

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED MAR 11 1981

DATE ENTERED APR 20 1981

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

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

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

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC Bonaparte Mountain Cabin

AND/OR COMMON Bonaparte Mountain Cabin

**LOCATION** *E OF TONASKET IN*  
Okanogan National Forest, three miles south on Trail #306  
STREET & NUMBER from Forest Road #3902

CITY, TOWN *Tonasket vic.* Havillah  NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT *35*

STATE Washington  VICINITY OF CODE 53 COUNTY Okanogan CODE 047

**CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**AGENCY** U.S. Forest Service  
REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable) Pacific Northwest Region 6

STREET & NUMBER 319 S.W. Pine - P.O. Box 3623

CITY, TOWN Portland  VICINITY OF Oregon STATE 97208

**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, Supervisors Office  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Okanogan National Forest

STREET & NUMBER P.O. Box 950

CITY, TOWN Okanogan STATE Washington 98840

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE N.F.O.R.R.R. Recreation Area Plans

DATE 1972  FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Okanogan National Forest, Supervisor's Office

CITY, TOWN Okanogan STATE Washington

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

EXCELLENT  
 GOOD  
 FAIR

99A

DETERIORATED  
 RUINS  
 UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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

The Bonaparte Mountain Cabin, a square building of hand-hewn log construction was erected in 1914 as a fire lookout and was occupied seasonally until 1930. Located on the Tonasket Ranger District of the Okanogan National Forest, the cabin is situated on the Summit of Mt. Bonaparte, at an elevation of 7,258 feet, and occupies an alpine landscape of glacially polished granite boulders interspersed with whitebark pine and low brush. The site is in Sections 13 and 14, Township 38 North, Range 29 East on the U.S.G.S Mt. Bonaparte Quadrangle map.

Measuring twelve feet by twelve feet, the Bonaparte Mountain Cabin is pyramidal in shape, tapering at an angle of approximately fifteen degrees to a low hipped roof. Although as built, the roof material was a heavy corrugated steel, possibly salvaged from an abandoned mine building, no lightning protection was devised. The exterior wall materials were square-hewn with a broad ax and stacked horizontally, utilizing the dovetail method of jointure. The log ends were closely trimmed and square-sawn. Mortar chinking ensured the structure's weatherproof qualities. Six-light single sash windows on three elevations provided light and ventilation. The cabin was accessed by a single sawn-plank door centered on the west facade. The cabin interior has unfinished log walls and a plain plank floor.

Originally, the cabin formed the base of a lookout tower. Peeled log posts abutted each corner of the cabin and extended through the roof to support an observation platform and its covering hipped roof. The platform, with its center-based heliograph, was enclosed by a simple peeled pole railing and accessed by ladder. Structural deterioration caused by environmental factors led to the removal of the platform as a safety hazard, but the lower portions of the corner posts remain, the ends square-sawn a few inches above the roof.

Repairs which essentially stabilized the cabin were effected in the summer of 1971: the roof material was replaced with new wood shingles, the logs were rechinked where the original mortar had fallen out and the plank door was renovated. The original sash windows were replaced with single pane casements. A stove and wooden bedstead were installed at the same time.

Albeit the lookout tower with its observation platform has been removed, the Bonaparte Mountain Cabin itself exhibits no significant structural changes. Material alterations, such as the replacement of the roof and the sash windows, have modified the original appearance of the cabin only slightly.

Adjacent to the Bonaparte Mountain Cabin, on the south, is the current lookout tower, brought to the site by helicopter in 1961. The design of this structure approximately inverts the design of the original lookout: a square cabin with a hipped roof rests on a platform which is supported by a tower constructed of treated square timbers. An intermediary lookout tower, erected immediately to the north of the Bonaparte Mountain Cabin in 1930, no longer stands. Apart from a small toilet facility of relatively recent construction, there are no outbuildings.

# 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 checked="" 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	Forest fire suppression
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Forest fires resulting from lightning storms and from human carelessness have hampered good forestry since the inception of forest management in this country. Built in 1914, the Bonaparte Mountain Cabin was the first permanent structure erected for fire detection purposes on what was then the Chesaw Ranger District of the Colville National Forest. With its observation platform and heliograph, the cabin represented a significant development in the evolution of fire control methods, and predates the 1915-1916 standardization of the cupola design.

