximately two feet in width where they join the roof. The current condition of the walls is sound, but some grout has fallen out and, consequently some rocks have loosened.

The roof structure is comprised of heavy timbers which have been hand hewn. The beams and trusses are joined with hand hammered wrought iron fixtures. The high gable roof is covered on the outside by cedar shingles. Some of the shingles are missing, having been used for fires inside the hut. The raking trim is composed of grey, weathered timbers which appear to be in good condition.

On the south side of the hut a graded unpaved terrace extends outward 8-12 feet. Long and wide stone steps encircle this dirt terrace. Entry on the north side of the hut was by a small gable roofed foyer. The door in this foyer has been sealed shut with stone making entry through it impossible.

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<sup>1/</sup> "Utterly Visionary and Chimerical: A Federal Response to the Depression." Throop, USDA Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Region, 1979.

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The seven windows in the hut are defined by steel sashes and divided into three horizontal sections. Only the upper sections open and are of an awning type. The glazing needs repair, and the sashes need paint. The two doors in the hut are also hand hewn; made of one inch boards laminated together. Decorative hand hammered wrought iron strap hinges run the width of the doors and attach them to the door frames. There are two single stack chimneys made of hand chipped local stone and grout. They are flush with the gables and straddle the ridge on the east and west ends of the building.

The hut has many decorative elements. Where the rear door entry used to be are two horizontally routed king posts made from large logs. These posts are sunken into the plane of the wall on either side of the rear entry. Another, larger routed king post is located inside on the upper floor in the dining area. This one is fully exposed. Other aesthetically pleasing components include the beams and trusses which form the ceiling and are made of hand carved timber. In the stairwell at the northwest corner of the hut is a small octagonal window. The light fixtures are made of hand hammered wrought iron.

Additional interior features contribute to the historic and architectural significance of the building. The stairs which connect the lower story with the upper story are made of rough cut flagstone. Similarly, the entire upper floor is covered with such stone. A striking bronze plaque hangs over the fireplace in commemoration of Ferdinand A. Silcox, head of the Forest Service from 1933 until 1939.

The present physical appearance of the building has not changed substantially from the original appearance. Except for general deterioration, due to weather and vandalism, the only change has been the enclosure of the south end of the foot of the 'L', which occurred when the Magic Mile ski lift was discontinued in 1962. When this occurred the large bull wheel which comprised the upper terminus of the ski lift was removed. Further, the rear entry door has been sealed shut. Overall, however, the same excellent design exists, the heavy and solid construction materials are intact, and the quality workmanship still evinces the naturalistic and sensitive use of architectural form and native materials characteristic of Forest Service structures built during the depression era.

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The dominant feature of the large gathering room is the huge stone fireplace on the east end. Above the fireplace is a bronze plaque made by the Works Progress Administration and placed by the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1940. It reads: "This building dedicated to Ferdinand A. Silcox, Chief of the Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, November 1933--December 1939. He made Possible the Development of the Timberline Lodge Recreation Area."

In the southwest corner of the main room is an L-shaped counter made of half logs resting on peeled log supports. This was the area where the concession stand was operated.

Stone steps lead down through a three-inch thick board and batten door with iron hardware into the wing which housed the bull wheel for the ski lift. This ell has the same roof support system as the main room, with partially squared beams. The floor is unpaved, except for the concrete foundation on which the bull wheel was mounted.

# 3 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/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-1939	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1938-39 BUILDER/ARCHITECT <sup>W.I.</sup> Tim Turner, Architect  
Forest Service Builder

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Silcox Hut was constructed during the boom period in recreation development which began with the election of Franklin Delanor Roosevelt and his New Deal. <sup>2/</sup> One major Federal government response to the Depression was to create a "conservation army" drawn from the unemployed and put them to work on public service projects. The Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) and Work Progress Administration (WPA) were organized providing a pool of inexpensive and talented labor. Both Timberline Lodge and Silcox Hut were built by these skilled craftsmen and laborers. <sup>3/</sup>

Ferdinand A. Silcox, whom Silcox Hut was named after, was appointed Chief Forester in 1933. This appointment proved fortuitous because he strongly supported the construction of complex and elaborate recreation facilities in national forests, a position unfortunately confined to the Depression era. <sup>4/</sup> Before and after the Depression Forest Service policy has been to provide recreation sites but not structures.

