
National Park Service
Cultural Landscapes Inventory

2005



Marblemount Ranger Station Historic District
North Cascades National Park

**National Park Service
Cultural Landscape Inventory
2006**

**Marblemount Ranger Station Historic District
North Cascades National Park**

North Cascades National Park concurs with the general findings of this Cultural Landscape Inventory, including the Management Category and Condition Assessment as listed below:

MANAGEMENT CATEGORY: **B: Should be preserved and maintained**

CONDITION ASSESSMENT: **Fair**



12-20-06

Superintendent, North Cascades National Park

Date

Please return to:
Erica Owens
CLI Coordinator
National Park Service
Pacific West Regional Office
909 First Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104-1060



STATE OF WASHINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY & HISTORIC PRESERVATION

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May 22, 2007

Mr. John Hammond
CLI Coordinator
NPS - PNW Regional Office
1111 Jackson Street, Suite 700
Oakland, CA 94607

In future correspondence please refer to:

Log: 052207-09-NPS

Property: Marblemount Ranger Station historic District - CLI

Re: Determined Eligible

Dear Mr. Hammond:

Thank you for contacting our office. I have reviewed the Cultural Landscape Inventory report for the Marblemount Ranger Station and I concur that the proposed discontinuous historic district (as devised) is eligible to the National Register of Historic Places.

I look forward to further consultation regarding any projects at this site. These comments are based on the information available at the time of this review and on behalf of the State Historic Preservation Officer pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and its implementing regulations 36CFR800.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Michael Houser

State Architectural Historian

(360) 586-3076

Michael.Houser@dahp.wa.gov

MARBLEMOUNT RANGER STATION HISTORIC DISTRICT

NORTH CASCADES NATIONAL PARK

Washington SHPO Consensus Determination of Eligibility

Actions Requested:

1) SHPO concurrence on the eligibility of the Marblemount Ranger Station Historic District for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Two structures within the district are already listed on the National Register (1930s District Ranger's Residences, Backus-Marblemount Ranger Station House No. 1009 (NRIS #9444) and Backus-Marblemount Ranger Station House No. 1010 (NRIS #9445)). The district boundary identified in the CLI has been expanded from the existing nominations to include additional historic structures and landscape features that help to convey the historic character and significance of the already-listed properties.

☒ I concur, ☐ I do not concur that the Marble Mount Ranger Station Historic District is **eligible** for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

2) SHPO concurrence that the **landscape characteristics** as identified in the CLI contribute to the historic character of the district (see the following landscape characteristic descriptions in the Analysis and Evaluation section of the CLI: Spatial Organization, Land Use, Buildings and Structures, Circulation, and Vegetation):

☒ I concur, ☐ I do not concur that the landscape characteristics as described in the CLI contribute to the historic character of the Marblemount Ranger Station Historic District.

3) SHPO concurrence with the list of contributing and non-contributing **structures** to the Marblemount Ranger Station Historic District, (see tables below):

Structures already listed on the National Register of Historic Places:

LCS number	Structure Name	Date Listed on National Register
30114	1930s District Ranger's Residence (Backus-Marblemount Ranger Station House No. 1010, NRIS #9445)	1989
30113	1929 Residences (Backus-Marblemount Ranger Station House No. 1009, NRIS #9444)	1989

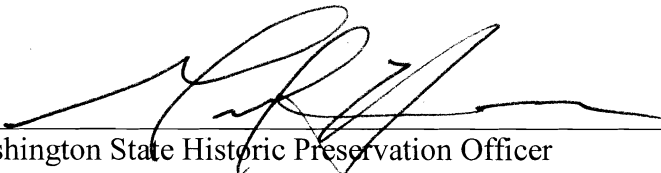
Contributing Structures: Based on the information provided in the CLI, the following structures have been identified as **contributing** features of the Marblemount Ranger Station Historic District:

LCS number	Structure Name	Date Built	Concur	Do not Concur
30154	Marblemount Ranger Station R&T Warehouse	1930s	✓	
595934	Marblemount Ranger Station Three Car Garage	1930s	✓	
595935	Marblemount Ranger Station Warehouse Marblemount Ranger Station	1930s	✓	
595936	Marblemount Ranger Station Woodshed of 1930s District Ranger's Residence	1930s	✓	
595937	Marblemount Ranger Station Chicken Coop of 1930s District Ranger's Residence	1930s	✓	
595938	Marblemount Ranger Station Rock Wall and Steps of 1930s District Ranger's Residence Yard.	1930s	✓	
595940	Northern Portion of Ranger Station Road	c. 1900	✓	
595941	Loop Road	1930s	✓	
595942	Residential Paths and Walkways	1930s	✓	

Non-contributing Structures: Based on the information provided in the CLI, the following structures have been identified as **non-contributing** features of the Marblemount Ranger Station Historic District:

LCS number	Structure Name	Date Built	Concur	Do Not Concur
NA	Breezeway between Warehouse and R&T Storage Building	1976	✓	
NA	Gas/Oil House, Marblemount Ranger Station (#1007)	1977	✓	
NA	Lumber Storage Building (#1028)	1978	✓	
NA	Office Building (#1025)	Post-1942	✓	
NA	Storage Building	Post-1942	✓	
NA	Storage Building (former chicken coop)	Post-1942	✓	

Reasons/comments why any 'Do Not Concur' blocks were checked:


 Washington State Historic Preservation Officer

 5.20.07
 Date

Please return forms to the attention of:
 John Hammond
 Cultural Landscape Inventory Coordinator - Oakland
 National Park Service
 Pacific West Regional Office-Oakland
 1111 Jackson Street, Suite 700
 Oakland, CA 94607
 (510) 817-1407
 John_W_Hammond@nps.gov

Table of Contents

Inventory Unit Summary and Site Plan	
Inventory Unit Description	2
Site Plans	3
Park Information	5
CLI Hierarchy Description	5
Concurrence Status	
Inventory Status	6
Concurrence Status	6
Revisions	6
Geographic Information and Location Map	
Inventory Unit Boundary Description	6
State and County	7
Size	7
Boundary UTM's	7
Location Map	8
Regional Context	9
Management Information	
General Management Information	10
Agreements, Legal Interest, and Access	10
Adjacent Lands Information	10
National Register Information	
Existing National Register Status	11
National Register Eligibility	11
Period of Significance	12
Area of Significance	12
Statement of Significance	12
National Historic Landmark Information	14
World Heritage Site Status	14
Chronology and Physical History	
Cultural Landscape Type and Use	15
Current and Historic Names	15
Ethnographic Study Information	15
Chronology	16
Physical History	19
Analysis and Evaluation of Integrity	
Summary	42
Spatial Organization	42
Land Use	43
Buildings and Structures	44
Circulation	55
Vegetation	59
Condition	
Condition Assessment and Impacts	65
Stabilization Costs	66

Treatment	
Treatment Information.....	68
Bibliography and Supplemental Information	
Bibliography	69
Supplemental Information	73
Documentation Assessment	74

Inventory Unit Summary & Site Plan

Inventory Summary

The Cultural Landscapes Inventory Overview:

CLI General Information:

Cultural Landscapes Inventory – General Information

The Cultural Landscapes Inventory (CLI) is a database containing information on the historically significant landscapes within the National Park System. This evaluated inventory identifies and documents each landscape's location, size, physical development, condition, landscape characteristics, character-defining features, as well as other valuable information useful to park management. Cultural landscapes become approved inventory records when all required data fields are entered, the park superintendent concurs with the information, and the landscape is determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places through a consultation process or is otherwise managed as a cultural resource through a public planning process.

The CLI, like the List of Classified Structures (LCS), assists the National Park Service (NPS) in its efforts to fulfill the identification and management requirements associated with Section 110(a) of the National Historic Preservation Act, National Park Service Management Policies (2001), and Director's Order #28: Cultural Resource Management. Since launching the CLI nationwide, the NPS, in response to the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), is required to report information that respond to NPS strategic plan accomplishments. Two goals are associated with the CLI: 1) increasing the number of certified cultural landscapes (1b2B); and 2) bringing certified cultural landscapes into good condition (1a7). The CLI maintained by Park Historic Structures and Cultural Landscapes Program, WASO, is the official source of cultural landscape information.

Implementation of the CLI is coordinated and approved at the regional level. Each region annually updates a strategic plan that prioritizes work based on a variety of park and regional needs that include planning and construction projects or associated compliance requirements that lack cultural landscape documentation. When the inventory unit record is complete and concurrence with the findings is obtained from the superintendent and the State Historic Preservation Office, the regional CLI coordinator certifies the record and transmits it to the national CLI Coordinator for approval. Only records approved by the national CLI coordinator are included on the CLI for official reporting purposes.

Relationship between the CLI and a Cultural Landscape Report (CLR)

The CLI and the CLR are related efforts in the sense that both document the history,

significance, and integrity of park cultural landscapes. However, the scope of the CLI is limited by the need to achieve concurrence with the park superintendent resolve eligibility questions when a National Register nomination does not exist or the nomination inadequately addresses the eligibility of the landscape characteristics. Ideally, a park's CLI work (which many include multiple inventory units) precedes a CLR because the baseline information in the CLI not only assists with priority setting when more than one CLR is needed it also assists with determining more accurate scopes of work.

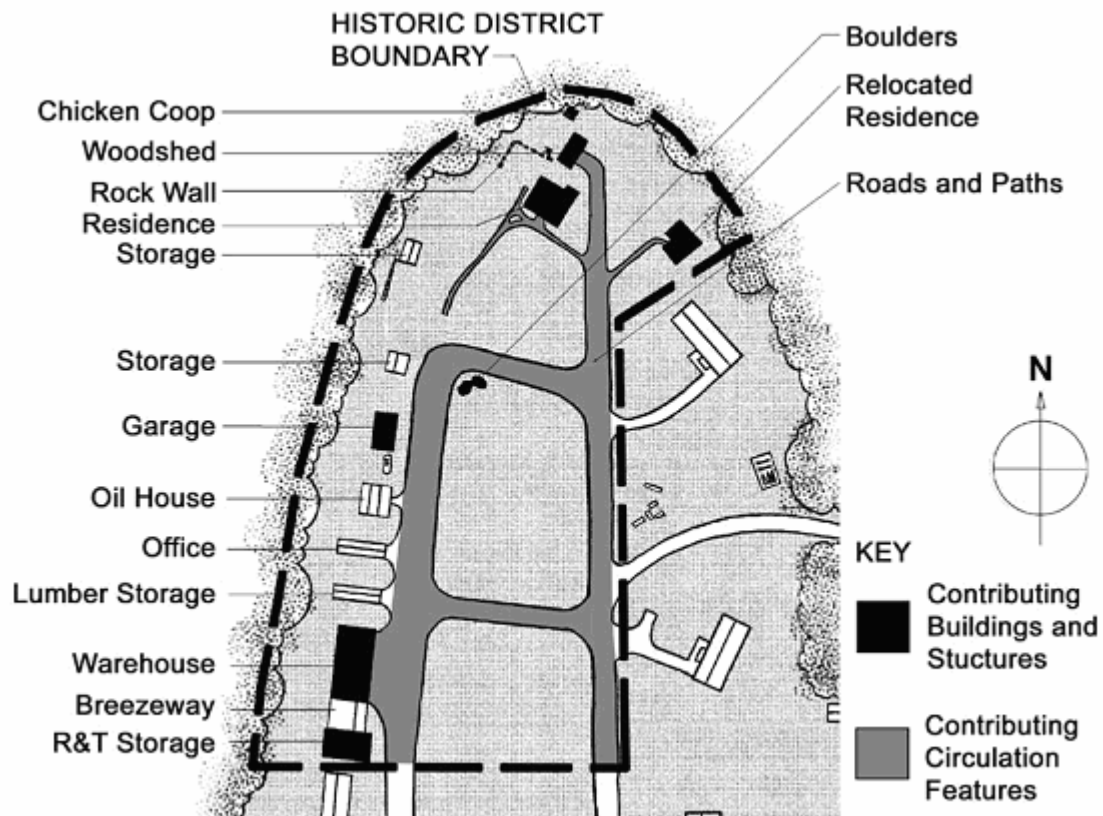
In contrast, the CLR is the primary treatment document for significant park landscapes. It, therefore, requires an additional level of research and documentation both to evaluate the historic and the existing condition of the landscape in order to recommend preservation treatment that meets the Secretary of Interior's Standards for the treatment of historic properties.

The scope of work for a CLR, when the CLI has not been done, should include production of the CLI record. Depending on its age and scope, existing CLR's are considered the primary source for the history, statement of significance, and descriptions of contributing resources that are necessary to complete a CLI record.

