

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

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

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



1. Name

historic Stillwater Ranger Station Historic District
and/or common Stillwater Ranger Station

2. Location

street & number U.S. Highway 93 not for publication
city, town Olney vicinity of congressional district 1
state Montana code 30 county Flathead code 029

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
and Montana Department of Highways
street & number 19 North Ewing 2701 Prospect Avenue
city, town Helena vicinity of state Montana

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Flathead County Courthouse
street & number _____
city, town Kalispell state Montana

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title _____ has this property been determined eligible? yes no
date _____ federal state county local
depository for survey records _____
city, town _____ state _____

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Stillwater Ranger Station Historic District lies outside the small village of Olney, in northwestern Montana. The station is surrounded by forest, and much of the station's grounds are tree covered. The Whitefish Range dominates the view to the north, up the corridor formed by U.S. Highway 93, which bisects the station. Most buildings at the station are log, with white trim, and date from the station's developing years. They appear virtually as they did in those years. All of the buildings were constructed by personnel at the Ranger Station, and nearly all of their materials were gathered locally.

The following buildings contribute to the historic character of the station:

1. Main Office and Sleeping Quarters: 1922 (one of the first two buildings built in the state's forests by the Office of the State Forester). Originally used for storage and telephone communications. An addition to the rear of the building (1931) was constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps. 22x50, chinked log 1½ stories on a concrete foundation. Gable roof with wood shingle siding in the gable ends. Open porch with hip roof on front entrance.
2. Main Residence: built 1928 by Pete De Groat, one of the station's first Rangers. 25x41, gable roofed one story, chinked log on a concrete foundation. Open, gable roofed front porch.
3. Fire Cache: 1928, 19x33, 16' high. Stone foundation, gabled roof, with wood shingle siding in gable ends. Two large wooden sliding doors on front facade.
4. Garage and wood shelter: 1931, 14x20, gable roofed, with wood shingles and a vertical log slab exterior. Plus 8x20 open lean-to for wood storage. Built by Pete De Groat.
5. Carpentry Shop: 1934, chinked logs and concrete foundation, 18x26, 16½' high. Gable roof with board and batten siding in gable ends. Cedar shake roof. Built by CCC crews.
6. Bunkhouse: 1938, chinked log on concrete foundation, 27x42 by 20' high, (1½ story). Built by Maurice Cusick.
7. Oil and Grease Storage: 1940, 13x14, 14' high. Chinked log on concrete. Gabled roof with wood shingle siding in gable ends. Built by Maurice Cusick.

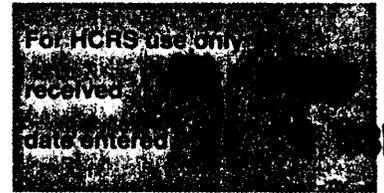
The following buildings are of more recent origin but do not detract from the historic character of the district.

8. Mess Hall: 1955, 24x53 by 15' high. Quonset Style outline, frame over timber rib construction. Two shed roof dormer windows on each side. Built by Maurice Cusick.
9. Bathhouse: 1955, 24x28 by 15½' high. Quonset style outline frame over timber rib construction. Built by Maurice Cusick.

(See continuation sheet.)

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10. Water pump house, 1967, 9x10, 12' high, frame.

11. Warehouse and shop: 1969, 30x56, 24' high, one story building. Built on foundation of and of same dimensions as an earlier shop that was built by CCC in 1933 and destroyed by fire in 1968.

Boundary explanation: the boundary is drawn to include all buildings at the Station, as well as the station's traditional forested setting.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below					
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation		
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)		

Specific dates 1909-Present

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The historic significance of the Stillwater Ranger Station stems from its associations with the establishment and early management of Montana's State Forests.

The Enabling Act of 1889 granted Montana sections 16 and 36 of every township, on condition that the state use the income from them for its public schools. The office of State Forester was created in 1909 to help the State Board of Land Commissioners manage the $\frac{1}{2}$ million acres of those grant lands that were forested. It soon became apparent that the state's forested lands were so widely scattered as to make them difficult and expensive to manage. The Stillwater Ranger Station and the surrounding Stillwater State Forest grew out of Montana's attempt to solve this problem by consolidating its land holdings.

In 1912, the State Forester began negotiating with the U.S. Forest Service to swap 60,000 acres of the state owned sections scattered within National Forests for a solid block of 60,000 acres of Forest Service land in the Whitefish and Stillwater River drainages. President Wilson approved the exchange in 1918, placing what was later designated the Stillwater State Forest in the hands of the State Board of Land Commissioners, and opening the way for efficient management of a significant portion of the state's grant lands.

State Forester Robert McLaughlin, a vigorous advocate of consolidation and more active management of the state's forest lands, had the Stillwater station's first building erected in 1922; the log structure was used during summer to store equipment and house a telephone for the forest work crews that built pack trails, strung phone lines, and guarded the state timber against trespass. In 1925, at McLaughlin's urging, the Montana Legislature passed a bill establishing the state land surrounding the station as a distinct management unit, the Stillwater State Forest. However, the major impetus behind the development of the Ranger Station did not come from the 1925 legislation, but from a 1926 forest fire which burned 40,000 acres of timber on the Stillwater Forest. Soon after the fire, a longstanding recommendation by the State Forester that a year-round ranger be stationed on the Forest was implemented. Also the state decided at that time to assume full responsibility for fire protection on the forest, a role which previously had been contracted out to the U.S. Forest Service. By 1928 a year-round Ranger's residence and a fire equipment warehouse had been built at the station. From 1928 on, the station became the center for the comprehensive timber management and fire protection of the Stillwater Forest.

