

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 90001682

Date Listed: 11/15/90

Backbone St. Park, Picknicking ... Area (B); Delaware County, IA  
Property Name County State

CCC Properties in Iowa State Parks MPS  
Multiple Name

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This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

Beth Boland  
Signature of the Keeper

11/15/90  
Date of Action

=====  
Amended Items in Nomination:

NOTE: This property is not part of a discontinuous district.

Item #8, Significance:  
Architecture is one of the areas of significance.  
Criteria Exception G applies.

References to this property are found in Section 7, pp. 2-4, 8-13, and 14; Section 8, pp. 2, 4-5, 11, and 14; and Section 10, pp. 1-5.

**DISTRIBUTION:**  
National Register property file  
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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 Backbone State Park: Picnicking, Hiking & Camping Area (Area B)  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number CTH W69 and C54  not for publication N/A  
city, town Dundee  vicinity  
state Iowa code IA county Delaware code 055 zip code 52038

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>5</u>	<u>1</u> buildings
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>20</u>	<u>4</u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u> objects
		<u>28</u>	<u>5</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:  
CCC Properties in Iowa State Parks: 1933-42

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.

[Signature] 9/17/90  
Signature of certifying official Date  
State Historical Society of Iowa  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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.
- determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

[Signature] 11/15/90  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

LANDSCAPE/park

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

LANDSCAPE/park

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Rustic Architecture

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls Limestone

roof Shingle

other Log

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

**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)

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE  
POLITICS/GOVERNMENT  
SOCIAL HISTORY  
CONSERVATION  
RECREATION

Period of Significance

1933-42  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates

1933  
1934  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Central Design Office, Ames  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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

see pp. 9-1 to 9-5

Primary location of additional data:

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

Specify repository:

Department of Natural Resources  
State Historical Society of Iowa

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property 241 acres

UTM References

A 

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Zone Easting Northing

B 

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Zone Easting Northing

C 

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D 

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

see pp. 10-1 to 10-3

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

see pp. 10-1 to 10-3

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Joyce McKay, Cultural Resources Consultant  
organization private consultant date June 3, 1990  
street & number P.O. Box 258 telephone 608-424-6315  
city or town Belleville state Wisconsin zip code 53508

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Table 1  
Contributing and Noncontributing Properties in Backbone State Park

No.	(1) Common Name	Property Subtype	Contributing / Noncontributing	Category
Area A: Cabin/Bathing Area: 52.5 acres				
60	cabin	individual facilities	noncontributing	1 building
61-77	cabins	individual facilities	contributing	17 buildings
78	pump house	water supply	contributing	1 building
-	shower building	post-CCC building	noncontributing	1 building
6	steps	trail steps & trails	contributing	1 structure
7	soil erosion	other minor park structures	contributing	1 structure
14-19	parking areas	other minor park structures	contributing	6 structures
-	paved road	other minor park structures	contributing	1 structure
-	trail	trail steps & trails	noncontributing	1 structure
-	CCC camp 1756	-----	contributing	1 site
58	bathhouse	bathhouse	contributing	1 building
59	boathouse	boathouse	contributing	1 building
52	steps	trail steps & trails	contributing	1 structure
53	wall	barriers, walls, & fences	contributing	1 structure
-	beach	other park structures	contributing	1 structure
54	drinking fountain	water system	noncontributing	1 structure
55	drinking fountain	water system	contributing	1 structure
79	pit latrine	comfort stations & privies	contributing	1 building
1	sun dial & bench	trailside seat, shelter, overlooks	contributing	1 structure
4	dam	dams	contributing	1 structure
2	sand filter bed	other park structures	contributing	1 structure

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5	drinking fountain	water system	contributing	1 structure
subtotal				43 resources

Area B: Picnicking, Hiking, and Camping Area: 241 acres

80	pit latrine	comfort stations & privies	contributing	1 building
81	shelter/concession	refectories & concessions	contributing	1 building
82	pit latrine	comfort stations & privies	contributing	1 building
83	picnic shelters	picnic & kitchen shelters	contributing	1 building
85	picnic shelters	picnic & kitchen privies	contributing	1 building
86	site of CCC camp 781	-----	contributing	1 site
8	east entrance gate	entranceways & checking stations	contributing	1 structure
9-10	overlooks	trailside seats, shelters, overlooks	contributing	4 structures
39-40				
11-12	benches	trailside seats, shelters, overlooks	contributing	2 structures
20-24, 44	parking lots	other minor park structures	contributing	6 structures
25	vehicle bridge	vehicle, foot, & bridle bridges	contributing	1 structure
41	incinerator	incinerators	noncontributing	1 structure
45-46, 48	trail steps	trail steps & trails	contributing	3 structures
47	Backbone Trail & steps	trail steps & trails	contributing	1 structure
56	Watercrest Springs	dams, lakes, & pools	contributing	1 structure
13	sign	signs	contributing	1 object
50	drinking fountain	water system	contributing	1 object
-	CCC museum	pre-CCC building	noncontributing	1 building
-	paved roads	other minor park structures	contributing	1 structure
-	trails	trail steps & trails	noncontributing	1 structure

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-	bridges	post-CCC struc- tures	noncontributing	2 structures
	subtotal			33 resources
Area C: Landscaping: 4 acres				
34	Richmond Springs	dams, lakes, pools	contributing	1 structure
35	steps	trail steps & trails	contributing	1 structure
51	waterway	dams, lakes, & pools	contributing	1 structure
	subtotal			3 resources
	total resources			64 resources

(1) All numbers are preceded by BAC prefixes.

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7. Description

Materials:

Roof: ASPHALT

Walls: Weatherboard

Statement of Description:

Backbone State Park is located six miles north of Dundee, Delaware County, Iowa. About 1399 acres in 1935 during CCC development, the park grew to 1411 acres by 1942 (Iowa State Conservation Commission 1935-42 (1936: 118; 1942: 127)). While the southeast and southwest portions of the park adjacent to the beach is the characteristic rolling landscape of Iowa, much of the park which follows the Maquoketa River offers a rugged, scenic landscape with limestone ledges and a winding, narrow valley floor. Except for developed areas, much of the park is now heavily wooded. Open grassy locations include the beach and cabin area along the 125 acre lake at the southeast tip of the park, a picnic area in the center and southwest sections of the park, the hatchery in the north central area, and a picnic and auditorium area to the north of the fish hatchery. The discontinuous district includes three areas of 66 contributing and 11 noncontributing CCC properties. Area A, the Cabin/Bathing Area, includes cabins; a pumphouse; bathhouse; boathouse; a dam; pit latrines; sand filter bed; and landscaping features such as gravel parking areas, an erosion control structure, stone steps, drinking fountains, a sun dial and bench, and walls. The Central Picnic, hiking, and Camping Area, area B, contains shelters, a small concession, latrines, entrance portals, overlooks, drinking fountain, stone benches, parking areas, a stone bridge, stone steps, trail, sign, and Watercrest Springs, a pool. Area C contains Richmond Springs and stone work around natural springs. Intrusions include a limited amount of primarily post CCC building construction or modified and deteriorated CCC structures. These properties belong to the property type CCC Properties in Iowa Parks. Except Area C which centers upon the springs, resources are scattered across the other two areas. Boundaries for areas A and B follow natural and park boundaries and incorporate associated landscape while those of area C are arbitrary but include the surrounding setting.

The contributing buildings, structures, and objects follow the guidelines of the mature rustic landscape architecture style as it

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developed during the CCC period in general shaping, floor plan, materials, decorative elements, functions, property subtypes, and setting. CCC companies 1756 between 1933 and 1942 and 781 briefly in 1934 and 1935 (Iowa Department of Agriculture 1935-36 [1935:205]) developed much of the park although some significant construction occurred during the mid-1920s. The description discusses each area within the district separately to best characterize its setting.

The Cabin/Bathing Area, area A, stretches north from the beach area between the park boundary and the lake formed by damming the Maquoketa River. It begins at the south end of the lake near the dam and follows the lake east around the lake between the service road and the lake to the bathing area, an open, grassy area. The cabin area starts north of the bathing area. A heavy cover of trees grows along the rocky and rather steep descent to the river to west. Four groups of four and one of six cabins scatter along grassy clearings which are open on the east side to the park boundary. Agricultural fields stretch beyond it. Following at a short distance from the east boundary, the paved park road begins at the south boundary of the area and travels northwest through the bathing area and into the cabin area spreading west in two fingers to reach the cabins.

Located at the south end of area A, the bathhouse and boathouse form the focal point of this end of the district and the park as a whole. Placed along the east edge of the beach behind a retaining wall, the bathhouse (BAC58) (bathhouse, IIE) is a long, rambling symmetrical building composed of four sections which include from north to south a men's walled dressingroom, a concession building, a women's walled dressingroom, and a storage building. Overall, the building measures 37 feet east-west and 100 feet north-south. While the concession and storage portions are protected by a gable roof covered with asphalt shingle, the dressingrooms lack a roof. Standing on a poured concrete foundation, the building is composed of roughly coursed limestone. Irregularly spaced casement windows contain four lights. Heavy, segmental lintels occur over open doorways and windows. Modified, stepped buttresses are located at the building's corners. Its long, rambling form, the juxtaposition of room shapes, and heavy massing distinguish this building. Original features on the interior include horizontal log siding along the front entries to the dressingrooms and narrow vertical paneling in the dressingrooms.