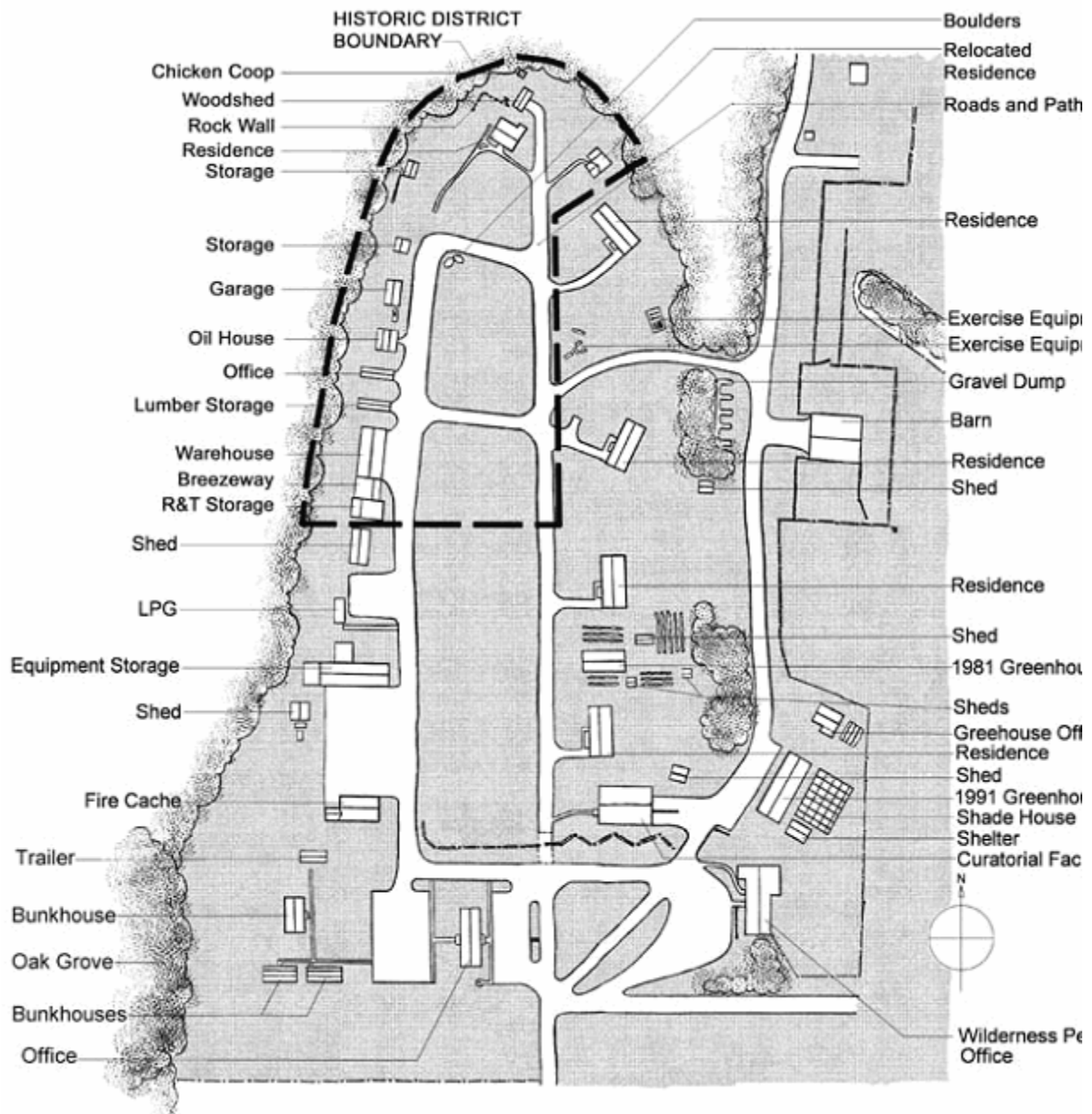
Inventory Unit Description:

Marblemount Ranger Station Historic District is less than one quarter of the area of the entire ranger station. Marblemount Ranger Station is an administrative facility within North Cascades National Park Service Complex that has been operated and expanded by the National Park Service since 1968. The ranger station was originally built by the United States Forest Service, and has existed in this location since 1908. It is the only remaining ranger station in the NPS Complex that is derived from the Mt. Baker National Forest, and even earlier, the Washington National Forest. The historic district is the core of the ranger station that remains from the 1920s and 1930s. The historic district is an integral part of the everyday functioning of the larger Marblemount Ranger Station, which serves as an administrative center, a maintenance facility, a residential area, a visitor contact station, a center for search and rescue, firefighting, and trail crew operations, and the center of the greenhouse and sub-alpine plant revegetation program for the entire park. During the 1920s and 1930s, the part of the ranger station within the historic district served as the administrative headquarters of a National Forest Ranger District, namely the Washington National Forest Skagit District Headquarters, later the Mt. Baker National Forest Skagit District Headquarters, and as a maintenance facility, and residential area. While more buildings, structures, roads, and functions have been added to Marblemount Ranger Station since the 1930s, the historic district still reflects the spatial organization of the early ranger station, a similar distribution of use-areas, its loop road system, and its central, open meadow area. Marblemount Ranger Station Historic District is significant for its design as an early USFS Pacific Northwest-style administrative facility constructed by the CCC between 1933 and 1942, and as the only remaining Mt. Baker National Forest Ranger Station remaining in the park, for its association with the event of the early federal government administration of the public lands of the North Cascades Mountains.

Site Plan



Site plan of Marblemount Ranger Station Historic District and contributing buildings, structures, and circulation features (PWRO-Seattle, 2005).



Site plan showing the Historic District located within the larger Marblemount Ranger Station (PWRO-Seattle, 2005).

Property Level and CLI Numbers

Inventory Unit Name:

Marblemount Ranger Station Historic District

Property Level:

Landscape

CLI Identification Number: 400183
Parent Landscape: 400183

Park Information

Park Name and Alpha Code: North Cascades National Park -NOCA
Park Organization Code: 9470
Park Administrative Unit: North Cascades National Park

CLI Hierarchy Description

Marblemount Ranger Station Historic District contains no component landscapes.

Concurrence Status

Inventory Status: Complete

Concurrence Status:

Park Superintendent Concurrence:	Yes
Park Superintendent Date of Concurrence:	12/20/2006
National Register Concurrence:	Eligible -- SHPO Consensus Determination
Date of Concurrence Determination:	05/20/2007

Revisions Impacting Change in Concurrence:

Revision Date: 01/30/2001

Revision Narrative:

The 1999 draft CLI level II was updated to reflect input from NOCA staff.

Revision Date: 03/15/2005

Revision Narrative:

The CLI was updated in 2005 to reflect comments and recommendations by Linda McClelland and Paul Lusignan at the National Register of Historic Places. It was recommended that the boundary of the historic district be changed to exclude the southernmost portion of Ranger Station Road. The setting of this portion of the road has been significantly altered since the period of significance and no longer has integrity. In addition, supplementary information about general USFS ranger station planning was added to the historic context of the statement of significance. Photographs and maps were also updated to reflect current condition and changes to the historic district boundary.

Data Collection Date: 08/01/1999

Recorder: S. Dolan

Data Entry Date: 08/01/1999

Recorder: S. Dolan

Geographic Information & Location Map

Inventory Unit Boundary Description:

Marblemount Ranger Station Historic District North Cascades National Park

The Marblemount Ranger Station Historic District is comprised of approximately 4 acres, within the larger 35-acre Marble Mount Ranger Station. The boundary of the historic district is described as follows:

Starting at the power pole on the east side of the road between residences 1012 (a 1959 residence) and 1009 (a historic residence), the boundary heads northeast on an alignment which is centered between the two residences, until it reaches the edge of the coniferous tree buffer behind the residences. Here the boundary turns north and follows the edge of the tree buffer in a northerly direction, and continues to follow the edge of the tree buffer as it turns west, and follows behind the two remaining historic residences. The boundary then follows the edge of the tree buffer as it turns to the south, and follows the tree edge for approximately 650 feet, to a point that is located midway between building 1005 (the historic R&T storage building) and building 1019 (a contemporary storage building). Here the boundary turns due east, and cuts across the open meadow to a point 10 feet east of the centerline of Ranger Station Road. The boundary then turns north, and follows the east side of the alignment of Ranger Station Road back to the point of origin.

State and County:

State: WA

County: Skagit County

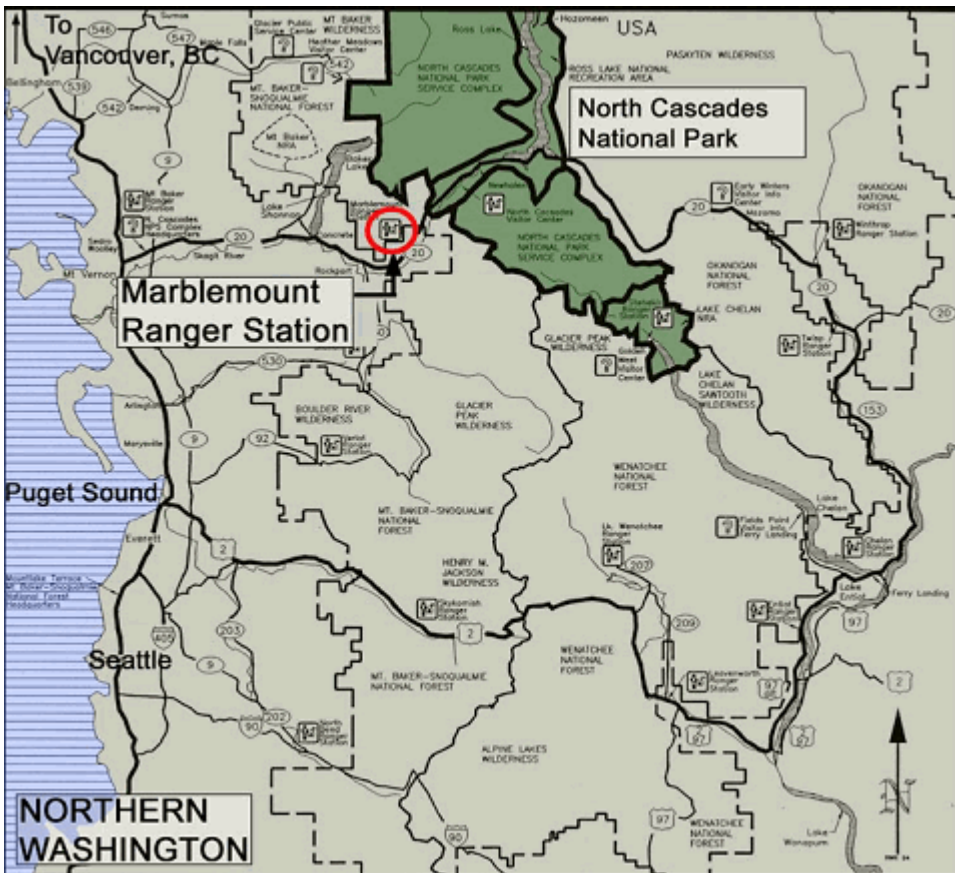
Size (Acres): 4.00

Boundary UTMS:

<u>Source</u>	<u>Type of Point</u>	<u>Datum</u>	<u>UTM Zone</u>	<u>UTM Easting</u>	<u>UTM Northing</u>
USGS Map 1:24,000	Area	NAD 27	10	614,501	5,377,234
USGS Map 1:24,000	Area	NAD 27	10	614,581	5,377,234
USGS Map 1:24,000	Area	NAD 27	10	614,481	5,377,358
USGS Map 1:24,000	Area	NAD 27	10	614,614	5,377,380
USGS Map 1:24,000	Area	NAD 27	10	614,576	5,377,407
USGS Map 1:24,000	Area	NAD 27	10	614,512	5,377,349

Marblemount Ranger Station Historic District North Cascades National Park

Location Map:



Map showing the location of Marblemount Ranger Station in northwest Washington State, and west of North Cascades National Park (PWRO-Seattle, 2005).

Regional Context:

Type of Context: Cultural

Description:

Marblemount Ranger Station is located approximately 40 miles along HW 20 from the Park Headquarters at Sedro Woolley, and approximately 10 miles outside of the North Cascades National Park Service Complex boundary. Marblemount Ranger Station is the second information station encountered by visitors traveling to the park from the west. Here, visitors can obtain information and backcountry permits at the Wilderness Permit Office. The ranger station is located among Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest lands and private lands, and is close to several state and local park campgrounds along the Skagit and Cascade Rivers.

Type of Context: Physiographic

Description:

Marblemount Ranger Station is located on a river terrace along Olson Creek within the Skagit River drainage of the North Cascades Mountains. Located at approximately 150 feet in elevation, the ranger station is surrounded by foothills of the North Cascade Mountains in its immediate vicinity that steeply rise to 1,500 feet. Within a 10-mile radius, Marblemount Ranger station is surrounded by mountains with more than 5,000 feet of elevation: Lookout Mountain, and Suiattle Mountain, among others. The physiographic zone of the elevation of the ranger station is lowland coniferous forest, dominated by Western red cedar, western hemlock, and Douglas fir.

Type of Context: Political

Description:

Marblemount Ranger Station is operated by the National Park Service, though it is located among Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie Forest lands and lands in private ownership, rather than inside the contiguous boundary of North Cascades National Park Service Complex.

GIS File Name: Marblemount.mxd

GIS File Description: Map file is located on the CLI co-coordinator's computer in the PWRO-Seattle.

