

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received JAN 27 1983
date entered

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

1. Name

historic St. Louis County 4-H Club Camp Lodge

and/or common St. Louis County 4-H Club Camp Lodge

2. Location

street & number 100 Pine Lane (~~Lake Esquagama~~) N/A not for publication

city, town Gilbert *vic* vicinity of

state Minnesota code 22 county St. Louis code 137

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name St. Louis County (Managed by the St. Louis County Promotional Bureau)

street & number 289 Spruce Lane

city, town Gilbert N/A vicinity of state Minnesota

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. St. Louis County Courthouse

street & number N/A

city, town Duluth state Minnesota

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date N/A N/A federal N/A state N/A county N/A local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A state N/A

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The St. Louis County 4-H Camp at Lake Eshquagama was constructed in 1934 as the result of a \$10,000 prize given to the county by the Sears Roebuck Company as a reward for high achievements by 4-H children in a variety of activities. The camp is situated on a high, rocky ridge overlooking the lake. The site is wooded with a number of pines and birch.

The main lodge building of the camp is constructed of virgin Norway pine from the Ely, Minnesota, area. These large-diameter straight logs are laid in a saddle-notch fashion which allows the ends of the logs to project slightly from the corners of the structure. The bark has been removed on both the exterior and interior of the building and the logs given a coating of orange shellac and varnish. The lodge is executed on a "V" plan with two radiating one-story gable-roofed wings meeting at a central two-story pavillion with pyramidal roof and massive central chimney. Groups of casement windows provide views of the lake and of the campgrounds. The building measures approximately 45 feet by 120 feet.

On the interior of the lodge, the basement story is used for washrooms, furnace room, storage rooms, craftshop, recreation room, and an archery room. The main floor contains a library, dining room with stage, kitchen, office, and a lobby with a double fireplace constructed of native granite. The second floor spaces are allocated to provide sleeping quarters for 45 campers.

In addition to the main lodge building, there are six detached cabins also constructed of logs, which provide quarters for an additional 40 campers, the camp director, and the kitchen staff.

Directly below the main lodge, constructed into the hillside is an eight-tiered amphitheater. The amphitheater faces Lake Eshquagama. Both the amphitheater and the stairways leading to the beach are constructed of native slate.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	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) recreation

Specific dates 1934 **Builder/Architect** ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ Simonson

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The St. Louis County 4-H Camp at Lake Eshquagama is significant as a large and outstanding example of log construction, being entirely constructed of virgin Norway pine from Minnesota. The complex has retained total integrity as it appeared in 1934 and is a testament to local craftsmanship. The general contractor, Simonson from Tower, Minnesota, was assisted throughout the project by participants in the W.P.A. and C.C.C. programs who provided skills in building retaining walls, the amphitheater and stairways, and the massive fireplace in the main lodge. Further, the camp is significant in that it was made possible as a result of a \$10,000 prize given by the Sears Roebuck Company to any county in the United States that could prove they had the best 4-H programs through records, projects, and demonstrations. With the money, St. Louis County decided to build a youth camp on 40 acres and eight lakeshore lots donated for the purpose. The logs for construction were donated by the Oliver Mining Company, one of the principal developers of the Mesabi Iron Range.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Streeter, Carroll P. "4-H Folks Look to Minnesota Which Has Only County Club Building in the Nation," The Farmer, 17 August 1935.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 8.7 acres

Quadrangle name Palo Quad. Minn.-St. Louis Co.

Quadrangle scale 7.5

UTM References

A

1	5	5	4	9	1	4	0	5	2	5	7	9	4	0
Zone	Easting			Northing										

B

1	5	5	4	9	3	4	0	5	2	5	7	9	4	0
Zone	Easting			Northing										

C

1	5	5	4	9	3	4	0	5	2	5	7	7	4	0
Zone	Easting			Northing										

D

1	5	5	4	9	1	6	0	5	2	5	7	7	4	0
Zone	Easting			Northing										

E

Zone	Easting			Northing										

F

Zone	Easting			Northing										

G

Zone	Easting			Northing										

H

Zone	Easting			Northing										

Verbal boundary description and justification Beginning at the intersection of southerly section line of Sec. 27, T58N, R16W and the eastern shore of Esquagama Lake, thence easterly a distance of 600 feet; thence northerly a distance of 666 feet; thence westerly a distance of 666 feet to the eastern shore of Esquagama Lake; thence southerly along said eastern shore-line to the point of beginning.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Walter W. Hautala, Executive Secretary/Charles W. Nelson, Historical Architect

organization St. Louis County Promotional Bureau/ Minnesota Historical Society date January 20, 1982

street & number 289 Spruce Lane/Fort Snelling History Center telephone (612) 865-6579/726-1171

city or town Gilbert/St. Paul state Minnesota

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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Russell W. Fridley

title Russell W. Fridley
State Historic Preservation Officer

date 1-12-83

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Beth Groves
Keeper of the National Register

date 3/4/85

Attest:
Chief of Registration

date

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DESCRIPTION

7.