A coursed ashlar, limestone retaining wall (BAC53) (Barriers,

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walls, and fences, IB) curves along the east edge of the beach just west of the bathhouse. Three tiers of stone high, the wall measures 1.5 to 1.8 feet high and 500 feet long. The CCC improved the three acre beach (other minor park structures, IM) by clearing, grading, and adding sand. To the east of the bathhouse and boathouse are located two parking lots, BAC14-BAC15 (other minor park structures, IM) respectively. BAC14 is a gravel parking lot with three parking lanes arranged in a north-south direction separated by two grass islands. It contains 80,000 square feet. BAC15 contains 3 parking lanes separated by two grass islands and arranged in an east-west direction. The grass surface covers 3,000 square feet.

The boathouse (BAC59) (boathouses, IF) stands north of the bathhouse facing west to the lake. It is a squat, rectangular building with a round tower at its south end. Excluding the tower which is 15 feet in diameter, the building measures approximately 42 feet square. The uncoursed ashlar limestone building stands on a poured concrete foundation. A gable roof supported by timber rafters protected by wood shingles covers the boat storage area which is now a boat concession area and a pyramid roof covers the observation tower. Fixed windows with ventilation louvers are regularly dispersed along the building and accented by heavy, flat lintels. The original door in the tower is composed of vertical board. The tower is accessed by a set of winding, concrete steps enclosed by an uncoursed ashlar wall. Four rectangular openings at the top of the tower face the lake. A heavy, half arch whose top mirrors the gable roof of the building visually joins the tower to the boathouse. Low, stepped buttresses occur at the building's corner. Little of the original woodwork remains on the interior.

A set of stone steps (BAC52) (trail steps and trails, IJ) rise east 62 feet up the slope adjacent to the south wall of the boathouse. Six feet wide, the steps are built of unmortared random rubble limestone. One to three individual stones placed side by side compose each step.

Northeast of the boathouse and across the parking lot, the pit vault latrine (BAC79) (comfort stations and privies, IH) is constructed of roughly coursed ashlar limestone and stands on a poured concrete foundation. The gable roof is covered with wood shingle and weatherboard finishes the gables. Windows are symmetrically arranged. Wood louvers cover the window four openings located high under the roof on the east side. The two fixed windows on the west side contain four light each. Door

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openings covered with vertical board doors occur at the north and south ends. The rectangular building measures 11.6 feet east-west by 31 feet north-south. The interior is divided into men's and women's restrooms which are separated by an enclosed space.

A sun dial and bench (BAC1) (trailside seats, shelters, and overlooks, IIC) are located south of the bathhouse immediately adjacent to the east shore of the lake. The semi-circular, courses ashlar bench surrounds a flagstone patio. The bench is stepped so that one row composes the seat and the adjacent one forms the back. The back of the bench faces the lake and its front opens around the semi-circular patio which contains the sun dial in its center. Five feet in diameter, the steel sun dial is circular with the points of the compass inscribed around its exterior and a star in its center.

Three stone fountains (water system, IG) are located near the bathhouse/boathouse complex near the bathhouse (BAC5), at the beach (BAC55), and near the sun dial (BAC54). They are constructed of courses ashlar or rubble limestone and concrete mortar. They possess a square base which tapers slightly to the top. They measure 2.3 feet at the base and rise to about 3.3 feet. The top stone is dished to receive water from the spicket. A single adjacent stepping stone provides access for children. The top of the drinking fountain near the sun dial has been altered to cement block.

Located across the lake opposite the bathhouse and boathouse complex, the spillway (BAC4) (dams, lakes, and pools, IID) including the wing walls and spill way walls is composed of reinforced concrete. The wingwalls of the two spillways extend along the shore of the lake. The north and south spillways both reach 120 feet long. The dam itself is composed of earth and rock fill. Southwest of the dam stands a sand filter (BAC2) which is apart of the sewer system. Measuring 95 feet square, a depression with sandy soil at its base holds two east-west wood troughs. A control valve located to the east of the filter consists of a 15.5 by 12.2 foot concrete box covered with wood planking.

The eighteen one story, rectangular frame cabins to the north of the bathing area in area A (individual facilities, IIIA) (BAC60-77) are covered with board and batten siding and a gable roof with asphalt shingle. Poured concrete pilings support them. Their eaves face the road. Casement windows of six lights are framed with wood shutters. Vertical pine paneling finishes the interior.

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The interior contains a living room and kitchen area with bedroom and bath to one side. Two styles exist. The larger cabins (BAC61, 62, 63, 70) measuring 14 to 15.5 feet by 24 feet, contains an approximately central entrance with a gabled hood above and flanking windows. The wall extends out slightly to one side at both the front and rear. A 13.2 to 15.5 by 24.75 space, style 2 (BAC60, 64-69, 71-77) has its entrance to the side along a short wall slightly behind the main front wall. The rear is flush (Iowa State Conservation Commission 1935-42 [1942: 112]; Iowa State Conservation Commission 1933-42a [10/14/40]).

The rectangular, 10 by 12.6 foot pump house (water supply, IG) (BAC78) which serves the cabin area is composed of coursed, rough-faced ashlar limestone. A shingled gable roof with a small vent covers the building. It is a low building erected partially into the side of a low hill. Stone steps lead down to the door centered in the gable end. An adjacent shower building which now serves as a cabin for summer employees was erected in 1954. It is a rectangular, frame building covered with vertical wood siding and an asphalt shingled, gable roof. The door enters in the gable end and casement windows light the interior.

Related structures include the paved road with four CCC parking areas of which one (BAC18) is paved while the rest continue as graveled locations (other minor park structures, IM) (BAC16-17, 19), a set of stone steps (trail steps and trails, IJ) (BAC6) leading to the lake between cabin BAC63 of the first group to the south and BAC64 of group 2, and a soil erosion structure (other minor park structures, IM) (BAC7) in the gully dividing cabins BAC71 and BAC72 of groups 3 and 4. Parking areas BAC16 and BAC17 are merely rectangular pull-offs while BAC18 and BAC19 are circular. Fifty-six unmortared, rubble limestone steps compose BAC6 which measures about 8 feet wide and occurs in several 12 foot sections. They extend in an irregular fashion up the rocky slope thus blending into the surrounding setting. The steps are placed in a wooded area between a paved road and a trail which runs along the lake at the base of the wooded slope. The soil erosion structure occurs in a wooded ravine. The rectangular depression in the center of the 21 foot long concrete wall of the soil erosion structure leads to a 30 foot long wood chute on the down slope side of the ravine.

✓ In area B, the picnic, hiking, and camping area, from the portals of the east gate (BAC8) in the center of the park, the park road curves west down the side of the ravine into the central picnic

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area with several overlooks (BAC9-10, 20) along each side as it descends. The road overlooks the rugged landscape of wooded valleys on each side. The Backbone Trail (BAC47) and several sets of stone steps (BAC45-46, 48) give foot access to the woods. The Maquoketa River winds in a loop west of the road to form the Backbone. Several stone seats (BAC11-12) mark the site of a former trail along the river. The road winds down to the buildings (BAC81-83), fountain (BAC50), and parking areas (BAC21-24) associated with the picnic area. They are scattered in a grassy area along a flat valley floor adjacent to the Maquoketa River. One leg of the park road ascends the opposite valley wall with additional gravel overlooks (BAC39-40), crosses a ridge and again descends onto the flat rolling landscape at the west end of the park. A picnic shelter (BAC85) and parking area (BAC44) mark the former camping area. The site of the CCC camp (BAC86) lies in the woods just north of the west entrance. The other leg of the road travels along the narrow valley floor passing Watercrest Springs (BAC56) and over a stone bridge (BAC25). The district ends with the concentration of CCC park development 20 feet west of the bridge.

The east segment of the district east of the picnic area is formed by a scatter of structures which develop the landscape for the park visitor. Placed on both sides of the road, the portals (entranceways and checking stations, IA) (BAC8) of the east gate are composed of two uncoursed ashlar limestone and concrete, curved pylons which stretch a distance of 21 feet to the south and 23 feet to the north. On the south side, the squarish pillar rises 5 feet and steps down as it curves south and east. The north portal maintains a similar shape but its main pillar rises 11 feet and carries a sign routed in stone: "BACKBONE STATE PARK."

Two gravel overlooks (trailside seats, shelters, and overlooks, IIC) (BAC9-10) occur below the east gate. Both in the shape of a half oval measure about 80 feet long. Limestone guard rails define their outer edge. One overlooks the Maquoketa River on one side and the other views the picnic area in the valley below on the other. Below the overlook lies a 32,585 square foot gravel parking lot (other minor park structures, IM) (BAC20) which is defined by stone guard rails and occurs adjacent to the beginning of the Backbone Trail. Across the road is a double vault pit latrine (comfort stations and privies, IH) (BAC80) which is built into the side of the hill. The 10 by 25 foot latrine is composed of uncoursed, rough faced ashlar limestone. Weatherboards close its gable ends and the gables of the two wall dormers which pierce the

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gable roof. Placed in the gable ends, the two entrances are protected by stepped, stone retaining walls. Stone walls are exposed to the roof line which is covered with plywood and windows and doors are trimmed with pine. The Backbone Trail (trail steps and trails, IJ) (BAC47) splits and connects to the road at two points, in both instances where the road curves sharply south. A set of stone steps (trail steps and trails, IJ) (BAC46) and trail connect the two curves. About 175 feet long, the 77 steps are composed of a single, dry laid, rubble stone high and 4 to 5 stones wide, a width of 2.5 to 5 feet. They lack side walls. With their irregularity and curving outline, the steps blend into the rocky hill side. A second set (trail steps and trails, IJ) (BAC48) climbs along the outside of this curve above the river. Of similar construction, these approximately 10 steps lie along a former trail and measure 1.2 feet wide by 26.5 feet long.

