



# HALFWAY RANGER STATION HISTORIC DISTRICT



## §106 RESOURCE AND BOUNDARY DELINEATION REPORT



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# Introduction

## Purpose and Overview



This report has been produced in response to requests made by the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) concerning the proposed disposition of the buildings located at the Kawishiwi Field Laboratory, also known as Halfway Administrative Site, and hereafter referred to as the Halfway Ranger Station Historic District (HRSHD). The HRSHD (previously determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places) is located within the boundaries of the Superior National Forest but the buildings located on this property are administered by the USDA Forest Service Northern Research Station (NRS), headquartered in Newtown Square, PA. In December 2006, SHPO requested that the NRS identify the district's contributing and non-contributing buildings and landscape features and accurately delineate and justify the site's historic boundaries (See Appendix B). Acting on these requests, the NRS retained Heritage Stewardship Group (a Forest Service Enterprise Business Unit) to assist with the investigation and analysis of the site's historic resources. Heritage Stewardship Group (HSG) is composed of Forest Service professionals specializing in historic preservation and cultural resource management.

The HRSHD is located in Township 62 North, Range 11 West, Section 33, 4<sup>th</sup> P.M. Babbitt, Minnesota 7.5" USGS Quadrangle Map (See Section Four for specific data). The site is situated adjacent to the South Kawishiwi River, approximately 12 miles south of Ely, Minnesota in Lake County. NRS is responsible for the management of the HRSHD. The HRSHD includes seven buildings and one structure from the Halfway Ranger Station built during the Depression, an additional four buildings historically part of the Lakes States Forest Experimental Station (LSFES), and an assortment of historic landscape features. The site also includes several ruins (concrete foundations) of no longer extant buildings. Collectively, these resources are known as the HRSHD.

The following document identifies the HRSHD's contributing and non-contributing buildings, structures, and landscape features, address the significance and integrity of these resources, and provides a clear historic boundary delineation and justification.

## Methodology

The purpose of this document is to inventory and explain contributing and non-contributing features and delineate the HRSHD's historic boundaries. To adequately address and explain significance and integrity of all resources located at the site, the document also includes a historical narrative. Incorporating a discussion of the HRSHD's history provides a more efficient means to connect the site's resources to historic contexts. HSG completed a site visit in early June 2009 to locate and evaluate contributing and non-contributing resources and historic boundaries. Finally, the NRS made all extant site records available to HSG for research purposes.

## Section One: Historic and Architectural Significance

**Note:** While largely reconfigured and supplemented, the following narrative borrows considerably from the *Halfway Ranger Station Historic District Historic Structure Report*, compiled and written by William Clayton, Lee Johnson, Erin Potter, Walt Okstad, Heritage Resources Program, Superior National Forest, Duluth, MN.

### Statement of Significance

The HRSHD is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) as a historic district. It is nationally significant under Criterion A for its association with a federal agency, the US Forest Service (USFS), and a federal program, the Depression-era Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). For over a century (1905-present) the USFS has been part of a trend of federal involvement in the management and conservation of the nation's public lands. The HRSHD (originally the Halfway Ranger Station) was developed in pursuit of this agency mission as a USFS administrative and logistical center, and later, as a forest research station where federal land management activities and forest science was conducted. The CCC was a New Deal Era (1933-1942) federal program developed to relieve the economic hardships of U.S. citizens during the Great Depression (1929-1939). Most of the HRSHD's buildings, structures, and landscapes were built with CCC labor. Based on its association with the CCC and Forest Service resource management, the HRSHD's period of significance is 1931-1959 (Clayton et al 2006).

The HRSHD is also eligible for the NRHP under Criterion C because seven of its buildings are good examples of the nationally significant Rustic or Adirondack architecture. Rustic designs were used in numerous private and government administrative buildings in the first half of the 20th Century, and principally during the Depression Era. The HRSHD possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. These buildings were constructed according to guidelines established by the renowned Forest Service architect W. Ellis Groben in his design book *Acceptable Plans, Forest Service Administrative Buildings* (1938). The craftsmanship and workmanship evident in these buildings is superior (Clayton et al 2006). Also, a single pre-CCC building located at this site exhibits distinctive Craftsman and National Folk stylistic elements, thus making it eligible under Criterion C.

## Section Two: Historic and Architectural Contexts

**Note:** While largely reconfigured and supplemented, the following narrative borrows considerably from the *Halfway Ranger Station Historic District Historic Structure Report*, compiled and written by William Clayton, Lee Johnson, Erin Potter, Walt Okstad, Heritage Resources Program, Superior National Forest, Duluth, MN.

### Overview

The HRSHD's dynamic history has witnessed almost 100 years of regional development in Northeastern Minnesota. The name Halfway dates to the turn of the century when the St. Croix Logging Company, operating out of Winton, Minnesota, conducted logging activities in the area. From at least 1910 until 1950, when the Superior National Forest moved Halfway Ranger District employees to offices in Ely, Minnesota, the site was the location of the Halfway Ranger Station of the Superior National Forest. The southern portion of the site has been a base for forest research since at least 1931, and possibly as early as 1924, when the LSFES started operating in the area. The site received considerable upgrades (buildings and other infrastructure) during President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal, when seven of the extant buildings and one structure were constructed by local CCC companies. Appendix A contains site plans showing the chronological development of the HRSHD. Since 1968, the HRSHD has been utilized by federal biologists conducting long-term, large mammal research, including a wolf study currently conducted by USGS biologists (Clayton et al 2006).

The design and construction of USFS administrative buildings is often a product of agency funding, policy and initiatives and is therefore a historic indicator of agency evolution. The architectural nature of the buildings at the HRSHD reflects USFS design and building construction practices during the 1930s. Seven of the buildings within the HRSHD are good examples of the nationally recognized architectural design type known as the Rustic or Adirondack style. The origins of Rustic architecture can be found in the promotion and utilization of the design in the construction of early 20th century administrative buildings of the National Park Service (NPS) and many state agencies. Rustic design was often used in the 1930s for the construction of CCC-built Forest Service buildings (Clayton et al 2006).

### Historic Context

The following narrative divides the history of the site into three distinct, yet overlapping, historic context statements. The first addresses the development and significance of the site as it relates to a wider Forest Service administrative context. The second explores the significance of the HRSHD's relation to forest research. And the third discusses the site's association with the nationally significant CCC.

#### **Federal Public Lands Management: Superior National Forest**

Federal management of Minnesota's pinelands was initiated on June 2, 1902 with the establishment of a 225,000 acre forest reserve near the headwaters of the Mississippi (White 1967).

Instrumental in the creation of this forest reserve (later consolidated into the Chippewa National Forest) was the successful lobbying of Christopher C. Andrews, Minnesota's first forest commissioner. C.C. Andrews observed scientifically managed forests during his appointment as Minister to Sweden and Norway (1869-77). Upon his return from Sweden, Andrews vigorously organized, lobbied, and lectured on the benefits of scientific forestry and land conservation. After the successful establishment of Minnesota's first forest reserve in 1902, Andrews turned his attention to the pinelands of Cook, St. Louis, and Lake County, which would later become the 2.3 million acre Superior National Forest. Andrews' aspirations regarding scientific management of Minnesota's Arrowhead region are highlighted in a 1902 letter to the General Land Office Commissioner Binger Herman: "I have the honor to recommend that the following townships, all public land situated in Cook and Lake Counties, an area in round numbers of 500,000 acres, be set apart by the president as a forest reserve..." (White 1967; Clayton et al 2006).

On February 1, 1905, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) became the primary manager of some 63 million acres of public forest lands (Bergoffen 1976; Steen 1991; Williams 2000). These initial landholdings were consolidated from Department of Interior Forest Reserves, which were established in 1891 to protect timber and hydrological resources. In 1907, the Department of Agriculture officially changed the name of the Forest Reserves to National Forests. The development of the National Forest system and the adoption and application of managerial directives concerned with the long-term production of sustainable forest products was fostered through the efforts of conservationists Theodore Roosevelt (1858-1919) and Gifford Pinchot (1865-1946). The early 20th century conservation movement was largely a response to the "cut and run" policies of early mining, railroad, and timber companies. The efforts of the nation's most well known conservationist (Roosevelt) and its first scientific forester (Pinchot) were successful, despite significant congressional and private opposition. By 1907, the federal government had consolidated some 150 million acres of forested lands. (Steen 1991; Clayton et al 2006).

The efforts of Minnesota's early conservation movement came to fruition on February 13, 1909, when President Theodore Roosevelt, in Proclamation #848, set aside 1,018,638 acres as the Superior National Forest. Since that time, the total acreage directly administered by the Superior National Forest has increased to 2,174,000 acres as of 2006 (Clayton et al 2006).

On May 1, 1909, Scott Leavitt arrived in Ely, Minnesota and assumed the duties of Acting Forest Supervisor (White 1974c). Mr. Leavitt gave ranger examinations to seven individuals, some of whom would later become the Superior National Forest's first forest rangers. The initial duties of the incipient forest crews included clearing portage trails, constructing fire towers and guard stations, installing telephone lines, suppressing wildfires, cruising and scaling timber harvested from forest lands, and verifying timber, stone, and homestead claims (Clayton et al 2006).

Before the Depression-era building boom which resulted in the widespread development of forest administrative building complexes, Superior National Forest lands were managed by



remote guard stations and a few centrally located ranger stations. Guard stations (built from 1909-1924) were typically composed of local materials and were often located in roadless portions of the forest. Guard stations served as satellites of the ranger stations and, prior to 1930, were based in Ely, Minnesota and near the Temperance River on the North Shore of Lake Superior, respectively. Historically, and still today, ranger stations were located in or near population centers or on roadways accessing portions of their respective ranger districts (Clayton et al 2006).

In 1930, the Superior National Forest was comprised of six ranger districts including, LaCroix, Mesaba, Halfway, Kawishiwi, Temperance, and Grand Marais. Currently the Superior National Forest has five ranger districts. They include (from west to east) LaCroix, Kawishiwi, Laurentian, Tofte, and Gunflint. The location of districts and the size of their respective lands has continuously changed and fluctuated throughout the 85 year history of the Superior National Forest. For example, Halfway Ranger Station was within the Stony Ranger District in the 1920's, the Halfway Ranger District through the 1970's, and the Kawishiwi Ranger District following 1974. The dynamic history of the Superior National Forest's administrative facilities should be viewed within a larger, national context, which recognizes changes in policy, directives, mission, and funding over time (Clayton et al 2006).

Early guard stations were typically one-room buildings approximately 12' x 14' in size and often associated with fire lookouts. In contrast, ranger stations were often larger and featured multiple rooms for office space. On average they were about 18' x 38' in size. In addition, ranger stations often included boathouses, wells, root cellars, barns, and outhouses. Locations for these administrative facilities were selected based on agency resource objectives such as proximity to active timber sales, proximity to major water routes accessing roadless areas, and proximity to tote roads and/or spur lines constructed by logging companies (Clayton et al 2006). USDA Historian, Gerald Williams explains the dynamic history of administrative sites on newly acquired Forest lands:

When the FS took over management of the forest reserves in 1905, the new agency built more of these cabins, especially on NFS lands near potential water power sites. Sometimes these early ranger stations were abandoned homestead cabins. They were termed ranger stations but within a few years they were mostly renamed as guard stations. They were set inside the NF boundary or right on the edge, as well as scattered throughout the forest, often a one day horse ride away from each other where a ranger and his horse could overnight. When roads replaced trails, there was little need for many ranger and guard stations. Later, one central ranger station covered the management of the district that was often 100,000 acres or larger (Williams 2006).

Generally, it appears that guard stations were evenly dispersed across the Superior National Forest by either a single-day paddle or hike (approximately 12-20 miles). The available data indicates that approximately 26 guard stations and five ranger stations were constructed on the Superior National Forest between 1909-1927 (Superior National Forest 1927). Work orders from 1924 indicate that the Halfway Ranger Station was in-use prior to 1921 on the eastern shore of the Kawishiwi River, approximately 12 miles south of Ely, Minnesota. At that time, Halfway was one of two ranger stations situated in the now consolidated Stony Ranger District (the other being

Baird Ranger Station). It is possible that the original Halfway Ranger Station utilized buildings that had previously been built by the St. Croix Lumber Company. In an interview with Superior National Forest Information Specialist Ray Naddy, dated July 27, 1970, the third Supervisor of the Superior National Forest, Joe Fitzwater, mentions that the “Halfway house” was utilized by Forest Service employees during the summer of 1910 (White 1974a: 3). Work records indicate that the original Halfway Ranger Station included a 24' x 38' 1 ½ story house, an 18' x 38' four room combination building, a cesspool, a toilet, and a 12' x 24' x 7' boathouse (Superior National Forest 1927). All of the buildings at the original Halfway Ranger Station were constructed of upright logs with rubberized roofs (Clayton et al 2006). Helen D. Barnes, daughter of Halfway Ranger Tom A. Denley (1917-1927; 1930-1943), recalls life in the original Halfway Ranger Station:

At the Halfway Ranger Station, he made it a point to get up and prepare breakfast for the several guards that worked for him during the summer months.....And somehow it seemed just right in that little old dark kitchen with walls of upright logs chinked with plaster, the wash basin in a corner by a bucket of water; worn oil cloth on the table, and the kerosene lamp chimney smoked and cracked, and the grey enameled dishes ready on the shelf of the warming shelves of the stove for the food he was preparing...Food for the working young men who waited outside to be called in to eat (Barnes 1970).

Guards working out of the Halfway Ranger Station were probably responsible for telephone line and trails maintenance, as well as fire patrol and suppression between Halfway and Clearwater Guard Station, situated in a roadless area approximately 10 miles to the northeast. Furthermore, forest guards operating out of the Halfway Ranger Station were likely involved in the administration and scaling of the Forest's first timber sale—the “Birch Lake Sale.” The sale was awarded to St. Croix logging company on February 15, 1910 and included approximately 735 acres of pine, spruce, and tamarack, much of which was partially damaged by fire in 1908 and 1909. (Forester 2004: 53; Clayton et al 2006).

