EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK THEME STUDY OF PARK SERVICE LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE, 1917-1941

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(Going-to-the-Sun Road, Glacier National Park)
National Historic Landmark Theme Study of National Park Service Landscape Architecture, 1917-1941

In the years between the end of World War I and the American entry into World War II, the National Park Service modernized and developed the national park system extensively. Park Service landscape architects and engineers designed scenic roads, campgrounds, administrative "villages," and myriad other park facilities in what proved to be the most intensive period of such human alterations in the history of the parks. It was during this era that the "developed areas" in national parks (and in many state and local parks as well) acquired the consistent appearance, character, and level of convenience that most visitors have since come to associate, almost unconsciously, with their experience of park scenery, wildlife, and wilderness.

The National Historic Landmark Theme Study of Park Service Landscape Architecture is a four-year project to identify, compare, and nominate landscapes in national and state parks that were designed by the National Park Service for the general purposes of visitor use, site interpretation, and park administration. The study covers the period from 1917, when the Park Service was organized, to 1941.

Part One of the study, a draft historical context, has been completed and distributed to the project's advisory committee for review. With the assistance of State preservation officers, Park Service regional staff, and individual park managers, a national survey of potentially significant state and national parks has also been completed.

Part Two of the study will consist of National Historic Landmark nominations in this theme. Examples of landscapes designed by the Park Service during this period have been organized into the following categories: park villages, park roads, park master plans, parkways, and state parks. Each category will be represented by one or more nominations in order to represent the full range of Park Service landscape design activities of this period.
PART ONE: CONTEXT

Part One of this theme study provides historical background for this period of National Park Service landscape architecture by describing the history of the American landscape park development in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Landscape parks (large parks set aside and developed primarily for the purpose of public appreciation of landscape scenery) first appeared in the United States as municipal parks in the mid-19th century. The profession of landscape architecture became established in the United States in the second half of the 19th century as many municipal park commissions hired landscape architects as consultants to plan and design parks and parkways on the edges of expanding cities. The larger parks of these systems (landscape parks) typically sought to preserve scenic areas from other forms of development. They also sought to maximize the public's appreciation and enjoyment of such areas. "Park development" implied that carriage drives, paths, overlooks, and shelters would be provided for the convenient appreciation of scenery. The term also implied that inherently scenic areas could be preserved from other forms of development by physically and conceptually transforming such places into parks.

By the 1880s, it was evident that the cultural value invested in natural places through "park development" best assured the preservation of those places in a relatively natural state. Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux expressed these intentions in their plans for municipal parks; but Olmsted had extended the basic theory to include much larger and wilder landscapes in his 1865 proposal for the management of Yosemite Valley. One of Olmsted's apprentices, Charles Eliot, created a system of reservations around the city of Boston in the 1890s that expanded the idea of the municipal landscape park to the scale of the regional scenic reservation. In the early 20th century the physical development of such regional scenic reservations continued to employ the design technology and aesthetics that had been developed over the previous 40 years in municipal landscape park design, even though the larger parts of such reservations were preserved largely in their existing state. In the years before World War I, many other states, counties, and metropolitan areas soon created regional scenic reservations on this model, such as Bear Mountain (New York), Lake Itasca (Minnesota), or Humboldt Big Basin (California).

Also beginning in the 1890s, Progressive conservation had become a successful basis for the Federal Government to manage much of the remaining public domain in the West. At first, the withdrawal of vast Forest Reserves seemed an encouraging success for national park advocates who were seeking to establish national parks in the Sierra Nevada, the Rocky Mountains, the Cascades, and in other areas. Even before the Forest Reserves were transferred from the Department of the Interior to the Department of Agriculture in 1905, however, it became clear that the forests would be managed along more utilitarian lines (allowing dam construction, grazing, and logging) than many felt was appropriate for national parks. Scenic preservationists rallied to prevent national parks from being managed as national forests. Many felt the best defense against grazing, logging, and dam construction in national parks would be if the parks were developed along the lines of regional scenic reservations.