Management Information

General Management Information

Management Category: Should Be Preserved And Maintained

Management Category Date: 03/10/2005

Management Category Explanatory Narrative:

Marblemount Ranger Station historic District meets National Register criteria; the inventory unit is compatible with the park's legislated significance; and the inventory unit has a continuing or potential purpose that is appropriate to its traditional use or function.

Agreements, Legal Interest, and Access

Management Agreement:

Expiration Date: NA

NPS Legal Interest:

Type of Interest: Fee Simple

Public Access:

Type of Access: Other Restrictions

Adjacent Lands Information

Do Adjacent Lands Contribute? No

National Register Information

Existing National Register Status

National Register Landscape Documentation:

Undocumented

National Register Explanatory Narrative:

Two buildings within Marblemount Ranger Station were listed on the National Register in 1989. However, the nomination did not locate these buildings within a Historic District or evaluate any other characteristics of the landscape. This CLI proposes expanding the boundaries of the two 1988 nominations to include the setting and other remaining historic resources.

Existing NRIS Information:

NRIS Number:	88003462
Primary Certification:	Listed In The National Register
Primary Certification Date:	02/10/1989
Other Certifications and Date:	Date Received/Pending Nomination - 12/29/1988
Name in National Register:	Backus--Marblemount Ranger Station House No. 1009
NRIS Number:	88003463
Primary Certification:	Listed In The National Register
Primary Certification Date:	02/10/1989
	Date Received/Pending Nomination - 12/29/1988
Name in National Register:	Backus--Marblemount Ranger Station House No. 1010

National Register Eligibility

National Register Concurrence:	Eligible -- SHPO Consensus Determination
Contributing/Individual:	Individual
National Register Classification:	District
Significance Level:	State
Significance Criteria:	A - Associated with events significant to broad patterns of our history C - Embodies distinctive construction, work of master, or high artistic values

Period of Significance:

Time Period:	AD 1933 - 1942
Historic Context Theme:	Expressing Cultural Values
Subtheme:	Architecture
Facet:	Rustic Architecture
Other Facet:	None
Time Period:	AD 1933 - 1942
Historic Context Theme:	Transforming the Environment
Subtheme:	Conservation of Natural Resources
Facet:	The Forest Service And Forest Preservation
Other Facet:	None

Area of Significance:

Area of Significance Category	Area of Significance Subcategory
Politics - Government	None
Architecture	None

Statement of Significance:

Marblemount Ranger Station Historic District is significant for its association with the event of the early federal government administration of the public lands of the North Cascades mountains (criterion A), and for its distinctive method of construction, associated with the US Forest Service Pacific Northwest architectural style of the period, evident in the remaining landscape characteristics and features (criterion C). For both National Register criteria, A and C, the period of significance is 1933 to 1942. This period reflects the years in which the ranger station was laid out by the Civilian Conservation Corps under US Forest Service (USFS) direction, and is the period to which the remaining landscape characteristics and features date.

Marblemount Ranger Station Historic District is associated with the early federal government administration of the North Cascades, as the site served as the Skagit District Headquarters of the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest for all but two years of the USFS's 63-year administration of these lands. The USFS became the steward of the Washington Forest Reserve upon its inception as a government agency in 1905. Construction of a ranger station at the Marblemount site began in 1907, and the station was redeveloped between 1926 and 1942, under the direction of the Thomas Thompson, district ranger between 1915 and 1943. Marblemount was the administrative center of the Skagit District, which was developed with a system of subsidiary stations. Bacon Creek, Goodell Creek, Reflector Bar, Ruby, Roland, Lightning Creek, and Boundary comprised the system of Skagit District guard stations that existed within the boundaries of today's park complex. Today, Marblemount Ranger Station is the only former Skagit District ranger station remaining within the park. All of the other stations were either lost through inundation by Ross Lake waters, or through removal by the USFS or

NPS.

The Skagit Ranger District of the Mount Baker National Forest, and the Stehekin Ranger District of the Chelan National Forest, had very significant roles in shaping the physical landscape of what would eventually become North Cascades National Park Service Complex. Each district regulated land use and development, by managing timber sales, land surveys, fire protection, and the building of administrative and recreational facilities. In accordance with the agency's legislative mandate, the Marblemount Ranger Station (formerly-named Backus Ranger Station) issued permits for use of the Skagit District by outside parties, such as individuals and companies interested in hydroelectric production, mining, logging, trapping, roadhouse operations, fish planting and recreation home building within the district. Ranger activities were also coordinated out of Marblemount Ranger Station by the district ranger, which included the construction of an extensive network of trails and phone lines for fire control, a system of fire lookouts, and an array of campgrounds and trail shelters within the district. As a district headquarters for 61 years before the transfer of administration to the NPS, Marblemount Ranger Station had a primary role in the shaping of land within much of today's national park complex. Marblemount Ranger Station is significant on a state level for its association with the early federal government administration of the public lands within the North Cascades mountains.

Marblemount Ranger Station Historic District is also associated with the distinctive method of construction of the USFS Pacific Northwest architectural style of the period. The USFS Pacific Northwest style was based upon the regional vernacular, the Arts and Crafts Movement and the National Park Service Rustic. This style was perpetuated by USFS Region 6 in the design of administrative facilities between 1891 and 1942. The style was developed to be harmonious with nature, economic in the use of materials, and fitting with the function of a particular building or structure. Typically, buildings and structures were designed predominantly of wood, with a simple frame, a gable shingle roof and shiplap or shingle sheathing. The sheathing was either painted or stained in natural or neutral colors to render it inconspicuous. French gray or silver gray shingle stain was the preferred medium, as the gray colors conferred a weathered appearance, rather like native cedar. As noted by E. Gail Throop in her report "A Character Expression, A Thematic Evaluation of Forest Service Depression-Era Administrative Buildings in the Pacific Northwest," by 1935, the distinctive Pacific Northwest rustic idiom appeared consistently, though its expression varied from highly stylistic to simply utilitarian. Throop has identified ten stylistic attributes of the USFS Pacific Northwest style, though these attributes alone do not represent the entirety of the style. Typically, at least five of the ten attributes are present in each building or structure: native construction materials, varied exterior treatment with the juxtaposition of two or more textures, gable roofs in simple or complex shapes repeated in dormers or porches, heavy timber posts, multipaned windows, covered entries, dormers, shutters, interior and exterior chimneys, and a tree symbol decoration or motif in cutwork. All of the remaining buildings within the Marblemount Ranger Station historic district display attributes of the USFS Pacific Northwest rustic style. In addition to the architectural style of the historic buildings, the development signature of the USFS is still apparent within the historic district through the surviving patterns or landscape characteristics of spatial organization, land use, circulation, and vegetation. These patterns reflect USFS site planning principles for administrative complexes built in the 1930s, as identified by the 1938 USFS document, entitled "Acceptable Building Plans". These

principles called for ease of vehicular circulation within the site, ready ingress and egress to connecting roads, the arrangement of buildings according to their function, the separation of public, semi-public, and service portions of the site, and the siting of facilities so that complete control, surveillance or supervision by direct observation would ensure efficient operation of the site.

The historic significance of Marblemount Ranger Station in association with criterion A and C is evident in the remaining landscape characteristics and features: spatial organization, land use, buildings and structures, circulation and vegetation. The landscape characteristic spatial organization is reflected in the extant layout of the historic district, representing the layout of Backus Ranger Station, during the period of significance. Land use remains a landscape characteristic because the overall types and locations of uses within the district are unchanged. The landscape characteristic buildings and structures is reflected in the remaining utilitarian and residential buildings that date from the historic period. Despite some modifications to these buildings, and some contemporary infill, the siting of the infill has been consistent with USFS site planning principles of the 1930s, and the 1930s buildings and structures still retain attributes of the USFS Pacific Northwest style of architecture. The landscape characteristic circulation is reflected in the overall unchanging types and distribution of vegetation, the forest buffer at the rear of the buildings, the trees and ornamental plantings around the former district ranger's residence, and the grasses within the open meadow area. These landscape characteristics, spatial organization, land use, buildings and structures, circulation, vegetation, and their associated features, still convey the physical character of Backus Ranger Station, as it was developed by the Civilian Conservation Corps under direction by the USFS between 1933 and 1942.

National Historic Landmark Information

National Historic Landmark Status: No

World Heritage Site Information

World Heritage Site Status: No

Chronology & Physical History

Cultural Landscape Type and Use

Cultural Landscape Type:	Historic Site
Other Use/Function	Other Type of Use or Function
Ranger Station	Both Current And Historic

Current and Historic Names:

Name	Type of Name
Backus Ranger Station	Historic
Marblemount Ranger Station	Both Current And Historic
Skagit Ranger Station	Both Current And Historic

Ethnographic Study Conducted: No Survey Conducted

Chronology:

Year	Event	Annotation
AD 1880 - 1890	Settled	Euro-Americans settled at the confluence of the Cascade and Skagit Rivers, and founded the town of Marblemount.
AD 1897	Established	Washington National Forest was established, covering 5600 square miles of the North Cascades mountains.
AD 1897	Homesteaded	Frank Backus received a homestead patent for his land at Marblemount.
AD 1907	Land Transfer	The newly-formed Forest Service acquired Frank Backus' homestead at Marblemount, along with some adjacent tracts of land. The ranger station was called "Backus Ranger Station."
AD 1908	Built	The first building, a residence/office, was built at Marblemount (Backus) Ranger Station in Marblemount.
AD 1908	Established	Marblemount was designated the headquarters of the Washington National Forest Skagit District, and a ranger station was proposed.
AD 1908	Established	Washington National Forest was established, replacing the former Washington Forest Reserve. The Forest had four districts, of which the Skagit was the largest.
AD 1915	Built	By 1915, a barn, chicken house, woodshed and entry gate had been built at Marblemount (Backus) Ranger Station by the District Ranger.
AD 1924	Established	Washington National Forest was renamed Mount Baker National Forest.
AD 1926	Built	A second residence/office was built, replacing the earlier residence/office.
AD 1929	Built	Another residence was built beside the 1926 residence/office.
AD 1933	Built	A gambrel-roof barn was built by the CCC.

Marblemount Ranger Station Historic District
North Cascades National Park

AD 1933	Built	Two residences were built by the CCC, including one for the District Ranger with a chicken coop and a woodshed.
AD 1933 - 1942	Built	The CCC built numerous buildings, roads, pathways, fences, and gates, and also planted trees and shrubs at Marblemount (Backus) Ranger Station.
AD 1937	Built	An R&T storage building was built by the CCC, along with a fire and tool warehouse, a shop, an oil house, and a three-car garage.
AD 1942	Built	By 1942, a loop road had been built around a central meadow, and a main entrance arch had been erected at the northeast corner of the ranger station. A rustic wooden fence and arbor had been built in front of the District Ranger's residence.
AD 1949	Established	The name of Backus Ranger Station was changed to Marblemount Ranger Station.
AD 1957	Established	The USFS launched Operations Outdoors, their equivalent of the NPS's Mission 66 program.
AD 1957 - 1962	Removed	The 1926 residence was removed.
AD 1960 - 1969	Removed	The 1930s barn was removed.
AD 1968	Retained	North Cascades National Park was established. Marblemount Ranger Station continued to serve as an NPS Ranger Station.
AD 1970 - 1979	Established	The Ranger Station was renamed "Skagit Ranger Station."
AD 1970 - 1979	Maintained	Buildings were reroofed; foundations, windows, and framing members were replaced, largely in-kind.
AD 1976	Built	The breezeway was constructed to attach the R&T Storage and the Warehouse to create additional storage space.
AD 1977	Removed	By this year, the 1930s shop was removed.

Marblemount Ranger Station Historic District
North Cascades National Park

AD 1977	Removed	The 1930s oil house was removed. A propane storage buildings or gas house was built in its location.
AD 1978	Built	A lumber storage shed was built.
AD 1980 - 1989	Moved	One of the 1930s residences was moved to Clark's Cabins on HW 20. The 1929 residence was moved to its location.
AD 1993	Established	The ranger station was renamed "Marblemount Ranger Station."
AD 1930 - 1939	Ranched/Grazed	During the 1930s the meadow was fenced and used for grazing livestock and passive recreation.

Physical History:

1880-1929

The first Euro-American settlers arrived in the upper Skagit River valley during the 1880s. The small town of Marblemount was founded at the end of the Skagit River Trail, at the confluence of the Skagit and the Cascade Rivers. A ferry crossing of the Skagit River was established at Marblemount.

The administrative history of National Forests began in 1891, when the passage of the Withdrawal or Creative Act gave legislative authority for the creation of Forest Reserves. Washington Forest Reserve was created in 1897 on land encompassing both sides of the North Cascades mountains, an area approximately 5600 square miles in size. For the first several years, the General Land Office within the Department of Interior undertook the administration of Forest Reserves.

By 1894, Marblemount was indicated on a General Land Office Map as a townsite with a store.

The town had become an important stopping point along the Skagit River Trail, where it served miners, trappers, and packers with supplies and lodging. Three years later, in 1897, a homesteader named Frank Backus received a patent for proving up on his homestead at Marblemount.

