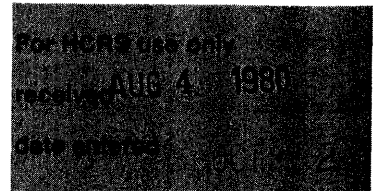


**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**



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

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

**1. Name** Cuyuna Iron Range Municipally - Owned Elevated Metal Water Tanks  
Thematic Resources

historic Municipally-Owned Elevated Metal Water Tanks on the Cuyuna Iron Range

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number Various (see inventory sheets) not for publication

city, town \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ congressional district \_\_\_\_\_ 7th \_\_\_\_\_

state Minnesota code 22 county Crow Wing code 035

**3. Classification**

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

**4. Owner of Property**

name Multiple Ownership (see inventory sheets)

street & number

city, town \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Crow Wing County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Brainerd state Minnesota

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Statewide Survey of Historic Resources

has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1979  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Minnesota Historical Society, 240 Summit Avenue, Hill House

city, town St. Paul state Minnesota 55102

# 7. Description

**Condition**  
 excellent     deteriorated  
 good         ruins  
 fair          unexposed

**Check one**  
 unaltered  
 altered

**Check one**  
 original site  
 moved    date \_\_\_\_\_

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

## THEME AND GEOGRAPHICAL RELATIONSHIP

The unifying theme of this nomination is a combination of engineering, public works, and community planning, as exemplified in five of the six surviving elevated metal water tanks owned, erected, and operated by municipalities located within the general area known as the Cuyuna Iron Range, which lies entirely within Crow Wing County.

## PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The six ~~nominated~~ <sup>nominate</sup> properties are all-metal elevated tanks designed for water storage and maintenance of necessary water pressure in municipal water supply systems. Each has a cylindrical tank; simple red painted conical roof with finial; hemispherical bottom; balcony; four-post lattice-girder trestle tower with diagonal tie rods, connected to the tank with a circular girder; and riser pipe connecting the tank with the water system. Each has the community name lettered on the tank. All are of similar dimensions and capacity. Individual differences are noted on individual inventory sheets.

The Cuyuna Iron Range elevated metal water tanks were inventoried by the State Historic Preservation Office as part of the on-going statewide survey of standing structures. During 1978-79 the Cuyuna Range communities were surveyed as part of the survey of Crow Wing County. The nominated tanks include all extant municipally-owned elevated metal water tanks within the area of the Cuyuna Range, with the exception of the elevated metal tank in the City of Riverton which, fabricated and erected in 1944, is not significant in the terms of this nomination.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) public works
<b>Specific dates</b>	1912-18	<b>Builder/Architect</b>	Minneapolis Steel and Machinery Co. and Des Moines Bridge and Iron Co.	

## Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Five of the six extant, municipally-owned, elevated metal water tanks on the Cuyuna Iron Range are significant in the interrelated areas of engineering, public works, and community planning. They are, in some cases, the only surviving material artifacts representing an historical occurrence peculiar to the development of communities on the Cuyuna Range. The general historical development of the Range communities parallels the history of range mining. The communities began around 1910, reaching a peak of mining employment in 1920. By 1930 range mining was in decline and by the 1950s was gone entirely. Today, communities such as Trommald and Cuyuna are almost ghost towns. During their heyday between 1910 and the mid-twenties these communities benefited tremendously from an unusual situation created by an ad valorem property tax on mining properties whose valuation was made by the State Department of Taxation and not by local assessors. This tax arrangement was created before the tremendous mining boom and resulted in huge amounts of unforeseen local revenue for communities which they could not reduce even had they so wished. As a result, great expenditures of these revenues were made on public works and improvements. State historian Theodore Blegen states: "A singular aspect of range-town life was the blossoming of schools, community buildings, parks, splendid streets, and other public improvements built generously, not to say lavishly. They set standards far beyond those of most Minnesota cities at the time. These reflected at once a public desire for the best, a concern on the part of citizens for the education of their children, and the availability of taxes to provide the funds without stint for public wants." Blegen adds that "so large were the revenues of the local iron-mining communities that the state legislature in the 1920s intervened to place per capita limitations on the annual amounts levied for general and school taxes."<sup>1</sup> Among the many public improvements "lavishly" funded by these revenues were the municipal water systems, including the elevated tank necessary for pressurizing the system. In line with their needs and ability to pay, even tiny communities installed complete systems and substantial, up-to-date equipment. Today, in some of the communities, the other public improvements such as schools have vanished, while extensive sidewalk and street systems line rows of cellar depressions or vacant and deteriorating structures. Only the elevated metal water tank remains in places like the ghost towns of Trommald and Cuyuna, still linked to fire hydrant systems along empty streets, and still used for water storage. Alone among all of the public works funded by the unique iron-mining property tax of the range boom years, the elevated water tanks stand as surviving historical evidence. As engineering artifacts these metal tanks constitute a cluster of very similar structures constructed within a brief span of years by a small group of companies. They represent a once-prolific structural type which is rapidly disappearing from the landscape.

<sup>1</sup> Theodore C. Blegen, Minnesota: A History of the State (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1975, p. 377.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

- Blegen, Theodore C. Minnesota: A History of the State. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1975, p.377
- Dubie, Carol. "The History of Metal Watertowers and Their Place in the American Landscape, 1885-1930." Paper presented at 1979 Annual Conference of the Society for Industrial Archeology. Folwell, William Watts. A History of Minnesota. Vol.4, rev.ed. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society 1969, pp. 50-53.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_  
 Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_  
 UMT References \_\_\_\_\_

**UTM NOT VERIFIED**

Quadrangle scale \_\_\_\_\_

**ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED**

A 

Zone	Easting	Northing							

C 

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E 

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G 

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B 

Zone	Easting	Northing							

D 

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F 

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H 

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## Verbal boundary description and justification

See Individual Inventory Sheets.

## 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 Robert M. Frame III, Architectural Historian/Research Historian

organization Minnesota Historical Society date Sept. 27, 1979

street & number 240 Summit Avenue telephone 612-296-9074

city or town St. Paul state Minnesota 55101

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Russell W. Fridley*  
 title State Historic Preservation Officer date 7-15-80

For HCRS use only  
 I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

*Frank D. Ray* date 10/22/80  
 Keeper of the National Register

Attest: *Anna McCallister* date 10-17-80  
 Chief of Registration