Preservationists such as J. Horace McFarland and F.L. Olmsted, Jr., and soon Stephen T. Mather specifically hoped to prevent national forest-type development in national parks by making national parks more accessible and convenient for tourists—especially the growing numbers of automobile tourists. If parks were developed with roads, trails, shelters, campgrounds, as well as lodges and other tourist facilities, more people would visit the parks and significant tourist revenue would be generated. This revenue would justify the exclusion of other forms of development (such as dam construction) that would be likely to "impair the scenery." In addition, the visiting public would become an important constituency in favor of maintaining parks in such an "unimpaired" state. And most importantly, only properly planned park development (as opposed to haphazard resort development) would minimize the destructive impacts of tourism in wild areas.
The establishment of the National Park Service in 1917 was an important step in the process of developing national parks as 20th-century landscape parks. Park development, which was intended to save the parks from other forms of development, was the central task of the new bureau. It was through such development that preservationists hoped to accomplish the primary mission of the new Park Service: to maintain the parks unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.
PART TWO: NOMINATIONS

Part Two of the theme study will consist of narrative summaries of the National Historic Landmark nominations. (The nomination forms themselves will be presented separately, or as an appendix.) Proposed nominations are initially outlined here for your information.

The final nominations will represent the most significant designed landscapes with the greatest integrity in this theme. They will be organized in formal categories that reflect the range of Park Service landscape architecture during this period. Park villages, park roads, master plans, parkways, and state parks will all be represented in the study with at least one nomination in each category in order to illustrate the scope of design and planning work that was undertaken by the Park Service.

In addition, each nomination will continue the contextual narrative begun in Part One. In this way, the narrative history of national park design will be continued through a series of case studies (the nominations), as indicated in the following summaries.

Historic Village District, Grand Canyon NP (South Rim)

The desire for "comprehensive plans" and planned "park villages" for national parks is older than the Park Service. The need for orderly design and development in national parks was evident to landscape architect Mark Daniels, who was hired by the Department of the Interior to consider such issues in 1914. Daniels, like other park advocates including Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., Horace McFarland, and Stephen Mather, knew that only planned development would minimize destructive impacts while accommodating increased numbers of tourists.

The first "park villages" were built in the first landscape parks—that is in 18th-century landscape parks designed by Lancelot Brown and others in the English countryside. The village of Milton Abbas employed consistent, pseudo-vernacular architecture (whitewashed stone cottages with thatched roofs) in a planned, unified layout. More importantly, the village was sited and designed specifically as a visual element of the larger park landscape. This basic formula defined what was later described as the "picturesque village" in the early 19th century. Eventually many of the principles of this village planning led to the "Garden City" town plans by British architects such as Raymond Unwin, as well as similar town plans in this country by landscape architects such as John Nolen. These early 20th-century town planners and landscape architects directly influenced the conception of "park villages" in national parks, in the years before World War I.

In 1914 Mark Daniels began village plans for Yosemite and Crater Lake; he later began village plans for Mount Rainier and Glacier. In 1918, Stephen Mather appointed landscape architect Charles P. Punchard, Jr. as "landscape engineer," replacing Daniels who had returned to private practice in 1915. In 1919, the Grand Canyon became a national park, and Punchard made a site visit, probably consulting with the architect Mary E. J. Colter on a general development plan at that time. In 1920, Punchard hired Daniel R. Hull as his assistant; Hull replaced Punchard as chief landscape engineer later that year after Punchard died.

The plan for Grand Canyon Village (see plan) was the result of a collaboration of Daniel Hull and representatives of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe (AT&SF) Railroad and the Fred Harvey Company. These representatives included the architect Pierce Anderson, of the Chicago firm Graham, Anderson, Probst and White (the successor firm to Daniel H. Burnham and Company, which had been retained by the AT&SF Railroad in 1921), and also Mary E. J. Colter, who was continuing her association with the Fred Harvey Company.
Hull was a trained landscape architect (University of Illinois, BS, 1913; Harvard University MLA, 1914) who not only was generally familiar with contemporary town planning, but had been involved specifically in national park village planning since 1920. He had just finished the Yosemite Park Village plan, in collaboration with Myron Hunt, in 1923. The Yosemite Park Village plan also employed certain key features of town planning that characterize the Grand Canyon plan. Both plans feature a unified architectural style for new buildings, for example, and both have curvilinear roads and streets that respond to topography. They both feature central plazas with important civic and park administration buildings sited around them. Both villages are zoned into residential and civic/commercial areas. Pedestrians and vehicles are segregated in innovative ways in the residential areas of both town plans. And of course, in both cases, the new villages are specifically designed to minimize the visual and environmental impact of such development.