In 1905, the responsibility for the administration of Forest Reserves was transferred to the US Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Forestry. Later that same year, the Bureau became the US Forest Service (USFS). Two years later, in 1907, the USFS acquired Frank Backus' homestead at Marblemount. Other tracts in the NW part of section 12 T35N R10E were also acquired. During 1907, the Forest Reserves were renamed National Forests.

Washington National Forest was formed in 1908 with four ranger districts: the Glacier, Baker River, Suiattle, and Skagit. Of these districts, the Skagit had the largest area. The USFS sited a number of ranger stations at this time, and began development within the four districts. Backus Ranger Station was established at Marblemount in the NW part of section 12, on land that included the former Backus homestead. The Backus Ranger Station was designated as the district headquarters of the Skagit District. Other ranger stations developed within the Skagit District included Bacon Creek, Babcock Creek, Reflector Bar, Ruby Creek and Boundary Ranger Stations. These ranger stations were all developed on the buildable land of river terraces within the Skagit drainage. In most cases, a homesteader or squatter had already cleared the land of trees, and when the USFS acquired the land homesteaders were compensated for the improvements made. The typical ranger station had a residence-cum-office, a barn, and a fenced clearing of about 3 acres. Of all of these early ranger stations, Backus (now Marblemount Ranger Station) is the only remaining ranger station in the Skagit District dating from this period, as the others were later abandoned or inundated by Ross Lake flood waters.

Ranger Axel Larson built the first USFS building at Backus Ranger Station, a

residence-cum-office. This was a small, one story, wood frame, hip-roofed house with 4 rooms. Al Conrad was the first resident district ranger. Al Conrad was succeeded by the following Skagit district rangers at Backus Ranger Station: Thomas Thompson 1915-1943; Hubert Wilson 1943-1946; Walfred Moisio 1946-1953; and Frank Lewis 1953-1968.

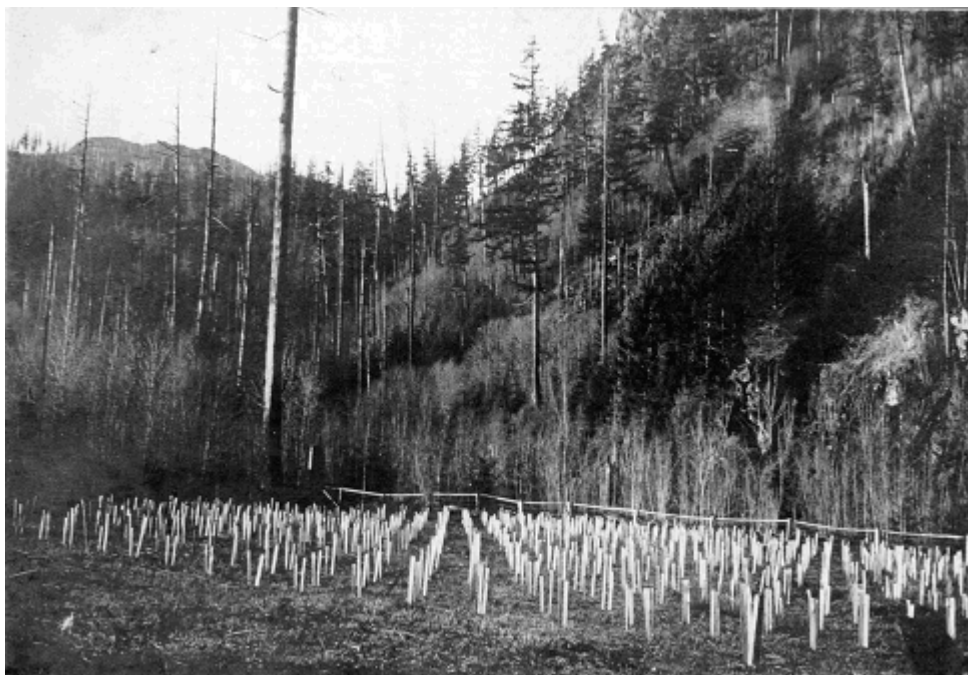
By 1915, a barn, chicken house, woodshed, and an entry gate had been built at Backus Ranger Station. Ranger Henry Soll built the first barn. At this time, Thomas Thompson took over the position of Skagit district ranger, an appointment he held until 1943. Thompson was the longest serving district ranger in the Skagit District, and had the largest influence over the development of Backus Ranger Station until 1943. During his tenure, Thompson planted an experimental grove of Northern red oaks (*Quercus rubra*) on the ranger station, to investigate their potential for timber products. He also planted an oak in the open meadow area of the ranger station. The "Council Oak" still survives as a specimen tree. Additionally, the oak grove still remains.

During the 1920s, Washington National Forest was renamed Mt. Baker National Forest. A USFS Supervisor's Inspection Report indicated in 1921 that the land of Backus Ranger Station was well cultivated with rotating crops by this time, that fences were well kept, and outhouses in good repair. The report praised the location of the ranger station, saying that it was well sited for accessibility, and water and pasture availability. By this time, the land had been cleared and most of the stumps removed.

In 1926, the district ranger's residence-cum-office built in 1908 was replaced by another residence-cum-office. The new shingled-sided building was a gable-roofed frame house with a gable-roofed porch on the left side of the front facade. This building may have been built in a location close to the first residence. In 1929, a building was constructed on the north side of the 1926 residence-cum-office. The 1929 building was a mirror image of the former building in design, and this building served as a residence. The gable-roofed porch of the new residence was located on the right side of the front facade. The 1926 building then served solely as the ranger station office.



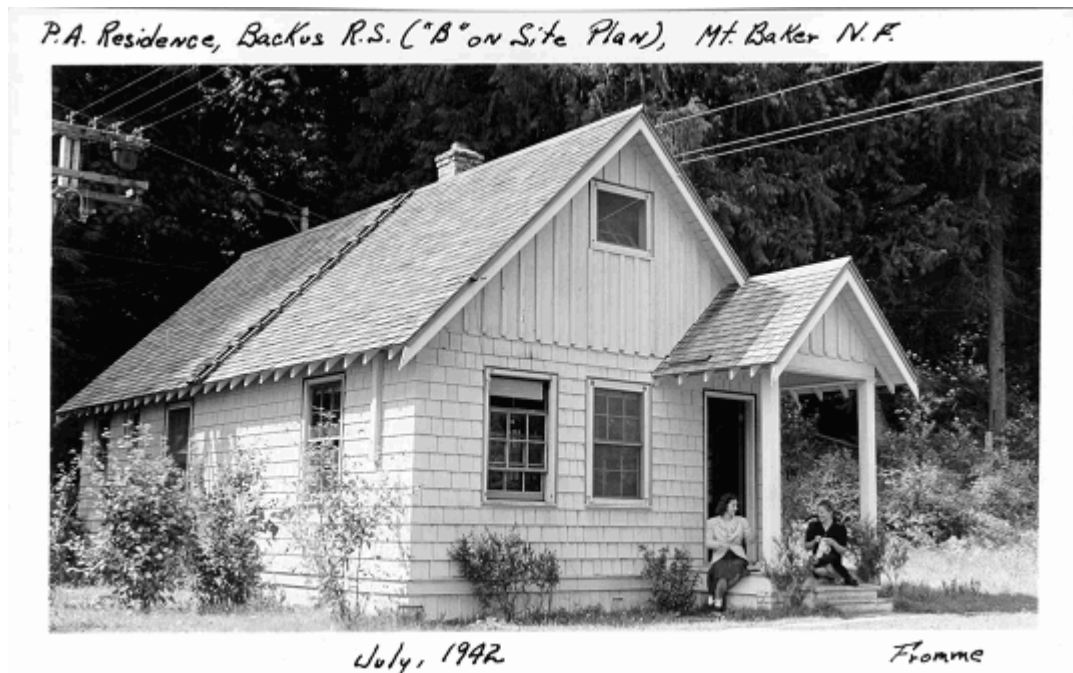
The first district ranger's house at Marblemount (Backus) Ranger Station, ca. 1916. Note the flagpole in front of the house and the barn and chicken coop in the rear (NOCA 11589, ca. 1916). This house was removed during the period of significance.



*Historic photograph of Thomas Thompson's plantation of Northern red oaks (*Quercus rubra*) at Marblemount (Backus) Ranger Station (NOCA 11266, no date).*



The 1926 Marblemount (Backus) Ranger Station office building in 1942. Note the ornamental foundation plantings around the buildings and the sign for camp fire permits (NOCA 11287, 1942). This residence was removed in the late 1950s-early 1960s.



The second residence (building 1009) at Marblemount (Backus) Ranger Station, built in 1929. Note the ornamental foundation plantings (NOCA 11380, 1942). This residence was moved in the 1980s.

1933-1942

Backus Ranger Station more than doubled in size during the 1930s, due to an ambitious development program made possible through New Deal Emergency Conservation Work, that was implemented by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) between 1933 and 1942. During the New Deal era, there were 50 CCC camps in Washington State, with the closest CCC camp to Backus Ranger Station at Bacon Creek, called Skagit Camp #F-13. Skagit Camp was established in 1933 with a crew from Illinois. Each CCC camp had 5 army officers, 200 CCC enrollees and 45 "Local Experienced Men." The CCC built numerous buildings, roads, pathways, fences and gates at Backus Ranger Station, and also planted trees and shrubs. The CCC built a row of buildings on axis with the 1926 office and 1929 residence with an even setback along a gravel loop road. Starting at the south end and working towards the 1929 residence at the north end of the row, the CCC built a barn, an R&T storage building, a fire and tool warehouse, a shop, an oil house, and a three-car garage. A Western red cedar was planted on the north side of the three-car garage, separating the row of utilitarian buildings from the office and residence to the north (this tree still exists). The CCC also built two other residences at Backus Ranger Station, to form a semi-circular cluster of residences at the north end. One of these residences was the largest residence on the ranger station, and had the most commanding view of the whole ranger station through a longitudinal open meadow area and along the row of utilitarian buildings. The largest residence became the district ranger's residence (building 1010), and had a chicken coop and woodshed in the rear. This residence

also had more elaborate ornamental plantings, and a whole-log rustic fence and arbor-gate separating the front yard from the rest of the ranger station.

Two more districts were added to the Mt. Baker National Forest in 1936, the Darrington and the Monte Cristo, however, the Skagit remained by far the largest district in the Mt. Baker National Forest, with more than 700, 000 acres.

By the time the CCC completed their work at Backus in 1942, the ranger station had ten buildings, including 3 residences, one with a chicken coop and woodshed, and a barn, a storage building, a warehouse, a shop, an oil house and a garage. Each building exemplified the USFS Pacific Northwest style of design in administration buildings of the period. The one-and-a-half story barn had board and batten siding and a gambrel cedar-shingled roof. The R&T storage building had narrow shiplap siding, and a gabled, cedar-shingled roof with an eve extension over the front porch. The warehouse had narrow shiplap siding and a gabled, cedar-shingled roof with four wood, doublewide garage doors with cross bracing along the front façade. The shop (or fire truck and tool storage building) had narrow shiplap siding, and a gabled, cedar-shingled roof with a shed porch over the front door. The shop had a wood garage door with cross bracing. The oil house had shingle siding, with a sheet metal gable roof. The roof projected over the first story, to form a Porte Cochere over the gas and water pumps below. The gable end of the oil house had board and batten siding. The three-car garage had shingle siding, and a gabled, cedar-shingled roof. The garage was three bays wide, and had three, doublewide wood garage doors with cross bracing, occupying the entire front façade. The office had shingle siding, with a gabled, shingled roof and a brick chimney. A gable porch extended over the front door on the left side of the façade, and board and batten siding covered the gable ends of the roof and porch. The office had six over six-sash windows. The residence immediately to the north was a mirror image of the office building, with a gable porch on the right side of the front façade. The district ranger's residence had wide shingle siding, with a gabled, cedar shingled roof. This residence had simple one over one-sash windows, board and batten gable ends, and a brick chimney. It also had decorative trellis and stick work surrounding the small, gabled front porch. The woodshed and chicken coop of the district ranger's residence were built as simple gable roofed structures, with cedar shingle roofs. The woodshed had lath siding, and the chicken coop had wide shiplap siding. The CCC followed USFS standard building specifications in constructing these buildings.

By 1942, a loop road had been built around the ranger station, and a fence line separated the ranger station from Ranger Station Road along the east boundary. The main entry was at the northeast corner, where a peeled log archway, built by the CCC, demarcated the entrance. From here, the road headed west towards the ranger station office, where Mt. Baker National Forest visitors could park their cars and obtain a campfire permit. Where the road met the row of utilitarian buildings on the west side of the ranger station, the road turned south, and followed along the row of buildings to the shop, where it turned east, and headed back to meet Ranger Station road. Here, the road exited through a peeled log gate into Ranger Station Road. A fenced meadow occupied the core of Backus Ranger Station. This area was used to hold pack animals, or graze livestock. The meadow was bordered on the east by a peeled log fence along Ranger Station Road, and a post and wire fence to the south. A large pasture existed to the

south, which was most accessible to the barn. This was used for grazing animals, and may have also been used for cultivating crops for subsistence. The spatial organization or layout of Backus Ranger Station may or may not have followed a formal master plan. A master plan has not been found. The USFS had very few landscape architects in the entire service by the 1930s, and generally, the layout of improvements, such as campgrounds, trails, picnic areas, and ranger stations was left to foresters and district rangers. It is highly probable that the long-term Skagit district ranger and resident of Backus Ranger Station, Thomas Thompson, had the greatest influence over the location of the ranger station's facilities. However, the plan of the site did conform to standard USFS site planning policy in the 1930s.