The Pacific Northwest benefited from the new Forest Service policy. In the summer of 1935, Silcox approved and the Forest Service fought for and won the right to build a hotel on Mt. Hood, Timberline Lodge. The Timberline complex was to consist of four buildings: the Lodge, a ski chalet, Silcox Hut, at the upper terminus of the Magic Mile ski lift, and another hut at the bottom of the ski lift. Plans were drawn for all of these buildings but the ski chalet was never constructed. In 1937 President Roosevelt dedicated Timberline Lodge as one of the wonders of the Northwest, "skilled wood carvers, blacksmiths, and other craftsmen lavished their attention on the projects, producing a massive rustic structure that embodied much of the folklore and legend of the region." <sup>5/</sup> Timberline Lodge was named a National Historic Site in 1973 and a National Landmark in 1978. Silcox Hut, Timberline Lodge's sister building, deserves similar recognition because, it too, is exceptionally significant.

<sup>2/</sup> Recreation Site Planning and Improvements in National Forests 1891-1942, Tweed, USDA Forest Service, Washington, D. C., 1980.

<sup>3/</sup> "How to Evaluate and Nominate Potential National Register Properties That Have Achieved Significance Within the Last 50 Years," Sherfy and Luce, U. S. Deptment of the Interior Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, Washington, D. C. 1979.

<sup>4/</sup> Recreation Site Planning and Improvements in National Forests 1891-1942, Tweed, USDA Forest Service, Washington, D. C., 1980, p. 18.

<sup>5/</sup> Recreation Site Planning and Improvements in National Forests 1891-1942, Tweed, USDA Forest Service, Washington, D. C., 1980, p. 24.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1. Cultural Resources Inventory, Dick Hoffman, USFS.
2. Recreation Site Planning and Improvement in National Forests, 1891-1942, Tweed. USDA Forest Service, Washington, D. C., 1980.
3. Silcox Hut Inventory Report, Jon Horn, ca 1980, Mt. Hood National Forest, CRM Files.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1.72 acres

UTM REFERENCES Lat. 121 42' 29" Long. 45 29' 27"

A	<u>1,0</u>	<u>6,0,1</u>	<u>1,9,0</u>	<u>5,0,2,1</u>	<u>8,3,0</u>	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING				ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C						D			

## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

From the section corner common to sections 5 and 6, township 3 south, range 9 east, Willamette Meridian, thence west 800 feet, thence south 250 feet, thence east 300 feet, thence north 250 feet, thence east 500 feet to the point of beginning.

## LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Sarah Munro, President

Nancy J. Randall, Attorney

ORGANIZATION

Friends of Timberline

DATE

ICE, Ltd.

STREET & NUMBER

Timberline Lodge

TELEPHONE

2774 N. W. Savier

CITY OR TOWN

Government Camp, OR

292-2423

STATE

Portland, OR 97210

227-3003

# 12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES X

NO

NONE

*[Signature]*  
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is National  State  Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

*[Signature]*

TITLE AGENCY PRESERVATION OFFICER

DATE NOV 20 1984

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

1/22/85

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

Listed 1/19/85 at

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

end of 45 day  
Announcement 12/1/84

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Like Timberline Lodge, Silcox Hut is a product of the Depression and the Federal government's response to unemployment. Many of the same skilled craftsmen who built Timberline Lodge participated in the construction of Silcox Hut, which was completed in 1939.