The area surrounding Halfway Ranger Station, like most of Northeastern Minnesota at the time, was rugged with few roads. The Halfway Ranger Station was unique in that it offered early forest rangers two transportation options: The Kawishiwi River provided water access to the interior reaches of the forest to the north, while the Stony Tote road linked the ranger station with Ely and the Stony River drainage to the east (Clayton et al 2006).

The Stony Tote road was constructed under contract for the St. Croix Lumber Company ca. 1900-1901. Bedrock outcrops, lakes, and swamps forced the road builders along a circuitous route at a total cost of \$6,000 per mile (Forester 2004: 50). Winding south of Ely, across the Stony and Kawishiwi Rivers, the Stony Tote road connected a series of St. Croix lumber camps before ending approximately 26 miles south of Ely at Source Lake. In the winters of 1901-1914, both draft horses and wood fed steam haulers plied the road with supplies for the winter camps (Clayton et al 2006). In a letter to historian J.W. White, dated April 9, 1971, retired Superior National Forest Ranger M.J. Valentine (1918-1953) describes how the Halfway claimed its name:

Mike Kelly drove the four horse tote team that hauled the supplies and equipment to various St. Croix lumber camps scattered throughout that area. In those days it was practically a full day's trip from Ely to the Halfway camp located along the tote road on the opposite side of the river. The following day he would travel on to camp 27 near the Stony River and approximately 27 miles from Ely.

Until the 1920's, the Stony Tote road was one of the only operable roads in the Ely area. Improvement and paving of newly renamed Highway 1 was completed by St. Louis County in 1921, and the road was extended to Two Harbors the following year (Searle 1977: 20). The evolution of the Stony Tote road from a primitive log-hauling road to an all weather highway facilitated growth in local tourism and improved access to national forest lands for resource management and fire suppression. And as road networks expanded and fire detection techniques improved, guard stations were replaced by centralized ranger stations responsible for the management of blocks of forest lands in excess of 100,000 or more acres. During the 1930s, Halfway Ranger Station, like many similar Forest Service facilities throughout the U.S., was significantly altered following the implementation of major public works programs like the CCC (Clayton et al 2006).

#### **Forest Research: Lake States Experimental Station**

From its inception, the Forest Service was committed to research and development in its effort to adhere to the conservation ethic. As Chief of the newly founded agency, Gifford Pinchot sought to institutionalize a research branch aimed at addressing research questions related to scientific forestry. Pinchot, like many of his contemporaries in the early Forest Service administration, applied long utilized European forestry techniques, like sustained yield, toward the management of national forest lands. The sustained yield method applied a holistic approach to forestry and sought to counter previous wasteful practices. It utilized scientific data to ensure a continuous supply of wood products while simultaneously conserving soil and water resources (Clayton et al 2006).

Before 1915, forest research was primarily conducted at the district level, with researchers subordinate to local administrators. This arrangement generated tension between administrators and researchers, and was considered by many to be "stifling" because it lacked the independent oversight necessary to conduct objective field studies. Earle Clapp, a forester who became the chief of Forest Service research in 1915, stated that "direct district participation had stifled research, for it was impossible to develop real research if the investigator had to cater to local whims." In June 1915, chief of the USDA Forest Service, Henry S. Graves (1910-1920), established the Branch of Research as an independent entity within the newly founded administration. Forest researchers were then able to carryout their unique mission and investigate fundamental questions completely "independent from the daily pressures of administering the national forests" (Steen 1991: 138; Clayton et al 2006).

By the mid-1920's, the Forest Service Branch of Research had established twelve regional centers, numerous experimental forests, the Forest Products Laboratory in Madison, Wisconsin, and a network of experimental stations/laboratories on National Forest lands throughout the U.S.

Raphael Zon, a European immigrant and Cornell graduate who had worked with Pinchot at the Bureau of American Forestry in 1901, was appointed as director of the Lake States Forest Experimental Station (LSFES) in St. Paul, Minnesota in 1923. The LSFES, renamed North Central Research Station in 1965 and later renamed the Northern Research Station, continues to be responsible for research and interagency cooperation regarding forest research in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan (Steen 1991: 141; Clayton et al 2006).

One of the LSFES's first tasks was to provide baseline data regarding the age, types, and structure of forests stands on the National Forests in the Upper Midwest and to develop research questions specific to the region. Research questions were tiered to diverse forest types, which covered the region, but included forest regeneration, nursery studies, fire research, drought resistance, insect damage, forest inventory, forest economics, and wildlife studies. Portions of the region were divided into work centers or branches, such as the Superior Branch (Halfway Ranger District near Ely, MN.), the Chippewa Branch (Cass Lake, MN.), and the Upper Peninsula Branch (Dukes, MI.). These regional branches, or work centers, were often located on existing Forest Service administrative sites (Clayton et al 2006).

The headquarters for the Superior Branch of the LSFES was established on the Halfway Ranger District administrative site in 1931 by F.H. "Windy" Eyre. In addition to persuading the Superior National Forest to allocate a portion of the Halfway Ranger District to LSFES, Eyre established the 2,635 acre Kawishiwi Experimental Forest. A combination dwelling-office structure was constructed at the LSFES portion of the Halfway administrative facility in 1931 for a total cost of \$2,626. This combination office dwelling included a bathroom which was, at that time, the only bathroom available on any of the existing Ranger Stations on the Superior National Forest. In 1942, Eyre sponsored the designation of the 640-acre Keeley Creek Scientific and Natural Area (later termed Research and Natural Area or RNA) near the Halfway administrative site. The Keeley Creek RNA, the second oldest in the North Central Region, continues to protect a unique jackpine, black spruce and sedge meadow ecosystem while also providing scientists with a baseline or reference area by which to monitor long-term ecosystem change (Rudolf 1985: 19; Clayton et al 2006).

The LSFES received a considerable boost in manpower between the years of 1933-1941, when CCC camps were established in the area. The additional labor intensified pre-existing LSFES experimental projects which included forest survey, timber stand improvement, and replanting. Between 1931 and 1937, CCC labor and Works Progress Administration funds were used to complete the first large-scale forest inventory of the Lake States region. The LSFES, Superior National Forest, and local CCC companies were successful in pooling resources, technical expertise, and the experimental data necessary to establish thousands of acres of pine plantation near the Halfway Ranger Station (Clayton et al 2006). A newsletter from CCC Company 704 (Halfway Camp), describes both the working relationship between the LSFES and CCC Company. 704, as well as the relationship of LSFES to the Superior National Forest (Birch Lake Newsletter 1936: 12):

The Lake States Forest Experimental Station, situated near the Halfway Ranger Station, is the other department with which we are concerned. The relation existing between this division and the Halfway camp are as follows: Fifty men from [the] camp are turned over to the LSFES each day, under the direction of R.K. Lebarron, assisted by foreman Kruse and Isaacson. The work is mainly the furthering of experimental projects relating to forestry. The LSFES, while being classed as in the Forest Service, differs from it in that their work is concerned with the experimental phases of Forestry rather than the management of extensive stands of timber. In other words the results of their experiments are often used profitably by the Forest Supervisor in planning future work.

The Superior National Forest appears to have moved Halfway Ranger District employees to the Kawishiwi Ranger Station in the early 1950's, thus making the LSFES the site's sole occupant. The Superior National Forest continued to assign personnel and District Rangers to the Halfway Ranger District until 1974, although these personnel were based out of the Kawishiwi Ranger Station office in Ely, MN (Russell ca. 1980s: 12; Clayton et al 2006).

On July 1, 1974, the Superior National Forest officially consolidated the Halfway Ranger District with the Kawishiwi Ranger District. Although the Superior National Forest retained control of the land, responsibility for management of all the buildings at the Halfway Administrative Site was assumed by North Central Research Station (formerly the LSFES and the North Central Forest Experiment Station and now the NRS) (Clayton et al 2006).

#### **Depression-era Relief: The CCC on the Halfway Ranger District**

Despite the nation-wide economic depression, the 1930s ushered in a period of increased activity on the Superior National Forest. This growth, typified by large-scale conservation projects and the construction of new administrative facilities, was largely the result of the successful implementation of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Emergency Conservation Work program, otherwise known as the CCC. On March 31st, 1933, congress signed a bill giving President Roosevelt authority to begin federal programs for relief of unemployment. At the time the bill was signed, Minnesota had a 29% unemployment rate with that figure reaching nearly 70% on the Iron Range (Drake 1987: 9). Seven buildings and one structure at the Halfway Ranger District originated during this prodigious period of conservation-orientated development (Clayton et al 2006; Otis et al 1986).

CCC operations and activities were coordinated through the combined efforts of the War Department, which was responsible for "physical conditioning, transportation, camp construction and administration, and supplies," the Department of Agriculture and the Department of the Interior, which were "responsible for planning and conducting work projects on national forests" as well as on other public lands, and the Department of Labor, which selected the workers. Men from local communities, known as Local Experienced Men, or LEMs, were hired to direct building projects and to provide on-the-job training to enrollees. Generally, a CCC camp housed about 200 enrollees, up to 25 army personnel, around 30 staff from the Forest Service, and 10-20 LEMs (Drake 1987: 12; Otis et al 1986; Clayton et al 2006).

Eligibility for the CCC required citizenship and sound physical fitness; and membership was only granted to unemployed and unmarried men, 18 to 25 years of age, without criminal records. Enrollees enlisted for one six month term. However, with satisfactory work performance these terms could be extended for a total of two years. Each worker was provided food, clothing, shelter, and a wage of \$30 per month, \$25 of which the enrollee was required to send home to a dependent (Kielely 1938; Otis et al 1986; Cornebise 2004; Soil Conservation Service and the U.S. Forest Service 1941).

By July 1933, enrollment had reached over 300,000, and more than 1,500 camps had been established across the country. This was the “largest peacetime mobilization...the United States had ever seen.” The CCC was divided across the country into nine distinct units known as Corps Areas. The Corps Areas were then broken down into smaller districts, sub-districts and, finally, companies, each of which was housed at individual camps. However, CCC camps, with few exceptions, were not stable fixtures in any locale. The Corps was funded by Congress in six month increments known as Enrollment Periods, therefore, “the number of CCC camps and conservation projects fluctuated biannually.” While, new camps were constantly being constructed, others were often abandoned or relocated, and there was never a fixed amount of camps. Each camp was delineated by a letter indicating the manager of the land on which it operated (all camps on national forest land were designated with the letter “F”) and a number (for example, the camp that likely constructed Halfway Ranger Station was known as F-1). The various individual companies located at these camps were also given numbers (for example, F-1 housed Company 704) (Otis et al 1986; Clayton et al 2006).

In northern Minnesota, CCC development projects (conducted between 1933 and 1942) included soil conservation, riparian rehabilitation, fish stocking, fire suppression, tree replanting, road improvement, and the construction of recreation and administrative facilities. From 1933 to 1942, a total of 28 CCC camps were established on the Superior National Forest (Drake 1987: 17). Associated with these permanent camps were numerous spike camps, which were used for the duration of individual conservation projects and subsequently abandoned. The Superior National Forest Heritage Resource Office has identified nearly 130 CCC sites within the Superior National Forest (Cultural Resource Inventory forms on file at the Superior National Forest Supervisor’s Office, Duluth, MN; Clayton et al 2006).

Historical documentation suggests that CCC Company 704 (based at Halfway Camp, 10 miles south of Ely, Minnesota) was involved in the construction of the Halfway Ranger Station, the South Kawishiwi River Campground, and the Kawishiwi Pavilion. Halfway Camp F-1 was established on May 18, 1933 approximately 3 miles west of the Halfway Ranger District. An excerpt from CCC Company 704’s “Birch Lake Newsletter” states that “During the past year this camp completed the following...2 office buildings at Ranger Stations...and 4,337 Mandays maintenance at the Halfway Ranger Station and Lake States Experimental Station” (Birch Lake Newsletter 1935: 6). In addition to Company 704, there were a number of other CCC companies based in the area which could have contributed to the construction of the Halfway Ranger

Station. These companies may have included Company 1720 (Dunnigan Camp), 701 (Gegoka Camp), (F54) Baptism Camp and 1721 (Isabella Camp) (Clayton et al 2006).

The available literature does not list the actual construction dates for the log buildings at the Halfway Ranger Station. However, congressional support (in the form of budgeted dollars) peaked between 1934-1936, and subsequently decreased in 1937 (Drake 1987:13). An article from the Ely Miner (1934) indicates that money for ranger station construction was being allocated by the spring of 1934:

Forest fire protection and administrative improvements estimated to cost about \$220,000 are being approved for the National Forests of Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin and will be constructed by emergency conservation workers from the CCC and NIRA camps during the coming year, according to Regional Forester E.W. Tinker. The improvements include fire lookout towers, various buildings such as ranger stations; warehouses for tools, machinery and other equipment; lookout cabins; garages; wells, and telephone lines. The buildings are plain, neat and simply constructed. They are generally located in isolated parts of the forests and can be built by the CCC boys, but local skilled labor is employed, when the job requires it.

Photographic evidence also supports a ca. summer 1934 construction date for at least some of the log buildings at Halfway Ranger Station. A photograph of the Halfway warehouse (ranger dwelling in the background) is stamped with a date of September 9, 1934. It is likely that the pump house, office building, boathouse, oil house, and outhouse, all of which are similar in design, workmanship, and materials, were constructed shortly thereafter (Clayton et al 2006).

## Architectural Context

This section consists of an overview of the architectural significance embodied in the buildings within the HRSHD. It explores the history of USFS administrative building design which had considerable influence on the design of the buildings at the HRSHD. The section also addresses the development and significance of rustic or Adirondack architecture (Clayton et al 2006).

The evolution of the USFS as a federal land management agency is reflected in the increasing complexity of form, shape, and design embodied in its administrative buildings. Yet, this complexity cannot be divorced from other contributing factors such as the evolution of building design, material technologies, and raw material availability (Clayton et al 2006).

During the early years of the USFS (1909-1920s), employees constructed buildings that exhibited minimalism and simplicity in design, materials, and construction methods. This was a period in Forest Service history characterized by limited funding for field operations. Prior to the construction of “simple” buildings, employees had to, “carry out their duties in rented rooms in towns, in abandoned homesteads, and in tents in the field” (Grosvenor 1999: 3). And while the Forest Service eventually constructed administrative buildings (guard stations and ranger stations), constraints in funding and support, and a lack of professional design standards led to

many “small, poorly designed...and inadequate [buildings] for conducting day-to-day business” (Grosvenor 1999: 3). Early Forest Service administrative buildings were also, “largely reflective of the ranger’s personal preferences, as well as the materials, tools, and time available to them” (Grosvenor 1999: 3; Clayton et al 2006).