A 1938 USFS document entitled "Acceptable Building Plans" made the following recommendations regarding site planning of administrative facilities:

Accessibility, represented by ingress and egress from highway or other roads is very important.

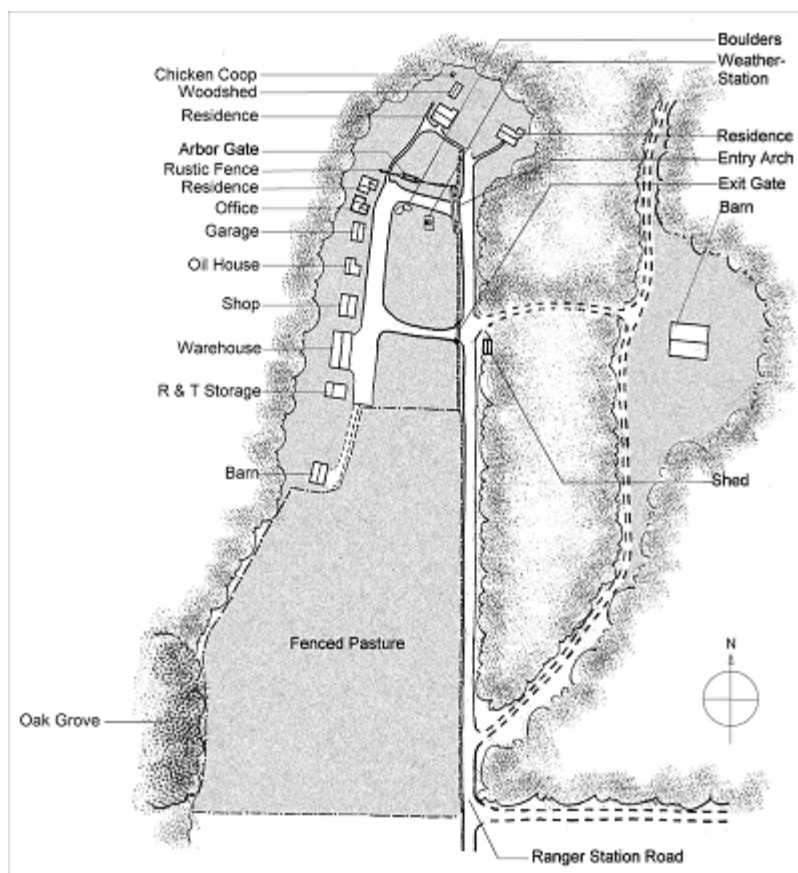
Vehicular circulation within the ranger station itself is very important, including the Service Court, and Parking Areas, etc.

Complete control, surveillance and supervision by direct observation to insure full knowledge of personnel performance and efficient operation at all times, is very important.

Separation of public, semi public, and service portions is very important, to avoid interference or interruption in their operation. Arrangement of buildings according to the above functions will simultaneously relate them to each other, with reference to their particular purposes, utility and efficiency.

Buildings of a group should possess similarity of character and appearance. Only such structures as are absolutely essential to fulfill specific requirements and then only of designs that harmonize with Nature's particular environment are recommended.

By 1942, the site plan of the completed Backus Ranger Station was consistent with these recommendations.



Site plan of the Marblemount Ranger Station in 1942 after completion of construction by the Civilian Conservation Corps (PWRO-Seattle, 1999). See the appendix for a larger version of this map.



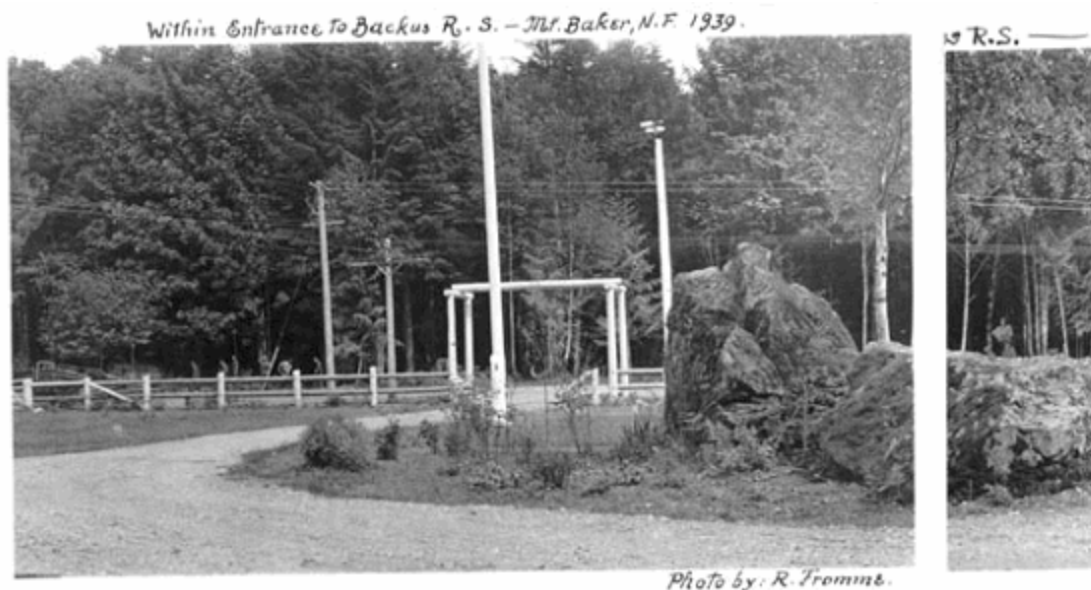
Historic photograph of Marblemount (Backus) Ranger Station, viewed looking north and west from Ranger Station Road. Note the row of utilitarian buildings built by the CCC and the fenced pasture (NOCA 11321, 1942).



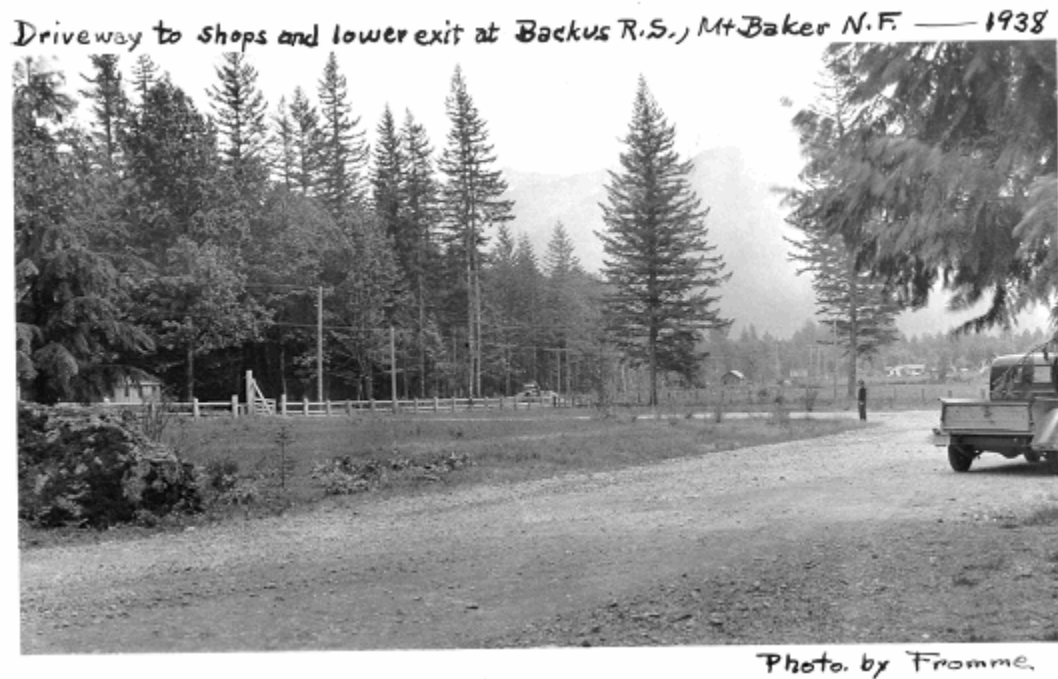
The District Ranger's Residence (building 1010) at Marblemount (Backus) Ranger Station in the 1930s. Note the ornamental plants and the trellises on either side of the front porch (NOCA 11289, 1942).



Historic photograph of the district ranger's residence at Marblemount (Backus) Ranger Station, showing a peeled log and stone rustic fence and arbor-gate in the front yard (NOCA 11296, 1942).



Overlaid historic photographs of Marblemount (Backus) Ranger Station, showing the north end of the ranger station and the main entrance. Note the gravel driveway, peeled log entrance arch, wooden fence, and glacial boulders (NOCA 11308, 1938).



Historic photograph of Marblemount (Backus) Ranger Station, looking south along the loop driveway. Noted the wood fence along Ranger Station Road with gated exit, and the central meadow area (USFS Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie Forest Headquarters, 1938).



The barn at Marblemount (Backus) Ranger Station, built by the CCC during the 1930s (NOCA 11295, 1942). This barn was removed in the 1960s.



Historic photograph of the R&T storage building at Marblemount (Backus) Ranger Station, built by the CCC during the 1930s (NOCA 11294, 1942).



Historic photograph of the warehouse building at Marblemount (Backus) Ranger Station, built by the CCC during the 1930s (NOCA 11293, 1942).



The shop at Marblemount (Backus) Ranger Station, built by the CCC during the 1930s (NOCA 11292, 1942). The shop was removed by 1977.



The oil house at Marblemount (Backus) Ranger Station, built by the CCC during the 1930s (NOCA 11291, 1942). This building was replaced in 1977 with a gas house.



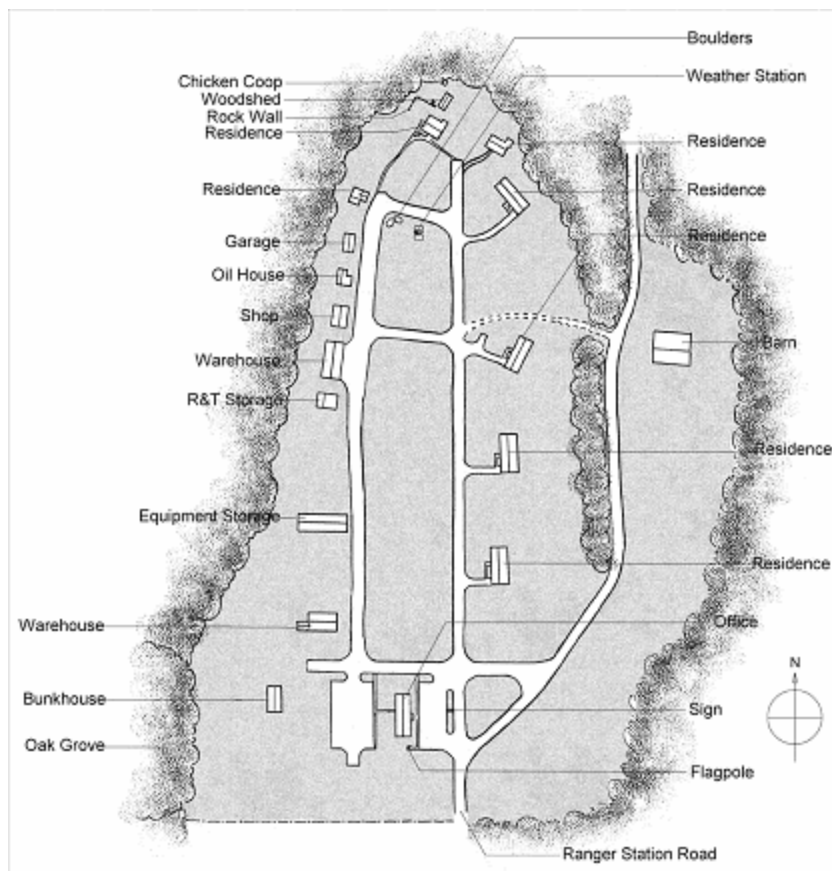
The 3-car garage at Marblemount (Backus) Ranger Station, built by the CCC in the 1930s. Note the Western red cedar on the right that separated residences from the row of utilitarian buildings (NOCA 11290, 1942).

1959-1967

In 1957, the USFS launched a capital improvements program called Operation Outdoors. Modeled after the National Park Service Mission 66 Program and conceived to run for five years, Operation Outdoors funded upgrades and expansions of facilities within the National Forests for recreation and administration purposes, to meet the accelerating demands of the post-war boom in population and automobile ownership. Under the auspices of this program, four new residences, a new office building, a bunkhouse, a warehouse (fire cache) and an equipment storage building were built at Marblemount Ranger Station (the name was changed from Backus in 1949). The new residences were built along the east side of Ranger Station Road, facing the 1930s row of utilitarian buildings. The new office, bunkhouse, warehouse and equipment storage buildings were sited at the south end of the ranger station and overall, the new construction expanded the developed area of the ranger station to the east and the south. The old, 1926 office building was removed, and a new loop road was added to the south of the 1930s loop. The architecture of the new buildings was modern, following USFS standard specifications. The architecture of one of the new residences (building 1015) was more highly articulated, however, as it was designed to be the new district ranger's residence, superseding the role of the largest residence built by the CCC. The new district ranger's residence was a ranch-style house with a built-in garage, like the other new residences, only it had more refined architectural details in the exterior and interior finishes.