Silcox Hut is exceptionally significant because it is a classic example of Forest Service architectural style built during the Depression era, "rustic." During this period each Forest Service regional office designed structures which were harmonious with their surrounding environment. <sup>6/</sup> This non-intrusive architectural style melded a building in with its surroundings through the integration of a buildings' design with the landscape and through the use of native building materials. Silcox Hut's design in the shape of an open 'L', situated on an east-west axis and sunken into the side of the mountain, makes it seem part of the mountain. Further, the use of natural local chipped rock and hand hewn logs tie it closer to its surrounding boulder-strewn alpine environment.

Silcox Hut is also exceptionally significant because it marked the beginning of recreational sport downhill skiing in the United States. When it was built in 1939, it housed the upper terminus of the Magic Mile ski lift. The Magic Mile was the second ski lift in existence in the United States. The ski lift was of such significance that Crown Prince Olav of Norway came to speak at its dedication. When the Magic Mile was discontinued in 1962, it was the oldest operating ski lift in the country.

Silcox Hut is a part of the Timberline Lodge complex. Yet, it deserves individual historic recognition for many reasons. It represents a unique expression of "cascadian" rustic architectural style; a style which was a function of its own time and suited to the conditions of a depressed economy. Silcox Hut's use of natural materials and labor intensive construction was an appropriate response to the Depression. The skilled craftsmen, who worked on the Hut, created many hand crafted decorations, which provide an artistic touch and visual pleasure within the rugged sturdy building. Silcox Hut marked the beginning of recreational downhill skiing in the Pacific Northwest. Silcox Hut has a rare and distinctive beauty as it sits, looking much like the boulder-strewn slope surrounding it, at 6,950 feet, the highest building on the mountain.

<sup>6/</sup> "Utterly Visionary and Chimerical: A Federal Response to the Depression."  
Throop, USDA Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Region, 1979, p. 32.

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Silcox Hut is the only remaining structure from the original "Magic Mile" ski lift on Mt. Hood above Timberline Lodge. The "Magic Mile" chair lift, of which Silcox Hut was the upper terminus, was the second chair lift built in the United States and the first to be constructed using steel towers. The lift began 200 yards east of Timberline Lodge, rose 996.5 feet in elevation over a 207° slope and ended 4,950 feet up the mountain at Silcox Hut. The lift had a capacity of 255 people per hour and moved at a rate of 450 feet per minute. The power plant was housed in the lower terminal, a building similar in design to Silcox Hut, which has since been removed. The lift itself consisted of towers set on concrete foundations evenly spaced up the mountainside. To prevent skiers from falling out, each chair was supplied with a seat belt and blankets were provided to ward off the cold.

The building of the lift and its upper and lower terminals was designed and supervised by the USDA, Forest Service Regional Engineer's Office headed by Supervising Architect, W. I. Turner, who also headed the Timberline Lodge project. His staff included Howard L. Gifford, Dean Wright, Linn A. Forrest, and Ward Gano. Construction work was done only by skilled W.P.A. craftsmen at a total cost of \$58,000.

In a pre-dedication ceremony, Crown Prince Olav and Princess Martha of Norway secured the first tower erected with a nut and bolt on May 21, 1939. On Sunday, November 26, 1939, the "Magic Mile" ski lift went into operation for the first time while snow was falling. The completion of Silcox Hut was still two weeks away but was open for guests during the event. Facilities housed in the building included a lunch and refreshment concession for the convenience of skiers and winter hikers on the mountain.

In its early years of use, operation of the lift did not end with winter. Beginning early in the summer of 1940, sunset chairlift rides were offered as an added attraction at Timberline. According to the Oregonian, "The view from the 'Sky Hut,'" as Silcox Hut was billed, "is considered one of the finest in the west."

In 1940, a bronze plaque, made by the WPA, commemorating Ferdinand A. Silcox, Chief of the Forest Service from 1933 until his death in 1939, was placed in the upper terminus. Since then the building has been known as Silcox Hut.

Use of the "Magic Mile" chairlift was discontinued in 1962, and the lift was dismantled in the following year. At its termination, it was the oldest operating ski lift in the country.