Other important village plans created by Park Service landscape architects during this period include: Mesa Verde Administrative District, Mammoth Hot Springs (Yellowstone), Fishing Bridge Museum and Village area (Yellowstone), Longmire Village (Mount Rainier), Sunrise (or Yakima Park, Mount Rainier), Rim Village (and the Munson Valley Administrative area, Crater Lake), and Giant Forest Village (Sequoia).

Among these, the only Park Service village plan that equals or exceeds the historical significance of the Grand Canyon plan would be Yosemite Park Village. In both cases, the number of visitors and residents to be accommodated was huge. These villages are the earliest, most ambitious, and most
significant examples of how the new Park Service attempted to deal with some of the most heavily visited (and most scenic) areas under its jurisdiction. In both cases, Park Service landscape architects collaborated with some of the leading architects of the day to produce plans that were not just innovative in national park history, but were outstanding examples of American town planning history, generally. Both village plans became benchmarks in the history of Park Service landscape architecture as it was applied to the design of new villages and other "developed areas" in the parks.

Of the two, however, only Grand Canyon Village retains the integrity of the original town plan to the degree necessary to be considered for NHL designation. The principal street and circulation patterns remain relatively unchanged. The sectional relationships defined by typical street, road, and path designs remain intact. The definition of outdoor spaces and the overall sequence of spaces within the historic district persist. The vast majority of the buildings built during the historic period (1919-1941) survive; few later buildings intrude. The older, pre-existing buildings (1897-1919) along the canyon rim continue to function as integral parts of the 1924 plan, as originally intended.

The Historic Village District, Grand Canyon, has been on the National Register since 1975. A revision of the boundaries of the district was completed in 1990, but has not yet been approved. The boundaries proposed in the 1990 revision of the historic district would be the boundaries of the proposed NHL district (see map). The proposed historic district as outlined contains 238 buildings, of which only six are post-1941. There are currently five NHLs in the theme of architecture in the proposed district: El Tovar Hotel (1905); Hopi House (1905); the Grand Canyon Depot (1910); the Powerhouse (1926); and the Park Operations Building (now the Rangers Office, 1929).
Going-to-the-Sun Road, Glacier NP

When the National Park Service was established in 1917, only Yellowstone had an extensive road system. Considering the importance of automobile tourists in the emerging constituency for national park preservation, it follows that Stephen Mather made road construction a top priority for the development of national parks.

One of Mather's first suggestions for the national parks was to bind them together as a true park "system" with an interstate "Park-to-Park Highway." A road across the continental divide in Glacier National Park was a critical missing link in this route. In 1918 Mather therefore directed his Chief Engineer (Punchard's counterpart in civil engineering), George E. Goodwin, to conduct a survey for a transmountain auto route through Glacier. Goodwin, who had been hired away from the Army Corps of Engineers in 1917, served briefly as superintendent of Glacier at this point, and he later served as acting superintendent again in 1920.

Goodwin surveyed the route along Lake McDonald, over Logan Pass, and along St. Mary Lake. To ascend to Logan Pass on the west side, he recommended that up to 15 switchbacks be constructed up the Logan Creek Valley. This was standard engineering practice at the time, but it would have severely disturbed the entire valley, which is an important viewshed in the park. In 1924, after a generous appropriation had been secured for the road's construction, landscape architect Thomas C. Vint (then chief landscape architect Daniel Hull's assistant) reviewed Goodwin's 1918 alignment for the road. Vint criticized the switchbacks up Logan Creek Valley and explained to Mather the disastrous visual consequences of such a design.

