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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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AND/OR COMMON	<u>, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , </u>	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·		·····
Van Loon Wildlif	e Area Truss Bridge G	Four Thematic	Resources	
2 LOCATION	NW of ha (rosse		
STREET & NUMBER Van Loon Wildlif	V			
CITY, TOWN			CONGRESSIONAL DISTR	ICT
La Crosse	<u>X</u>	VICINITY OF	Third	
STATE Wisconsin		CODE 55	COUNTY La Crosse	CODE 063
3 CLASSIFIC	ATION			
CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRES	ENTUSE
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BUILDING(S)	PRIVATE		COMMERCIAL	PARK
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SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	ENTERTAINMENT	RELIGIOUS
OBJECT	_IN PROCESS	YES: RESTRICTED	GOVERNMENT	SCIENTIFIC
	BEING CONSIDERED	YES: UNRESTRICTED	_INDUSTRIAL	X_TRANSPORTATION
		NO	MILITARY	-OTHER:
NAME State of Wiscons STREET & NUMBER P. 0. Box 7921 CITY. TOWN Madison	in, Department of Nat	vicinity of	fice of Lands, J.R ^{STATE} Wisconsin 53	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
5 LOCATION	OF LEGAL DESCR	IPTION '		
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STREET & NUMBER				
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	TATION IN EXIST	ING SURVEYS		
	ory of Historic Place	S		
DATE		EEDEDAL X	STATECOUNTYLOCAL	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
1979			STATECOUNTYLOCAL	
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS	State Historical Sc	ciety of Wisconsin		······
CITY, TOWN	Madison		STATE Wisconsin 53	3706

7' DESCRIPTION

	CONDITION	CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
EXCELLENT	LDETERIORATED	UNALTERED	X_ORIGINAL SITE
GOOD	RUINS	_XALTERED	MOVED DATE
FAIR	UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The truss bridge group is located in the Van Loon Wildlife Area along the McGilvray Bottoms Road. The wildlife area contains over 4,000 acres of land--much of it former farmland--along and through the Black River and its backwaters in northern La Crosse County. The purpose of the area is to provide put-and-take pheasant hunting and to provide an area for fishing and for waterfowl, upland game, and deer hunting near the La Crosse population center. The roadway is now open only to pedestrian traffic.

The six bridges that constitute this group are numbered one to six, with Bridge #1 being the most easterly and Bridge #6 the most westerly. All five of the bowstring bridges were constructed in 1891-1892 by the Clinton Bridge Company of Clinton, Iowa; all are made of steel from the Jones and Laughlin Steel Company; and the tension members of each bridge are a combination of round and square eye-bars with the eyes made by looping over and welding the end of the bar. The wood king post bridge was built in 1920 by the Clinton Bridge Company to replace a flood-damaged bowstring arch bridge.

Bridge #1 is a double span bowstring arch truss bridge 17 feet wide and 134 feet in length, with one mid-span support and a wooden deck. Bridge #2 is a double span bowstring arch truss bridge 17 feet wide and 141 feet in length, with a mid-span support and a concrete deck. Bridge #3 is a single span bowstring arch truss bridge 17 feet wide and 110 feet in length, with two center supports and a wooden deck. Bridge #4 is a double span bowstring arch truss bridge 17 feet wide and 131 feet in length, with mid-span support and a concrete deck. Bridge #5 is a kingpost bridge 17 feet wide and 65 feet in length, with two center supports and a wooden deck. Bridge #6 is a bowstring arch truss bridge 17 feet wide and 50 feet in length, with a wooden deck.



PERIOD	AR	EAS OF SIGNIFICANCE CH	IECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW	
PREHISTORIC 1400-1499 1500-1599 1600-1699 1700-1799 1800-1899 1900-	ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC AGRICULTURE ARCHITECTURE ART COMMERCE COMMUNICATIONS	COMMUNITY PLANNING CONSERVATION ECONOMICS EDUCATION ENGINEERING EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT INDUSTRY	LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE LAW LITERATURE MILITARY MUSIC PHILOSOPHY POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	RELIGION SCIENCE SCULPTURE SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN THEATER XTRANSPORTATION OTHER (SPECIFY)
SPECIFIC DAT	^{ES} 1892 ¹ 1920 ²	BUILDER/ARCI	HITECT Clinton Bridge	Company

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Van Loon Wildlife Area Truss Bridge Group is a unique combination in Wisconsin of five rare bowstring arch truss bridges and one kingpost truss bridge. They represent two styles of bridge construction popular in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries which are quickly being replaced due to deterioration or to meet today's greater traffic requirements. That these bridges are located on a former county highway now closed to vehicular traffic provides a rare opportunity for their preservation.