(See continuation sheet.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Biennial Reports of the State Forester 1910-1950, Montana Historical Society.
Gareth Moon, State Forester; Personal Communications, June, 1980.
Maurice Cusick, State Forestry Department, retired; personal communications, June 1980
Toole, K. Ross and Burlingame, Merrill, A History of Montana. Lewis Historical Publishing Co., Inc.

UTM NOT VERIFIED

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Approx. 6.4 acres

Quadrangle name Olney

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A

1	1	6	7	9	5	5	0	5	3	7	9	2	3	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

(See continuation sheet.)

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

state code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title John Westenberg

organization

date

street & number 19 No. Benton

telephone 443-1274

city or town Helena,

state MT

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Marcella Sheffy

title

Deputy SHPO

date

May 20 1981

for

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During the 30's the importance of the station grew. For several years it doubled as a CCC camp whose crews undertook a number of forestry projects, including the erection of several of the station's buildings.

Partially because of the state's inability to negotiate additional land swaps, the Stillwater Forest was the only large, coherently managed State Forest for over 25 years. The Stillwater Station itself was the only major "on site" Ranger Station in the State Forest System until Montana assumed all management responsibilities for the Swan River State Forest in 1954.

For most of its history, the Stillwater Ranger Station and State Forest were supervised by Maurice Cusick, one of the pioneers of the State Forestry Department. Cusick began working on the Stillwater Forest in 1928, became its supervisor in 1936, and except for two years in private industry in the 50's, served in that capacity until 1967. Cusick personally built several of the buildings that now make up the Ranger Station.

Although many of the buildings in the district were built within the last fifty years, they were important contributions to the development of the Ranger Station, and reflect the same rustic architectural style as the district's older buildings.

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Item number 10-verbal boundary Page 1

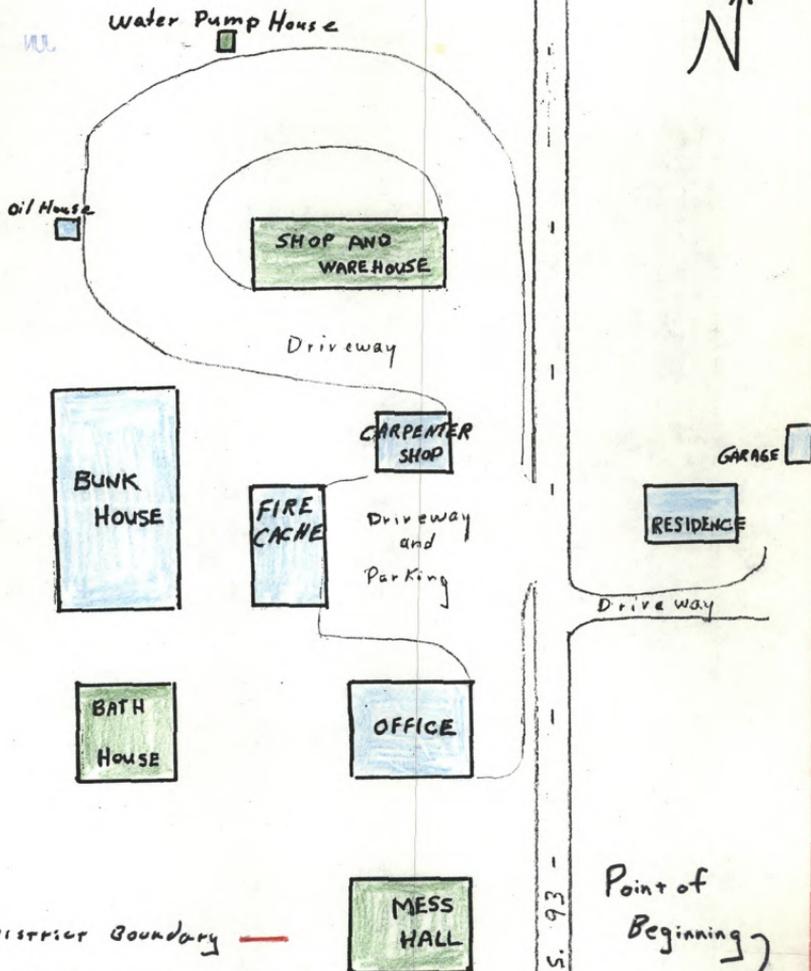
The point of beginning of the Stillwater Ranger Station Historic District boundary is found by following a line due east from the southeast corner of the Mess Hall to the west shoulder of U.S. Highway 93. Then follow the shoulder south for a distance of 50' to the point of beginning.

From the point of beginning, the historic district boundary runs west by southwest, directly perpendicular to the highway, for 300 feet, then north by northwest directly parallel to the highway right of way for 500 feet, then east by northeast, bisecting the highway at a right angle, for 550 feet. The boundary then runs south by southeast, paralleling the highway's east shoulder for 500 feet, then due west 250 feet to the point of beginning.

The nomination is in T32N, R23W, NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 17.

Map of Stillwater Ranger Station (not to scale)

1981 8 JUL



Historic District Boundary —

Buildings Contributing to historic character of the Station ■

Buildings of recent origin, but not detracting from historic character of the Station ■

JUL - 8 1981