The Backbone Trail (trail steps and trails, IJ) (BAC47) follows the top of the backbone ridge. The double entrance joins to form one path and then splits a second time to encircle the highest portion of the backbone. CCC modification for the trail includes clearing of vegetation, the addition of gravel, the horizontal laying of stone at numerous locations, and the addition of a set of 40 limestone steps which curve down toward the river. Measuring 69 feet long and 5 feet wide, the steps are composed of rows of a single layer of dry laid, rubble stone. They blend into the stone ledges of the slope. Surrounded by a loop in the Maquoketa River, the 11,500 foot long ridge is composed of unglaciated limestone. The trail overlooks the steep descent to the river 100 feet below (TIMBER CADET 12/34). A 4 foot high and 7 foot long sign (signs, IC) (BAC13) marks the lower entrance to the trail. Roughly in the shape of a U, the rubble limestone base rises at the two ends to support a wood timber from which hangs a painted wood sign stating "BACKBONE". Two benches (trailside seats, shelters, and overlooks, IIC) (BAC11-12) which mark the location of a former trail east of the Backbone overlook the river. They are modified from a solid piece of limestone at the base of the cliff with BAC11 measuring 2.3 feet wide by 7.5 feet long and 21 inches high and the other measuring 2.75 feet wide by 7 feet long and 16 inches high.

Below the Backbone, the road curves down to the flat valley floor. This area contains the central picnic location with shelter-concession (BAC81) (concession and refectories, IIB), picnic shelter (picnic shelters, IIA) (BAC83), latrine (comfort stations and privies, IH) (BAC82), drinking fountain (water supply, IG) (BAC50), and parking areas (other minor park structures, IM)

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(BAC21-24).

Along with the picnic shelter (BAC83), the concession and picnic shelter (BAC81) is a pivotal resource in the picnic area. The 36.5 by 40.5 foot ell-shaped building includes an enclosed, roughly coursed, rough-faced limestone concession and a connected picnic shelter open along three sides. The shelter roof is also supported by two stone pillars whose top broadens at the eaves to hold the rounded timber roof supports. The rafters are exposed. Wood shingling covers the intersecting gable roof. The fireplace is placed at the rear of an alcove with a wood bench along each side. It forms a segmental arch which includes a keystone. An uncoursed, rough-faced ashlar limestone double pit vault latrine (comfort stations and privies, IH) (BAC82) stands just to the northeast. The ell-shaped, 15 by 26 foot building supports an intersecting gable roof covered with wood shingle. The timber roof supports are exposed on the exterior as well as the interior. The interior trim is now pine.

A picnic shelter (BAC83) stands on the opposite edge of the picnic area from the concession. The rear is fully closed with the exception of two entrances on either side of the chimney. The sides are stepped. They are composed of uncoursed, rough-faced ashlar limestone. Four rounded, oak timbers with bracing also support the timber framing of the gable roof which is covered with wood shingling. Exposed rafters and purlins and timber cross pieces in gable add decorative elaborations to the shelter. The fireplace is completed with a segmental arch.

Associated structures include a water fountain (BAC50) near the concession. Coursed ashlar limestone composes the 2.3 foot square, 2.8 foot high fountain. It tapers slightly from the base, and its top is dished to receive water from the spicket. Four parking lots three of which are gravel (BAC21-23) and one of which is grass (BAC24) contain 4,085, 20,696, 1,794, and 17280 square feet. They are scattered across the picnic area. Near the north boundary of the district, Watercrest Springs (dams, lakes, and pools, IID) (BAC56) is composed of two sections of random rubble, limestone retaining wall which are together 41 feet in length. Stepped up the slope of the hill, the wall creates a shallow pool at the head of the spring. The springs continue to support a bed of watercrest. The resource is essentially a landscaping device. On the north, the boundary ends north of the stone arch bridge (BAC25) which spans an intermittent stream bed in a timbered area. A stone veneer covers its concrete and steel support system. The single

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segmental arch of the 58 foot long bridge includes a keystone. The side rails of the bridge are also composed of stone.

The road from the picnic area to the west gate accesses additional CCC resources. A set of limestone steps (trail steps and trails, IJ) (BAC45) similar to those already described curve 150 feet up from the road to a steep, rocky cliff. The rubble stone blends into the rocky hill side. Limestone boulder guard rails define the outside edge of the two half-oval, gravel overlooks (other minor park structures, IM) (BAC39-40). While BAC39 measures 76 feet in length, BAC40 reaches 135 feet. The base of a rectangular, limestone rubble incinerator (incinerators, II) (BAC41) remains opposite the current CCC museum. The chimney has now fallen into the base. The building occupied by the museum was constructed in ca. 1925 during one of the park's first phases of development. It once served as a two story, frame stable isolated from CCC park development.

A second picnic shelter (picnic shelters, IIA) (BAC85) near the west gate serves as a pivotal resource for this area and was once the center of the park's camping area. It now functions as a picnic area. The 35 by 44 foot rectangular shelter roof is wholly supported by triple and single timber posts and timber framing. Wood shingling covers the gable roof. Timber bracing along the posts, exposed rafters and purlins, and horizontal timbers under the gable add to the decorative detailing of the shelter. A massive chimney with wing walls is centered along a side wall. Its fireplace is completed with a segmental arch which includes a keystone. As in the other shelter and concession, the floor as well as the footings are now concrete. The gravel parking lot (other minor structures, IM) (BAC44) to the south incorporates 25,026 square feet. Limestone boulder guard rails line the north side of the approximately square parking lot which contains a grassy island in its center.

The remains of CCC camp SP17 (BAC86) of company 781 lie in an 900 foot by 825 foot area of woods and brush to the northwest of BAC85 adjacent to the west entrance. This second company at Backbone arrived April 1, 1935 and remained until April 1, 1935. Although of permanent frame construction, these structures were intended to survive only a short period of use (Iowa Department of Agriculture 1935-36 [1935: 205]; Iowa State Conservation Commission 1917-73 [maps ca. 1935]). Visible remains include the concrete foundations once apart of the 23 buildings: seven barracks, officer's quarters, foreman's quarters, mess hall and kitchen, latrine and bath,

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hospital, headquarters and recreation hall, education building, education shop, two garages, technical office, tool room, repair garage, store house, oil room, and exchange and supply room (U.S. NPS, Project Supervisor 1933-47 [1/23/40, box 72]). Although foundations are visible, no historical archaeological testing of the site's potential to yield significant data has occurred.

Richmond Springs, area C within the discontinuous district of Backbone State Park, incorporates two man-made pools (BAC34) which capture water from an adjacent spring, the waterway (BAC51) (dams, lakes, and pools, IID), and a set of stone steps (trail steps and trails, IJ) (BAC35). The rear wall of the springs is composed of a natural limestone outcropping and dry laid limestone slabs. The springs seep from the rock at the foot of the outcropping into two adjacent circular pools. Constructed of random rubble limestone slabs, the pools measure 40 and 41 feet in diameter. A 30 foot long by approximately 500 foot long limestone lined waterway stretches from the spring area to and under the road to the east. This ditch is intended to act as an overflow for the springs. Also, a set of limestone steps curves up the slope of the hill around the springs. Constructed both of natural limestone outcropping and random rubble limestone, the 60, 98 foot long by 1.2 foot wide steps are built of single stone, unmortared limestone. They lack side walls. Their irregular manner of construction and curving course blend them into the surrounding landscape. A wooded area surrounds the springs to the rear or west and a grassy lawn lies to the east. It forms the head of a trout stream which flows to the former fish hatchery nearby.

Mainly deterioration in part perhaps caused by original construction techniques and modifications demanded for modern use of the park have caused alterations or added intrusions within the three areas of the district.

In area A, the Cabin/Bathing Area, both the bathhouse and boathouse did undergo change probably within a decade following their construction (Iowa DNR 1917-89 [IOWA CONSERVATIONIST 1/37]). Originally, the all gable ends were stepped and the roof did not overhang the exterior wall. Sometime in the 1940s, the gables were altered to the current configuration. Additionally, a frame concession room with vertical siding has been added to the south end of the bathhouse. The dressing areas in the dressingrooms have been partially replaced. Also, the original, side hung doors with half log decorative detailing was replaced with overhead doors or vertical siding on the west side of the boathouse. The original

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windows were replaced with louvers and a wood barriers has been added at the head of the stairs to the tower. Although some of the properties adjacent to the bathing area have suffered deterioration, they have not experienced loss of decorative elements or structural alterations. The fountain (BAC54) adjacent to the sun dial (BAC1) is the single exception. Since a concrete block top has replaced the stone top of the fountain, this property is considered noncontributing.

In the north part of the Cabin/Bathing Area, Cabin 1 (BAC60) represents a replacement of the original after a fire in the 1960s. Although a noncontributing building because it was not constructed by the CCC, the replacement retains the same exterior design and materials as the others of type 2 and therefore blends well with the others. BAC68 and 72 have suffered considerable deterioration particularly along the sill but still remain intact. They are currently not in use. Cabins 2 through 18 (BAC61-78) have received small bath additions, and asphalt replaces wood shingles. For style 1, this addition occurs along one corner of the rear and is not visible from the front. Style 2 received the addition along the front of the bedroom wing so that the original center protrusion no longer exists and the lower roof line above the wing is raised to the level of the main roof line. While the addition was built with the same materials and similar design and is not perceptible upon the exterior, it does alter the irregularity of massing. While resource 78, the former shower building and current cabin, is a noncontributing property because of its later construction in 1954, its small size, rectangular shape, and frame construction blend it into the surrounding built environment (Schaut 1989). Although the paved road and parking area (BAC18) were once gravel, they remain in the same location. Thus demarcating the same paths, relationships within the setting are not altered and the structures are therefore contributing. Finally, the trail along the lake may not be a CCC resource and is therefore currently viewed as noncontributing.