Significant changes in USFS land management goals during the 1920s and 1930s, led to increased support for reliable infrastructure (access roads, buildings, and structures) throughout the forests. During this period, the LSFES Dwelling was constructed. Supported with funds provided by the Hoover administration’s Public Works Program (Rudolf 1985: 19), the LSFES Office/Dwelling was built in 1931 as a combination office/laboratory/living quarters. It was probably built to a standardized plan (Grosvenor 1999: 13-17). This balloon or platform-framed building is an example of a vernacular type known as the National Style. The single-story layout of the building, as well as the front entrance porch and finished attic space, is indicative of the “gablefront” subgroup or family of the ubiquitous National Folk Style (McAlester and McAlester 2003: 90). Later versions of gable-front buildings of the National design were built with Craftsman detailing and spatial massing. The Craftsman Style was one of the leading residential design modes from the 1900s to the 1920s (McAlester and McAlester 2003: 90, 453-454). The dwelling features some Craftsman elements, including a low-pitched gable roof and wide, unenclosed eave-overhangs (Clayton et al 2006).

Forest Service architecture continued to evolve through various initiatives following the Hoover Administration. New Deal directives, largely made in response to the economic depression, created positions for professional architects within the agency and organized a large labor force (CCC) with the capacity to undertake large construction projects. Both of these directives played an active role in the design and construction of the rustic buildings at the HRSHD. When considering Forest Service administrative buildings of the era, it is important to understand that their design was part of an agency-wide plan to standardize the architecture of administrative buildings, yet, allow for a certain amount of regional flexibility in their final construction (Merrill 1981; Steen 1991; and Williams 2000; Grosvenor 1999; Clayton et al 2006).

The most prominent individual associated with administrative building development during the era was Forest Service architect W. Ellis Groben. Hired specifically to help the Forest Service craft its own unique style of architecture, Groben developed a set of standard plans for the design and construction of administrative buildings. In the early 1930s, T.W. Norcross, Chief Engineer of the Forest Service, hired Groben as consulting landscape architect for the Washington DC headquarters. Groben argued that earlier forest facilities exhibited deficiencies, stating that Forest Service design did not “possess Forest Service identity or adequately express its purposes.” His theories concerning architectural designs and form for administrative sites were published in technical information and design guidelines to assist regional architects and New Deal construction workers. Even though he developed general guidelines for designers, Groben also encouraged the different regions to develop building plans that reflected their separate identities. These guidelines were supplemented in 1936 and in 1937 when the Forest Service published the *Improvement Handbook* that specified building construction techniques and appropriate materials.



Groben's guidelines articulated that buildings in a group should be of similar character and appearance, that local materials should be used whenever possible, and every effort should be taken to avoid combinations of materials (e.g. a stone building with brick and wood porch posts) (Atwood et al 2005).

Groben's guidelines were further refined and published in a book entitled *Acceptable Plans, Forest Service Administrative Buildings*. This book addressed how to effectively plan and design "acceptable" administrative complexes from site selection to color choices and individual building designs. "Architectural and landscape designs were integral parts of planning for optimum serviceability and utility, as was provisions for logical future expansion." Administrative, service, and residential buildings or building groups were organized separately to achieve maximum efficiency of operation and minimum interruption of activity. While the function of each respective building was clearly articulated, a uniformity of style was achieved through similarity of character and appearance (exhibited at HRSHD). "Continuity of forms and materials produced a textural harmony which contributed to the overall ensemble character of the site." Groben's site planning philosophy was supplemented by the work of A.D. Taylor. A prominent landscape architect, Taylor was hired by the Forest Service and authored the 1936 publication *Problem of Landscape Architecture in the National Forests*. Taylor furthered the discussion of how to locate buildings within a complex, and landscape effectively (Atwood et al 2005).

One of Groben's stylistic recommendations for the Eastern Region of the USFS was the use of log construction. The architectural details of Groben's log designs are quite similar to the rustic or Adirondack style, previously developed and extensively utilized by the National Park Service during the early 20th Century. One prominent example of this style is the Park Service's Old Faithful Inn, built in 1912 at Yellowstone National Park. In fact, prior to the construction of log administrative buildings on the Superior National Forest, the state of Minnesota had already fashioned their administrative buildings according to tenets of Rustic design. One example of this is the famous Douglas Lodge built in Itasca State Park in 1905. Notable elements of the rustic style include the use of round, saddle-notched logs accentuated with chisel-shaped log-ends that often ran "proud" of wall planes at corner-junctions (Grosvenor 1999: 32; Bomberger 1991; Dunn 1997; National Park Service 1989a; National Park Service 1989b; Clayton et al 2006).

At the HRSHD, the Ranger Dwelling, although featuring unique architectural deviations (the addition of a full-length porch instead of a stepped-in, partial-length porch), was constructed from Groben's Plan #48 for Ranger Dwellings (Groben 1938). Its elevations, shape, details (exposed rafter tails, low profile shed roof dormer, interior finishes, and interior massing of room units) suggest a direct influence from the Craftsman school. However, the overall composition of the walls and corner details are clearly reflective of the rustic style and the rustic philosophy. The other six log buildings at the HRSHD are more purely rustic and largely devoid of Craftsman influence (Dunn 1997; Clayton et al 2006).

The construction of rustic buildings on a nation-wide scale reflected changes in Forest Service administration strategies and priorities. However, these new administrative goals could not have been met without a ready supply of CCC labor. Without the CCC, the Superior National Forest would not have had the resources to construct the Halfway administrative facility. In addition, the CCC gave the Forest Service the opportunity to employ large crews composed of both trainees (CCC enrollees) and professional craftspeople (LEM). As a result, facilities at administrative sites like the HRSHD were built with a high level of workmanship (Clayton et al 2006).

The HRSHD features representations of three distinct yet interconnected styles of architecture that predominated throughout the Forest Service during the first half of the Twentieth Century. The LSFES Dwelling/Office and the log buildings of the Halfway Ranger Station are manifestations of policies implemented during two Presidential administrations: Hoover and Roosevelt. In addition, the HRSHD buildings are good examples of three significant design styles: National Folk, Rustic or Adirondack, and Craftsman.

## Section Three: Contributing and Non-Contributing Resources

### Introduction

The purpose of this section is to discuss resources that are both contributing and non-contributing to the National Register eligibility of the HRSHD. What follows is a series of brief descriptions of the form, structure, and character-defining features of each resource as well as an evaluation of each resource's status within the district. Each brief narrative will describe the qualities and conditions of the buildings, structures, and landscape features, in order to illustrate the architectural uniqueness, significance, and the overall integrity of the district.

The HRSHD features twelve standing buildings and structures and three historic ruins (concrete foundations). These consist of one pre Depression-era building (the LSFES Dwelling and Office), seven Depression-era buildings (Ranger Dwelling, Pump House, Oil House, Outhouse/Sauna, District Office, Warehouse/Garage, and Boat House), one Depression-era structure (a CCC-built Cellar), three historic ruins (former building foundations of unknown vintage), two post-WWII buildings (Laboratory and Insectary), and one outhouse of unknown vintage. Furthermore, various historic landscape features such as roads, lawns, walkways, paths, retaining walls, and plantings are located throughout the site. The CCC-built resources were constructed in 1934 or 1935. The LSFES combination dwelling office was built in 1931. The two post-WWII buildings were constructed in 1957 (Clayton et al 2006).

The section is divided into three primary subsections: landscape features, buildings and structures, and historic ruins. Within each subsection is a discussion of associated resources determined to be contributing elements of the historic district followed by a discussion of those that have been determined non-contributing to the eligibility of the district. Overall, the HRSHD features eight contributing and three non-contributing buildings, one contributing structure (a cellar), and three non-contributing historic ruins (concrete foundations). The HRSHD also features several contributing landscape resources which will be discussed in detail below.

### Landscape Features

#### Overview

The HRSHD landscape evolved and changed considerably during its period of significance 1931-1959. However, the most significant additions came during the Depression when the Forest Service installed the current road system and introduced various landscape architectural features such as concrete walkways, lawns, and retaining walls. Since this time, the landscape has undergone few significant alterations. The majority of the HRSHD landscape was constructed between 1934-1939 by CCC enrollees and Forest Service personnel. The Facility occupies a twelve acre parcel of land located directly south of the South Kawishiwi River.

Comprehensive site planning was used in the development of the compound (See Appendix A). Landscaping and room for future in-character additions were part of the facility's original

design. All buildings were organized separately for maximum efficiency and minimum disturbance of the different activities (Forest Service Region 6, 1989).

Historic contributing features include: circular drives, concrete pedestrian walkways and steps, native and domestic mature evergreen and deciduous trees, native grasses and forbs, retaining walls, and maintained domestic lawns. In lieu of providing verbal descriptions of these features, labeled site plans and photographic illustrations have been utilized to highlight contributing and non-contributing features of the historic landscape.

## Roads

The HRSHD road system closely resembles the 1930s road system with few alterations. The site is still accessible at two points along State Highway 1, although the southern-most access road is now the site's primary entrance (See Figures 1 and 2 below for a description of specific road characteristics and alterations). Overall, the road system has retained a preponderance of integrity and is considered a contributing element of the historic district.

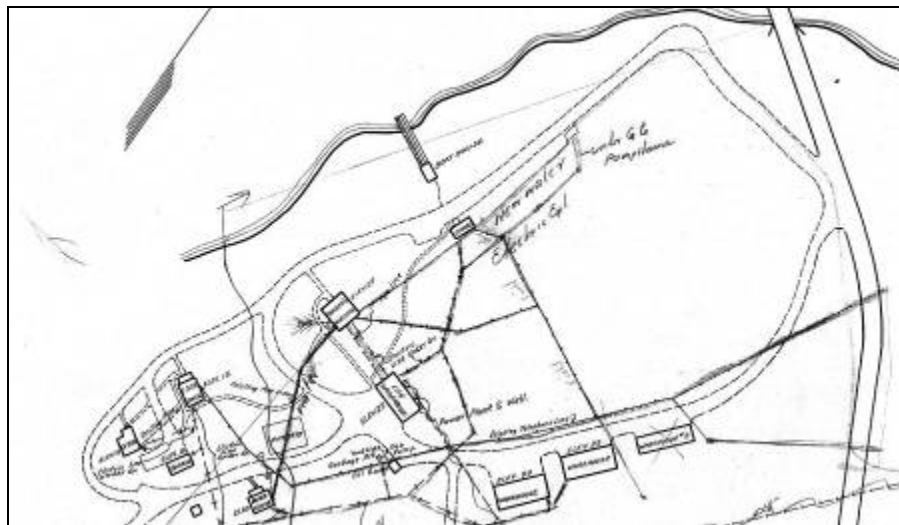


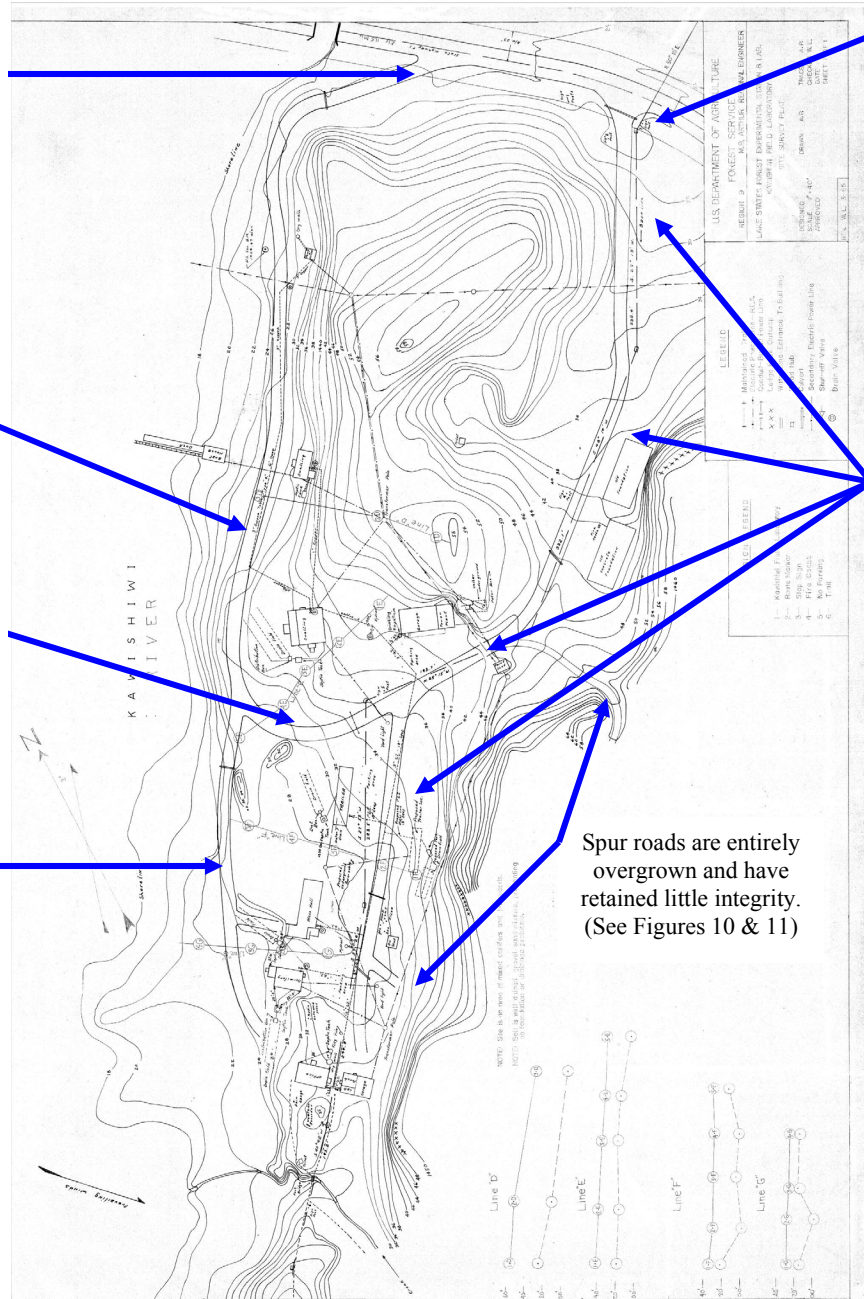
Figure 1. Halfway Ranger Station Road System (1937)

This northernmost entrance remains and has retained a preponderance of integrity. (See Figure 3)

Historic road segment still exists but is seldom used and somewhat overgrown but it retains a preponderance of integrity. (See Figure 6)

Historic road segment still exists but is seldom used and somewhat overgrown but it retains a preponderance of integrity. (See Figure 7)

Historic road segment is considerably overgrown but retains a preponderance of integrity. (See Figure 8)



The historic road system still intersects the Highway at both points, although this entrance has been significantly altered as a result of recent highway construction which widened the roadway. (See Figure 9)

This segment is the primary roadway and it retains a preponderance of integrity. (See Figures 4 & 5)

Spur roads are entirely overgrown and have retained little integrity. (See Figures 10 & 11)

Figure 2. HRSHD Site Plan (1965). Roads have undergone few alterations since this time.