Mather then replaced Goodwin on the project with an engineer from the Bureau of Public Roads, Frank A. Kittredge. The subsequent collaboration of Kittredge and Vint on the new alignment of Going-to-the-Sun Road set a high standard for park roads that were well engineered, but which also were considered as elements of the larger park landscape. The 15 switchbacks approaching Logan Pass were replaced by a longer route requiring only one switchback, vastly reducing the visual impact of the road.
The success of Going-to-the-Sun also led to a 1926 agreement between the Park Service and the Bureau of Public Roads, in which it was agreed that the engineers from the latter agency would work closely with Park Service landscape architects. Vint and his landscape division retained the right to reject the Bureau of Public Roads engineers' plans if they felt it necessary. Going-to-the-Sun Road opened in 1933, and is considered by many to be the most scenic road in the country. In addition, however, it is the most significant park road in the history of national park road construction between 1917 and 1941. It set the scenic and engineering standards (and led to the administrative arrangements) that resulted in the high quality of subsequent park roads.

The Going-to-the-Sun Historic District has been on the National Register since 1983. The district was defined by a verbal description: the width of the district extends 15 feet on either side of the centerline of the road for 48.7 miles. The NHL nomination will not require a change in the boundaries of the existing historic district; working with the superintendent and managers in the park, however, minor changes may be found to be desirable.

Mount Rainier National Park

Taken as a whole, Mount Rainier National Park is the outstanding example of Park Service "master planning" of the period. It is at Mount Rainier that we can see most clearly how Park Service managers, landscape architects, and engineers planned the development of roads, trails, villages, and other features as part of a unified master plan for the entire park.

"Comprehensive plans," later called general development plans or master plans, were called for by Mark Daniels beginning in 1914. By the late 20s, these plans had been organized into a particular format and organization specifically for Mount Rainier National Park. When Park Service Director Horace M. Albright saw the Mount Rainier planning package in 1931, he ordered that all national parks produce similar "master plans" from that time forward. Mount Rainier was developed extensively between 1917 and 1941 and it was not heavily redeveloped after World War II. The combination of the excellent integrity of its overall master plan to the theme study period, plus its significance in the history of Park Service master planning, make Mount Rainier unique—and extremely significant—in the history of Park Service landscape architecture.

The Park Service master planning process was the creation, above all, of Thomas Vint, who replaced Daniel Hull as chief landscape architect of the Park Service in 1926. The planning process involved drawings done at least two scales. Map scales (one inch to a mile, for example) were used for planning the entire park as a unified whole. Roads, trails, and fire road and other park-wide systems were planned at this scale. In addition, the entire park was "zoned" at the map scale into "developed areas" (roads and villages), "wilderness areas" (most of the park, where roads and vehicles were not allowed but trails and camping were), and "research areas" (where all access was to be restricted to preserve completely undisturbed areas for scientific purposes).

The next set of drawings in the master plan package were drawn at design development, or engineering, scales (for example, 1" = 40'-0"). These drawings were used to develop individual landscape designs for park villages and other developed areas. At Mount Rainier these areas included: Longmire Village, Paradise Village, Sunrise Village; the Tipsoo and Nisqually Entrances; and the Ohanapecosh Hot Springs, Mowich, and White River Campground areas. The landscape designs for these individual areas more fully articulated the general goals expressed in the planning maps.
Master plan packages such as those drawn up for Mount Rainier contained drawings at both scales, as well as brief textual supplements describing priorities and future needs in each category of work, as set by the park superintendent. The plans were updated every year (at least after 1931). Mount Rainier National Park, overall, is the best surviving example of this planning and design process; it also can fairly be described as the park at which this process was first completely developed and employed. Other parks, such as Yellowstone, were also extensively developed by the Park Service through this planning process. But at Yellowstone, for example, extensive redevelopment of certain areas after World War II has had far more impact on the original master plan of the park, as well as on individual developed areas.

The historic significance of Mount Rainier as an example of Park Service master planning would be agreed on by most. The question remains, however, how best to define an NHL district that would represent the significance of the park’s developed areas as parts of a master plan, not as isolated examples. The existing National Register Multiple Property Submission for Mount Rainier (1991) includes many of the historic structures that were planned and constructed in Mount Rainier between 1917 and 1941. The multiple property approach works well in considering the many historic structures that are scattered widely through the park. It does not, however, even begin to acknowledge the historic landscape planning, which was the context in which all of these structures were conceived, located, and designed.