In 1963, a master plan for Marblemount Ranger Station proposed expanding the number of facilities and circulation network. Not all of the proposals were implemented however, such as a parking lot proposed near the middle of the meadows area to the south of the ranger station, and a relocation of Ranger Station Road at the northeast end of the ranger station, to make a sweeping arc beside two diagonally-oriented new residences. The road was not relocated, however, and the diagonal orientation of the two residences in this location that were actually built, remains an anomaly, though a clue to the 1963 intent for the alignment of the road. One of the larger residences built during the 1930s by the CCC was slated for removal on the 1963 plan, though it was not relocated until the 1980s, when it was moved about 1 ½ miles away, to Clark's Cabins on HW 20 (where it can still be seen). The 1930s barn was slated for removal on the 1963 plan, and was subsequently removed. The 1930s shop to the north of the warehouse was not slated for removal on the 1963 plan, but was removed at some point before 1977. A heli-port was proposed on the 1963 plan and built in a pasture along Olson Creek Road, to the east of the main development. A barn, which had existed along Olson Creek Road since the 1940s, was slated for removal on the 1963 plan, and may have been removed and replaced by another one in the same location. The existing barn along Olson Creek Road is known to date from at least the early 1960s.

The development associated with the Operation Outdoors infusion of funding also included the planting of many trees around the new residences and other buildings at the ranger station. The more than 50 trees planted, documented more than 10 years later on a 1977 plan, were mostly non-native. These trees were planted for their ornamental flowering and fruiting qualities, and they supplemented the existing ornamental plants around the older residences of the ranger station. Approximately 15 Scots and Ponderosa Pine were planted in an island triangle at the southeast end of the ranger station, to be used as a picnic area for USFS staff. By the mid-1960s, the road system at the ranger station reflected the circulation visible today. The 1960s were a busy time for Marblemount Ranger Station, as the number of all-year round residents increased and the functions of the ranger station expanded. The central open meadow area had become the outdoor center of the ranger station community, and this functioned as a play space for resident children as well as a center for community activities.



Site plan of Marblemount Ranger Station in 1965, after a period of USFS development funded by the Operation Outdoors Program (PWRO-Seattle, 1999). See the appendix for a larger version of this map.

1968-Present

North Cascades National Park Service Complex was formed in 1968, and with it, most of the former Skagit District of the Mt. Baker National Forest was transferred to the NPS. The remaining Mt. Baker National Forest was merged with Snoqualmie National Forest, and became the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest. Marblemount Ranger Station continued to serve as a ranger station, though for the NPS rather than the USFS.

In 1973, the USFS property at Marblemount was formally transferred to the NPS. During the 1970s, the NPS adopted the name “Skagit Ranger Station” for Marblemount Ranger Station. Using funds made available for the new administration, the NPS continued to expand the facilities at Skagit Ranger Station during the 1970s. Early on in the NPS administration, Ranger Station Road was truncated at the southern end of the ranger station, to prevent local traffic from circulating past the newer residences.

In 1976, a breezeway was built to connect the R&T storage building with the adjacent

warehouse. The intent of the addition of the breezeway was to provide additional storage space. The addition was part of a larger project at the time to rehabilitate most of the remaining 1930s buildings. The buildings were re-roofed, and foundations, windows, and framing members were replaced, largely in-kind. During 1977 the 1930s oil house was removed, and a propane storage building or gas house was built in its location. A lumber storage building was added in 1978, along the alignment of the row of 1930s utilitarian buildings. Also in 1978, a front porch was added to the 1959 ranger station office building.

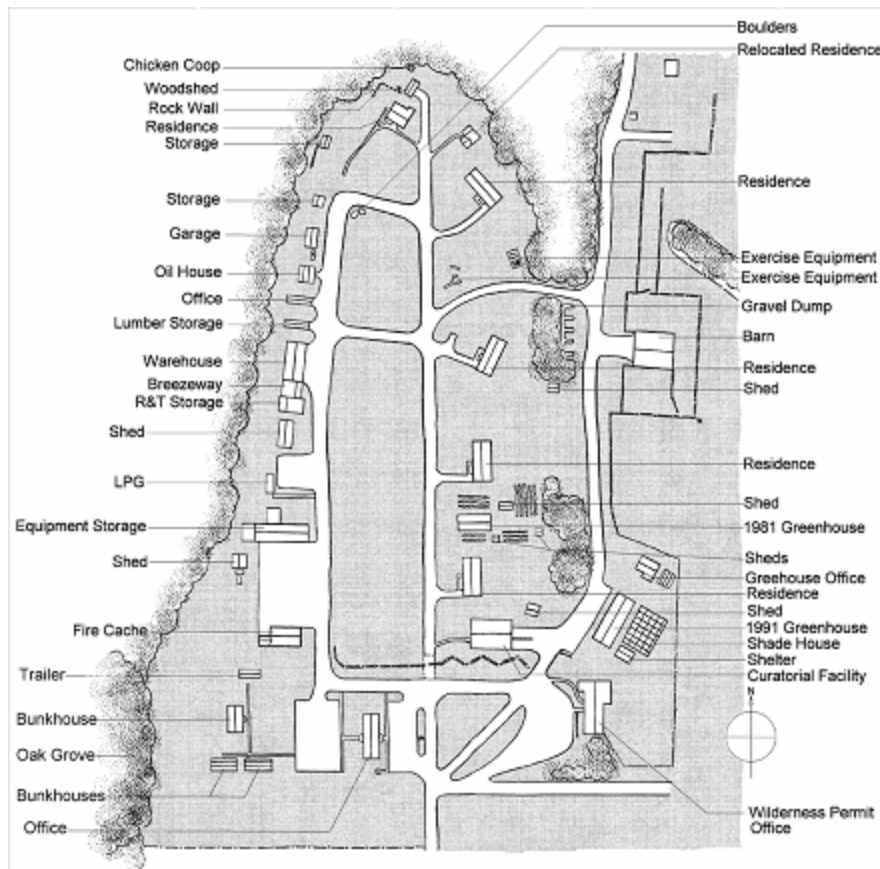
The greenhouse and subalpine revegetation program for North Cascades National Park Service Complex was begun with the building of a greenhouse at Skagit Ranger Station in 1981. The greenhouse was sited between two of the residences on the east side of the ranger station. A trailer shelter was also added at this time, which later became the Wilderness Permit Office.

During the 1980s, one of the 1930s residences was removed from the ranger station and relocated to Clark's Cabins on HW 20. The 1929 Backus Ranger Station residence was moved to the location of the 1930s residence, due to moisture problems in its original location.

The ranger station continued to grow into the 1990s. In 1991, a new greenhouse and shade structure was added near the Wilderness Permit Office along Olson Creek Road. In 1992, a curatorial facility was built near the 1959 residences along the truncated Ranger Station Road, and native plants were planted around the new facility.

In 1993, Skagit Ranger Station was formally renamed "Marblemount Ranger Station." Memorial trees, mostly apples and cherries, were planted at the south end of the ranger station within the open meadow area, in memory of a deceased NPS employee.

Marblemount Ranger Station Historic District
North Cascades National Park



Site plan of Marblemount Ranger Station in 1999, showing development from the 1970s to present (PWRO-Seattle, 1999). Note the 1942 road pattern, building layout, and central meadow are all still evident. See the appendix for a larger version of this map.



Contemporary photograph of the Marblemount Ranger Station Historic District taken from the District Rangers Residence, looking south (PWRO-Seattle, 2004).

Analysis & Evaluation of Integrity

Analysis and Evaluation of Integrity Narrative Summary:

Marblemount Ranger Station Historic District retains integrity in the following landscape characteristics: spatial organization, land use, buildings and structures, circulation, and vegetation. The landscape characteristic spatial organization is reflected in the extant layout of the historic district, representing the layout of Backus Ranger Station during the period of significance, 1933 to 1942. Land use remains a landscape characteristic because the overall types and location of uses within the district are unchanged: the residential area is still used for living quarters, the row of utilitarian buildings continues to serve this function, and the central meadow area is still open space, used for community activities. The landscape characteristic buildings and structures is reflected in the remaining utilitarian and residential buildings that date from the period of significance. Despite some modifications to these buildings and some contemporary infill around them, the siting of the infill has been consistent with USFS site planning principles of the 1930s, and the 1930s buildings and structures still reflect the USFS Pacific Northwest style that was typical during the period of significance. The landscape characteristic circulation is reflected in the pattern and alignment of Ranger Station Road and the loop driveway, along with the paths connecting residences with the loop driveway. The landscape characteristic vegetation is reflected in the overall unchanging types and distribution of vegetation, the forest buffer at the rear of the buildings, the trees and ornamental plantings around the former District Ranger's residence, and the grasses within the open meadow area. These landscape characteristics, spatial organization, land use, buildings and structures, circulation, vegetation, and their associated features, still convey the physical character of Backus Ranger Station as it was developed by the USFS and the CCC between 1933 and 1942.

Landscape Characteristic:

Spatial Organization

The spatial organization of the approximately 4 acres that make up the historic core of Marblemount Ranger Station is relatively unchanged since the 1930s. The spatial organization was formed by the arrangement of the road, buildings and vegetation. The spatial organization was laid out with a circular road delineating an open meadow area in the center of the ranger station. Buildings and structures were located around the outer periphery of the circular road, oriented towards the central open space. Vegetation in the central space was managed as low grass or meadow plants, to maintain the space as an open area for various uses. The site was bounded to the north and west by forest canopy, to the east by Ranger Station Road, and to the south by a fence delineating pasturelands. The spatial organization of the 1930s ranger station was laid out according to USFS site planning principles. These principles called for ease of vehicular circulation within the site; ready ingress and egress to connecting roads; arrangement of buildings according to their functions; separation of public, semi-public and service portions of the site, and siting of facilities so that complete control, surveillance or supervision by direct observation would ensure efficient operation. Consequently, the spatial organization of the ranger station was shaped by the need for a strong circulation network and with public, semi-public and service portions separated. A residential area was discretely located at the

north end of the ranger station, the District Ranger's Office was located near the main public access point, and utilitarian buildings were grouped together in a row, where they were clearly visible across the central open meadow. Additionally, the District Ranger's house was oriented to command a view of the entire ranger station.

This pattern of spatial organization still exists within the historic district today, despite alterations and additions that have occurred since 1942. The district is still organized around a central open space, with buildings located at the periphery and oriented towards the center. A loop road still delineates the central open space, and the cluster of residential buildings and row of utilitarian buildings remain separated. While some buildings and structures have been removed and others added, the new additions have not modified the historic pattern of spatial organization and have conformed to the USFS site planning principles in use in the 1930s. Therefore, Marblemount Ranger Station Historic District retains integrity of the landscape characteristic spatial organization.

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



This photo from the District Ranger's Residence porch reveals the commanding view created by careful siting of the house. The looped road, central open area, and maintenance area are all visible (PWRO-Seattle, 2004).

Land Use

Patterns of land use are relatively unchanged within the historic core of Marblemount Ranger Station since the 1930s.

During the 1933-1942 period of development by the CCC, the ranger station was laid out with spatially separated land uses. These land uses included maintenance activities, livestock grazing, residential use, and passive recreation. Maintenance activities included storage and repair of equipment and machinery which was accommodated within a row of utilitarian buildings along the western edge of the looped road. A central open space (or meadow) was used for holding pack animals, graze livestock, and for passive recreation. (More details about the meadow are located in the history section 1933-1942.) Ranger station residents lived in the houses clustered at the northern end of the development. This pattern of separated land uses was consistent with USFS site planning principals of the 1930s.

The separation of uses, the types of uses, and their locations still remain intact within the historic district. The row of utilitarian structures is still used for equipment storage and covered work areas, and is the center for maintenance operations in the park. The residential area is used for housing seasonal employees. The central meadow area is no longer used to graze livestock, but is still used for passive recreation.

Buildings And Structures

Buildings and structures is a landscape characteristic of Marblemount Ranger Station Historic District. Eight out of the twelve original buildings and structures at Marblemount Ranger Station still exist in the historic district, where they retain integrity and continue to evoke the character of the USFS ranger station constructed in the 1930s. The remaining buildings and structures include most of the original utilitarian buildings, and most of the original residential buildings. These buildings contribute to the significance of the historic district, as they retain their original architectural character and similar functions and provide articulation to the spatial organization of the ranger station. These buildings are listed as contributing features in the list below. The remaining structures, distinguishable from buildings as uninhabitable architectural forms, are the woodshed, the chicken coop, and the rock wall and steps of the 1930s District Ranger's house. These structures also contribute to the significance of the district, as they retain their original architectural character, and continue to evoke the built form of Marblemount Ranger Station in the 1930s.