**Contributing Road Segments**

The following road segments are contributing features of the HRSHD for their association with the CCC and because they are character defining elements of a Depression-era Ranger Station compound designed by FS landscape professionals. The historic roads were intentionally crafted to harmonize with the surrounding landscape and the present-day features have retained a preponderance of integrity and continue to represent their historic period. Figures referenced in the above site plan correspond to the photographs below. Each photograph serves as a representative sample of its corresponding road segment.



**Figure 3.** Northernmost highway access point is seldom used but has retained a preponderance of integrity and is considered a contributing feature of the historic district. (J. Ferguson: June 2, 2009)



**Figure 4.** Primary access road has retained a preponderance of integrity and is considered a contributing feature of the historic district. (J. Ferguson: June 2, 2009)



**Figure 5.** Primary road accessing the LSFES portion of the District has retained a preponderance of integrity and is considered a contributing feature of the historic district.  
(J. Ferguson: June 2, 2009)



**Figure 6.** Road adjacent to the South Kawishiwi River is seldom used but has retained a preponderance of integrity and is considered a contributing feature of the historic district. (J. Ferguson: June 2, 2009)





**Figure 7.** Road crossing between the access roads has retained preponderance of integrity and is considered a contributing feature of the historic district. (J. Ferguson: June 2, 2009)



**Figure 8.** Southernmost portion of road adjacent to the river is considerably overgrown but has retained integrity and is considered a contributing feature of the historic district. (J. Ferguson: June 2, 2009)

### **Non-Contributing Road Segments**

Like the above contributing segments, the following road segments are significant for their associative characteristics, however, due to considerable alterations, deferred maintenance, and redundancy, these segments no longer retain historic integrity and are therefore considered non-contributing features of the HRSHD. The road segments referenced in Figure 2 correspond to the photographs below. Each photograph serves as a representative sample of its corresponding road segment.



**Figure 9.** Southernmost entrance from HWY 1 has been altered due to road construction and is considered a non-contributing feature of the historic district. (J. Ferguson: June 2, 2009)



**Figure 10.** Northernmost spur road lacks historic integrity and is considered a non-contributing feature of the historic district. (J. Ferguson: June 2, 2009)



**Figure 11.** Southernmost spur road lacks historic integrity and is considered a non-contributing feature of the historic district. (J. Ferguson: June 2, 2009)

### **Other Landscape Features**

The following landscape features are contributing elements of the HRSHD for their association with the CCC and because they are character defining features of a Depression-era Ranger Station compound designed by FS landscape professionals. The landscape was intentionally crafted to harmonize with the surrounding environment and the present-day features have retained a preponderance of integrity and continue to represent their historic period. Below is a historic site plan (Figure 12) addressing landscaping design and planting. It shows the original location of domestic lawns, concrete walkways, and retaining walls. The majority of plantings have naturally altered over time but the overall feeling of a professionally designed landscape remains in place.

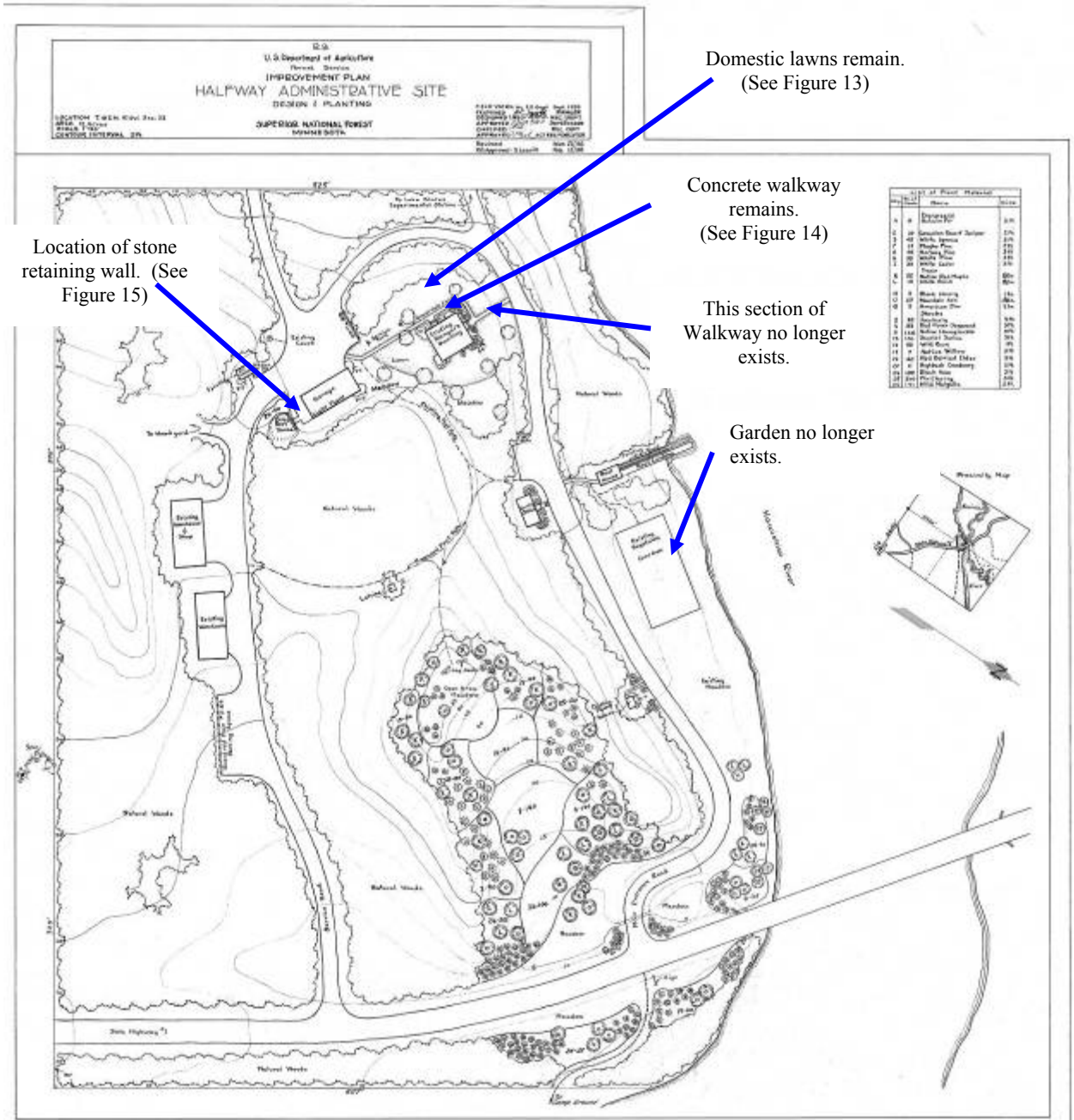


Figure 12. HRSHD Landscape Plan (1939)

## Contributing Landscape Features



**Figure 13.** Domestic lawns surround the Ranger Dwelling (FS Bldg. #31101) and the LSFES Office and Dwelling (FS Bldg. #31108). Lawns are considered contributing features of the historic district. (J. Ferguson: June 2, 2009)



**Figure 14.** Concrete walkway connecting the main drive to the Ranger Dwelling is a contributing feature. (J. Ferguson: June 2, 2009)



**Figure 15.** Stone retaining wall located between the Warehouse/Garage (FS Bldg. #31106) and the Cellar (FS Bldg. #31103) is a contributing feature. (J. Ferguson: June 2, 2009)

# Buildings and Structures

## Overview

Below is a site plan (Figure 16) which shows the location of all contributing and non-contributing HRSHD buildings and structures. Each resource will be discussed individually below.

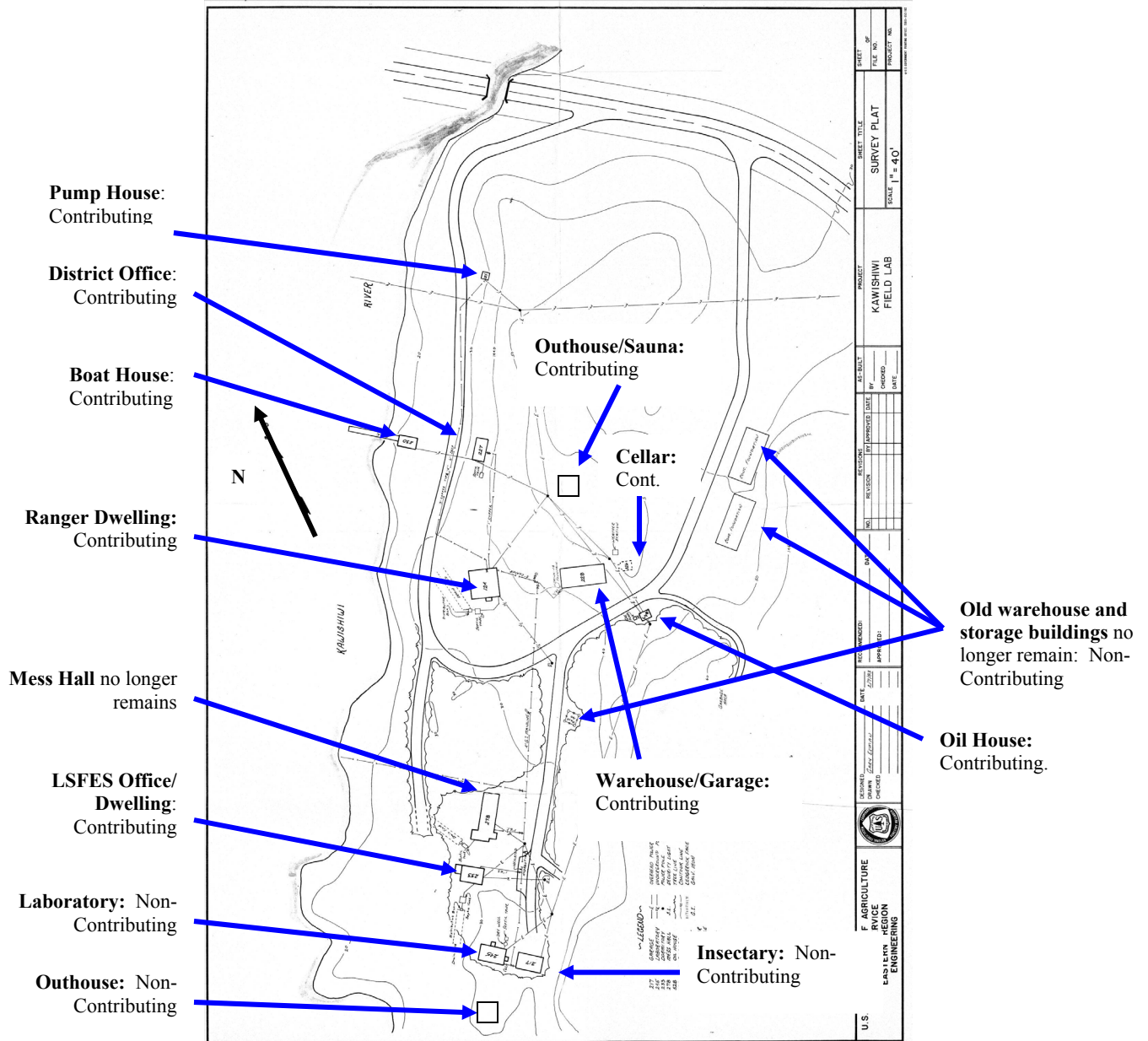


Figure 16. Contributing and Non-Contributing Buildings. (1983)



## Contributing Buildings

**Note:** While largely reconfigured and supplemented, the following narrative borrows considerably from the *Halfway Ranger Station Historic District Historic Structure Report*, compiled and written by William Clayton, Lee Johnson, Erin Potter, Walt Okstad, Heritage Resources Program, Superior National Forest, Duluth, MN.

### Ranger Dwelling (FS Bldg. #31101)



**Figure 17.** Ranger Dwelling west (front) elevation. (J. Ferguson: June 2, 2009)

#### Physical Description

The Ranger Dwelling (Figure 17) is a single-story log building with a medium pitched side-gabled roof and wide, exposed eave-overhangs. The building measures approximately 38' x 38'. Historically it served as living quarters for the district ranger and family members. The building also possesses a finished attic. Built with notable deviations from Region 9 building Plan #48 for Ranger Dwellings, the building was designed with a square massed floor plan, which included a full-length porch extending approximately 7-8 feet from the front entrance façade-wall. A low-angle shed roof extends outward from the main roof's eave-line to form a continuous or "extended" porch cover. The floor plan is oriented on the landscape so that the front entrance façade-wall faces to the west. The center axis of the building is roughly perpendicular to the east shoreline of the South Kawishiwi River.

The Ranger Dwelling rests on a full-sized, poured concrete basement with at least a six foot wall depth below grade. The outer wall of the porch rests on three large poured concrete footings

that are approximately 3' x 3' square. The walls are constructed with peeled round logs prepared from locally available pine and aspen logs (Dunn 1997) that were laid with alternating butt and tip ends and connected by means of a standard saddle-notch. In keeping with the rustic style, log ends were intentionally cut to run proud of the wall intersection and finished by shaping the ends to chisel-edge point. In order to facilitate a tight, weatherproof fit, the underside of each log was prepared by shaping a groove or flute along its entire length. The roof of the Ranger Dwelling was constructed with purlins made of small diameter logs and covered with twelve inch wide dimensional lumber. The original roof covering was likely cedar shake.