One way to conceive of an NHL district that would better address the significance of the Mount Rainier as an example of Park Service master planning would be to imitate the original master planning process. In the historic master plans, the park was considered on the one hand as a single whole, in planning maps that depicted the entire park. On the other hand, developed areas were designed in more detail through site development plans of particular areas. It would be consistent conceptually (and far simpler in practice) if the entire park were considered the NHL “district.” Within such a district, individual developed areas could be considered contributing “sites” within the larger district. This approach reflects the master planning process that also proceeded both at planning and design scales. It would be important to emphasize that only the specifically identified sites, structures, and buildings within the comprehensive NHL park district would be contributing features. Obviously the vast majority of the historic district (over 95%) would consist of wilderness areas, which would not be contributing.

A comprehensive district based on the boundaries of the park would simplify the identification and description of historic park design features. The alternative would be to define many discrete historic districts, each with complex boundaries. A comprehensive NHL district would also allow for a description of the aspects of landscape planning not considered in the existing multiple property documentation. Zoning different areas of the park for different uses, the design of park-wide circulation systems, the coordinated locations of developed areas, and other aspects of landscape planning (in addition to the landscape design of individual areas) could be discussed and documented as part of the master planning process epitomized by Mount Rainier National Park.

It is the importance and integrity of the overall plan at Mount Rainier that raises its historical significance up to the national level. An NHL district which did not somehow include and highlight the historic master planning process--at the planning as well design scale--would not express the national significance of the property. The multiple property approach, which by definition describes a series of independent (if “associated”) properties, does not address the overall unity of the park plan, and therefore is not appropriate for the NHL nomination in this case. In the NHL nomination for Mount Rainier, the unity of the overall park plan should be a principal consideration.
The architectural NHLs in the park are: The Longmire Administration Building, Community Building, and Service Station (1927-29); The Yakima Park (Sunrise) Stockade Group (1930-1943); and the Paradise Inn (1917). The four sites of this proposed NHL district (Nisqually Entrance, Longmire, Paradise, and Sunrise Villages) are currently represented by four "districts" in the Multiple Property Submission. The proposed sites of an NHL nomination would have to be larger than the current districts in order to include the complete village plans (as represented in the design development sheets of the master plans). The exact boundaries of these four contributing sites, as well as a description of the contributing buildings, structures, and objects outside of these sites, will require field work. The schematic diagram (below) of the proposed NHL district is meant to illustrate only the general concept of the district, not its particulars.
The Blue Ridge Parkway

The Blue Ridge Parkway is a masterpiece of 20th-century American landscape architecture. The parkway may well be the single greatest monument of National Park Service landscape architecture of any era.

Stanley Abbott, the principal Park Service landscape architect for the project, was a former apprentice of Gilmore D. Clarke. Clarke's parkway design emphasized graceful, curvilinear alignments, arched bridges with stone veneer, massed plantings and grassy shoulders, and the coordinated development of recreation areas and landscape parks. All of these features place his work firmly in the tradition of earlier American picturesque park design; but Clarke also embraced modern highway engineering, including the elimination of all crossings at grade, fully limited access, and advanced reinforced concrete construction.

Abbott applied what he had learned in Westchester to the design of the Blue Ridge road. Other influences on Abbott included Park Service roads being built in the West (Going-to-the-Sun Road) and in the East (the Skyline Drive). The Blue Ridge, however, was a true parkway not a park road; it was conceived as a corridor park, not as a road providing access within a larger park. And as a surviving example of parkway design of the 1930s, the Blue Ridge is unparalleled. In Westchester and elsewhere, modernizations and widenings have all but eliminated the historic landscape design. The Blue Ridge Parkway--protected by its Federal ownership and its relatively remote location--remains as the most significant example of pre-war automotive parkway design with the greatest degree of integrity in the United States.
The parkway is not currently on the National Register. In 1992, Professor Ian Firth of the University of Georgia, Department of Landscape Architecture, completed a draft Historic Resource Study for the parkway, which includes lists of historic buildings, exhibits, and roadway structures along the length of the parkway. In the summary of his study, Professor Firth suggests that the parkway should be placed on the National Register as a continuous historic district, based on the boundaries of the park. Certainly some sections of the parkway built after World War II would have to be considered non-contributing portions of such a district; but the only feasible way to adequately consider the historic landscape design as a National Historic Landmark would be to consider a historic district that is defined by the park boundaries. That the parkway is nationally significant in the history of American landscape architecture is self evident; it remains to decide how and whether NHL designation can be a positive and useful tool in the management of the park.