The USFS Pacific Northwest rustic style of architecture was derived from the regional rural vernacular, the Arts and Crafts Movement and National Park Service Rustic, and perpetuated by USFS Region 6 in the design of administrative facilities between 1891 and 1942. The style was intended to be harmonious with nature, economic in use of materials, and fitting with the function of a particular building or structure. Typically, buildings and structures were designed predominantly of wood, with a simple frame, a gable shingle roof and shiplap or shingle sheathing. The sheathing was either painted or stained in natural or neutral colors to render it inconspicuous. French gray or silver gray shingle stain was the preferred medium, as the gray colors conferred a weathered appearance, rather like native cedar. As noted by E. Gail Throop in her report "A Character Expression, A Thematic Evaluation of Forest Service Depression-Era Administrative Buildings in the Pacific Northwest," by 1935, the distinctive Pacific Northwest rustic idiom appeared consistently, though its expression varied from highly stylistic to simply utilitarian. Throop has identified ten stylistic attributes of the USFS Pacific Northwest rustic style, though these attributes alone do not represent the entirety of the style.

Typically, at least five of the ten attributes are present in each building or structure: native construction materials, varied exterior treatment with the juxtaposition of two or more textures, gable roofs in simple or complex shapes repeated in dormers or porches, heavy timber posts, multipaned windows, covered entries, dormers, shutters, interior and exterior chimneys, and a tree symbol decoration or motif in cutwork. All of the remaining buildings and structures within the historic district still retain attributes of the USFS Pacific Northwest rustic style.

Contributing Buildings and Structures

Some modifications to the original buildings have occurred since the end of the period of significance in 1942. A breezeway was added to connect the R&T storage building with the warehouse in the 1970s. The new breezeway connected the side facades of the original buildings, but did not modify their front facades, overall size or roof line. The breezeway was designed with an architectural style compatible to the original buildings, and did not destroy the USFS 1930s architecture of the R&T storage building or the warehouse.

The three-car garage has also been modified. The front garage doors have been removed, but the interior of the building remains divided into three separate bays, indicating the intended design for the storage of three vehicles. The doors were removed to facilitate access to the interior of the building. Besides the loss of the front doors, the garage retains its original architecture.

In the residential area at the northend of the ranger station, four historic buildings and structures remain. Four of them, the historic District Rangers Residence (building 1010), the Chicken Coop, the Woodshed, and the rock wall, all remain in their historic location. The fourth building, the 1929 Residence (building 1009), was moved to its current location after the period of significance. The 1929 Residence was moved to historic site of a 1930s residence that was removed. While the location of the 1929 Residence has changed, the new location and orientation of the building is consistent with USFS site planning principles applied in the construction of Marblemount (Backus) Ranger Station. The relocated residence remains within the residential area, and is sited with the same location and orientation as the former residence, therefore retaining the same relationship to the ranger station. This residence and the District Rangers Residence were listed on the National Register in 1988.

Non-Contributing Buildings and Structures

Five new buildings or structures have been added to the historic district since 1942, and one original structure has been completely modified for a new use, totaling six non-contributing buildings and structures within the historic district. These are listed below. These buildings and structures vary in their relative compatibility with the remaining original buildings. Generally, all the new buildings have been sited in locations that former buildings occupied, and they are consistent with the original site planning of Marblemount Ranger Station; i.e., utilitarian and residential functions remain separate, and the buildings exist in a similar arrangement and orientation as the originals, therefore not affecting the spatial organization of the historic district.

In summary, buildings and structures is a landscape characteristic of the Marblemount Ranger Station Historic District, with eight buildings and structures contributing to the significance of the district.

Character-defining Features:

Feature: 1930s District Ranger's Residence, Marblemount Ranger Station

Feature Identification Number: 104885

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

IDLCS Number: 30114

LCS Structure Name: RESIDENCE, BACKUS RANGER STATION

LCS Structure Number: 1010

Feature: Breezeway between Warehouse and R&T Storage Building

Feature Identification Number: 104886

Type of Feature Contribution: Non-Contributing

Feature: Chicken Coop of 1930s District Ranger's Residence

Feature Identification Number: 104887

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Gas/Oil House, Marblemount Ranger Station (1007)

Feature Identification Number: 104888

Type of Feature Contribution: Non-Contributing

Feature: Lumber Storage Building 1028

Feature Identification Number: 104889

Type of Feature Contribution: Non-Contributing

Feature: Office Building 1025

Feature Identification Number: 104890

Type of Feature Contribution: Non-Contributing

Feature: R&T Storage Building, Marblemount Ranger Station

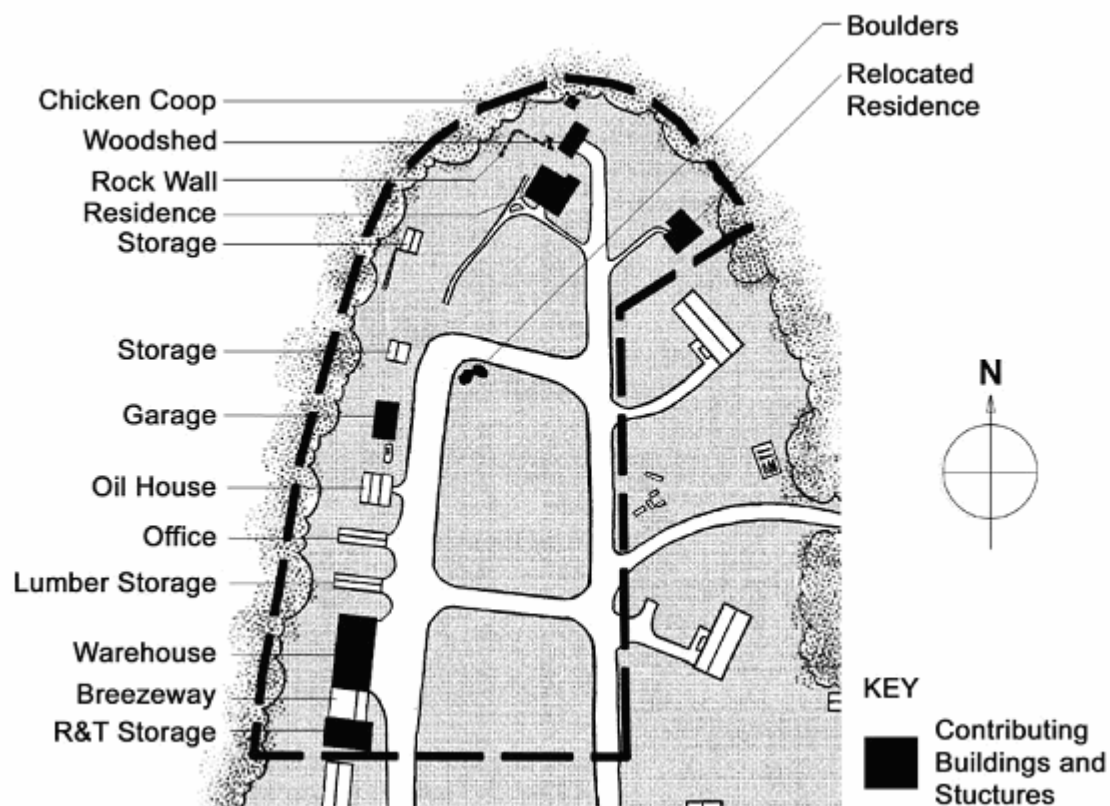
Feature Identification Number: 104891

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Marblemount Ranger Station Historic District
North Cascades National Park

IDLCS Number:	30154
LCS Structure Name:	SHOP, BACKUS/MARBLEMOUNT RANGER STATION
LCS Structure Number:	1006
Feature:	Residence, Marblemount Ranger Station
Feature Identification Number:	104892
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
IDLCS Number:	30113
LCS Structure Name:	RESIDENCE, BACKUS/MARBLEMOUNT RANGER STATION
LCS Structure Number:	1009
Feature:	Rock Wall and Steps of 1930s District Ranger's Residence Yard.
Feature Identification Number:	104893
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
Feature:	Storage Building
Feature Identification Number:	104894
Type of Feature Contribution:	Non-Contributing
Feature:	Storage Building (former chicken coop)
Feature Identification Number:	104895
Type of Feature Contribution:	Non-Contributing
Feature:	Three Car Garage, Marblemount Ranger Station
Feature Identification Number:	104896
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
Feature:	Warehouse, Marblemount Ranger Station
Feature Identification Number:	104897
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing
Feature:	Woodshed of 1930s District Ranger's Residence
Feature Identification Number:	104898
Type of Feature Contribution:	Contributing

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Buildings and structures that contribute to the significance of Marblemount Ranger Station Historic District (PWRO-Seattle, 2005).



The RT Storage building (left) and the warehouse (right) connected by a non-historic breezeway (PWRO-Seattle, 2004).



The garage (right) has had the front doors removed (PWRO-Seattle, 2004).



This residence (building 1009), built in 1929, was moved to its current location after the period of significance (PWRO-Seattle, 2004). Its current location was originally the site of a different residence.



The District Ranger's Residence (building 1010), constructed in the 1930s by the CCC (PWRO-Seattle, 2004).



Chicken coop located behind the District Ranger's Residence (PWRO-Seattle, 2004).



The Woodshed located behind the District Ranger's Residence (PWRO-Seattle, 2004).



*Rock wall, located along the western edge of the District Ranger's Residence
(PWRO-Seattle, 2004).*

Circulation

Patterns of circulation within Marblemount Ranger Station Historic District are relatively unchanged since the 1933 to 1942 period of significance. These patterns were important in the site planning of Backus Ranger Station, in keeping with 1930s site planning principles for USFS administrative facilities. These principles required ready access to connecting roads, good ingress and egress on the site, and a strong vehicular circulation system within the site itself. The loop road built in the 1930s by the CCC remains the primary organizing feature of the ranger station development, and is integral to the continued functioning of the original buildings and structures. The loop road, composed of one section of Ranger Station Road linking two east-west oriented roads with a north-south road alongside the row of utilitarian buildings, is relatively unchanged since the period of significance. While the original paving material has changed from gravel to asphalt, the scale and alignment of the road has not changed. The loop road is listed below as a contributing feature of the historic district.

The stretch of Ranger Station Road that runs through Marblemount Ranger Station also retains integrity as part of the original circulation system. While a barrier erected in the 1970s changed the direction of traffic flow, the road still exists in its entirety, and the barrier is a temporary structure that can be removed. Ranger Station Road pre-existed the development of Backus Ranger Station in the 1930s, and was aligned with a strict north-south orientation on the half

section line of section 12 T35N R10E. The construction of the road dates to the homesteading period, when Frank Backus laid claim to the land in the northwest quarter of the section. Ranger Station Road remains the primary access route to Marblemount Ranger Station, and is a contributing feature of the historic district.

The paths connecting the residences within the historic district with the loop road were built by the CCC and contribute to the significance of the historic district. These paths are indicated on the site plan of the historic district included in this document. These paths are concrete, two to three feet in width, and provide access to the front doors of each residence from the loop road. One pathway connected the 1929 residence with the 1930s District Ranger's house. While the 1929 residence has been relocated to the eastside of the District Ranger's house, the pathway that connected them still exists. Consequently, the pathway currently appears to terminate without purpose, but it provides a clue to the former existence of a residence at the terminal end of the pathway.

In summary, circulation is a landscape characteristic of Marblemount Ranger Station Historic District, as the roads and paths retain integrity from the period of significance and continue to evoke the historic character of the 1930s ranger station.

Character-defining Features:

Feature: Northern portion of Ranger Station Road

Feature Identification Number: 104900

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Loop Road

Feature Identification Number: 104899

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Paths of Residences

Feature Identification Number: 104901

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



The northern portion of Ranger Station Road appears much as it did historically in width and surface material (PWRO-Seattle, 2004).



A portion of the Loop Road in front of the Garage and non-historic Gas/Oil House still appears much as it did historically in width and surface material (PWRO-Seattle, 2004).



Historic concrete pathways to both residences still remain. This shows one of the walkways at the District Rangers Residence (PWRO-Seattle, 2004).

Vegetation

Vegetation is a landscape characteristic of the Marblemount Ranger Station Historic District as the overall types of vegetation that were planted or incorporated within Marblemount (Backus) Ranger Station remain relatively unchanged since the period of significance. The types of vegetation fall into three categories, the forest edge vegetation, the low grasses or lawn areas, and a mixture of native and non-native woody vegetation planted as either solitary specimens or as ornamental groupings at various locations within the district.

Forest vegetation along the north and west sides of the historic district, has existed since the period of significance, and continues to function as a boundary. The forest vegetation types are typical of the lowland coniferous forest in the region, dominated by Western red cedar, Douglas fir, and Western hemlock trees. Over the years, the forest canopy has grown and closed the gap between the forest edge and the ranger station development. Currently, the forest canopy is overhanging and encroaching on some of the historic buildings, where litter drop and moisture retention could potentially cause problems in the future. Historically, buildings were sited where they were not overhung by the forest canopy, as indicated by photographs from the 1930s.