The building possesses many character defining features including a large shed dormer, a fireplace chimney, and a smaller, furnace chimney. The centrally positioned dormer is covered by a low-angled shed roof, which is tied into the ridgeline of the principal roof. The dormer roof extends from the roof peak and terminates at the primary roof eave line. The fireplace gable wall chimney is situated on the west half of the north elevation and is constructed of locally cut stone quarried from a nearby source of gabbro. The chimney is towered. A smaller brick chimney that serves as an exhaust outlet for the furnace protrudes just below the ridgeline on the main roof's western slope. A secondary entrance offers direct access to the basement stairs and the kitchen. This entrance is located in the center south gable wall, and is accessible from the yard by an elevated stoop covered with a small shed roof. The stoop is supported by thin log columns set atop a low, log wall.

In order to facilitate description of the interior layout, the massed floor plan of the Ranger Dwelling is arbitrarily divided into two approximate halves: east and west. The west side of the first story includes a combined kitchen and eating space, in addition to a living room with a stone fireplace flanked by two casement windows on the north wall. Views of the porch and surrounding yard are accessible through two sets of tall casement windows set into the west façade wall. One set is centered on the kitchen wall and one is on the right half of the living room wall. From the porch, the front entrance to the building is located in the center of the west façade wall and is situated on the inside near the southwest corner of the living room wall. The east half of the building contains a full bath, linen closet and two bedrooms. A narrow hallway joins the bath and bedrooms, as well as the attic staircase. The attic consists of two main rooms on the west side that are joined by a full-length hallway. The east side of the attic is reserved for a continuous storage space that is partitioned off from the hallway by a short knee wall.

The building also possesses unique finishing elements. The ceiling framing is finished with 1 to 1 ½ inch wainscoting, which is covered with at least one coat of high-gloss varnish. In the particular case of the living room ceiling, the wainscoting was installed in between exposed log beams, which are set perpendicular to the west façade wall and spaced approximately two feet on center across the length of the room. The dwelling features at least three different types of doors that vary according to construction method. These include the front entrance door, located in the approximate center of the west façade wall, which consists of vertically oriented dimensional planks strengthened with hand-forged iron tie bands that are finished with a hand-hammered dimpling texture. Other door types in the Ranger Dwelling include storage space

doors in the attic, which are finished on the hallway side with the same wainscoting used to construct the ceilings and the interior rooms, and side entrance doors, which were constructed in the typical rail-and-stile fashion. Also notable is the screen door, which was constructed in typical rail-and-stile fashion with two rails located on either side of the vertical midpoint uniquely connected with a row of turned dowels. This unique screen door type originally hung on many of the buildings within the district, and also appeared on the Kawishiwi Pavilion located directly north of the district, across Highway 1 on the north side of the South Kawishiwi Campground. With the exception of the dormer, all the windows in the building appear to be of original construction consisting of multiple glass panes encased in a joined frame tied together with a squared latticework of rabbeted muntins. The windows in the Ranger Dwelling were constructed according to two common patterns: casement and double hung. The casement windows were installed primarily in the kitchen and the living room and the double-hung types were installed primarily in the bedrooms and attic rooms. All windows retain their original hardware.

### Alterations

Overall, with the exception of the exterior finish and some minor detailing, the Ranger Dwelling has changed little from its original form, shape, and layout. Furthermore, it has retained most of its significant architectural and stylistic elements (See Figure 18). Alterations since construction are minor and consist of several episodes of exterior repainting, replacement of window screening, replacement of front and side entrance stoops, and several episodes of roof re-shingling—including the most recent one witnessed by the heritage resources staff during a photographic survey trip in the fall of 2006. The most significant change was the removal of the log railing on the front entrance stoop, which can be seen in a 1934 photograph of the front elevation (See Figure 18). The date of this alteration is unknown but was probably completed when the present version of the front stoop was constructed.



**Figure 18.** Front view of the Ranger Dwelling in 1934. Exposure was taken from the west. (Photo courtesy of Superior National Forest.)

Determination

This building is significant under National Register criteria A & C for its association with the Depression-era CCC and as a representation of Forest Service rustic/Adirondack log architecture with distinctive Craftsman architectural elements. The resource has also retained a preponderance of integrity and is therefore considered a contributing feature of the HRSHD.

## District Office Building (FS Bldg. #31105)



**Figure 19.** District Office Building northwest (front) elevation. (J. Ferguson: June 2, 2009)

### Physical Description

The District Office Building (Figure 19) is a single-story, side gabled, log dwelling with a low pitched roof and wide, unenclosed eave-overhangs. It once served as the administrative office for the Halfway Ranger District but is now vacant. The building was constructed with a linear, double-room, rectangular floor plan and a newer bathroom addition connected to the south corner. The building's long axis is oriented in a northwest-southeast direction resulting in a northwest facing entrance, and northeast-southeast facing gable walls. According to the original floor plan, the two rooms consisted of a kitchen/living area on the building's northeast side and a bedroom on the southeast side that opens on the east wall to the newer bathroom addition. The interior rooms are divided by a log wall and are accessible by a slightly offset doorway. The main entrance door is located roughly in the center of the northwest elevation and allows direct access to the right side of the kitchen/living space. A small, cross-gable porch cover intersects the main roof at midpoint between the peak and the eave line. The entrance porch cover is supported by two log columns that rest directly on a rough-cut stone platform that serves as a stoop. The building is accessible via a rough stone sidewalk and stone stairs.

The Office Building is situated on a poured concrete foundation, approximately twelve inches in height. The exterior walls are constructed of round logs and are fitted in the same manner as the Ranger Dwelling (See Page 31-32). The roof is constructed with one-inch dimensional lumber sheathing laid perpendicular to four log purlins tied into the top of the gable walls and supported by a central partition wall.

Other architectural details include several paired sets of double-hung windows and three doors. Two sets of windows flank the front door, one set is centered at each gable wall and one is centered on the rear (east) elevation. All doors are constructed in typical rail and-stile fashion. The front entrance door features a single course of three elongated rectangular lights. A secondary screen door is also hung on the front entrance and is similar in construction and design to the one hanging on the front entrance of the Ranger Dwelling porch.

### Alterations

Based on survey and photographic evidence the District Office Building has undergone more significant alterations than any of the contributing buildings within the historic district (See Figure 20). The most striking of these changes are the bedroom and bathroom additions. The building was originally constructed with a one-room floor plan. Some time before 1947, a smaller room, (the present bedroom), was attached to the southwestern wall and made accessible by cutting in, and installing, the present doorway. The original window for this wall has been filled in but is still discernible. Photographic evidence shows that construction of the bedroom addition must have occurred within a 14-year period after the building's initial construction. However, the bathroom addition's construction date remains unknown.

Another significant alteration was the complete replacement of the original support posts for the porch cover (See Figure 20). Originally, the posts consisted of two bent logs that flanked the front entrance door. Each log was connected to the wall in an unknown fashion and angled upward roughly from the door's midpoint to meet with a central support log. The date of this alteration is unknown but it took place sometime after 1947.



**Figure 20.** Front (northwest) view of the District Office building in 1947. View is from the north-northwest. Note the curved log brackets supporting the porch roof and hanging half-log gutters. (Photo courtesy of Superior National Forest).

#### Determination

This building is significant under National register criteria A & C for its association with the Depression-era CCC and as a representation of Forest Service rustic/Adirondack log architecture. The resource has also retained a preponderance of integrity and is therefore considered a contributing feature of the HRSHD.

## Warehouse/Garage (FS Bldg. #31106)



**Figure 21.** Warehouse/Garage southwest (front) elevation. Note original herring-bone doors have been replaced. (Photo courtesy of Superior National Forest, 2006)

### Physical Description

The Warehouse Building (Figure 21) is a single story, cross-gabled, log building with a low pitched roof and wide, overhanging eaves with exposed rafter ends. Originally, it served as a storage warehouse, garage, and workshop for the Halfway Ranger Station. It was constructed with a rectangular, linear floor plan that encompasses four separate units consisting of a large work space/garage room on the northwest side, a narrow garage space in the center, and a shop-storage room combination contained in the southeast end of the building. A stud wall separates the shop and storage area. The large cross-gable features three garage doors and the two small gabled porch covers are located over two smaller pedestrian doors supported by small diameter log struts. Like the Ranger Dwelling and the District Office Building, the Warehouse Building is not oriented toward a cardinal direction. Its long axis runs roughly northwest to southeast with the front entrance wall facing roughly to the southwest. All windows are horizontal sliding sash with two sashes per window and four lights each in a 2-over-2 configuration. As for doors, there are three modern, sectional garage doors and two modern rail-and-stile doors that are now used in the front façade-wall entryways.

The structural system for the Warehouse Building is similar in design, materials, and construction to the Ranger Dwelling with the exception of the floor construction (See Page 31-32). The foundation consists of a short wall made from poured concrete that runs underneath each wall. This foundation wall, which encompasses the entire building plan, surrounds a poured



concrete slab that serves as the building's floor. The walls are built with the same log construction method utilized on the other buildings in the district and the roof is designed and constructed in a similar manner.

### Alterations

Alterations to the original construction of the Warehouse Building include the replacement of all the exterior doors and the addition of supporting brackets to both the small porch covers (See Figure 22). The original door construction consists of board-and-batten covered on the exterior with wainscoting set in a diamond pattern. Remaining examples of this door type hang on the front entrance of the Oil House, the front entrance of the Sauna/Outhouse, and a variation on the front entrance of the Boat House. The date of these alterations is unknown. The Warehouse has experienced some structural degradation from powder post beetle infestation.



**Figure 22.** View of the left side of the Warehouse in 1947. (Photo courtesy of Superior National Forest).

### Determination

This building is significant under National Register criteria A & C for its association with the Depression-era CCC and as a representation of Forest Service rustic/Adirondack log architecture. The resource has also retained a preponderance of integrity and is therefore considered a contributing feature of the HRSHD.

## Boat House (FS Bldg. #31107)



**Figure 23.** Boat House northwest (front) elevation. Note newer dock.  
(Photo courtesy of Superior National Forest, 2006)

### Physical Description

The Boat House, which is still used to store watercraft, is a small front-gabled log building with a low pitched roof and wide, unboxed overhanging eaves. The building is situated on the west shoreline of the South Kawishiwi River (See Figure 23). Built to a simple single-room rectangular floor plan, the Boat House is accessible through a large sliding door on the right side of the front gable wall and a standard single-leaf door on the rear wall. There is a single vertical sliding-sash window centered on each of the side elevation walls. Each sash consists of six lights in a 2-over-3 configuration. Aside from its log construction, the most notable detail of the Boat House is the unusual design of the sliding door. The interior side consists of vertical battens. The exterior side is partitioned into four quadrants and edged with four-inch wide trim-boards. Each quadrant is filled in with wainscoting arranged in a diamond shape. For details on the structural system of the Boat House, please refer to the structural description section for the Warehouse/Garage Building (Page 38-39).

### Alterations

The Boat house has received very few alterations except the removal of the original boat ramp which consisted of iron rails and a dock. There has been some structural degradation from powder post beetle infestation.

Determination

This building is significant under National Register criteria A & C for its association with the Depression-era CCC and as a representation of Forest Service rustic/Adirondack log architecture. The resource has also retained a preponderance of integrity and is therefore considered a contributing feature of the HRSHD.

## Oil House (FS Bldg. #31111)



Figure 24. Oil house north (front) elevation. (Photo courtesy Superior National Forest, 2006)

### Physical Description

The Oil House (Figure 24), presently used to store firewood, is a 12' x 14' single-room, side-gabled, log building with a low pitched gable roof and wide, exposed eave-overhangs. The front entrance is centered on the north elevation wall with single windows centered on each gable end. The entrance features a small gabled porch cover which intersects the main gable roof at midpoint between the ridge and the eave line. A single-leaf door provides access to the building. It is finished on the exterior-side with wainscoting set in a diamond-shaped pattern. The inside consists of vertical planking. The original windows are gone. Screen material now covers the window openings. For details on the structural system of the Oil House, please refer to the structural description section for the Warehouse/Garage Building (Page 38-39).

### Alterations

The Oil House has experienced very few alterations except the removal of the original windows and some structural degradation from powder post beetle infestation.

### Determination

This building is significant under National Register criteria A & C for its association with the Depression-era CCC and as a representation of Forest Service rustic/Adirondack log architecture. The resource has also retained a preponderance of integrity and is therefore considered a contributing feature of the HRSHD.

## Pump House (FS Bldg. #31102)



Figure 25. Pump House southwest (front) elevation. (J. Ferguson: June 2, 2009)

### Physical Description

The Pump House is a single-room (10' x 10') front-gabled log building with a medium pitched roof and wide, exposed, overhanging eaves (Figure 25). The building still houses pumping equipment. The single front entrance is located on the left side of the front gable wall and consists of a single leaf door. There are no windows. For details on the structural system of the Pump House, please refer to the structural description section for the Warehouse/Garage Building (Page 38-39).

### Alterations

The Pump House has experienced very few alterations, with the exception of slight structural degradation from powder post beetle infestation.

### Determination

This building is significant under National Register criteria A & C for its association with the Depression-era CCC and as a representation of Forest Service rustic/Adirondack log architecture. The resource has also retained a preponderance of integrity and is therefore considered a contributing feature of the HRSHD.

## LSFES Office and Dwelling (FS Bldg. #31108)



Figure 26. LSFES Office/Dwelling east (front) and west (rear) elevations. (Photo courtesy of Superior National Forest, 2006)

### Physical Description

The LSFES Office and Dwelling is a front-gabled, one-and-a-half-story, wood framed building with a medium pitched gable roof. It also features wide, exposed eave-overhangs (Figure 26). The building's foundation consists of poured concrete. The walls and both gabled roofs are balloon framed. This building served multiple purposes for the LSFES as an office, laboratory and bachelor's quarters. It was built in 1931 and is the oldest extant administrative building on the Superior National Forest. The building is oriented so that its front gable entrance-wall faces roughly toward the northwest and the west shore of the South Kawishiwi River.