In Area B, the Picnic, Hiking, and Camping Area, the overlooks (BAC9-10, 39-40) have likely lost some of their stone guard rails. This loss is particularly evident for BAC10 where they have disappeared from the center. While the stone base and log support are original to the Backbone Trail sign (BAC13), the sign itself has been replaced. Although the exterior of the two pit latrines (BAC80, 82) remains in their original state, the ceiling of BAC80 was finished with plywood and the oak was altered to pine trim on the interior of both in 1987 to replace deteriorated roof members.

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The window openings of the concession (BAC81) were boarded after removal of the store. The park administration is contemplating its rejuvenation in the next few years. Because the incinerator is abandoned with chimney fallen into the base of the structure, this resource is also viewed as noncontributing. However, it is not visible from areas of public use. While brush piles cover the site of CCC camp 781, they will be removed and the area cleared of brush and timber so that the foundations are again visible. These ruins will be interpreted in the nearby CCC museum whose displays are now under construction. The museum also stands in the district. Because of its ca. 1925 construction, it is a noncontributing resource. However, the two story, frame stable blends well with the other resources, and it stands removed from them and the main park road. Additionally, while the general location of the park's roads in the district retain the irregular placement of the original, they are now paved rather than graveled. The two bridges adjacent to resources BAC81-83 represent replacements of the original. They are low, unobtrusive steel and timber, single span bridges. Finally, sections of many of the trails with the exception of the Backbone Trail have been refurbished or relocated and are therefore viewed as noncontributing (see table I).

Richmond Springs, area C, has suffered little alteration except limited deterioration. The stone steps (BAC35) were cleared of undergrowth and reset in 1983.

While deterioration has occurred in many of the buildings, CCC resources must be viewed as semi-permanent park resources built by essentially unskilled labor under the supervision of trained architects, landscape architects, and craftsmen, primarily locally experienced men. And, the buildings were erected to serve a public with needs differing from current park patrons. Modification derive from these two sources. Although resources have suffered deterioration, Backbone State Park has received few recent additions to its cultural resources. Sensitive to the emphasis upon landscaping through the rustic style, property counts recognize the importance of associated landscapes and exclude post-CCC intrusions. Because of this emphasis, considerable importance is placed upon the integrity of setting, location, feeling, and association. Because of the fragility of the resources, maintenance of the overall design and reasonable integrity of materials and tolerance for changes effected by deterioration and modern use remain a requirement. Finally, the integrity of workmanship extant in the district retains the important association with the CCC participants.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

The CCC resources within the three areas of the Backbone State Park District gain historical significance under criterion A in association with the context Civilian Conservation Corps Properties in Iowa State Parks: 1933-1942 and the property type: CCC Properties in Iowa Parks. The district represents the theme through the areas of CONSERVATION, RECREATION, SOCIAL HISTORY, and POLITICS/GOVERNMENT. The CCC was a national level government program carried out through the state within its parks. It sought to provide recreational opportunities for local communities and conserve the parks' landscapes by utilizing unemployed youths in make-work projects, a move toward social welfare at the national level. Additionally, the resources in the Backbone State Park District acquire significance under criterion C in the area of ARCHITECTURE as examples of rustic architecture. The buildings, structures, and objects reflect the effort of this landscape movement to blend park amenities into the natural landscape in their material, design, workmanship, and immediate setting and reflect common types developed by the National Park Service for park construction. Thus, the conservation and naturalistic emphasis of the CCC relates well to the architecture which it erected in parks such as Backbone. Because the park amenities within this district were constructed for the enjoyment of local communities and do not contain single examples of exceptionally well preserved, scarce cultural resources or outstanding examples of Iowa state park rustic architecture, the resources of the district gain significance at the local level. The period of significance extends from the commencement of CCC work in the park in 1933 to its close in 1942 (Iowa Department of Agriculture 1935-37 [1935: 205]; U.S. CCC 1933-42; U.S. NPS, Project Supervisor 1933-37 [9/33, 10/33, 10/34, box 72]; Alleger and Alleger ca. 1935: 47, 59).

## Background

The State of Iowa acquired Backbone as its first state park in 1918 shortly after the creation of the Iowa State Board of Conservation. The 1279.59 acre park was dedicated in 1920. Encompassing 1411.38 acres by 1941, it remains the largest state park within the system (Paul 1917-23; Iowa State Conservation Commission 1935-42 [1942: 127-28]; 1937, 1941 [1941: 4]). One major phase of park development began ca. 1925 with the construction of the fish hatchery and the stable, now the CCC museum. During the second

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half of the 1920's, construction at the former location included the fish hatchery building in 1925, a utility building, meat house, five irregular pools, and at least some of the round pools, and a portion of the entrance wall (Iowa DNR 1917-89 [plans of fish hatchery, 11/15/40]; U.S. NPS, Project Supervisor 1933-47 [3/35, box 81]; Proudfoot, Bird, and Rawson 1925; Iowa State Board of Conservation 1925: 2: 49; Iowa State Conservation Commission 1935-42 [1938:9]). The state completed a large outdoor auditorium north of the hatchery in 1931 (Iowa State Board of Conservation 1931: 5).

CCC Company 1756 began construction in the park in July, 1933. It established camp SP2 south of the cabin area and north of the boathouse between September and November, 1933. Construction of the four 20 by 100 foot barracks began in September. By the end of October, the camp included nine semi-permanent frame buildings, the four barracks, a kitchen and mess hall, one bathhouse, hospital, one office, a tool shed, a recreational building, and one staff building. A garage was completed in November. A second company 781 worked in the park between April 1, 1934 and March 31, 1935. It occupied camp SP17 (BAC86) located just northwest of the camping area and structure BAC85 during this period. This camp included 26 buildings as listed in the description and remained standing until at least October, 1942 (Iowa State Conservation Commission 1933-42b [map: 2/10/35]; U.S. NPS, Project Supervisor 1933-47 [9/33, 10/25/33, 11/33, box 72]; Iowa DNR 1917-89 [report dated 1/23/40]; Iowa Department of Agriculture 1935-36 [1935: 205]; Iowa State Conservation Commission 1917-73 [letter dated 9/6/42, folder 4, box 1]; Allegor and Allegor ca. 1935: 47)).

By August, Company 1756 began landscape work in the park such as clearing undergrowth for the construction of roads, controlling tree and plant disease, the building of erosion control dams at the north end of the park, and by October forest improvement and planting. Erosion control remained a major portion of CCC work through the 1930s. By 1935, tree planting, fine grading adjacent to buildings, road side clearing, trail clearing, clearing in the camp ground, stream improvement, insect control, and seed collection were added to this category of activity (U.S. NPS, Project Supervisor 1933-47 [8/33, 10/33, 12/34-1/35, 3/35, box 72]; Iowa Department of Agriculture 1935-36 [1935: 206]).

Major areas of park development at Backbone include the auditorium, fish hatchery, central picnic, hiking, and camping area, the cabin area, and bathing and boating area. As noted, the auditorium was

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completed prior to 1933. Major development at the fish hatchery occurred in the 1920s beginning in 1925. CCC additions included the garage and custodian's house between May, 1934 and January, 1935 and the pumphouse and latrine between October, 1935 and September, 1936. They also refurbished and partially rebuilt the fish ponds and the front wall from December, 1934 to March, 1935. Of this development in the 1920s and 1930s, only the garage, ponds, and portions of the wall remain (Iowa State Conservation Commission 1933-42a (map: 1940); Iowa DNR 1917-89 [IOWA CONSERVATIONISTS 1/37]; U.S. NPS, Project Supervisor 1933-47 [5/34-9/36, box 81]; Proudfoot, Bird, and Rawson 1925; Iowa State Board of Conservation 1924-27 [1925: (2) 49]; Iowa State Conservation Commission 1935-42 [1938: 9]). Because major development at the hatchery pre-dates the CCC efforts and many of the resources from both eras no longer remain, this area is also not designated as a district.

The CCC began the erection of park buildings and structures at the south end of the man-made lake. Between August, 1933 and October, 1934, the CCC with assistance from the CWA erected the dam and spillways (BAC4) and cleared the lake bottom. It constructed the bathhouse between September, 1934 and April, 1935 and erected the boathouse between January and May, 1935. The grading and other improvements on the beach occurred between November, 1934 and September, 1935. One or both parking lots to the east and the retaining wall between the bathhouse and the beach were constructed about December, 1937. The bench and sun dial, also called the stone overlook, was completed sometime between November, 1935 and March, 36. Work on the pit vault latrine and sand filter occurred between November, 1934 and March, 1935. Finally, the CCC installed most of the stone drinking fountain about September, 1936 (U.S. NPS, Project Supervisor 1933-47 [8/33-9/36, boxes 77 and 81]; U.S. NPS, Regional Office 1933-37 [5/36-12/37]; U.S. NPS, District Office 1933-36 [box 2, 12/34-12/35]; Iowa State Conservation Commission 1917-89 [box 5]).

The CCC began the construction of individual family overnight cabins in its park system in 1937. The cabins were probably built from south to north in time despite variation in style (Schmidt 1989). In that year beginning in January, south four of the six planned cabins were built at Backbone and open for use in 1938. An additional four were constructed in 1938, two in 1939, and two by June, 1940. In 1940, the state planned the construction of the last six cabins to the north, cabins 13 to 18 (BAC72-77). Construction began by the CCC by December, 1941 and was mostly completed by the CCC so that they opened in the summer of that

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year. The Iowa State Conservation Commission may have done limited finish work and landscaping (Schmidt 1989; Galliart 1989). The pumphouse was probably erected during 1939 as the CCC installed the water line. A plan of the cabin area indicates its presence by the fall of 1940 (Galliart 1989; Iowa State Conservation Commission 1933-42a [map, 10/14/40]; Iowa DNR 1917-89 [report of CCC work, 1939 and 1941]; U.S. NPS, Project Supervisor 1933-47 [1/37-5/37]; Iowa State Conservation Commission 1937, 1941 [1941: 4]; Iowa State Conservation Commission 1917-73 [letters, 12/11/41, 3/5/42]).