These six are all that remain of seven bridges built in 1891-92 by the Clinton Bridge Company, of Clinton, Iowa, to facilitate traffic between rural Trempealeau County and the city of La Crosse. The Black River had long blocked travel between these two locations before Alex McGilvray built his ferry in 1861. However the increased logging over the years made for difficult maintenance and discontinuous operation of the ferry. After repeated petitioning from residents of both Trempealeau and La Crosse counties, the La Crosse County Board appropriated funds to construct seven bowstring arch truss bridges: the main bridge no longer extant and not included in the nomination, and six on the La Crosse County road leading over the river's swampy backwaters to the ferry, to replace McGilvray's ferry across the Black River. In 1911, a flood substantially weakened and partially washed away one of the bridges.

After nearly nine years of bickering between the respective boards of the Town of Holland, in which the road and bridges are located, and the County of La Crosse over ownership and maintenance of the road and bridges, the county finally agreed to pay the Clinton Bridge Company to replace the damaged bowstring arch truss bridge with the present kingpost bridge. In 1957 the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources acquired the roadway, bridges, and much of the surrounding countryside for inclusion in the Van Loon Wildlife Area. The department plans to maintain the roadway and bridges for pedestrian access to the preserve.

- 1. The Record, Onalaska, Wis., Vol. 7, No. 8, February 25, 1892; Proceedings of the La Crosse County Board of Supervisors, 1918-1919, p. 220
- 2. Proceedings of the La Crosse County Board of Supervisors, 1920, p. 5

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See continuation sheet

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS	USE ONLY		
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DATE ENTE	ERED	FEB 2	2 7 1980

Van Loon Wildlife Area Truss Bridge Group, La Crosse County, Wisconsin

ITEM NUMBER below PAGE 1

9. Proceedings of the La Crosse County Board of Supervisors, 1886, 1887, 1891, 1892, 1918-1920 The Record, Onalaska, Wisconsin, February 25, 1892 Wagner, Doris B., <u>McGilvray's Ferry</u> (St. Mary's College Press, Winona, MN, 1976) Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Interdepartmental Memo, Mark A. Riebau

to Raymond E. Kyro, La Crosse Station, November 4, 1976

10. Verbal Boundary Description

CONTINUATION SHEET

The six bridges located in that part of the SW-NW Section 23; SE-NE, SW-NE, SE-NW, SW-NW Section 22; SE-NE, NE-NE, SW-NE, NW-NE of Section 21 T18N-R8W, Town of Holland, La Crosse County, Wisconsin.

More fully described by the following defined centerline. Commencing at the SE Corner of the SW1/4 - NW 1/4 Section 23, N18N-R8W thence S84°30'W 437.0 feet, thence N 1°30'E 66.0 feet to the point of beginning. Thence N 88°30' W 1.898.8 feet to the beginning of a 10 degree curve concaved to the Northwest and having a radius of 573.7 feet, thence along said curve 225.0', thence N 66°00'W 403.5 feet to the beginning of an eight degree curve concaved to the northwest and having a radius of 716.8 feet, thence along said curve 227.1 feet, thence N47°50'W 221.7 feet to the beginning of a 20 degree curve concaved to the southeast and having a radius of 287.9 feet, thence along said curve 232.5 feet, thence \$85°40'W 1,916.4 to the beginning of a 4 degree curve concaved to the northwest and having a radius of 1.432.7 feet, thence along said curve 187.5', thence N86050'W 2,058.3 feet to the beginning of a 5 degree curve concave to the Northwest and having a radius of 955.4 feet, thence along said curve 120.0', thence N80°50'W 72.1 feet, thence S85°10'W 859.8 feet to the beginning of a 6 degree curve concaved to the southwest and having a radius of 955.4 feet, thence along said curve 229.2 feet, thence S71°25'W 479.5 feet to the end, this portion to be 50 feet wide, 25 feet lying on either side of said centerline.

11. George C. Brown, Historian, Historic Preservation Division

State Historical Society of Wisconsin	October 1979
816 State Street	608/262-3390
Madison	Wisconsin 53706