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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

SEP 15 1989

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Old Mill State Park WPA/Rustic Style Historic Resources  
other names/site number Old Mill State Park

2. Location

street & number off County Highway 39  not for publication N/A  
city, town Foldahl Township Argyle  vicinity  
state Minnesota code MN county Marshall code 089 zip code 56713

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>3</u>	<u>          </u> buildings
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u> sites
<u>4</u>	<u>          </u> structures
<u>1</u>	<u>          </u> objects
<u>8</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:  
Minnesota State Park CCC/WPA/Rustic Style  
Historic Resources

Number of contributing resources previously  
listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Nina M. Archabal

9/15/89

Signature of certifying official Nina M. Archabal

Date

State Historic Preservation Officer

State or Federal agency and bureau Minnesota Historical Society

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.

Bill Boland

10/25/89

- determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.

- determined not eligible for the National Register.

- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Recreation/Outdoor Recreation

Landscape/State Park

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Recreation/Outdoor Recreation

Landscape/State Park

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Other: NPS Rustic Architecture

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone

walls Stone/Wood

roof Shingle

other \_\_\_\_\_

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

See Continuation Sheets

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Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 1DESCRIPTION

Old Mill State Park WPA/Rustic Style Historic Resources include three buildings, four structures, and one object which make up the historic district. The district defines the original development in the park and contains no intrusive elements. Architects for the park buildings were from the Design Office of the Minnesota Division of State Parks and the National Park Service.

Old Mill State Park Historic District

1. Building: Shelter Building 1-430 Builder: WPA  
Architect: H. Nielsen Date: 1941

The 57' x 24' Shelter Building contains a picnic shelter and a kitchen area arranged in a rectilinear design. The entire building is constructed with native split field stone collected in the general area of the park. The shelter may be entered through paired openings on both principal facades which are separated by corbelled stone piers. The shelter features built-in seats, a massive split stone fireplace with a segmental arch, and exposed timber trusses. The kitchen may be entered from the shelter or from a 6' opening in the north facade which is capped by a timber lintel. The kitchen still contains four cast iron cook stoves built into the back side of masonry mass of the fireplace. Windows are either 4' or 6' wide openings with corbelled stonework. The gable areas contain 10" rough horizontal boards with an 8" exposure.

In 1974 two of the entrances to the shelter were infilled with roll-up type garage doors and three other openings were infilled with horizontal boards and plexiglass windows.

2. Building: Latrine 1-282 Builder: WPA  
Architect: L. Taylor Date: 1939

The Latrine is a 27' x 13'4" gable roofed structure built into a hillside. Split stone walls rise 4'9" to the sill level and are followed by rough horizontal boards of random width to the eaves. The entrances feature flagstone pavement and stone entrance screens 5'6" high. Paired openings on the principal facade were originally just screened although shutters were constructed for winter protection.

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3. Building: Beach House 1-283 Builder: WPA  
Architect: State of Minnesota Date: 1939

The Beach House is constructed with the same standard design utilized throughout the state park system. The central portion of the rectangular gable roofed building originally contained a concession, restrooms, and storage areas. Service counters in the concession opened onto the principal facade as well as the flanking loggias. The loggias passed through the entire width of the building and allowed access to the adjacent partially enclosed changing wings. The entire building is constructed with native split field stone with the exception of the changing wings which were defined by low stone walls followed by frame walls with rough board vertical siding.

In 1962 the wooden screen walls of the changing wings were removed and a 23'3" x 14' frame addition was constructed on the beach facade for a concession.

4. Object: Drinking Fountain Builder: WPA  
Architect: State of Minnesota Date: 1939

A stone Drinking Fountain is located next to the Beach House. The split stone fountain rests on a stone platform and rises to a height of 3'. The fountain is approximately 2' square at the base and tapers to 1'8" at the top. A faucet is placed at the side and a stone step is located on an adjacent side to allow children to reach the bubbler.

5. Structure: Diversion Dam Builder: WPA  
Architect: H. Petersen Date: 1939

The Diversion Dam was constructed across the Middle River to provide an adequate supply of water for the nearby swimming beach. The structure consists of a 60' wide spillway flanked by two sixteen foot square masonry abutments which rise eight feet from the dam. Each abutment features an overlook with 2'10" sidewalls constructed with masonry and 6" to 8" log posts and rails. A 14" shear gate in the east abutment leads to the artificial lake. The Diversion Dam was constructed according to the specifications of the Division of Drainage and Waters.

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6. Structure: Swimming Beach Builder: WPA  
Architect: L. Petersen Date: 1939

The Swimming Beach was created by diverting the Middle River and forming a lakelet in the original location of the river. The lakelet is separated from the new river channel by an earthen dike which is riprapped on both sides. An outlet dam located at the north end of the lake consists of an 8' high concrete wall capped with split stone masonry. A 12" shear gate is located at the base of the dam. A spillway or rock cascade begins at the top of the dam and continues 50' to the Middle River. The cascade is 16' wide and is constructed with field stone set in mortar. The spillway extends into the stream bed with riprapping to prevent erosion.