Construction in the central picnic area began by December, 1933 and continued until at least 1938. Work began on .1 miles of Backbone Trail at the end of 1933 and continued until at least December, 1934. The trail following the ridge along the unglaciated Backbone was built with rock riprap laid horizontally to resemble the adjacent limestone bedrock. Trail improvements in the area continued into 1935. Clearing in the central picnic area and the collection of rock for the guard rails of parking areas and overlooks began by 1933 and were installed in 1933 and 1934. These guard rails which looked "naturalistic" along the landscape (U.S. NPS, Project Supervisor 1933-47 [6/34, box 72]) were set along the backbone curves, overlooks, and parking areas in March, 1935. This project continued into April and May, 1935. The east gate (BAC8) reached completion between February when the footings were poured and May, 1935 when the Board of Conservation provided the stone marker. The latrine in this area (BAC80) was not completed until 1938 (Galliart 1989). The picnic shelter (BAC83) and pit vault latrine (BAC82) were begun in September and October, 1934 and completed in December, 1934 and March, 1935 respectively. The stone of the latrine was "...being laid just as it comes from the quarry, thus making the rustic appearing structure" (U.S. NPS, Project Supervisor 1933-47 [10/34, box 81]). However, the stone work of the nearby shelter appeared "too domesticated" (U.S. NPS, District Office 1933-36 [12/6/34, box 5]). Yet, Good chose this shelter from Iowa to illustrate appropriate varieties for prairie areas (1938: (1) 59). The adjacent stone fountain (BAC50) was completed in September, 1936. Work on the concession (BAC81) was begun considerably later, between January, 1937 and shortly after May, 1937. The CCC began the building of the stone bridge (BAC25) in September, 1935 and finished early in 1936. The camp ground near a heavily wooded area was then heavily used by campers. The CCC began clearing and building camp ground facilities in March, 1935 and constructed a timber shelter (BAC85) in the area between February and April, 1935 (Iowa State Conservation Commission 1933-42a [map of BAC25, 6/25/35]; 1935-42 [1935: 120]; U.S. NPS,

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Project Supervisor 1933-47 [8/33-9/36, boxes 72 and 81]; U.S. NPS, Regional Office 1933-47 [1/37, box 12]; U.S. NPS, District Office 1933-36 [12/34-4/35, box 5 and 22]; TIMBER CADET 12/34)).

Work began on the enclosure of Richmond Springs (BAC34, Area C) which flows from the exposed Niagara limestone by June, 1934 and continued through March, 1935. The impetus for the project partially lay in the need to protect the area as a source of potable water. The "naturalistic improvement" of the springs which included the building of the stone steps (BAC35) occurred in September, 1935. In October through March, 1936, the CCC excavated a new channel from the area (BAC51) to prevent overflow into the springs. The sandy texture of the soil required riprapping to prevent erosion. Fine grading and seeding of the area also occurred at this time (U.S. NPS, Project Supervisor 1933-47 [6/34-3/36, box 81]).

Backbone State Park had been opened for public use since the 1920s. During CCC development, the season 1936-1937 brought 176,300 visitors. Attendance rose as more facilities were added: 192,650 in 1937-1938, 205,175 in 1938-1939, and 211,470 in 1939-1940. It dropped considerably as the war began: 36,800 in 1940-1941 and 79,405 in 1941-1942 (Iowa State Conservation Commission 1935-42 [1938; 1940: 173-74; 1942: 128-29]). The Iowa master plan for park development (Crane 1933) suggested the creation of specific types of parks to serve particular purposes. The Iowa State Conservation Commission reclassified these parks several times so that by 1942 Backbone State Park was identified as a state park with many roles (Iowa State Conservation Commission 1935-42 [1942: 127-28]). CCC park development was broad creating a general recreation area by providing accessibility, shelter, protection, sanitation, and general landscaping (U.S. NPS, Project Supervisor 1933-47 [3/36, box 72]). As such, the park offered nature study, facilities for outdoor entertainment, rental cabins, camping, fishing, a trout hatchery, picnicking, refreshments, supervised swimming, and winter sports (Iowa State Conservation Commission 1937, 1941 [1941: 4]). Concessions and miscellaneous refreshments were offered as early as 1935 and service primarily in the bathing area continued through 1942. The Conservation Commission also provided nature tours from 1936 to 1940. The Conservation Commission opened 4 rental cabins in its parks in 1937. Backbone possessed six by 1938. By 1942, the park offered 18 of the park system's 73 cabins (Iowa Conservation Commission 1935-42 [1936: 123; 1938: 108-109, 135; 1940: 157,190-91; 1942: 112, 144-45]; Iowa State Conservation Commission 1937, 1941 [1941: 19]). Thus, Backbone State Park received heavy

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public use even during the CCC period.

Historical Significance

Iowa state parks preserve in a very tangible way evidence of the CCC program. The four areas of significance which relate to the district through criterion A, GOVERNMENT/POLITICS, SOCIAL HISTORY, CONSERVATION, and RECREATION, are tightly intertwined. Thus, the legislation of the New Deal at the national level directed the improvement of state parks to provide welfare in the form of work for the unemployed building park facilities. They would offer local recreational opportunities for the idle to ensure a smoother recovery from depression.

GOVERNMENT/POLITICS

The national government reached a sufficient level of maturity to create and operate a public works program by the depression era. Although conceived during the Progressive Era, the bureaucratic government came of age to oversee such programs with professionally led government agencies only in the 1930s. Through a bureaucratic government, the nation influenced such areas as social welfare, conservation, and recreation, in, for example, CCC programs. And, through such programs, it heavily influenced the orientation of state and local government in these areas. Where before they had been the concern of the individual family or at most the community, social welfare, conservation, and recreation at these levels were now influenced by the federal government (Berthoff 1971: 330-38, 342, 357, 359-61; Hays 1957: 48, 140-41, 150; Weibe 1967: 111, 131).

To participate in the CCC program, each state was required to submit a park development plan. Iowa was among a small number of states which had developed such a plan and an organization, what became the Iowa State Conservation Commission, by 1933. By 1934, it also created a State Planning Board. This planning allowed State Forester G.R. McDonald to present a proposal for sixteen Iowa camps soon after the creation of the CCC. Like the national level organization, the operation of the Iowa CCC relied upon the cooperation of a multitude of state, local, and private agencies (Iowa Department of Agriculture 1935-37 [1935: 6-7, 191; Wirth 1980: 150; Merrill 1981: 128). The Iowa State Conservation Commission directed the effort, the Central Design Office created

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many of the plans, and many other state agencies provided services in areas of their expertise (U.S. NPS, District Office 1933-36 [12/16/34, box 6]; Iowa State Planning Board 1936-38 [1936: 1 (1): 4]).

The Iowa CCC was underway by April, 1933, the year camp 1756 at Backbone was constructed. State park work led by the National Park Service began with two companies and expanded to thirteen by October, 1933, the peak number except in the fifth period (4-9/1935) when it reached fourteen. The number declined to five by the tenth period (10/1937-3/1938), three by the seventeenth period (4/1941-9/1941), and ended with two by the eighteenth period (10/1941-3/1942) (U.S. CCC, Office of the Director 1933-41 [1935: appendix D, 1937: appendix C, 1938: appendix D, 1939: appendix H, 1940: appendix D, 1941: appendix D]). However, the National Forest Service camps also significantly contributed to the state park cause and are not included in this count. This work advanced park development greatly in Iowa. The State Conservation Commission was able to complete 75% of its 25 year master plan between 1933 and 1937 (Grieshop 1989).

## SOCIAL HISTORY

The bureaucracy of the national government enabled it to become responsible for the welfare of the nation's individual citizens through state and local governments and local representatives of federal agencies. Again, although such concepts were not wholly new, they had not been activated at the federal level. The context of the depression demanded new solutions to the social welfare problem (Howard 1943: 651-52; Johnson 1941: 48; Scheslinger 1940: 1-4; U.S. Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works 1934: 71-72). The national government created the CCC program to provide temporary relief and secondarily offer training in work skills to destitute young men. It taught them social maturity, new values, and a sense of responsibility, gave them hope for a brighter future, and offered limited education opportunities. And, it purposefully utilized this human resource to conserve the nation's environment (Paige 1985: 126, 132; Holland and Hill 1974 [1944]: 113; Wirth 1980: 100). Between 1933 and 1942, the Iowa program created work for 5% of the male population or 45,846 Iowans. Their accomplishments, the development of state parks, provided recreational opportunities which were utilized soon after construction. It had been one of the goals of park development to create opportunities to engage the idle and boost their sense of

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optimism and confidence in the future. It also provided economic opportunities for local communities since CCC camps purchased many supplies locally. And, communities reciprocated by gifts of land and materials for the park projects (Iowa Secretary of State 1939-40: 308-09; Merrill 1981: 128; Wirth 1980: 145; Paige 1985: 127). The site of camp SP17 (BAC86) represents the reciprocal contributions, those of society to the area in a new form of social welfare program and of the men to society as they worked on park projects while living at the camp.