State Parks

The following state parks were all designed by the National Park Service in cooperation with local park authorities between 1933 and 1941.

Each park listed here was a flagship park of a state park system that took shape largely in the 1930s with Park Service planning assistance. These parks are parts of state systems, in other words, in which the Park Service made heavy investments; and the individual parks nominated are themselves the most developed examples (of course with the best integrity) illustrating the range of different types of state park design in which the Park Service was involved.

The Park Service prepared state park master plans that were basically reduced versions of national park master plans. Therefore, in each case listed here, the proposed NHL historic district boundary will be based on the historic boundaries of the park, as shown in the master plans and other design documents from the historic period. State parks that do not have the overall integrity to warrant an historic district based on park boundaries, probably do not have enough integrity to be considered NHLs.

There may be other state parks that qualify as NHL’s in this theme. An indicative list of state parks that should be considered will be included in the study.

Deception Pass State Park (Washington)

Deception Pass State Park lies nine miles north of Oak Harbor on Route 20. The pass itself, a scenic channel that runs between the bluffs of Fidalgo and Whidby Islands, was named in 1792 by George Vancouver. The state park was developed beginning in 1934 in recognition of the historic and scenic qualities of the site. It quickly became the showcase of Park Service/CCC efforts in the state.

As with all the state parks nominated in this survey, the outstanding characteristics of Deception Pass are: the broad and ambitious scope of the park planning as reflected in the park as built; the extremely high quality of the individual design features; the excellent degree to which the park retains the overall complement of its period development without major subsequent intrusions. In the case of Deception Pass, the swimming beach, trail system, shelters, group kitchens, and utility compound are all still in good shape and functioning. The bridge over the pass (carrying Route 20) is an integral part of the park, and is already on the National Register. The park bathhouse has recently been restored and converted into a museum of CCC activities in the state of Washington.
A unique series of log guard rails line route 20. This type was once a Park Service standard (and survives in fragments in Yellowstone and possibly elsewhere); but Deception Pass has a unique full complement of these guard rails still functioning. The overall quality of the park design is extremely high, and the integrity is apparent in many small details as well as in major features.

Deception Pass is not on the National Register. The proposed NHL district would be determined by the historic park boundaries, as shown in the Park Service master plan (see attached map).

Guernsey Lake State Park (Wyoming)

In 1925, the Bureau of Reclamation approved the Guernsey Reservoir Dam north of Cheyenne as part of the North Platte River Project. The dam, which is already on the National Register (1979), was completed in 1927.

The state park was planned beginning in 1933 in order to take advantage of the reservoir as a recreational feature. This makes the park an interesting prototype for "national recreation areas" planned by the Park Service around other reservoirs in later years. In 1933 and 1934, two CCC camps were established in the park, which quickly became the center of CCC state park activities in the state. By the mid-1930s, an extraordinary series of structures were underway in the park, including a museum, a lookout tower, and other buildings. A golf course with oiled sand greens was completed in 1939, but has since reverted to scrub and grasses.
The park retains an almost eerie degree of integrity, from original trail signs to the major buildings. The park museum, for example, retains all of its original 1939 exhibits, designed by John Ewers, in perfect condition. The trash dump at the site of one of the former CCC camps has a wrecked green Ford pick-up truck with "National Park Service" still stenciled on the doors in yellow paint.

The Guernsey State Park Historic District has been on the National Register since 1979. This district is large and inclusive; but for the proposed NHL district it should be expanded to reflect the historic park boundaries.

**Devils Den State Park (Arkansas)**

Devils Den State Park, in the northwest corner of Arkansas in the Arkansas Ozarks, was acquired in 1933. Intensive development began in 1935, when the first CCC camp was established at the site. In addition to the expected full complement of state park features of high quality and in excellent condition, the park also has a unique and dramatic dam and waterfall. Many state parks featured man-made lakes for recreation purposes; the dramatic dam at Devils Den is certainly one of the most interesting, if not the most exceptional, in the country. The park also features a well preserved CCC camp site, which now has an interpretive trial through it.