7. Structure: Suspension Bridge Builder: WPA  
Architect: State of Minnesota Date: 1940

The Suspension Bridge crosses the Middle River and is one of only two such bridges in the state park system. The 80' long bridge is supported by suspension cables which rest on massive stone pylons placed on each river bank. Each cable also rests on a small stone pier. The pylons are 12'1" x 6'3" at the base and rise to a height of 13'6". The dimensions at the top of each pylon are 9' x 3' as a result of a 1'6 1/2" batter to each of the four sides. The bridge is accessed through 8'6" x 4' openings in the pylons and consists of a wooden deck and railings. The bridge deck is approximately 10' above the river. Concrete anchors for the suspension cables are located 9' below grade.

8. Structure: Water Tower 1-284 Builder: WPA  
Architect: O. Newstrom Date: 1939

The Water Tower is a 16' square building with a one story gable roofed addition for the Pump House. The split field stone tower rises 21' with a 6" batter on each side. This is followed by a 9'6" frame section capped by a hip roof with a 2'9" overhang. The frame upper portion of the tower is sheathed with fir board and batten siding which flanks louvered openings. Rough clapboards with an 8" exposure are placed both above and below the openings. Six light casement windows are placed on each of the facades of the Tower and Pump House at the ground level. Pairs of screened openings for ventilation are located in the stonework of the tower at the mid-point.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture  
Landscape Architecture  
Recreation  
Government

Period of Significance

1937-41

Significant Dates

1937

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

National Park Service

State of Minnesota

Works Progress Administration

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

See Continuation Sheets

See continuation sheet

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Old Mill State Park WPA/Rustic Style Historic Resources are historically significant for their association with the social, political, and economic impact of the Great Depression and the subsequent development of the various Federal Relief Programs such as the Works Progress Administration which was responsible for their construction. The Old Mill State Park Historic District is also historically significant for its association with the development of the Minnesota State Park System. During the period of significance the site received exceptionally heavy use and provided recreational facilities to a large number of people while located in the rather sparsely populated northwestern section of the state. In 1938, when the area was only partially developed, an organized picnic one Sunday brought over 10,000 people to the park.

The buildings and structures at Old Mill State Park are exceptionally significant architecturally as outstanding examples of rustic style split stone construction. The Suspension Bridge in particular is a notable rustic style architectural achievement. These historic resources are characterized by nonintrusive and environmentally sensitive designs based on National Park Service design philosophy and master planning which carefully located the park buildings and structures along the Middle River. (Refer to the Statement of Exceptional Significance on page F34 of the Multiple Property Documentation Form.)

Old Mill State Park was established in 1937 when the State of Minnesota purchased 285 acres at a cost of \$11,000. The park was originally known as Middle River State Park although the name was changed in 1951 to prevent confusion with similar names in Marshall County and to honor an old grist mill located in the park. The mill was built by John Larson in 1889 on the Larson family farm which had been homesteaded in 1882. The mill is listed individually on the National Register.

This area along the Middle River was associated with recreation long before the park was established. As early as 1901 the site had been used as a picnic ground and a baseball field. Once the park was established, WPA funds of \$11,107 were allocated for the construction of the present facilities.

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Department of Natural Resources. Working Drawings and Specifications for Structures at Old Mill State Park. Bureau of Engineering. St. Paul, Minnesota.  
State of Minnesota. Minnesota State Park, Parkway, and Recreational Area Study. 1938.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property 25 Acres

UTM References

A 

1	4
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6	7	9	7	6	0
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5	3	5	9	4	4	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Zone Easting Northing

C 

1	4
---	---

6	8	0	2	4	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

5	3	5	9	0	0	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

B 

1	4
---	---

6	8	0	2	4	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

5	3	5	9	4	5	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Zone Easting Northing

D 

1	4
---	---

6	7	9	7	6	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

5	3	5	9	0	0	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The boundary for Old Mill State Park WPA/Rustic Style Historic Resources is shown as the heavy line on the accompanying map entitled "Old Mill State Park." It is defined by the Middle River on the north and west, the inside edge of the old service road to the east, and a line just south of the suspension bridge to the south. The heavy boundary line is crosshatched.

See continuation sheet

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary includes the buildings and structures that have been historically associated with the property and that maintain historic integrity. The boundary defines the area of the park developed by the WPA.