Within the heart of the historic district, a mixture of low turf grasses form the majority of vegetation ground cover, as they have done since the 1930s. The maintenance of low grasses in the central open space or meadow area, enabled the space to accommodate a variety of uses. The maintenance of lawn or low grasses in other areas also enhanced visibility, accessibility and therefore efficiency throughout the ranger station. The presence of grass ground cover throughout the district contributes to the historic character of the ranger station.

A mixture of ornamental and native vegetation plantings also contribute to the historic character of the district. This vegetation includes a number of solitary coniferous or deciduous trees planted at various locations throughout the district, and at the historic District Ranger's Residence (building 1010), a mixture of non-native and native trees, shrubs, ground cover plants and ferns, were planted to create an ornamental garden. Here, the plants remain clustered in ornamental groupings of trees, shrubs, and sometimes ground covers and ferns. These groupings generally surround and define a space around the District Ranger's residence. A typical ornamental plant grouping includes a large tree under-planted with shrubs such as juniper, boxwood or rhododendron, and beneath the shrubs, ground cover such as periwinkle or ivy. Foundation plantings also remain in front of the residence, along with an ornamental stone rockery.

The mixture of native and non-native vegetation planted throughout the historic district is typical of USFS developments in the 1930s. While USFS administrative developments of the 1891-1942 period sought to harmonize with the natural scenery surrounding them, many USFS administrative facilities received ornamental plantings, creating a more domesticated landscape than equivalent NPS developments of the period. Often tree and bush fruits were planted, along with vegetable gardens and flowering plants. 1930s photographs of Marblemount (Backus) Ranger Station show foundation plantings in front of the ranger station office, of Irish yew and Japanese boxwood, among other plants.

In summary, the extant vegetation within the historic district contributes to the significance of the ranger station.

Character-defining Features:

Feature: 1930s District Ranger's Residence ornamental plantings

Feature Identification Number: 104902

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Forest vegetation boundary on north and west sides

Feature Identification Number: 104903

Type of Feature Contribution: Undetermined

Feature: Grassy meadow contained within the historic loop road.

Feature Identification Number: 104904

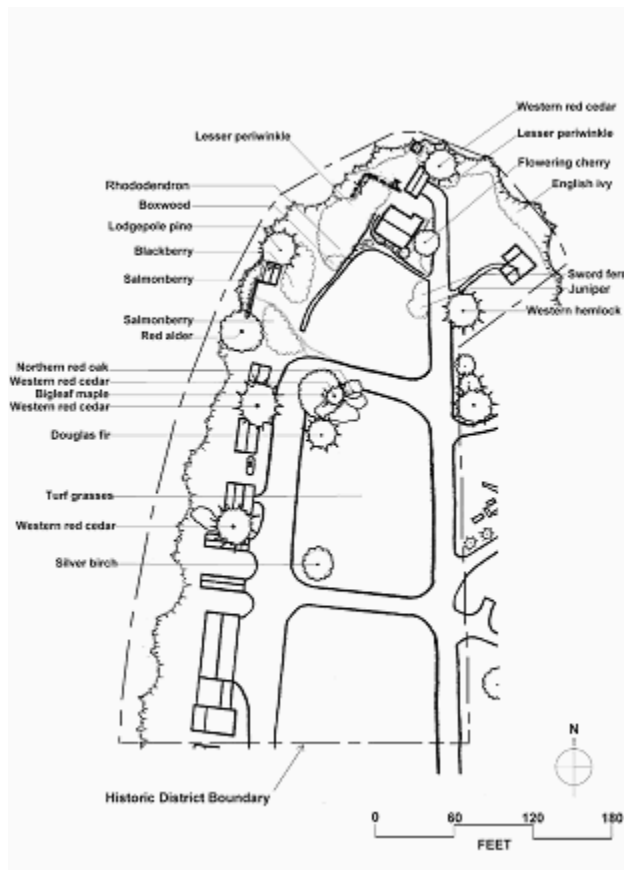
Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Native and non-native solitary trees throughout historic district

Feature Identification Number: 104905

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Plan of vegetation that contributes to the significance of Marblemount Ranger Station Historic District (PWRO-Seattle, 2005). See larger version of map in the appendix.





Mature coniferous forest creates a buffer along the western and northern edges of the historic district. Lawn is maintained in the central area (PWRO-Seattle, 2004).



Ornamental shrubs and perennials grow in historic plant beds around the District Rangers Residence (PWRO-Seattle, 2004).

Condition

Condition Assessment and Impacts

Condition Assessment: Fair
Assessment Date: 12/20/2006
Condition Assessment: Fair
Assessment Date: 09/30/1998

Stabilization Measures:

Drainage ditch or swale from south of the R&T storage building to historic residence 1010: The ditch is needed to intercept storm water draining from the hillside on the west side of the ranger station, and would therefore solve standing water problems around the historic buildings. The ditch would be made wide enough to be maintained by a machine, and the estimate for the project includes the costs of geotechnical design work and bank stabilization above the proposed ditch.

Vegetation management: Vegetation management includes the pruning back of tree canopies overhanging historic structures, and selective removal of seedling or volunteer trees encroaching upon the historic buildings.

Impacts

Type of Impact:	Deferred Maintenance
External or Internal:	Internal
Impact Description:	Vegetation has grown over and is obscuring some of the paths and rock walls within the historic district. Paths and rock walls/steps in the residential area should be redefined by the removal of vegetation.
Type of Impact:	Improper Drainage
External or Internal:	Internal
Impact Description:	Drainage problems behind the row of utilitarian buildings is causing pools of standing water around the building foundations -- the 1930s R&T storage building and the 1930s warehouse are among those affected by the drainage problems. Grading of a swale behind the buildings is needed, to intercept the stormwater that drains off the slope.
Type of Impact:	Operations On Site

External or Internal:	Internal
Impact Description:	Maintenance vehicles park on the lawn of the central meadow area, changing the character of the meadow and compacting the meadow grasses and soil.
Type of Impact:	Vegetation/Invasive Plants
External or Internal:	Internal
Impact Description:	Lack of vegetation management is an impact upon the condition of Marblemount Ranger Station Historic District. Currently, forest canopy is encroaching on the row of utilitarian structures, where it drops leaf and needle litter, causing moisture retention on building roofs and sheathing. The central meadow grasses are being compacted by vehicular parking, and is addressed above. Other woody vegetation planted around the historic structures and throughout the historic district is in need of remedial and rejuvenative pruning, or replacement. Ivy growing at the rear of the historic residences at the north end of the ranger station should be contained. It currently occupies a large area, and may suppress or kill the other remaining ornamental plants dating from the period of significance (such as periwinkle, boxwood, and rhododendron).

Stabilization Costs

Landscape Stabilization Cost: 55,000.00

Landscape Stabilization Cost Explanatory Description:

No stabilization costs were identified in the List of Classified Structures database for Marblemount Ranger Station. However, in 12/2000, approximately \$40,000 was needed to re-roof the historic warehouse and R&T storage buildings. Landscape stabilization costs were estimated with the assistance of Tom Belcher, NOCA Chief of Maintenance. In 1999, landscape stabilization work was estimated at \$55,000 and included the construction of a drainage ditch or swale from south of the R&T storage building to historic residence 1010, and some vegetation management. Funding for these projects has been approved and they are scheduled to be completed in FY2005.

The ditch is needed to intercept storm water draining from the hillside on the west side of the ranger station, and would therefore solve standing water problems around the historic buildings. The ditch would be made wide enough to be maintained by a machine, and the estimate for the project includes the costs of geotechnical design work and bank stabilization above the proposed ditch.

Vegetation management includes the pruning back of tree canopies overhanging historic structures, and selective removal of seedling or volunteer trees encroaching upon the historic buildings. Most of the

vegetation work can be done in-house.

Treatment

Treatment

Approved Treatment: Undetermined

Approved Treatment Costs

Landscape Treatment Cost: 0.00

Landscape Approved Treatment Cost Explanatory Description:

No treatment costs were identified in the List of Classified Structures database for Marblemount Ranger Station.

Bibliography and Supplemental Information

Bibliography

Citation Author: Luxenberg, Gretchen A.
Citation Title: Historic Resource Study, North Cascades National Park Service Complex, Washington
Year of Publication: 1986
Source Name: CRBIB
Citation Number: 013683
Citation Type: Both Graphic And Narrative
Citation Location: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Citation Author: Luxenberg, Gretchen A.
Citation Title: Historic Resource Study, North Cascades National Park Service Complex, Washington
Year of Publication: 1986
Source Name: CRBIB
Citation Number: 013683
Citation Type: Both Graphic And Narrative
Citation Location: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Citation Author: Luxenberg, Gretchen A.
Citation Title: Historic Structures Inventory, North Cascades National Park Service Complex
Year of Publication: 1984
Source Name: CRBIB
Citation Number: 016365
Citation Type: Both Graphic And Narrative
Citation Location: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Citation Author: NPS Staff
Citation Title: National Register Nomination, North Cascades National Park Service Complex
Year of Publication: 1988
Source Name: CRBIB
Citation Number: 014098
Citation Type: Narrative
Citation Location: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Citation Author: USFS
Citation Title: A Characteristic Expression. A Thematic Evaluation of Forest Service Depression-Era Administrative Buildings in the Pacific Northwest.
Year of Publication: 0
Source Name: Other
Citation Type: Both Graphic And Narrative
Citation Location: CCSO
Citation Title: Recreation Site Planning and Improvements in National Forests 1891-1942.
Year of Publication: 0
Source Name: Other
Citation Number: FS-354
Citation Type: Both Graphic And Narrative
Citation Location: CCSO

Citation Author: USFS
Citation Title: United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service.
Acceptable Building Plans.
Year of Publication: 0
Source Name: Other
Citation Type: Both Graphic And Narrative
Citation Location: CCSO-CR

Citation Author: USFS
Citation Title: Recreation Development in the National Forests in Oregon and
Washington, 1905-1945. Historic Context.
Year of Publication: 0
Source Name: Other
Citation Type: Narrative
Citation Location: CCSO

Citation Author: USFS
Citation Title: Mt. Baker CCC Inspection and Progress Report, September 9,
1933
Year of Publication: 1933
Source Name: Other
Citation Number: FARC-RG 95
Citation Type: Both Graphic And Narrative
Citation Location: FARC

Citation Author: USFS
Citation Title: Mt. Baker CCC Inspection Record, August 19, 1933.
Year of Publication: 1933
Source Name: Other
Citation Number: FARC-RG 95
Citation Type: Both Graphic And Narrative
Citation Location: FARC

Citation Author: USFS
Citation Title: Supervisor's Inspection Report, Skagit River Ranger District,
November 26, 1921
Year of Publication: 1921
Source Name: Other
Citation Number: FARC-RG 95-POR
Citation Location: FARC

Citation Title: History of Mt. Baker national Forest
Year of Publication: 0
Source Name: Other
Citation Type: Narrative
Citation Location: The original report is held by Jim Harriss at NOCA

Citation Title: Mt. Baker Almanac
Source Name: Other
Citation Type: Narrative
Citation Location: NOCA, USFS Mt. Baker Ranger District

Supplemental Information

- Title:** 1975 aerial photograph of Marblemount Ranger Station
- Title:** Facility Location Map of Marblemount Compound, 1998.
- Title:** General Land Office (GLO) Map of 1889.
- Description:** This map indicates Backus Creek near the future location of Backus Ranger Station.
- Title:** Individual Building Data 1005, 1006, 1008, 1009, 1010, 1011
- Description:** Located in the NOCA building maintenance files.
- Title:** Marblemount Ranger Station Existing Conditions Site Plan, 1986
- Title:** Marblemount Ranger Station Site Development Plan, 1963
- Title:** Marblemount Ranger Station Site Plan Drawing No. 168-60004
- Description:** This plan includes an inventory of trees.
- Title:** Metsker Atlas of Skagit County, 1925, 1935, 1941 maps
- Description:** The Skagit County map of 1941 indicates the name of the ranger station was still "Backus" Ranger Station in 1941.
- Title:** Metsker Atlas of Whatcom County, 1936, 1942 maps
- Title:** Mt. Baker National Forest Map, 1949
- Description:** Backus Ranger Station appears as "Marblemount" Ranger Station on this map. Therefore the name was changed by the USFS.
- Title:** Thomas Thompson Papers in Washington State University Pullman Library.

Documentation Assessment

Documentation Assessment: Fair

Documentation Checklist

Documentation

Document: Administrative History

Year of Document: 1998

Adequate Documentation: No

Explanatory Narrative:

This document focuses on the administrative history of North Cascades National Park Service Complex since its establishment in 1968. It does not document the history of Marblemount Ranger Station, which was largely developed by the USFS before this time.

Document: Historic Resource Study

Year of Document: 1986

Adequate Documentation: No

Explanatory Narrative:

This document provides a brief history of the early development of Backus Ranger Station.

Document: Other

Year of Document: 1984

Amplifying Details: Historic Structures Inventory, North Cascades National Park Service Complex

Adequate Documentation: No

Explanatory Narrative:

This document provides a brief description and history of five structures within the historic core of Marblemount Ranger Station.