The park is currently on the National Register. The original historic district boundaries (1992) were drawn to include only the historic structures; the new National Register district (1994) has been defined by the park boundaries. No significant changes will need to be made to these boundaries to create the NHL district.

**St. Croix Recreation Demonstration Area (Minnesota)**

St. Croix State Park has been selected as the outstanding example of a Recreation Demonstration Area. About 31 such areas in 18 states were originally developed by the Park Service on sub-marginal farmland acquired by the Resettlement Administration beginning in 1934. The goal of these areas was to provide models for local authorities of how to develop recreation areas, ideally within easy traveling distance from major cities, for the benefit of an increasingly urban American population. A special feature of the RDAs were the group camps: groups of cabins set around central dining halls for summer camp groups to use for weeks at a time.

Other RDAs include Catoctin Mountain (Maryland), Mendocino Woodlands (California), Prince William Forest (Virginia), and Lake Murray (Oklahoma). Unlike virtually every other example, however, St. Croix possesses almost complete integrity to the period. It also was exceptionally well designed and built (as were many RDAs) as a demonstration of good park design. And in addition, St. Croix continues to function as originally intended; various YMCA and Scouting groups continue to use the groups camps for the purposes they were originally conceived. The group camps were the special features of the RDAs, and at St. Croix there is a particularly well designed series of these camps, which are excellent examples (of course in excellent condition) of the planning strategies and architectural design that went into this type of development. One other RDA, Pine Mountain (Georgia), will be nominated in this study. The Georgia park, however, will be nominated mainly for other reasons; St. Croix will be nominated as the outstanding RDA in the country.

The buildings and structures of St. Croix are currently listed as multiple properties on the National Register (1989). A National Register nomination currently being prepared by the Minnesota SHPO will define a St. Croix historic district based on the historic park boundaries (see map). The proposed NHL district will have the same boundaries.
FDR (Pine Mountain) State Park (Georgia)

In 1924, Franklin Roosevelt first visited Warm Springs, Georgia, hoping to regain strength in his legs through hydrotherapy at the local hot springs. His efforts at physical recuperation were of no avail; he did, however, find other occupations and interests in Georgia, which did restore his ambitions and motivations to serve the public.

The agricultural South was effectively in a state of economic depression long before the rest of the country. When Roosevelt arrived in Warm Springs, he found an area with few paved roads, little electrification, poor soils, and antiquated agricultural practices that perpetuated hardship and poverty from one generation to the next. Roosevelt soon began acquiring land (finally over 5,000 acres) and launched a model farm and forestry project. He later built his Little White House on part of the property. It was during these years that he further developed his lifelong interest in improved forestry and agriculture. He also began to promote a scenic ridgetop highway through his property (now Route 190), to the adjacent Pine Mountain, which offered scenic views of the surrounding countryside. Roosevelt himself often followed this route to his favorite picnic spot at Dowdell Knob.

In 1933, many traced Roosevelt's enthusiasm for establishing national agricultural reforms and land conservation efforts to his earlier experiences in Georgia. Pine Mountain itself, adjacent to Roosevelt's property in Warm Springs, became the site of a combination state park and Recreation Demonstration Area. Hundreds of CCC recruits were soon engaged in the kinds of forestry and public recreation projects that Roosevelt had earlier suggested through his own activities as a landowner. Roosevelt continued to visit the Little White House throughout his Presidency (of course he died there). Pine Mountain was the one CCC state park project in which Roosevelt was personally involved as an original planner, an observer, a kibitzer, and even occasionally (with assistance) as a laborer. Eventually Roosevelt's model farm and forest also became part of the state park (the "eastern half"); but the Roosevelt property itself will not be part of this NHL district because it was added after World War II. Besides these extraordinary historical associations, FDR State Park also happens to have an excellent complement of state park features and RDA group camps, both with excellent integrity. FDR State Park is not on the National Register. The proposed NHL district would be defined by the historic park boundaries.