The building's front entrance is accessible through an offset, enclosed porch, capped by a medium pitched front gable roof. This feature is supported on each corner by a small, square column. There are three double-hung windows on the southwest façade wall, three on the northeast façade wall, three on the front gable, and two on the rear. The upper level features two such windows each centered at the top of the gable-ends.

The exterior walls are covered with standard lap siding with a four inch reveal. The lapboards tie in at each corner to corner boards made from one-inch dimensional lumber. Roofing consists of at least one layer of standard three-tab shingles. A red brick chimney exists on the roof's southwest slope near the peak.

### Alterations

Based on limited information, the LSFES Dwelling appears to have been relatively unaltered since its construction. The few notable alterations, based on photographic evidence, include the addition of aluminum inserts on all the windows and the replacement of the original doors.

### Determination

This building is significant under National Register criteria A and C for its association with Early Forest Service administration of the Superior National Forest—and subsequent forest

research—and as a good example of National Folk architecture. The building remains one of the few remnants of pre-CCC architecture left in the Superior National Forest. The resource has also retained a preponderance of integrity and is therefore considered a contributing feature of the HRSHD.

## Outhouse/Sauna (No FS Number)



**Figure 27.** Outhouse, front (south) elevation. Note reoccurrence of diamond pattern door. (Photo courtesy of Superior National Forest, 2006)

### Physical Description

The Outhouse is a square, front-gabled, log building with a low pitched roof and wide, exposed located on the west elevation wall. The door consists of a single leaf type finished on the exterior side with a diamond-shaped geometric pattern outlined in wainscoting. The gable eaves are trimmed with a simple fascia board and there is a vent stack positioned on the ridgeline of the roof. The foundation of the Outhouse most likely consists of a set of sill logs positioned directly on the ground. The walls and roof are composed of logs installed in the same manner as the rest of the buildings within the district.

### Alterations

The only alteration made to the Outhouse is its conversion into a sauna. In order to do this, the bench was removed to make room for a wood sauna stove. An access opening for the stove was cut into the bottom portion of the east façade wall.

### Determination

This building is significant under National Register criteria A & C for its association with the Depression-era CCC and as a representation of Forest Service rustic/Adirondack log architecture.



The resource has also retained a preponderance of integrity and is therefore considered a contributing feature of the HRSHD.

## Cellar (FS Bldg. #31103)



Figure 28. Cellar west elevation. (J. Ferguson: June 2, 2009)

### Physical Description

The Cellar (Figure 28) is a 12' x 12' subsurface enclosure constructed of poured cement with a dirt floor. Although its original purpose is unknown, it may have been used to store seedlings. The structure possesses a single entrance located on the west side. The interior of the structure is accessible through a single leaf door constructed planks of dimensional lumber. There is a vent stack positioned on the roof of the structure. The walls and roof are constructed of poured concrete.

### Alterations

Any alterations made to the structure are unknown.

### Determination

This building is significant under National Register criteria A for its association with the Depression-era CCC. The resource has also retained a preponderance of integrity and is therefore considered a contributing feature of the HRSHD.

## Non-Contributing Buildings

Three non-contributing buildings exist on site, the Laboratory and Insectary (Figure 29) constructed in 1957 and an associated outhouse constructed at an unknown date. While each building dates to the historic period and has retained original integrity, all lack association with significant persons, events, or the architectural characteristics necessary for National Register eligibility and are therefore considered non-contributing elements of the HRSHD.

### LSFES Laboratory Building (FS Building #31109)



**Figure 29.** Laboratory (right) and Insectary (left) northeast (front) elevations. (J. Ferguson: June 2, 2009)

### Physical Description

The LSFES Laboratory Building (Figure 29) is a single-story, wood framed, multi-room dwelling built according to a massed, rectangular floor plan capped with a low-pitched hip roof featuring wide, unboxed eave-overhangs. The building was built as a laboratory space in 1957 and now serves as an office space. The walls of the building are sided with short-reveal lap siding that is tied into corner boards and the narrow window casings. The building features multiple double-hung and casement windows as well as a wooden interior and metal exterior door set. The front elevation also features a course of three large picture windows. The building is oriented on the landscape with its long axis laid out in a general east west direction. The front elevation faces roughly to the north. There is a red brick chimney extending above the roof ridge on the right side of the roof's northeast slope. The building rests on concrete cinder block foundation.

Alterations

The LSFES Laboratory appears to have been relatively unaltered since its construction.

## **LSFES Insectary/Garage (FS Building # 31104)**

### **Physical Description**

The Insectary/Garage (Figure 29) is a single-story, wood framed, two-unit building covered by a low pitched hip roof. Built in 1957, the same year as the Laboratory Building, the Insectary was initially utilized as a space to raise various species of insects for forestry-related research. It now serves as a storage space. Like the Laboratory Building, the long axis of the Insectary is laid out in an east-west direction. The building possesses a garage space on the eastern end and an open space, presumably for raising insects, on the west end that is enclosed with floor-to-ceiling screening. The single-leaf, main entrance door to the building is located in the center of the front wall. The building rests on concrete footings for the screened area and a concrete foundation for the garage area. The screened area is supported by a wooden joist system constructed with dimensional lumber. The garage portion of the building has a concrete slab for a floor.

### **Alterations**

The LSFES Insectary appears to have been relatively unaltered since its construction.

### **Outhouse (No FS Number)**



**Figure 30.** Outhouse north (front) elevation. (J. Ferguson: June 2, 2009)

#### **Physical Description**

This small, wood framed building is front-gabled with a low pitched roof clad with cedar shakes (now mostly deteriorated and covered with moss). The walls are clad with board and batten. It rests on a concrete foundation. The building's construction date is unknown.

# Historic Ruins

## Overview

The HRSHD features three separate concrete foundations dispersed throughout the site. The foundations are remnants of historic buildings (two warehouses and an oil house) that no longer remain and about which little information has been found. The only evidence of their existence is the ruins and their presence on some of the facility's older site plans (See Figure 31). At least by 1965, the two warehouse buildings were removed as indicated on the 1965 site plan (See Figure 32). The three ruins have been overgrown with moss and are difficult to locate. While the former buildings were likely integral features of the historic building compound, their remnants lack most aspects of integrity and are therefore considered non-contributing features of the HRSHD (See Figures 33-34).

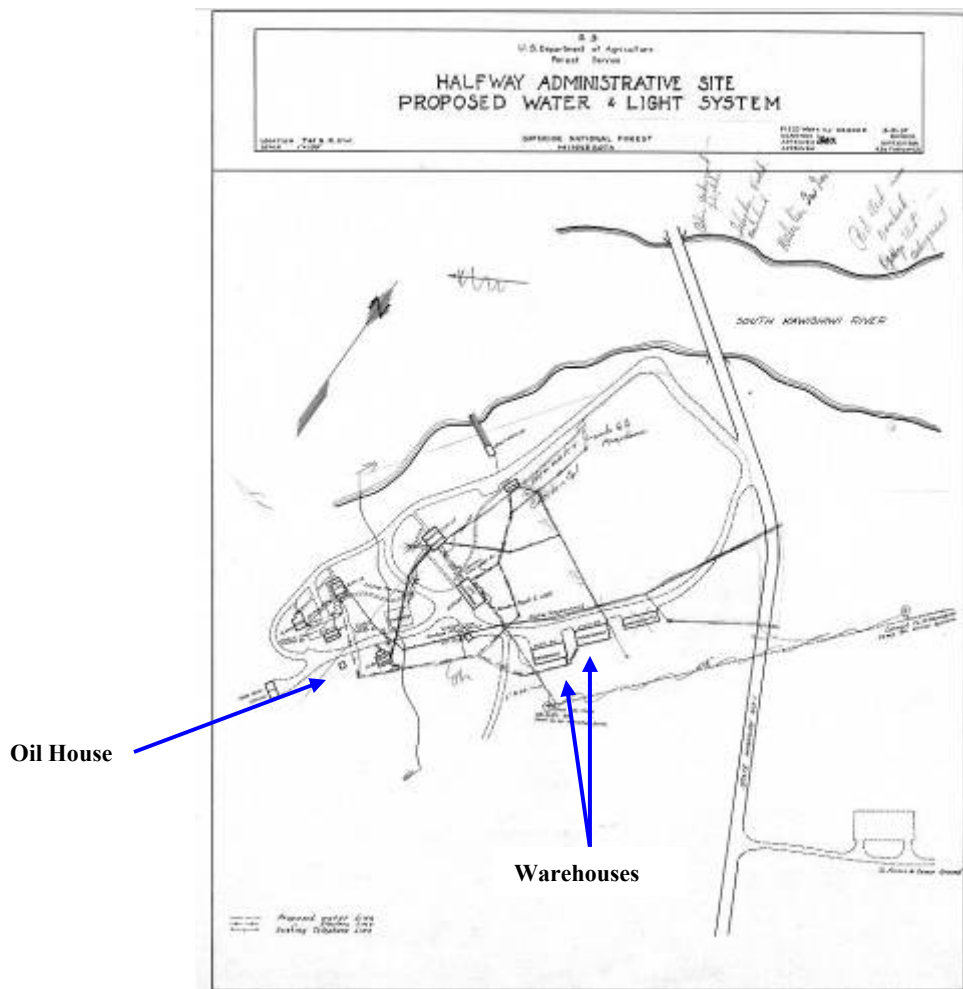
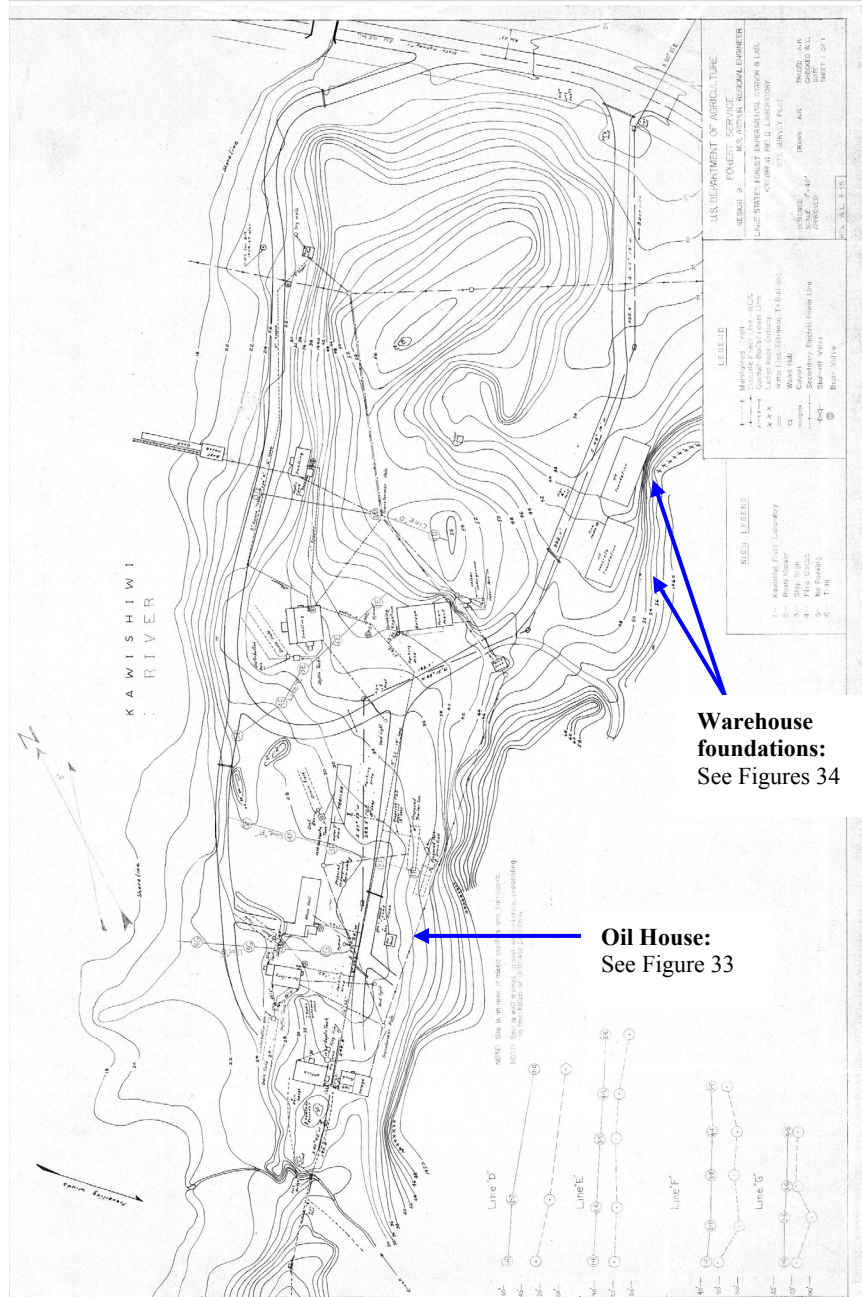


Figure 31. 1937 site plan showing the locations of two warehouses and an oil house.



**Figure 32.** 1965 site plan showing the presence of the two concrete foundations of the former warehouses and an oil house.





Figure 33. Oil House foundation. (J. Ferguson: June 2, 2009)



**Figure 34.** Warehouse foundation (representative of both). (J. Ferguson: June 2, 2009)

## Section Four: Historic Boundaries

### Boundary Description and Justification

The HRSHD is located in Township 62 North, Range 11 West, Section 33, 4<sup>th</sup> P.M. Babbitt, Minnesota 7.5" USGS Quadrangle Map (See Figure 41 for more specific data). The site is situated adjacent to the South Kawishiwi River, approximately twelve miles southeast of Ely, Minnesota in Lake County. The Facility occupies a twelve acre parcel of land and features distinct geographic boundaries on all sides. Generally oriented obliquely toward the northeast, the Property's northeastern boundary is Highway 1, at which the HRSHD can be accessed at two points, its entire southeastern boundary is marked by a prominent rock outcropping, its southwest boundary is marked by a small creek (name unknown) which drains into the South Kawishiwi River and a geographic depression, and its northwestern boundary is the South Kawishiwi River. Below is a topographic site plan which accurately depicts the HRSHD's historic boundaries (Figure 35), followed by photographs of each boundary feature (Figures 36-39), an area map (Figure 40), and a USGS topographic map (Figure 41).