The Bonaparte Mountain Cabin exhibits the pioneer techniques of log construction common to the time and location: logs were square-hewn by hand with a broad ax and stacked horizontally utilizing the dove-tail method of jointure with closely trimmed ends. Although its tower has been removed, the Bonaparte Mountain Cabin possesses integrity of form, material and environment, retaining the primary elements of fabric, setting, location, design and workmanship.

In the early years of the U.S. Forest Service, fire suppression was difficult and dangerous. Few fire trails or roads accessed the remote forest areas and before mechanized transportation was readily available, fire crews had to carry the most essential fire-fighting tools on their backs and pack heavier equipment and supplies on horses and mules. Because much valuable time was necessarily consumed in reaching a fire on foot, the earliest possible detection of a fire was paramount to its successful containment: the fire lookout bore a great responsibility.

At the highest peak in eastern Washington, Mt. Bonaparte was identified early as a strategic location for a fire lookout. Its moderate slopes gave comparatively easy access to a broadly rounded summit when, prior to 1914 when the cabin was built, fire lookouts were housed in tents. With the improved visibility provided by the observation platform of the Bonaparte Mountain Cabin, the fire lookout scanned the surrounding forest for the smoke that signalled a forest fire. Before telephones were installed, the lookout communicated the locations of fires to a receiving station, perhaps 20 or 30 miles distant, by heliograph, a mirror device with which the sun's reflection could be trained: messages in Morse code were flashed by means of a shutter.

Subsequently used for storage, the Bonaparte Mountain Cabin was replaced in 1930 by a second tower (since removed), and by a third in 1961. The continued active use of the site indicates the importance of the location for fire control in the area.

# MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1. Okanogan National Forest Visitor Information Plan, Okanogan, Washington
2. Forest Service Records, Okanogan National Forest, Tonasket Ranger District, Supervisor's Office, Okanogan, Washington.
3. Kerr, Charles, "Lookout," Wenatchee Daily World, August 1971.
4. Kresek, Roy, Spokane, Washington, telephone interview, October 16, 1979.

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 0.4 acres

**ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED**

UTM REFERENCES

**UTM NOT VERIFIED**

A 11 344174 5405515  
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B                 
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C               

D               

### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The summit of Mt. Bonaparte - the boundary, described by a circle 150 feet in diameter

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE L. G. Sandberg, Landscape Archicect and revised by E. Gail Throop, Historian, Regional Office, Portland, Oregon

ORGANIZATION U.S. Forest Service, Okanogan National Forest DATE November 8, 1979

STREET & NUMBER P.O. Box 950 TELEPHONE (509) 422-2704

CITY OR TOWN Okanogan, STATE Washington CODE 98840

## 12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

### STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES  NO  NONE

Jeanne M. Williams  
 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 BARRY R. PLANN TITLE Director DATE 3/4/80  
Office of Environmental Quality

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER	
<u>Barry R. Plann</u>	DATE <u>4/20/80</u>
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION	
TEST <u>Emma Jane Saxe</u>	DATE <u>4-20-81</u>
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER	
<u>Regional Reviewer</u>	

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CONTINUATION SHEET

2

ITEM NUMBER

8

PAGE

2

With its pyramidal shape and hand-hewn squared log construction, the Bonaparte Mountain Cabin is one of two fire lookouts of its type and age remaining in the Pacific Northwest Region. The structure and its environment retain sufficient integrity to convey a feeling of time and place consistent with the periods of construction and important use, and together, they have a readily identifiable relationship to early Forest Service history. The Bonaparte Mountain Cabin continues to evoke the isolated life and the responsibilities of the early fire lookouts who manned it.

A year later a sister lookout on Columbia Mountain (elevation 6782 feet) was built apparently by the same person. The cabin is one mile north of Sherman Pass about 30 miles east of Bonaparte Mountain Cabin. This land is under supervision of the Colville National Forest.

The Bonaparte Mountain Cabin has been an attraction for hikers for many years. Several hundred visitors ascend the trail up the north slope of Mt. Bonaparte annually, a distance of three miles, to view the cabin and talk to the fire lookout. The Forest Service plans to equip the cabin with fire equipment of the 1914-1930 era for visitor information.