### CONSERVATION

The conservation projects reaching the scale of those executed by the CCC were economically if not philosophically inconceivable under normal conditions before 1933. These projects not only provided a source of make-work projects but began to refurbish the nation's ailing natural resources and as importantly highlighted their deteriorated condition to the nation. These resources could no longer be taken for granted (U.S. Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works 1934: 67; U.S. Federal Security Agency 1941: 3; Owen 1983: 82, 120). The conservation movement in Iowa had slowly begun as early as 1895 (IOWA CONSERVATIONISTS 1943: 2 (2) 9) and reached a clear expression as Iowans gained concern for the erosion of their natural resources in the REPORT ON THE IOWA TWENTY-FIVE YEAR CONSERVATION PLAN (Crane 1933: 2, 13-17). The plan spelled out both the steps necessary to restore the state's resources and to create a state-wide park system which ensured the preservation of these resources. The CCC projects in parks included conservation of the parks' natural resources. Park amenities were not to intrude upon them either visually or physically. Almost all if not all park development required landscaping through the planting of trees, shrubs, and grasses around new construction and many times throughout the entire park. Erosion control devices were constructed to rejuvenate park lands already suffering from erosion or to prevent its occurrence after park development (Ahlgren 1988). For example, at Backbone, the CCC planted many trees and shrubs across the park including the picnic area (area B) and constructed numerous erosion control devices. Additionally, a conservation ethic guided the design and placement of park buildings, structures, and objects at Backbone State Park as noted below.

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## RECREATION

The CCC park development erected facilities which did not intrude upon the natural setting and thus ensured a healthful environment for the escape of local communities from the circumstances of the depression. Also, in the long run, increasing mechanization created greater leisure time but also greater stress. To cope, the individual needed to seek relaxation and rejuvenation of mind and spirit in a non-mechanized environment or nature. This increasing mechanization also provided the means to physically reach beyond the built environment through the automobile. Parks provided an opportunity to satisfy the immediate requirement created by the depression. As it lifted, they satisfied the need to break the isolation from the inspiration of man's natural surroundings (Crane 1933: 144; IOWA CONSERVATIONIST 1941-42 [1941: 1(2): 7]; U.S. NPS 1941: v, 9; Owen 1983: 12). This identified public need became substantiated by the rise in Iowa state park visitation from 1,542,557 in 1928 to 3,686,481 in 1941-1942 which was also reflected at Backbone (Iowa State Conservation Commission 1935-42 [1936; 1938; 1942]). Thus, the CCC's activity in state parks provided the necessary opportunity for recreation in the form of picnicking, nature study, bathing, and fishing. Conservation and recreation remained intimately tied in the development of Iowa state parks. Park development for such recreation was not to impair the natural surroundings. And, it became the state's responsibility to provide a wholesome environment in which its citizens could spend its leisure time (Crane 1933: 11; Iowa State Planning Board 1936-38 [1937: 2(3): 7-8]). This philosophy espoused early in Iowa was echoed in the federal government's study of recreation needs in 1934 and 1941 (U.S. NPS 1941: v).

## Architectural Significance

The National Park Service developed the basis for park design utilized in state parks during the depression era, the philosophy of rustic architecture, beginning as early as 1917. This philosophy reached maturity by the 1930s and became obsolete by the early 1940s. With its emphasis upon landscaping and strong recognition of the need to conserve and remain sensitive to the natural environment, this design movement dovetailed with the goals of the Roosevelt era. And, because of its demand for intensive labor guided by a carefully prepared master plan for park development, "A work program intended to remedy unemployment and introduce new manual skills was suited to the construction of the

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architectural designs prescribed by rustic architecture" (Ahlgren 1987: 29).

Stated principles of rustic architecture emphasized that man-made resources be inconspicuous and blend with their natural environment. Design simplicity and the use of native materials, often from the park, furthered this goal. Because each region possessed a different environment, the design was specific to each region if not the park. Planning in Iowa was to be sensitive to the rolling hills of prairie and woodland often resulting in low, horizontal massing of buildings and buildings and structures of combined log and stone or frame. Park facilities also often followed a single historical allusion to the areas's past so that the buildings achieved a unity of design and blended culturally. For this reason, rustic architecture did possess some ties to the romantic movement. In Iowa, the historical theme generally referred to the pioneer past through the use of native materials or to a general Native American theme. Study of the natural setting prior to development and the extensive use of master plans ensured harmony within the built environment and with their natural surroundings. Each resource contributed to the whole. Development occurred in areas of concentrated use such as the picnic areas or the cabin area rather than being scattered across the park to minimized intrusion upon nature (Good 1938: I; Ahlgren 1987: 30, 78-79; 1988; Tweed 1977: 55, 63, 77, 94, 104). This orientation dictated simplicity of stylistic theme with a limited variety of construction materials and simple ornament. Many times, rustic architecture utilized elements from the American Craftsman style (1900-1930). Detailing often included large dormers, exposed rafters and purlins as well as other exposed building members, brackets, broad overhangs, and porches in addition to its low, horizontal massing (Gottfried and Jennings 1985: 140, 186, 222-23; Ahlgren 1988: 202-03; Good 1938: I, 8).

Specific guidelines for park facilities derived from these principles stressed the minimal impact of construction upon surroundings through hand labor and the use of native materials such as stone and timbers which underwent limited refinement by hand. The use of modern materials such as concrete was to be covered by a veneer of natural materials. Simple frame buildings were utilized for utilitarian functions. Low, horizontal lines in rolling hills of prairies and scattered woodlands assisted blending. Careful landscaping with native vegetation allowed the building's or structure's transition into its setting as did the use of rough stone foundations, battered or buttressed walls,

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irregular building lines, and native materials placed in their natural position. In stone construction, the stone was laid in vaguely horizontal planes with larger stones toward the base but with a mix of size within general limits. Roofs were often of heavy, exposed timber supports covered with wood shingle. Thus, they blended with the surrounding tree line and the upper portions were heavy and durable like the lower portions of the building or structure (Good 1938: I; Ahlgren 1987: 5, 56; 1988; Tweed 1977: 30, 35, 54, 71, 93-94).

Such make-work programs as the CCC, the Works Progress Administration, and the National Youth Administration utilized this style extensively across the nation. To meet the volume of work demanded by the broad state park development, the National Park Service published a guide by Albert Good in 1935 and 1938, PARK STRUCTURES AND FACILITIES (1938) which in effect summarized rather than forecasted work in the style. This style is evident in a majority of Iowa parks in which the CCC, WPA or NYA worked. The Central Design Office with the assistance of the National Park Service provided the design for a majority of the CCC buildings and structures in Iowa state parks. Frank J. Loupek of the Central Design Office completed one version of the master plan for Backbone State Park in 1935 (Iowa State Conservation Commission 1933-42a [map, 2/10/35]). Associate Architect Mitchell of this office also rendered plans for the park between 1933 and 1934. Also, the project supervisor, V.W. Flickinger was a landscape architect who later became an inspector of CCC projects in state parks for the National Park Service (U.S. NPS, Regional Office 1933-37 [1933-34, box 3]).

The Backbone State Park District resources represent the rustic style. The 1935 master plan places buildings and structures in groupings such as the bathing area, cabin area, central picnic area, campground, fish hatchery, and auditorium (Iowa DNR 1933-42a [map: 2/10/35]). All buildings and structures use both native stone and timbers. The CCC quarried limestone outside the park boundary 400 yards from the park dam as well as at Osborne. However, rather than removing it by hand, at least some of the stone was loosened by blasting. Timber cut from the lake bottom was trimmed for use in the park buildings and structures (U.S. NPS, Project Supervisor 1933-47 [1/34, 6/34, box 72]; Alleger and Alleger ca. 1935: 47). Buildings have uncoursed, rough faced ashlar walls with large timber roof supports, materials which blend with the natural surroundings. The district inspector, however, noted that the stone work of the shelter (BAC83) was too

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domesticated because it had been "tooled too much" (U.S. NPS, District Office 1933-37 [12/6/34, box 4]). By contrast, the project supervisor praised the effect presented by the appearance of the latrine (BAC82) whose stone was laid "just as it came from the quarry" (U.S. NPS, Project Supervisor 1933-47 [10/34, box 72]). Open buildings such as the picnic shelters and concession (BAC81, 83, 85) have intricate timber roof supports. Enclosed buildings display exposed purlins and rafters and log bracing, and the timber roof framing is often open to view upon the interior. The low, horizontal extent of these buildings coupled with their use of native materials assists their blending into the natural landscape.

Companies 781 and 1756 also performed extensive landscaping and trail development which is particularly evident at the Backbone Trail (BAC47), Watercrest Springs (BAC56, and Richmond Springs (BAC34-35, 51). The placement of man-made resources to give access to and emphasize natural features without severe intrusions is also evident in the irregular placement of the roads, overlooks, and trail steps in area B. Although the roads are paved, their location remains original to the CCC era. While the simple one story, frame cabins have undergone some modification, their irregular arrangement among the trees above the lake in groups of four to six adhere to the landscaping ideals of the rustic style (Good 1938: I). The minor structures such as the portals (BAC8), stone arched bridge (BAC25), and fountain (BAC50) are also of native materials. Thus, the resources adhere to the general pioneer theme through the use of native materials. The ornamentation retains the simplicity prescribed by the rustic style. It is often integrated with the support members and evident in the massing, frequently of low, horizontal lines. Common features include the exposed timber roof supports, exposed timber bracing, stepped walls, dormers, and the segmental arch with keystone of the bridge, as well as the rough texture offered by the use of native materials.

Thus, the resources adhere to the general pioneer theme through the use of native material. The ornamentation retains the simplicity prescribed by the rustic style. It is often integrated with the support members and evident in the massing, frequently of low, horizontal lines. Common features include the exposed timber roof supports, exposed timber bracing, stepped buttresses, and the segmental arch with keystone of the bridge, as well as the rough texture offered by the use of native materials.