**Figure 35.** Halfway Ranger Station Topographic Site Plan showing the HRSHD's natural boundaries (1965).



**Figure 36.** Northeast Boundary: Highway 1 (J. Ferguson: June 2, 2009).



**Figure 37.** Southeast Boundary: Rock Outcropping (J. Ferguson: June 2, 2009).



**Figure 38.** Southwest Boundary: Small Creek and Geographic Depression (J. Ferguson: June 2, 2009).



**Figure 39.** Northwest Boundary: South Kawishiwi River (J. Ferguson: June 2, 2009).

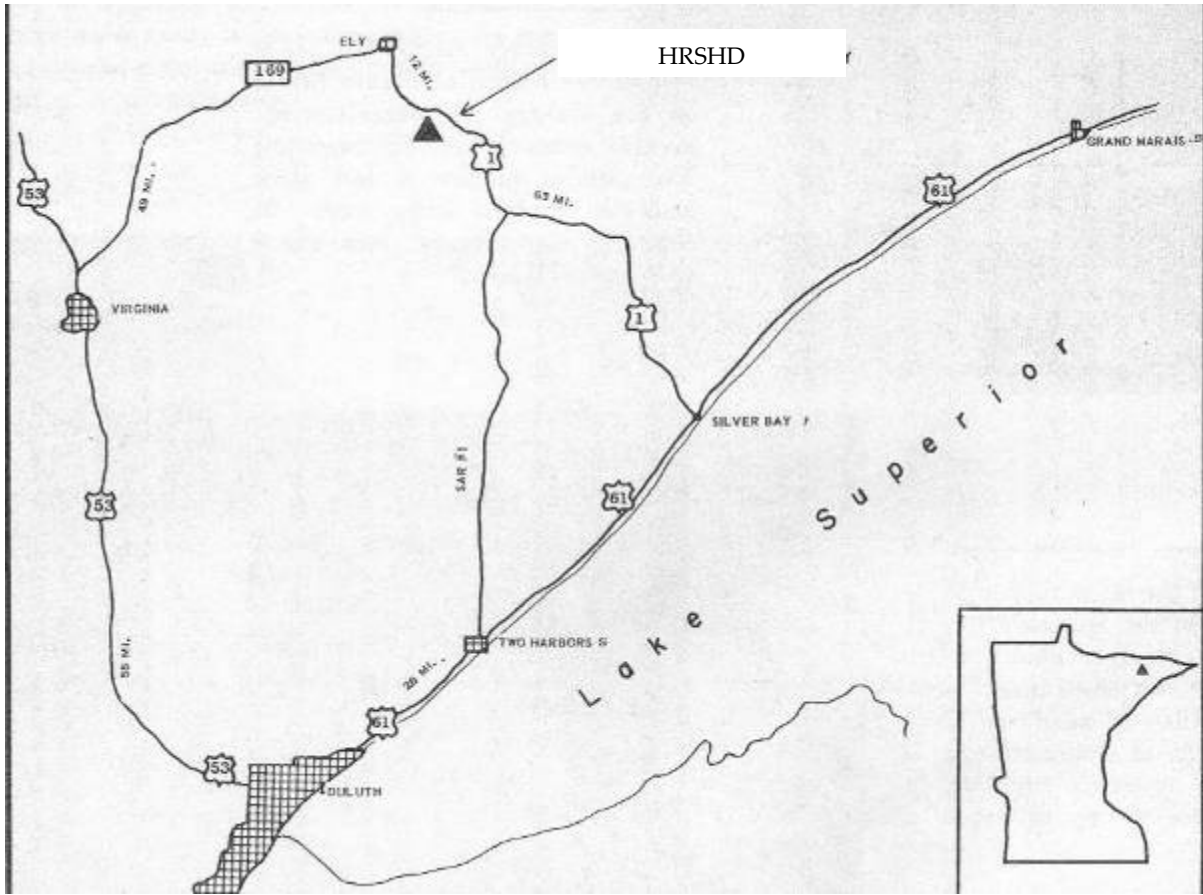


Figure 40. Area Map

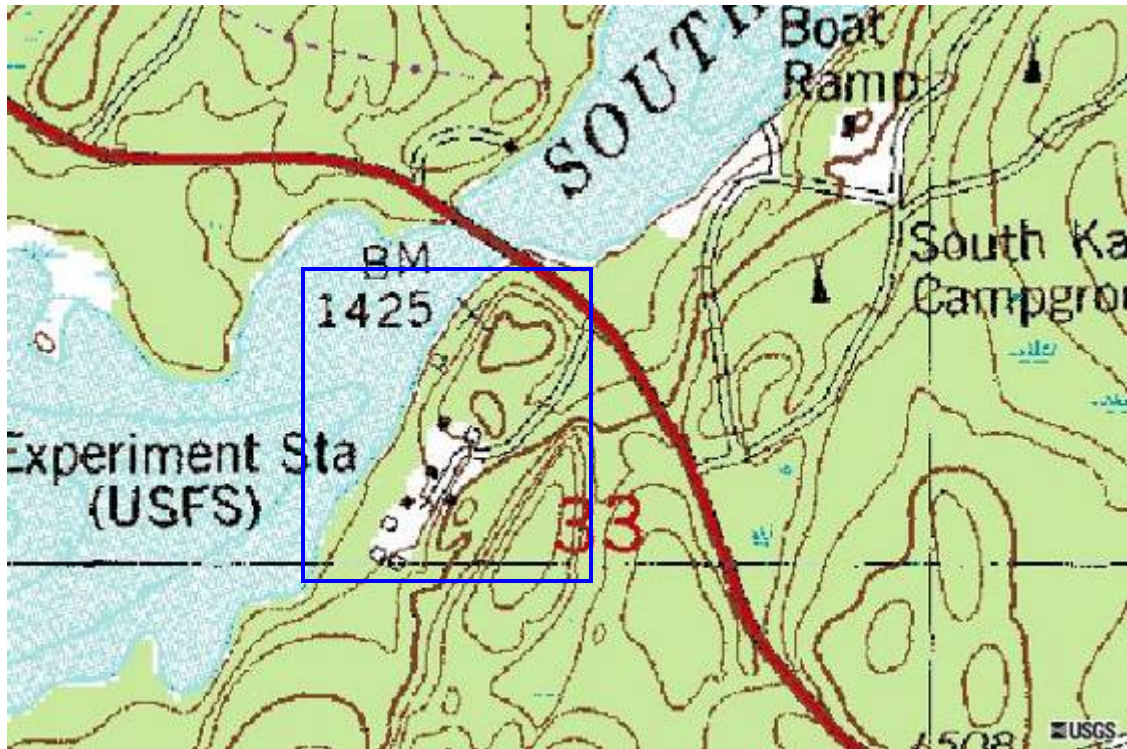


Figure 41. USGS topographic map showing the location of the HRSHD (TerraServer).

Longitude 91W 44' 19.86" -91.73885

Latitude 47N 48' 49.85" 47.81385

UTM Zone 15 easting 594446 northing 5296290 (NAD83)



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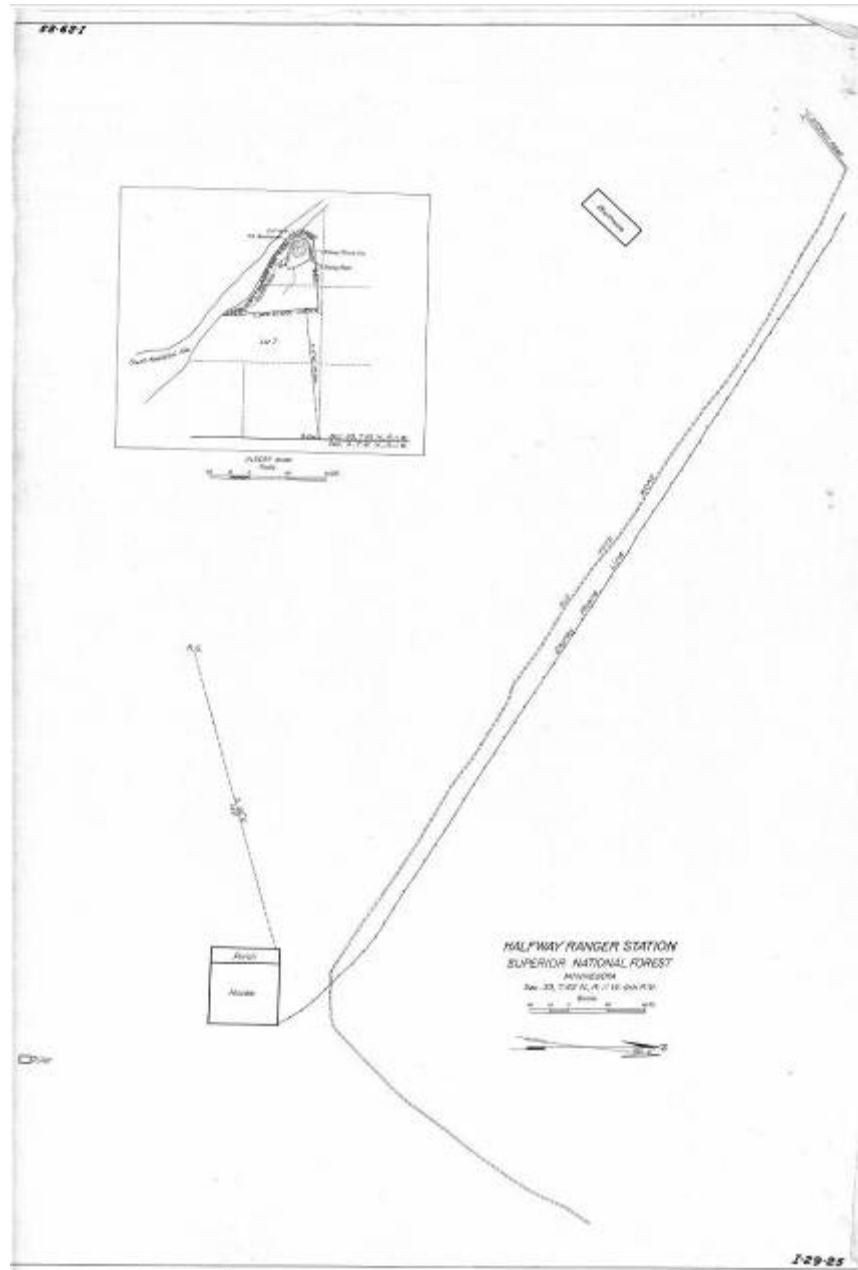
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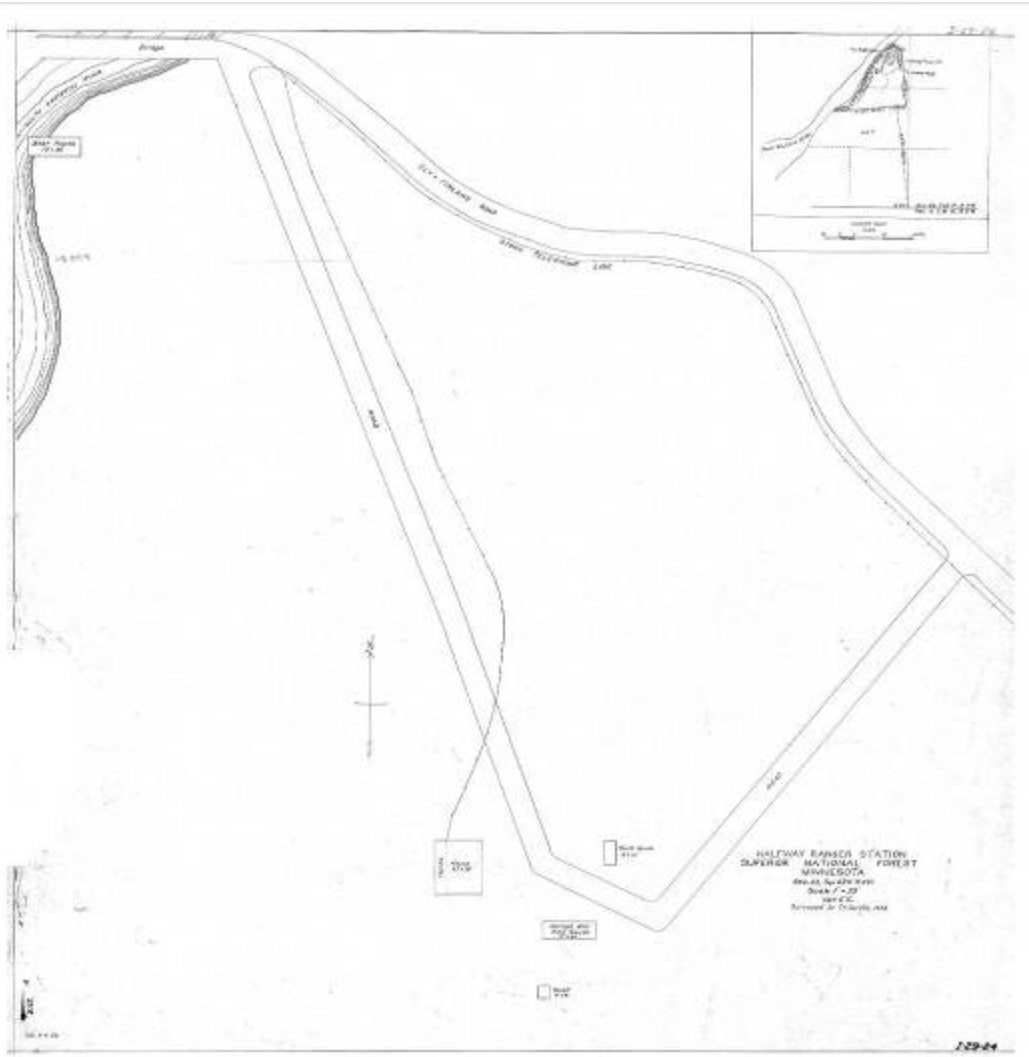
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# Section Six: Appendices