The St. Louis County 4-H Club Camp at Lake Eshquagama near Gilbert, Minnesota was constructed in 1934 with funds provided by a \$10,000 prize given to the county by Sears Roebuck Company in recognition of high achievement in a variety of areas by 4-H Club members. The camp property includes a total of 30 acres, but the main lodge of the camp is situated on a high, rocky ridge overlooking the lake and is separated from the other camp buildings. The entire site is heavily wooded with large pine and birch trees.

The main lodge building of the camp is constructed of virgin Norway pine logs cut near Ely, Minnesota. Saddle-notch joints are used at the corners. In plan the building is V-shaped with two one-story wings meeting at a central two-story pavillion with pyramidal roof and massive stone fireplace chimney. Both wings have gabled roofs. Groups of casement windows on all sides provide views of Lake Eshquagama and the surrounding forest. Overall, the main lodge building measures 45' x 120', making it one of the largest log structures ever constructed in the State of Minnesota.

The interior of the main lodge has three levels. The basement houses washrooms, storage, a furnace room, laundry, craftshop, recreation room and an indoor archery range. The main floor contains a library, kitchen, office, dining room with a stage and a lobby with a massive double fireplace constructed of local stone. The upper floor has sleeping quarters for 45 campers.

On the hillside directly below the main lodge is an eight-tiered amphitheater facing Lake Eshquagama. Both the amphitheater terraces and the stairways leading to the beach are constructed of locally-quarried slate.

In addition to the main lodge, there are six cabins located on the camp property. These are located away from the main lodge and were constructed of various materials and at different times over the years. None are contemporary with the main lodge. These structures are not included as part of this nomination. Although they are support structures in the sense that they provide additional sleeping space for staff and campers, they should be considered non-contributing both architecturally and historically insofar as they relate to the main lodge building. Most are of simple frame construction and some have "log-cabin" siding to promote a rustic appearance. The six cabins were constructed at different times over the years.

Each summer since its completion in 1934, the St. Louis County 4-H Club Camp has operated at full capacity.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

8.

The St. Louis County 4-H Club Camp main lodge building at Lake Eshquagama is significant both architecturally and historically. Of unique architectural design, utilizing local timber and stone as construction materials, the main lodge building is an outstanding example of timber construction technique and is one of the largest log structures ever constructed in Minnesota. The main lodge has been carefully maintained over the years and retains total integrity as it was constructed in 1934. It is also a testament to the skills of the local craftsman who constructed this large log structure with its massive stone fireplace.

The St. Louis County 4-H Club camp main lodge building is also historically significant for the following reasons: First of all, it is the only example of a county-owned 4-H Club camp in the state of Minnesota. It has been in continuous operation since 1934, the year the national 4-H Club movement began. As already noted, the main lodge building was constructed in 1934, thus making it both the oldest and the only such facility in Minnesota. It is not known how many other 4-H Camps there may be in the country, but it is not too likely that any others would date from 1934, the year the national 4-H Club movement began. In fact, funds for the construction of the camp were provided as a prize from the Sears-Roebuck Company in recognition of the St. Louis County 4-H Club's outstanding achievements as a result of a national competition. The main lodge building is also a testament to the outstanding work of the local craftsmen who built it. Many of them had also participated in the various WPA and CCC programs of the depression era. Although not a WPA or CCC project, the St. Louis County 4-H Club Camp certainly reflects the type and level of craftsmanship often associated with these programs. The location of the camp is also significant in that it is adjacent to both the historical water and land routes from Duluth and the western end of Lake Superior northward to the Canadian boundary waters area. Lake Eshquagama is part of a centuries-old water route used by local Indians, fur traders, explorers and missionaries. The first overland route from Duluth to the area that is now known as the Iron Range was cut through the forest in 1865 and runs adjacent to the camp. This route was used by the gold seekers traveling to nearby Lake Vermilion in that year and was later used by the prospectors who discovered Minnesota's vast iron ore deposits.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Item 9.

Add: St. Louis County 4-H Club Records
St. Louis County Historical Society Archives