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## Comparative Statement

As a state park offering many types of recreation, Backbone was intended for use by a region within an 80 mile radius (Crane 1933). For this reason, it might merit a state level of significance. However, because several central portions of its recreation resources either were not constructed by the CCC or have experienced considerable modification, the significant areas within the park do not represent its original range of resources. Also, its eligible properties very adequately represent the typical kinds of resources available in Iowa state parks. Therefore, the resources within the Backbone State Park District gain significance at the local level.

As noted in the descriptive statement, buildings and structures within the three areas generally retain integrity of setting, location, overall design, material, feeling, association, and workmanship. And, except for some general deterioration, all contributing resources except the cabins (BAC61-77), the bathhouse (BAC58), boathouse (BAC59) and latrines (BAC80, 82) retain a high integrity of design. The property subtype including cabins has generally suffered small additions to accommodate modern use as well as modifications necessitated by deterioration. In those cases where additions are small and modifications minimally affect location, setting, workmanship, feeling, association, and materials and general design, then the cabins are deemed eligible. Importantly, this high concentration of cabins remain in their original configuration and their setting has suffered little modification so that the landscaping efforts of the CCC design continue to be communicated. Additions occurred in a similar material, the board and batten siding, and remain small. Modifications of the two latrines (BAC80, 82) is limited to the replacement of interior oak with pine trim and for BAC80 the addition of plywood at the ceiling level. Exterior integrity remains uncompromised. The bathhouse and boathouse underwent rather alteration along their eaves, the boathouse entry was altered, and the bathhouse received a frame addition on its south side. However, alteration of the eaves occurred within several year after their construction. Additionally, the low, horizontal massing of these massive buildings is distinctive meriting their inclusion in the district. There is a strong association of these two buildings with the development of Backbone State Park during the 1930s (Galliart 1989).

A majority of the contributing buildings, structures, and objects

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within the district are relatively common to Iowa state parks which underwent development by the CCC, for example the bathhouse (BAC58), shelters (BAC83, 85), latrines (BAC80, 82), drinking fountain (BAC50), entrance portals (BAC8), landscaping with trails (BAC47), cabins (BAC61-77), trail steps (BAC6, 35, 45-46, 48), parking areas (BAC16-18, 20-24, 44), erosion control structures (BAC7), overlooks (BAC9-10, 39-40), pumphouse (BAC78), and benches (BAC11-12). However, the subtypes including the boathouse (BAC59), cabins (BAC60-77), Backbone sign (BAC13), two pools (BAC56 and 34, 51), concession (BAC81), and vehicle bridge (BAC25) as well as the CCC camp 781 (BAC86) are less well represented in Iowa state parks.

There are two CCC-constructed boathouse represented in Iowa state parks which are located at Backbone and Gull Point. Both represent significant functions in the park. Because of their massing, they stand as major buildings in their districts. And, they are relatively rare in Iowa state parks. Therefore, despite alterations to the roof and openings, this example has been included as a contributing building of local significance in area A of the district. It lacks sufficient integrity to gain significance at the state level.

While there were 72 cabins erected in Iowa state parks, a substantial share were erected by the WPA and many such as those at Backbone which were erected by the CCC have undergone some modification. Those at Lacey-Keosauqua have experienced fewer alterations. Thus, those at Backbone gain significance at the local level.

The CCC camp at Backbone State Park currently gains significance as an historic site whose partially visible remains mark the location of one of the camps which developed the park. Although it is believed that the site remains intact, archaeological testing has yet to determine its information potential. The site thus gains importance as the location of a significance occurrence within the park itself. Since CCC camps likely varied little according to their affiliation to the National Park Service or the Forest Service, the comparative base for such a site is likely broader than state parks. Such a survey has not been completed. Therefore, BAC86 currently retains significance at the local level.

Although the base of the sign remains intact, the sign itself as in most cases has been replaced. Because this element has generally suffered such replacement, the resource remains eligible if the substitution does not interrupt the overall design. Because of

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modifications, the resource remains eligible at the local level of significance. Signs of varying integrity remain at Waubonsie, Lake of Three Fires, and Lacey-Keosauqua parks. The pools at Richmond and Watercrest springs follow the general landscaping guidelines specified by Good. They are small pools placed in a setting of natural appearance (Good 1938: (1) 119-26). No other identified resources fall into this category. For this reason, they are eligible at the state level of significance. The concession (BAC81) also retains a high level of integrity. The flagstone floor is now concrete and the concession windows are boarded. The concession with shelter at Ledges State Park has survived with few modifications. BAC81 therefore remains significant at the local level. Finally, the stone arched vehicle bridge retains high integrity. Two other examples exist at Lacey-Keosauqua State Park which display somewhat more elaborate detailing. Therefore, BAC25 is eligible at the local level.

Because a majority of the resources at Backbone State Park retain integrity at the local level, the district achieves significance at the local level. The district recognizes the contributions made by the two CCC camps in the state park and therefore gains significance during the period of construction, 1933 to 1942. The significant dates denote the arrival of the two companies 1756 and 781.

Then, the Backbone State Park District is a discontinuous district including three separate areas constructed by the same two CCC companies between 1933 and 1942. These boundaries not only eliminate landscapes and buildings which fail to contribute to the significance of the district but also parallel the concept of the park as nodes of activity, the picnic, hiking, and camping area (area B), cabin area (area A), and the Richmond Springs area (area C). As a product of the CCC, the district gains significance for its historical associations with the CCC and its contribution to the areas of GOVERNMENT/POLITICS, SOCIAL HISTORY, CONSERVATION, and RECREATION. The park is a direct product of interrelated historical movements in all these areas. It is through the combination of these threads of historical movements that CCC resources gain significance. Under the area of ARCHITECTURE, they also represent the main principles of mature rustic architecture of the 1930s. Despite the district's strong relationship to national and state movements, it possesses local significance. From the perspective of landscape architecture, the resources while following principles espoused at the national level, generally embody common resource subtypes becoming significant illustrations

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of CCC state park development in Iowa.

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10. Geographical Data

Boundary Description:

Area A: Cabin/Bathing Area: The boundary begins at the intersection of the intersection of the north edge of the park entry road with the park boundary line at the southeast tip of the park. From this point it travels northwest, then due north, and then due west along the east park boundary. Where the park boundary line again turns due north adjacent to BAC78 or cabin 18, the district boundary runs due southwest to the lake shore and follows the water line southeast and then west to a point 15 feet northwest of the bank of the northwest spillway. It follows the spillway along this line southwest to the crossing service road. The boundary then travels northeast along the north edge of the service road to the point of beginning (see park and USGS maps).

Area B: Central Picnic, Hiking, and Camping Area: The boundary begins 10 feet east of the east gate and follows the park boundary west, north, and west again to a point perpendicular with a line 20 feet west of BAC25, a stone bridge. The boundary then drops south from the park boundary to a point 500 feet west of the paved park road. It follows the road southwest at a distance of 500 feet until intersecting with the Maquoketa River. The district boundary follows the west edge of the river until it turns to the north. The district boundary then drops west to the park boundary and follows it generally south to a line 20 feet south of BAC44, a gravel parking lot. At this point, the district boundary turns due west and runs to the Maquoketa River. When it joins the Maquoketa River, it follows the exterior or outside edge of its water line around the Backbone to an east-west line parallel with the north-south boundary of the east gate (see park and U.S.G.S. maps).

Area C: Richmond Springs: The district boundary includes a 300 foot area around the pool of the springs and 20 feet on either side of the overflow between the springs and the road (BAC51) (see park and U.S.G.S. maps).

Boundary Justification:

Boundary lines were drawn to include three concentrations of CCC resources within Backbone State Park and exclude as much as possible the earlier park development of the 1920s and extensively

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modified CCC resources or later additions to the park. These boundaries also incorporate the scenery which its designers were attempting to highlight in their park designs. For this reason, boundaries tend to follow natural features, an arbitrary distance from resources or the park boundaries. In area A, the boundaries include the grassy areas to the west of the cabins and the woods between the cabins. The boundary incorporates wooded areas to the north, the lake shore on the west, and grassy areas and the beach on the south and east. The boundaries themselves follow the lake to the west, the service road to the south, the park boundary to the east, and primarily the park boundary to the north. Particularly in area B, boundaries have been extended to include rather widely scattered properties and incorporate the immediate natural landscape around which the CCC developed this section of the park. The east and west boundaries follow the park boundary lines. The north and south boundary include the Maquoketa River and associated valley walls which the adjacent trails and overlooks were constructed to view. Area C includes the spring, rock ledges, and woods and lawns immediately associated with Richmond Springs. Thus, the boundaries of the three areas within the park's discontinuous district recognize the central theme of CCC park construction, the limited development of the park's natural resources for the enjoyment of the visitor.