See continuation sheet

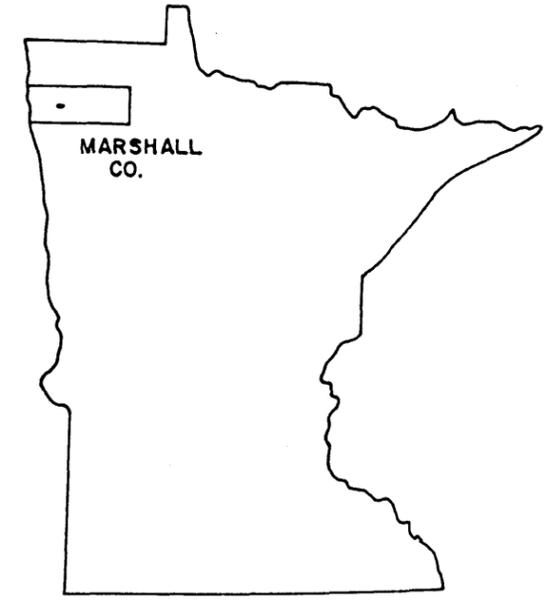
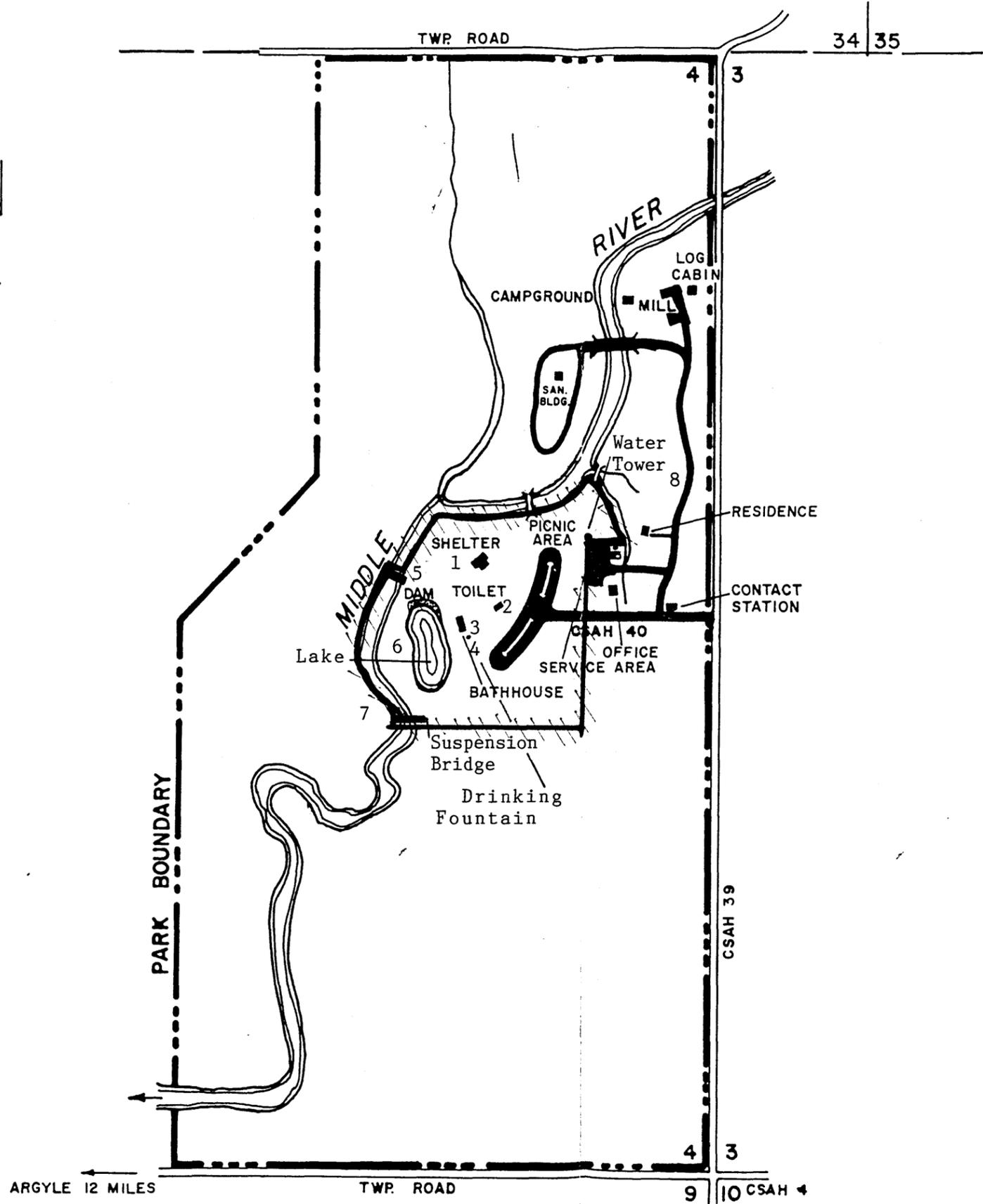
**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Rolf T. Anderson date August 28, 1988

organization N/A telephone 612-824-7807

street & number 3632 Park Avenue South state Minnesota zip code 55407

city or town Minneapolis



KEY  
 ——— EXISTING DEVELOPMENT

NOTE  
 NO PRIVATE LAND  
 WITHIN PARK BOUNDARY

SCALE: 1" = 600'  
 STATUTORY BOUNDARY 28720 ACRES (APPROX.)

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION OF PARKS AND RECREATION			
STATE PARK SITE			
OLD MILL STATE PARK MARSHALL CO.-NR. ARGYLE			
SEC. 4	T. 156 N.	R. 46 W.	5 TH P.M.
DRAWN JAJ 4-7-64	BUREAU OF ENGINEERING		SURVEY
CHECKED GLC 4-28-64			DATUM
REVISED SVF 7-20-78	<i>[Signature]</i> CHIEF ENGR.		61
REQ. 60-35	SHEET 7	FILE 20770001	