## Appendix A: Site Plans



Halfway Ranger Station, possibly 1923



Halfway Ranger Station (1923)



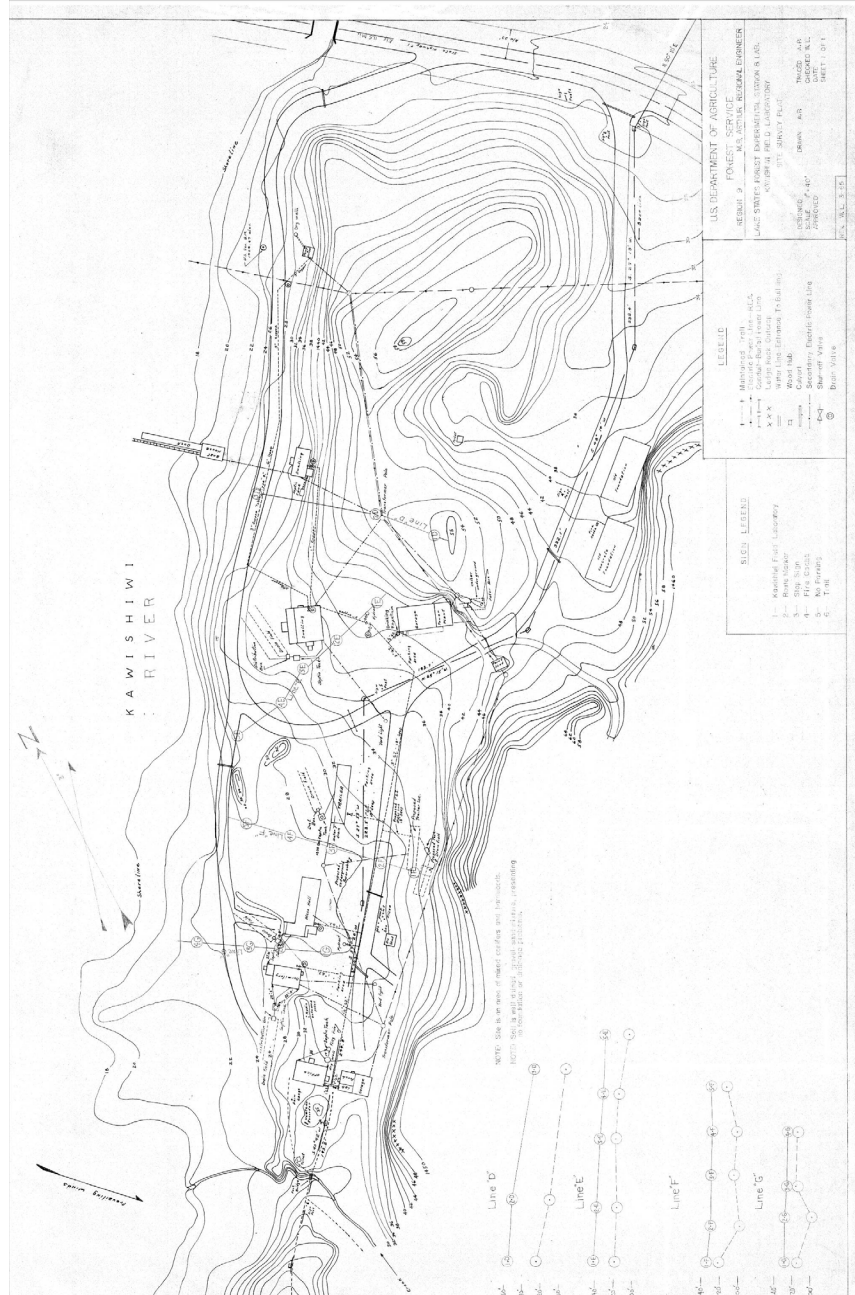
Halfway Ranger Station (1937)



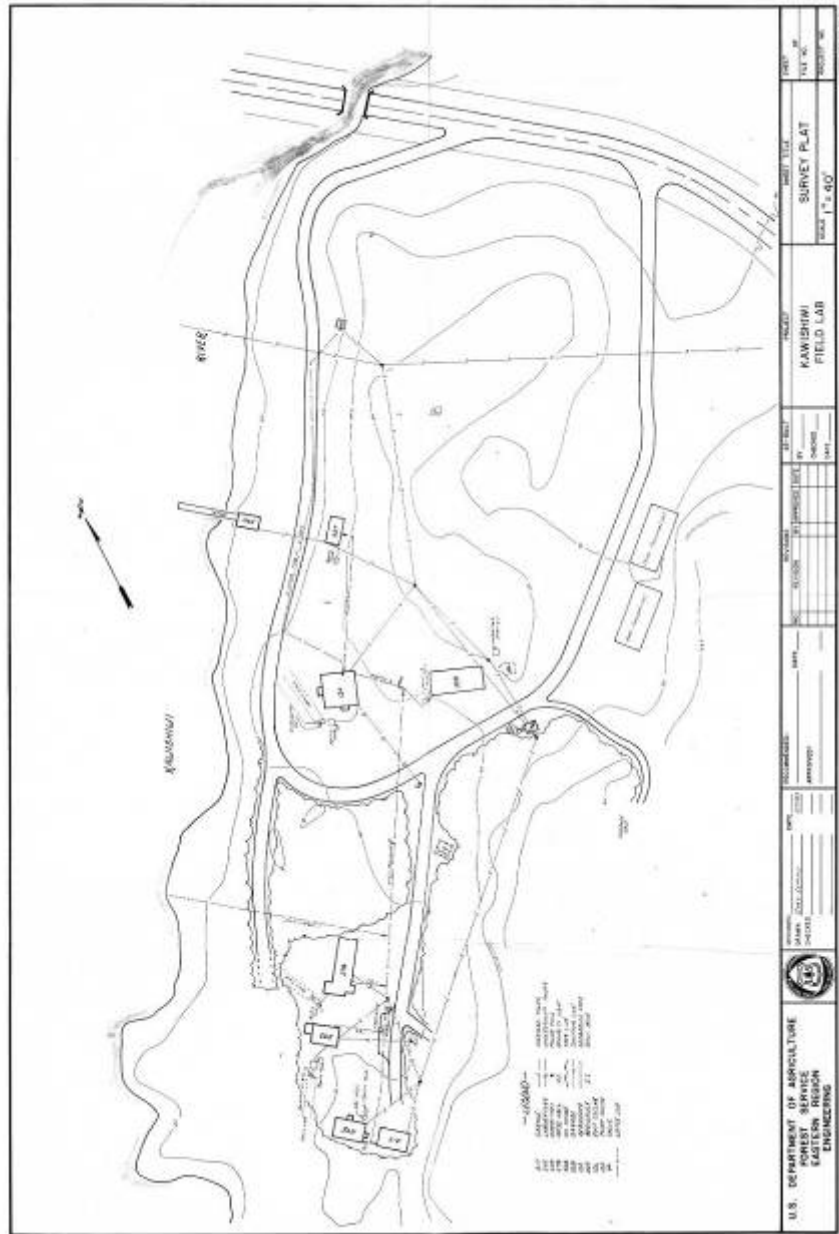
Halfway Ranger Station (1938)



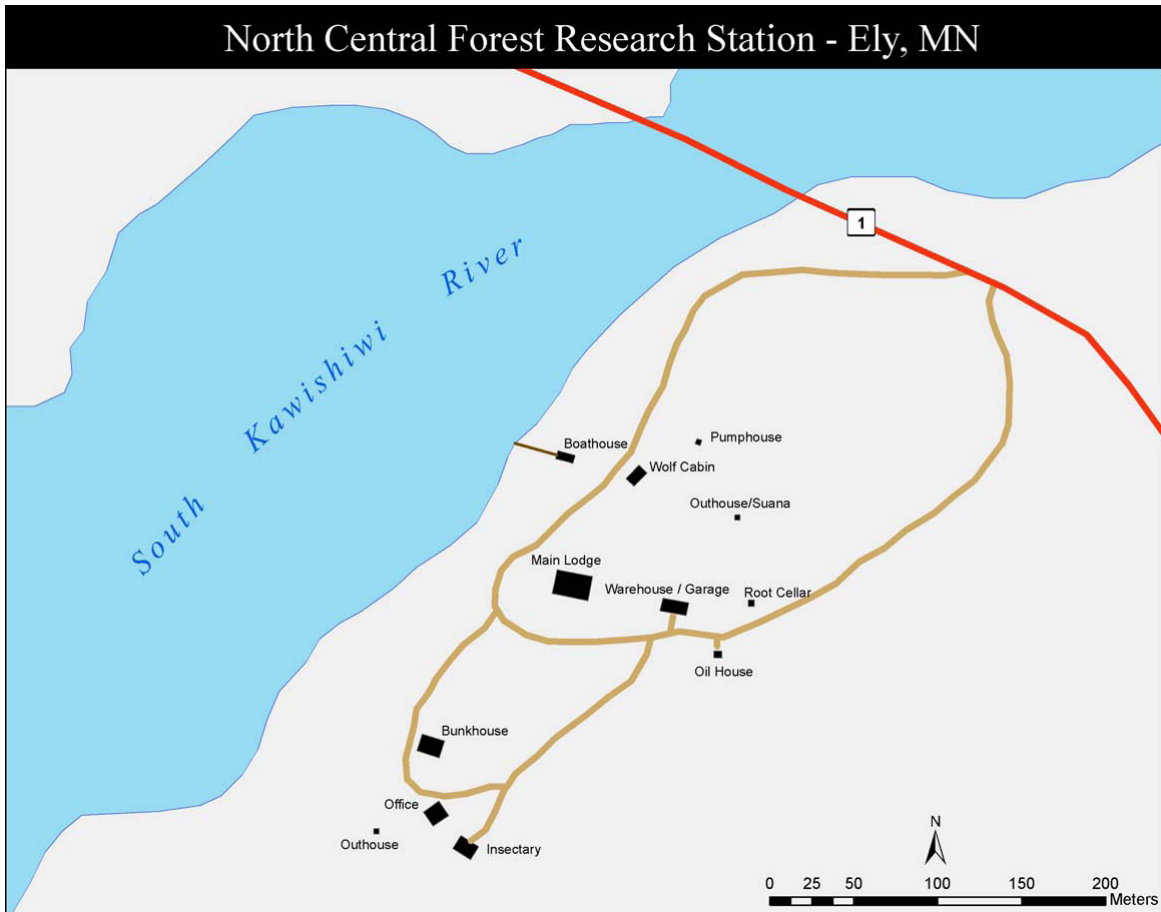




Halfway Ranger Station (1965)



Halfway Ranger Station (1983)



HRSHD Building Layout. (Courtesy of the NRS).

## Appendix B: SHPO Correspondence



**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
**State Historic Preservation Office**

December 20, 2006

Mr. Richard Sindt  
Station Engineer  
Northern Research Station  
1992 Folwell Avenue  
St. Paul, MN 55108

Re: Possible disposition of the buildings at the Kawishiwi Field Laboratory  
Fall Lake Twp., Lake County  
SHPO Number: 2007-0668

Dear Mr. Sindt:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the above project. It has been reviewed pursuant to the responsibilities given the State Historic Preservation Officer by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and the Procedures of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (36CFR800).

As your notice indicates, the Halfway District Office complex meets the criteria of the National Register of Historic Places. Your transmittal indicates that the specific future alternatives for conveyance of this property area are not developed at this point. It also indicates that the land will remain in the ownership of the Forest Service.

It is important that alternatives that preserve the historical integrity of the property are developed and investigated. Moving the buildings to new locations would likely result in the loss of eligibility of the complex. It is not clear if the Forest Service intends to consider an alternative that would include retention of Forest Service ownership of the land, with potential long-term lease(s) of the buildings. Such an alternative, with appropriate planning, could retain the historical integrity of the complex. There may be other alternatives as well.

We note that our previous correspondence with the Forest Service (17 April 2001) indicated the need for clarification of the appropriate boundaries for the National Register determination. We would recommend that this issue be addressed at the earliest stage of the planning process for this proposal.

We look forward to working with you as this proposal proceeds. Contact me at 651-259-3456 with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dennis A. Gimmestad'.

Dennis A. Gimmestad  
Government Programs & Compliance Officer

cc: Walt Okstad, USDA-FS

345 Kellogg Boulevard West/Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102-1906/Telephone 651-296-6126



MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

State Historic Preservation Office

June 3, 2008

Mr. Richard Sindt  
Environmental Engineer  
Northern Research Station  
1992 Folwell Avenue  
St. Paul, MN 55108

Re: USDA Forest Service Northern Research Station to dispose of its buildings at the  
Kawishiwi Field Laboratory, Superior National Forest  
Fall Lake Twp., Lake County  
SHPO Number: 2007-0668

Dear Mr. Sindt:

Thank you for your recent letter regarding the above referenced proposed undertaking.

We previously commented on this proposal in a letter of 20 December 2006 to your office. The concerns we expressed in that letter still apply, and a copy of that letter is attached.

One of the issues we raised in that letter (also expressed in an earlier letter of 17 April 2001) focused on the need for clarification of appropriate boundaries for the National Register determination. We recommended that this issue be addressed at the earliest stage of the planning process. The site map included with your recent letter illustrates buildings that are "under consideration for historical significance" and buildings that are "not historically significant". This categorization does not adequately address our expressed concerns or the requirements of the Section 106 review. Previous studies of this area have resulted in a determination that the area meets National Register criteria as a historic district. The boundaries of this district need to be delineated, taking into account not only the individual buildings, but also other topographic and landscape features that define the historic property. Then, the elements within this district need to be classified as "contributing" or "non-contributing". It is important that individual buildings considered to be "not historically significant" be categorized as "non-contributing" elements within the historic district. Appropriate treatment of these building within a historic district may need to be addressed as part of any treatment strategies.

Certain alternatives may need to incorporate measures to address archaeological concerns, even though the land will remain under FS ownership.

Please consider the other issues we raised in our 20 December 2006 letter as well.

Contact us at 651-259-3456 with questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dennis A. Gimmestad'.

Dennis A. Gimmestad  
Government Programs & Compliance Officer

cc: Walt Okstad, USDA-FS

enclosure: 20December 2006 letter

345 Kellogg Boulevard West/Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102-1906/Telephone: 651-296-6121