The three areas are placed within a single discontinuous district to interrelate the CCC resources constructed in the park and associate them with the park's historical development. This approach also relates the activities of the several CCC companies. It allows an overall impression of CCC work in the park yet eliminates park lands inappropriate to the theme of the nomination. The discontinuous district also provides a workable guide for overall park planning by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

#### UTM References:

##### Area A:

A. 15-4717195-620290    B. 15-4717370-620460    C. 15-4718080-619910  
D. 15-4718350-619910    E. 15-4718350-619510    F. 15-4718300-619500  
G. 15-4718240-619450    Z. 15-4717195-620195    AA. 15-4717130-620195  
BB. 15-4717110-620000    CC. 15-4717330-620040

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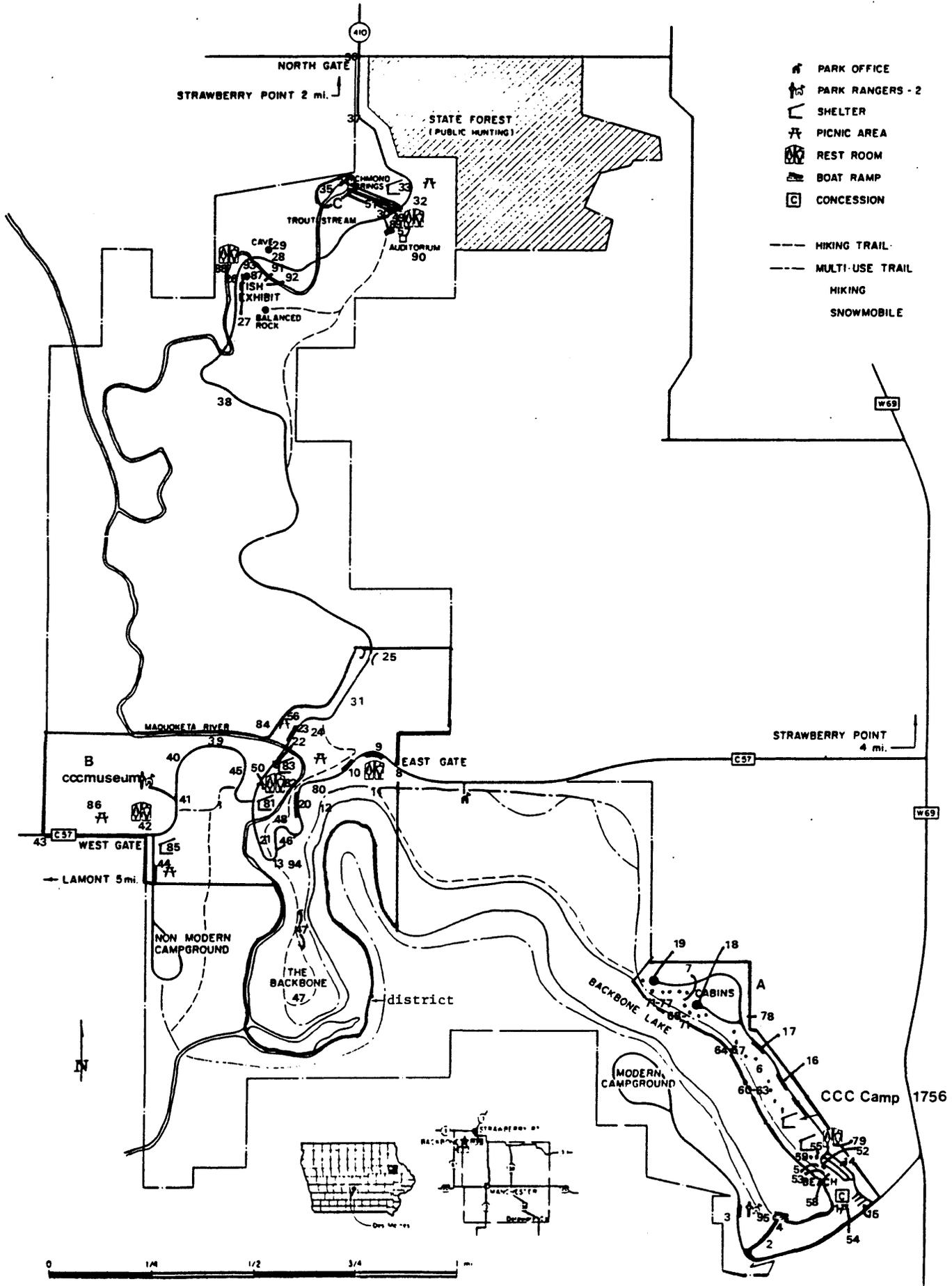
Area B:

H. 15-4719610-618710	I. 15-4719600-618240	J. 15-4719240-617800
K. 15-4719300-617460	L. 15-4719300-617090	M. 15-4718820-617100
N. 15-4718830-617480	O. 15-4718680-617480	P. 15-4718660-617450
Q. 15-4718560-617050	R. 15-4718230-617890	S. 15-4717860-618120
T. 15-4718200-618460	U. 15-4718820-618290	V. 15-4718820-618500
W. 15-4719220-618500	X. 15-4719220-618700	

Area C:

Y. 15-4721370-618290

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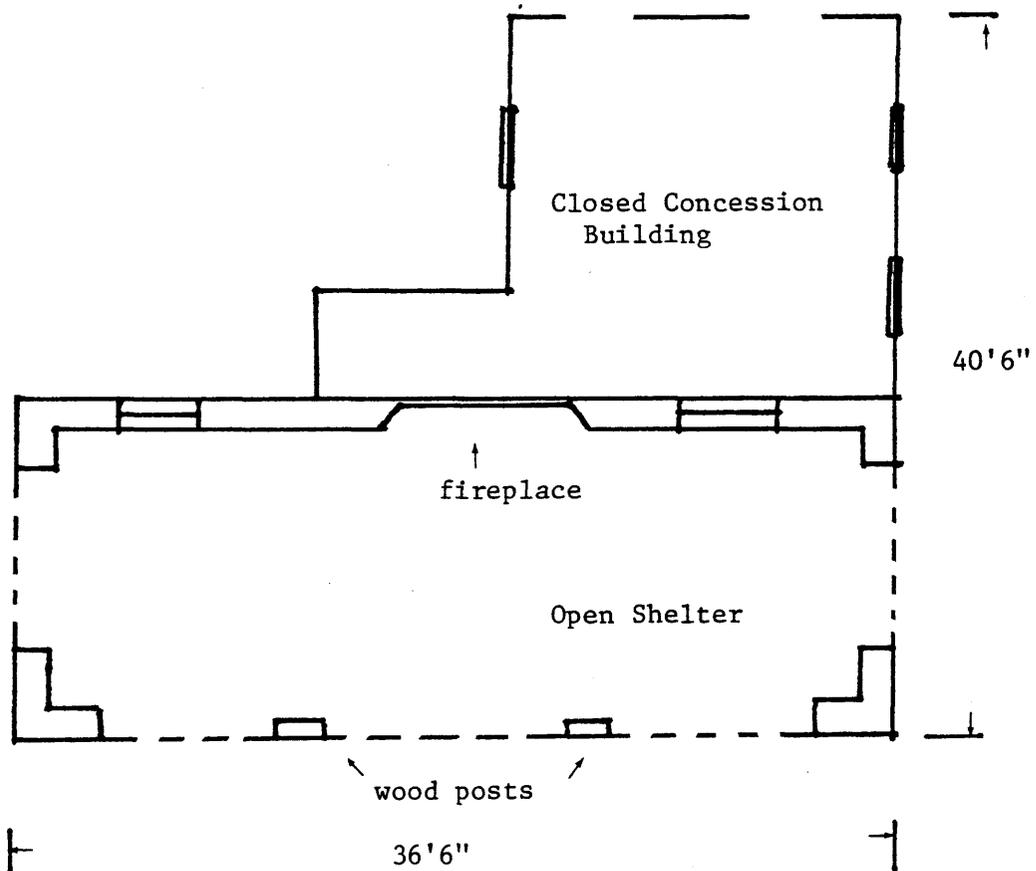
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Concession Building with shelter (resource BAC81)  
Backbone State Park

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## Photographic Identification

Name: Backbone State Park District

Location: Dundee, Delaware County, Iowa

Negative: Bureau of Historic Preservation, State Historical Society  
of Iowa

Photographer: Robert Schaut and Joyce McKay

Date: 3/21, 3/22, 5/22, 5/25-26, 1989

### Description:

1. View of the front facade of cabin 8, style 2 (BAC67, area A) facing northwest.
2. View of the front facade of cabin 11, style 1 (BAC70, Area A) facing northwest.
3. View of the stone steps (BAC6, Area A) between cabins BAC63 and BAC64 facing east.
4. View of the soil erosion control structure (BAC7, area A) between cabins BAC71 and BAC72 facing west.
5. View of the pumphouse (BAC78, area A) in the cabin area facing northeast.
- \*6. View of the east entrance gate (BAC8, Area B) facing west.
- \*7. View of the sign for the Backbone Trail (BAC47, area B) facing south.
- \*8. View of Backbone Trail (BAC47) facing east.
- \*9. View of the parking area (BAC20, area B) adjacent to the entrance to Backbone Trail facing north.
- \*10. View of the overlook above the central picnic area (BAC9, area B) facing south.
- \*11. View of the trail steps (BAC46, area B) adjacent to the road near the Backbone Trail facing west.
- \*12. View of the pit vault latrine (BAC80, area B) above the Backbone Trail facing northeast.
- \*13. View of a bench (BAC12, area B) along the trail following the Maquoketa River facing north.
- \*14. View of the concession and picnic shelter (BAC81, area B) in the central picnic area facing northeast.
- \*15. View of the latrine at the central picnic area (BAC82, area B) facing northeast.
- \*16. View of the picnic shelter in the central picnic area (BAC83, area B) facing northeast.
- \*17. View of the drinking fountain in the central picnic area (BAC50, area B) facing east.

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- \*18. View of the picnic shelter (BAC85, area B) in the camp ground facing east.
- \*19. View of the stone bridge (BAC25, Area B) facing north.
- \*20. View of Watercrest Spring (BAC56, area B) facing north.
- 21. View of pools and setting at Richmond Springs (BAC35, area C) facing southwest.
- 22. View of the east facade of the bathhouse (BAC58, area A) facing southwest.
- 23. View of the west facade of the bathhouse (BAC58, area A) facing northeast.
- 24. View of the west facade of the boathouse (BAC59, area A) facing southeast.
- 25. View of the west and south facades of the pit vault latrine (BAC79, area A) facing northeast.
- 26. View of the sun dial and bench (BAC1) along the lake with the dam (BAC4) along the opposite or west bank facing west.
- 27. View of the spillway and dam (BAC4) facing west.

\* Only these photographs have been submitted for this nomination.